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Errata

There is an error on page 79 in the article by Nathan Rinne, "Paradise Regained: Placing Nicholas Hopman's *Lex Aeterna* Back in Luther's Frame," *CTQ* 82 (2018). The last sentence of the second paragraph should read, "Even if they are born of a spontaneous love, the good intentions and works that characterize the 'new man' can be of a very impure love, still tainted by sin, even as that sin is covered by Christ's blood."

The Editors

CTQ 82 (2018): 163–178

Salvation by God's Grace, Judgment According to Our Works: Taking a Look at Matthew and Paul

Timo Laato[1]

I. Introduction

How are you saved? By God's grace, no doubt! That is the right answer. Yet, the Scriptures tell us that judgment will take place according to our works. Most Christians do not want to think about judgment according to works. One renowned New Testament scholar only adds to the problem as he states, "Nowhere in the Biblical material does one find judgment according to grace or faith."[2] Also George Stöckhardt, a trustworthy representative of nineteenth-century confessional Lutherans, dares to claim, "The works of men appear throughout Scripture as the actual norm of the judgment."[3] Approximately three-fourths of Paul's judgment sayings refer to the judgment of Christians![4] He wanted to alert them to the risks of their living. Did they always take his warnings seriously? Do we?

Many attempts have been made to reconcile the emphasis on salvation by God's grace and the thought of judgment according to works within a single system of dogmatics. A number of academics at the turn of the twentieth century drew the conclusion that the idea of judgment according to works is a Jewish or early Christian relic that has no value.[5] Currently, many scholars regard the notion of judgment according to works simply as a contradiction in New Testament theology that must be allowed to stand.[6] A fairly modern way of solving the problem is to understand the motif of judgment and recompense exclusively as a rhetorical

[1] This article is dedicated to Christopher Barnekov, an incarnation of a real gentleman who makes God's mercy visible through his hospitality, in appreciation of his involvement in Scandinavian Confessional Lutheranism.

[2] Klyne R. Snodgrass, "Justification by Grace–to the Doers: an Analysis of the Place of Romans 2 in the Theology of Paul," *New Testament Studies* 32 (1986): 78.

[3] George Stöckhardt, *Romans*, trans. Edward W. Schade, ed. Otto F. Stahlke (St. Louis: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1984), 83.

[4] Snodgrass, "Justification by Grace," 93n101 in reference to H. Braun, *Gerichtsgedanke und Rechtfertigungslehre bei Paulus* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1930).

[5] For a list of scholars, see Nigel M. Watson, "Justified by Faith, Judged by Works—An Antinomy?" *New Testament Studies* 29 (1983): 220n8.

[6] For a list of scholars, see Snodgrass, "Justification by Grace," 88n12.

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device, as a tool of the overall argument.[7] Indeed, it seems that more time has been spent explaining away the judgment according to works than explaining what it means.

In truth, the New Testament authors have transmitted both the emphasis on salvation by God's grace and the dramatic vision of the last judgment according to human works. There is never any indication that they perceived a problem. Far more, they have made the outwardly controversial utterances their own and integrated them into their theology. Thus, any explanation can be judged by answering the question "What does the explanation do with the pieces that do not fit?" The pieces that do not appear to fit are telling signs of the inadequacy of the whole reasoning. When some theological aspects have been omitted, other components of the theory are stretched and overloaded. As a result, grievous distortions emerge, because the overall doctrinal system is thrown off balance.[8]

The Lutheran Confessions thoroughly discuss the biblical teaching on judgment according to works. Maybe the most comprehensive passage is Apology IV 370–373:

> Our opponents urge that good works properly merit eternal life, since Paul says (Rom. 2:6), "He will render to every man according to his works"; and v. 10, "Glory and honor and peace for every one who does good." John 5:29, "Those who have done good will come forth to the resurrection of life"; Matt. 25:35, "I was hungry and you gave me food," etc. These passages and all others like them where works are praised in the Scriptures must be taken to mean not only outward works but also the faith of the heart, since the Scriptures do not speak of hypocrisy but of righteousness in the heart and of its fruits. Whenever law and works are mentioned, we must know that Christ, the mediator, should not be excluded. He is the end of the law (Rom. 10:4), and he himself says, "Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). By this rule, as we have said earlier, all passages on works can be interpreted. Therefore, when eternal life is granted to works, it is granted to the justified. None can do good works except the justified, who are led by the Spirit of Christ; nor can good works please God without the mediator Christ and faith, according to Heb. 11:6, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." When Paul says, "He will render to every man according to his works," we must understand not merely outward works but the entire righteousness or unrighteousness. That is to say, "Glory for him who does good," namely, for the righteous man. "You gave me food" is cited as fruit

[7] Ernst Synofzik, *Die Gerichts- und Vergeltungsaussagen bei Paulus. Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977).

[8] Snodgrass, "Justification by Grace," 72.

and evidence of the righteousness of the heart and of faith, and for this reason eternal life is granted to righteousness."[9]

As shown in the beginning of the quotation, Melanchthon primarily or explicitly refers to three chapters in the New Testament (viz. Matt 25; John 5; and Rom 2) as the biblical foundation for the judgment according to works. Two of those (viz. Matt 25 and Rom 2) are recounted toward the end of the quotation but without being specified as quotations from Scripture. They are the central texts that most of all need to be explained. At the same time, the emphasis on salvation by grace prevails beyond any reasonable doubt.

The task here—within the limits of a short article—is to examine the biblical teaching on judgment according to works especially in relation to the thought of salvation by grace. The focus lies on those two texts that are of primary importance in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession (see above): Matthew 25 (in particular, vv. 31–46) and Romans 2 (in particular, vv. 6–11). Other relevant passages must be discussed in another context and at another time. Doing everything here and now seems next to impossible.

II. Matthew 25:31–46

The idea of judgment according to works occurs in the Gospel of Matthew. To quote Matthew 16:27, one of the most relevant passages: "For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done"[10] (καὶ τότε ἀποδώσει ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὴν πρᾶξιν αὐτοῦ). Much later, Matthew 25:31–46 uncovers in depth how exactly the last judgment is going to happen. All the facts and features in the passage will not be discussed below. The focus lies on the relationship between God's grace and human efforts. Many details in the text, primarily in verse 34, reveal that in no way do the righteous earn their place in the heavenly kingdom through their works.[11]

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[9] Quotations from the Lutheran Confessions are from Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959). See also Ap IV 252.

[10] This and subsequent Scripture quotations marked ESV are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. All other Scripture translations are my own.

[11] The points made here are my own reflections on Matt 25:31–46 in light of several commentaries and special studies. This whole section goes back to my more comprehensive article, "Rättfärdighet i Bergspredikan mot bakgrunden av hela Matteusevangeliet," in *Reformaatio vai restauraatio – tradition aarteita ja tulkinnan kompastuskiviä*, Iustitia, eds. T. Eskola and J. Rankinen (Helsinki, Finland: Suomen Teologinen Instituutti, 2017), 190–213. It has been translated into English by B. Ericsson and is used by permission.

First, good deeds are not what made the righteous into "sheep." Rather, the righteous were first incorporated as members of God's flock, and afterward they showed love to their fellow man. Second, the righteous are expressly said to be "blessed by my Father" (Matt 25:34, ESV). The substantive verb οἱ εὐλογημένοι (perf. part.) emphasizes a permanent state that points back to the Father's favor. The good deeds do not proceed as the basis for his benevolence. Third, the expression "inherit" (κληρονομήσατε) means that the righteous really inherit the kingdom of God. They do not take possession of it in any other way, but receive it only as an inheritance, on account of a birthright. Fourth, the kingdom of heaven has been "prepared (ἡτοιμασμένην, perf. part.) for you from the foundation of the world" (ESV). Thus, it cannot be acquired with the help of good works afterward. Fifth, before Jesus (the Son of Man) lists the good deeds of the righteous, he emphasizes the eternal election as the basis for the whole of salvation and the Christian life. Sixth, the righteous themselves do not begin to list their good works in order to thereby demand reward. Seventh, in addition, the righteous are surprised by all the good that they have done. Apparently, their salvation is not based on what they have accomplished. Eighth, the righteous shall be judged according to what they "have done for one of the least of these, my brothers" (Matt 25:40). Their failures, omissions, and shortcomings are not even mentioned. What grace! On the contrary, the unrighteous will be judged in accordance with what they have not done for one of the least of these; whatever they at times perhaps tried to do escapes any notice. See Matthew 25:40 and 25:45. Ninth, the sentence is announced on the basis of deeds of *love*, but not, strictly speaking, on different deeds of *the law* (cf. 1 Cor 13 and the Epistle of James in its entirety). These do not assume communion with Christ as the basis and content of salvation. Tenth, in contrast to the righteous who are called those "who are blessed by my Father" (see second point), those who are lost are called "you cursed" (Matt 25:41, ESV). The difference in the manner of formulation awakens the impression that the latter bear responsibility for their perdition (particularly because according to Matt 25:41, the eternal condemnation was originally prepared only for the devil and his angels), while the former thank God for his final salvation.

In light of these ten points, the kingdom of heaven shows itself to be an invaluable gift that cannot be earned by human accomplishments. What place, then, do good works occupy according to which the judgment nevertheless occurs? Such a question still demands an answer. To this end, a short summary of a theological discussion that goes back to the time of the Reformation will follow. The purpose is not to use an anachronistic *a priori* understanding in the exposition of Matthew's Gospel, but rather to provide a broader and better perspective on different and alternative interpretations.

A powerful theological debate was stoked into flames among Lutherans already in the 1550s concerning the importance of good works in the question of who would finally be saved. In particular, Georg Major emphasized that good works are necessary for salvation. Among those who opposed him, Nicolaus von Amsdorf held that good works are harmful for salvation. Both extreme positions were rejected. The Lutheran fathers stressed, in order to highlight their well-balanced point of view for pedagogical purposes quite simply, that good works are necessary, namely as unavoidable consequences of faith, but have no part in actual salvation.[12] In total, there were three different alternatives in the charged debate. First, good works are necessary for salvation. Second, good works are harmful for salvation. Third, good works are necessary (assuming that one rightly understands what this short sentence means).

Against the background of the former "Majoristic Controversy," a more nuanced interpretive horizon regarding Matthew 25:31–46 opens up. Apart from the second alternative, which is of course eliminated, the passage is sometimes interpreted in agreement with the first alternative, as if good works are necessary for salvation. However, such an idea appears unfathomable in light of the ten points that attribute the glory of salvation to God (see above). Instead, the text shall be summarized in conformity with the third alternative: good works are necessary. Full stop! The sentence cannot be expanded anymore.

There is, in fact, a decisive difference between the sentences "Good works are necessary for salvation" and "Good works are necessary" as they relate to the exposition of Matthew 25:31–46. In the former case, salvation depends, in the end, on human accomplishments, despite praising the Messiah as the Savior. In the latter case, however, the whole of salvation depends on God's grace, which the Messiah mediates. In communion with him, his grace provides love for all. It is just such a vision that Matthew 25:31–46 depicts when the final judgment is painted there.

III. Romans 2:6–11

In Romans, the first explicit quotation from the Old Testament Scriptures is found in 1:17, where the apostle refers to Habakkuk 2:4; and the second is found in Romans 2:6, where he refers to Proverbs 24:12 as well as MT Psalm 62:12 (resp. LXX 61:12). In the former case, he underscores his teaching on salvation through faith by grace; and in the latter case, he underlines his thought of judgment according to works. Taken together, both quotations confirm the thesis of this

[12] See FC IV.

article, that is, that salvation is by God's grace but judgment occurs according to human works.

It is worth noting that in Pauline theology, good works or the fruit of the Spirit do not amount to the *conditio sine qua non* of salvation. It depends, from beginning to end, on faith alone (Rom 1:17; 11:20–23; 2 Cor 1:24; 13:5–7; the whole Epistle to the Galatians, primarily 2:20). Good works do not at all effect remaining in Christ. They rather show that one has entered communion with him through faith. Nevertheless, Paul, at the same time, maintains that judgment occurs according to human deeds or that heinous sins results in the loss of salvation (see esp. Rom 2:6–13; 6:15–23; 8:12–13; 11:22; 14:10; 1 Cor 3:10–13; 4:2–5; 5:1–5; 6:9–10; 10:1–13; 2 Cor 5:10; Gal 5:19–21).[13] Thus, the question still remains as to whether his emphasis competes with his teaching on *iustificatio sola gratia per fidem propter Christum*.[14]

In the debate that here follows, the main focus lies—as already stated in the introduction—primarily on Romans 2 and especially on verses 6–11. To begin with, the passage is to be interpreted in the light of context. The polemics in Romans 1–2 obviously recalls the Wisdom of Solomon. The points of contact are manifold. In Romans 1, six points of agreement with Wisdom of Solomon are present. First, creation bears witness to the Creator (Rom 1:19–20; Wis 13:1–19). Second, idolatry is based on pure folly (Rom 1:21–23, 25; Wis 13–15). Third, idolatry leads to lewdness (Rom 1:24–28; Wis 14:12). Fourth, Gentiles make themselves guilty of gross sins (Rom 1:21–32; Wis 14:23–31). Fifth, Gentiles are without excuse (Rom 1:20; Wis 13:8). Sixth, God passes righteous judgment (Rom 1:32; Wis 12:13).

From the opening of the second chapter, however, the polemical tone suddenly turns against the argument found in Wisdom of Solomon. The contrast runs through especially Romans 2:1–6. Wisdom of Solomon affirms the judgment of God over the Gentiles. Because of their upsetting idolatry and every kind of vices, they are with full justice forever damned (chs. 11–19). Even if the Jews themselves sin, they are nevertheless free from eternal damnation and not hindered from judging others. This astonishing line of reasoning goes back to four principal presuppositions in Wisdom of Solomon.

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[13] However, see Judith M. Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying In and Falling Away* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1990), 83–154. She draws the conclusion that "Paul does not think Christians' ethical failure results in exclusion from final salvation" (157). Her thesis needs, in my opinion, no refutation. Yet, see Heikki Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), 185–186n116.

[14] See my own discussion: Timo Laato, *Paulus und das Judentum: Anthropologische Erwägungen* (Åbo: Åbo Akademis Förlag, 1991), 199–204; and Timo Laato, *Paul and Judaism: An Anthropological Approach*, trans. T. McElwain, South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism 115 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 158–162.

First, God's wrath falls exclusively on the Gentiles: "For when they were tried, albeit but in mercy chastened, they learned how the ungodly were tormented, being judged with wrath: For these, as a father, admonishing them, thou didst prove; But those, as a stern king, condemning them, thou didst search out" (Wis 11:9–10).[15] Second, the Jews escape God's wrath because of their knowledge of him and his mercy: "But thou, our God, art gracious (χρηστός) and true, longsuffering (μαχρόθυμος), and in mercy ordering all things. For even if we sin, we are thine, knowing thy dominion; But we shall not sin, knowing that we are accounted thine; For to know thee is perfect righteousness, Yea, to know thy dominion is the root of immortality" (Wis 15:1–3). Third, God in his wrath has patience in order to give the Gentiles a chance to repent: "But thou hast mercy on all men, because thou hast power to do all things, and thou overlookest the sins of men to the end they may repent (εἰς μετάνοιαν)" (Wis 11:23; cf. 12:10–11). Fourth, the Jews should bear in mind the goodness and patience of God in their judging: "While therefore thou dost chasten us, thou scourgest our enemies ten thousand times more, to the intent that we may ponder thy goodness when we judge (κρίνοντες), and when we are judged may look for mercy" (Wis 12:22).[16]

In Romans 2, Paul takes on the task of correcting these false presuppositions of Wisdom of Solomon. He strives to overthrow the Jewish egocentric self-arrogance. In view of verses 1–3, no one has the slightest right to judge his fellow man if he commits the same sins himself. Therefore, in contrast to Wisdom of Solomon, the apostle brings out the following contrasting points in Romans. First, God's wrath falls also on the Jews: "Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God?" (Rom 2:3, ESV). Second, the knowledge of God and his mercy rather increases the guilt of the Jews: "Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness (τῆς χρηστότητος) and forbearance and patience (τῆς μακροθυμίας) . . . ?" (Rom 2:4a, ESV). Third, God in his wrath has patience in order to give also the Jews a chance to repent: " . . . not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead *you* to repentance (εἰς μετάνοιάν)?" (Rom 2:4b, ESV, emphasis added). Fourth, in their judging, the Jews should bear in mind the justice and impartiality of God, in other words, ultimately his frightful judgment of them: "But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. He will render to each one according to his works" (Rom 2:5–6, ESV; cf. vv. 7–11).

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[15] Translations of the Wisdom of Solomon are from *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament,* ed. R. H. Charles (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913).

[16] For the line of reasoning in Wisdom of Solomon, see Anders Nygren, *Pauli brev till romarna*, vol. 6 of *Tolkning av Nya Testamentet* (Stockholm: SKD's bokforlag, 1979), 120–121.

Lexical similarities between Wisdom of Solomon and Romans 1:18–2:5 strengthen the conclusion that the latter passage relates to the former text.[17] This being the case, Paul already in Romans 2:1 embarks on an earnest debate with the Jews. Because he explicitly addresses mankind (Rom 2:1, 3), he is hardly discussing this matter with merely the Jews. Rather, they are types representing those (e.g., the Gentile moral philosophers or followers of rigorous religions) who raise themselves above others to judge them. Paul knows well enough that at least some Gentiles, to say nothing of Jews, do not consider themselves the same as wicked heathens (Rom 1:18–32). Only after several further accusations (Rom 2:1–29), he sets up the whole world as *massa perditionis* (Rom 3:9–18).

The argument in Romans 2:12–13 is inextricably linked to the overall reasoning in Romans 1–2. All those "who sin apart from the law" designate the Gentiles (Rom 1:18–32), whereas all those "who sin under the law" denote the Jews (Rom 2:1–5), representing not the common (decadent) people but the better ones. Then, Romans 2:14–16 once again draws on the Gentiles who "do not have the law" (ESV), whereas Romans 2:17–24, in turn, moves to the Jews who "rely on the law" (ESV). Finally, the mention of the law implies the subject of the circumcision, which involves the question of being circumcised or not (Rom 2:25–27) and the discussion of having the circumcision either "in flesh" or "in Spirit" (Rom 2:28–29). In this zigzag manner, the flow of the argument goes on in Romans 2.

But what about Romans 2:6–11? What is the function and meaning of the verses in the overall context? The structure of the passage contains a clear-cut chiasm. Both Romans 2:7 and 2:10 speak of those who do and receive good, whereas Romans 2:8 and 2:9 are the intervening verses that speak of those who do and receive evil. Besides, Romans 2:6 and 2:11 assert that God shows no partiality.[18] Hence, Romans 2:7–10 is inserted or sandwiched between the two assertions in 2:6 and 2:11, which focus on God's righteous verdict at the last judgment. For sure, he will have the final say (cf. Rom 1:32).[19] On the whole, the chiastic arrangement of Romans 2:6–11 looks like this:

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[17] Laato, *Paulus und das Judentum*, 199–204; and Laato, *Paul and Judaism*, 94–95.

[18] Michael P. Middendorf, *Romans 1–8*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2013), 162–163, in unison with most commentaries. See also Snodgrass, "Justification by Grace," 80.

[19] Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 136.

A 2:6 ὃς ἀποδώσει ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ
  B 2:7 τοῖς μὲν καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ
    C δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν ζωὴν αἰώνιον,
      D 2:8 τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας καὶ ἀπειθοῦσι τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ
        E ὀργὴ καὶ θυμός.
        E′ 2:9 θλῖψις καὶ στενοχωρία
      D′ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν, . . .
    C′ 2:10 δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη παντὶ
  B′ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν, . . .
A′ 2:11 οὐ γάρ ἐστιν προσωπολημψία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ.

A 2:6 " . . . who will give back to each one according to his works."
  B 2:7 On the one hand, to those who, according to the endurance in good work,
    C seek glory and honor and incorruptibility, [he will give] eternal life.
      D 2:8 On the other hand, to those who, out of self-centeredness, are unpersuaded by the truth, but are persuaded by the unrighteousness,
        E [there will be] wrath and fury,
        E′ 2:9 tribulation and distress
      D′ upon every person of man who works that which is evil, . . .
    C′ 2:10 but glory and honor and peace to every person
  B′ who works that which is good. . . .
A′ 2:11 For there is no partiality in the presence of God.[20]

Romans 2:6–11 is often interpreted as no more than a hypothetical possibility, as if it were within reach to obey the law and earn eternal life due to one's own accomplishments. The argument is that only wishful thinking is called for here, since no one will ever achieve what he works toward. So, he builds his castle in the air.[21] Hence, Romans 2:6–11 "sets forth the biblical conditions for attaining eternal life apart from Christ."[22]

However, there is nothing in Romans 2:6–11 to suggest that the way of thought amounts only to a hypothetical possibility. Indeed, it has every indication of being

[20] Middendorf, *Romans 1–8*, 163.

[21] See Hans Lietzmann, *An die Römer* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1971), 13. For a list of other scholars, see Snodgrass, "Justification by Grace," 88n9.

[22] Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 142.

meant seriously, showing no features of fictive character.[23] At least seven facts show a true and real sense of the passage. First, Romans 2:6 and 2:11 portray a common Pauline notion of judgment according to works. Romans 2:7–10 explains it by speaking of those who do and receive evil or good. The line of reasoning follows a definite chiastic order, forming a coherent whole (see above). Therefore, either everything or nothing is hypothetical. Certainly, the former case is implausible. Consequently, the latter case is the simple available option. Second, the meaning of Romans 2:7 and 2:10 (speaking of those who do and receive good) is a "pure sham," if damnation remains the only possibility.[24] Third, the idea of judgment according to works is repeated time and again in the Pauline letters without raising any theological complications. If since all those passages are not to be interpreted hypothetically, why should Romans 2:6–11 be understood in that way?[25] Fourth, definitely the most natural interpretation is to read the text as it stands, without any preconditions from outside that are laid down in advance. Fifth, also Romans 6:22 suggests the necessity of good works. It speaks of eternal life as being the result or goal of sanctification.[26] Yet, 6:23 denies sharply that eternal life can be earned by human accomplishments. Indeed, it is a gift received. On the other hand, death (especially eternal death as the opposite of eternal life) is a wage earned ("provisions" or the pay given to soldiers), a penalty deserved.[27] Sixth, likewise Galatians 6:8 views eternal life as a result of "reaping from the Spirit," after having been "sown to the Spirit."[28] A man reaps what he sows (Gal 6:7). Still, neither when he sows nor when he reaps is he anything, "but only God who gives the growth" (1 Cor 3:7, ESV). Even so, he "will receive his wages according to his labor" (1 Cor 6:8, ESV)! Seventh, the more the Pauline emphasis on judgment according to works is deemphasized, the more the common overall picture of the coming of the Son of Man in the New Testament is torn apart. In that case, the several tensions are not

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[23] *Pace* Middendorf, *Romans 1–8*, 164–169. Correctly, Charles E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1, Introduction and Commentary on Romans I–VIII (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1982), 152, states: "But the fact that there is no indication whatsoever in the text that what is being said is hypothetical tells strongly against it."

[24] Snodgrass, "Justification by Grace," 83: "The words of 2. 7, 10, and 13–15 would be a 'pure sham' if judgment were according to works, but damnation were the only possibility." This is true as to vv. 7 and 10 (but not regarding vv. 13–15; cf. above and see below).

[25] Snodgrass, "Justification by Grace," 74.

[26] Snodgrass, "Justification by Grace," 85; Karl P. Donfried: "Justification and Last Judgement in Paul," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 67 (1976): 99–100.

[27] Stöckhardt, *Romans*, 83: "It is to be remembered especially that the concept of the norm does not necessarily include the concept of merit. As the Scriptures otherwise testify, e.g., Rom 6:23, the godless with their evil works indeed deserve hell, but contrariwise the devout do not deserve salvation with their good works."

[28] Snodgrass, "Justification by Grace," 85.

loosened. The bond between Jesus (as demonstrated, e.g., in Matthew) and Paul or the link between James (the brother of Jesus) and Paul is lessened.[29]

That being said, a further clarification is needed instantly. Rightly, George Stöckhardt pointed out, in reference to Calov, the following: "It is one thing to reward according to works, i.e., according to the testimony of works, which give testimony of interior faith or unbelief; it is another thing to reward on account of works, i.e., on account of the merit of works."[30] As already shown, Melanchthon in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession also comes to a similar interpretation. He does not shrink from the literal sense and obvious meaning of the biblical text with the intention of defending his main doctrine on justification by faith more effectively. In truth, he sees here no difficulties at all with his teaching on salvation by grace. Nevertheless, judgment is according to works because the Scriptures say so. That is really Lutheranism at its best!

Moreover, there are nine basics in Pauline theology that should be taken into consideration in this context. They enlighten some important viewpoints in the big picture. First, with exceptional emphasis, Paul argues for the total depravity of the whole humankind. Every person is absolutely corrupt and therefore fully unable to save himself or even contribute to his salvation. So, his only remaining hope lies in the amazing grace of God, which is received for Christ's sake, by faith alone.[31] Works that are taken into account at the last judgment do not alter the precondition of the anthropological pessimism (or realism) in Pauline thinking. Second, the new Christian life is brought about by faith, which originates in God's almighty power by the use of the gospel to the exclusion of any human contribution or cooperation (see, e.g., Rom 1:16; 10:17; 1 Cor 4:15; 2 Cor 4:6).[32] Judgment according to works is based on that apostolic insight. Third, strictly speaking, a

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[29] Snodgrass, "Justification by Grace," 86.

[30] Stöckhardt, *Romans*, 85. See also his interpretation of Rom 2:13 on p. 89: "It is two different matters, whether one says that the doers of the Law, even those persons, are justified, or whether it is said that those concerned are justified for the works' sake."

[31] Laato, *Paulus und das Judentum*, 94–97; and Laato, *Paul and Judaism*, 75–77. Cf. also the very sharp contrast that exists between Rom 2:7–8 and Rom 1:18–32. The three nouns "glory and honor and incorruptibility" (δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν) in Rom 2:7 without doubt allude to Rom 1:23–24. The Gentiles exchanged "the glory of the incorruptible God" (τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ, Rom 1:23) for idolatry. Then, God gave them over "in the desires of their hearts into impurity, to the dishonoring (τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι) of their bodies among themselves" (Rom 1:24). In other words, they do just the opposite of Rom 2:7. As stated in Rom 2:8, there will be "wrath and fury" for those sinners who "are unpersuaded by the truth, but are persuaded by the unrighteousness" (ἀπειθοῦσι τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ). Now the description matches the picture of the Gentiles who suppress "the truth in unrighteousness" (τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ, Rom 1:18). They exchanged "the truth" (τὴν ἀλήθειαν) for a lie (Rom 1:25). See esp. Middendorf, *Romans 1–8*, 166, and other commentaries. Snodgrass, "Justification by Grace," 80–81, argues in a similar way.

[32] Laato, *Paulus und das Judentum*, 190–194; and Laato, *Paul and Judaism*, 150–154.

Christian lives only because Christ lives in him (Gal 2:20). Then it follows that in the deepest sense, Christ does all the good works of the Christian. Alternatively, Paul talks about the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22–23). In that case, he makes the spiritual life the true source and basis of good works.[33] In and with the rewarding of Christian charity and kindness, God indeed crowns his own toil and labor.[34] Fourth, when addressing judgment according to *good* works, Paul prefers talking about judgment according to good work in the singular form. Actually, he speaks of τὰ ἔργα in the plural form only in Romans 2:6, which, as stated above, is a quotation of the Old Testament.[35] Straightaway in the next verse, he makes use of the singular καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ ("the endurance in good work"). The somewhat unexpected expression is to be seen as a collective, summing up the "life work" of a person as a single dominating goal. Maybe it simply denotes "doing good" or "love" as the fulfillment of the law (Rom 13:10; Gal 5:14).[36] At least, the singular form ἔργον excludes weighing good deeds against bad or keeping ledger books in view of the last judgment.[37] It occurs in a positive sense also in Galatians 6:4 (cf. 1 Cor 3:13).[38] Fifth, though good works are never the cause of salvation, it still can be maintained that evil works cause the loss of salvation. Even if the positive (meritorious) statement is not true, the negative one still remains true. Accordingly, they do not exclude each other. That needs to be spelled out clearly. In Romans 6:23, (eternal) death is exposed as "the wages of sin." On account of a supposed parallelism, eternal life should be exposed as "the wages of sanctification (holiness)." Yet, unexpectedly, it is portrayed as "a gift of God."[39] Similarly, in Romans 2:7, the Greek accusative case of "eternal life" (ζωὴν αἰώνιον) expresses the outcome of God's gift as the object of the divine recompense (ἀποδώσει) in 2:6. On the contrary, in 2:8, the words for "wrath" and "fury" (ὀργή and θυμός) are nominative: "There will be wrath and fury" (ESV) for all who do wrong and break the rules. They receive the righteous

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[33] Laato, *Paulus und das Judentum*, 200–204; and Laato, *Paul and Judaism*, 159–162.

[34] See Stöckhardt, *Romans*, 84: "Faith and all the good works of believers are the work and effect of divine grace. God in and with the rewarding of the good works only crowns His own work."

[35] Paul refers to Prov 24:12 as well as to MT Ps 62:12 (LXX 61:12). Evidently, instead of the present tense, he makes use of the future tense (ἀποδώσει), since in v. 5 he pointed out how "you are storing up wrath against yourself" for the last judgment.

[36] E.g., Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 137n10. See also Snodgrass, "Justification by Grace," 84.

[37] For a similar view, cf. Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard de Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 273–274 (although he does not deal with Rom 2:6–7).

[38] Also in Matt 16:27 (see above), the singular form occurs: καὶ τότε ἀποδώσει ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὴν πρᾶξιν αὐτοῦ. See as well, e.g., Heb 6:10; 1 Pet 1:17; Rev 22:12.

[39] See various commentaries.

judgment that they brought on themselves by their own unrighteous conduct.[40] Sixth, since salvation is completely by God's grace, it is also by faith alone. In Romans 5:9, justification means salvation from God's wrath on the last day. The expectation of being saved in the future follows directly from having been justified by Christ's blood. Nothing more is needed or required. For certain, so far not even a word has been uttered about the paraenesis that begins as late as in Romans 12. Thus, neither the earnest works of law among Jews nor the good works of charity among Christians add anything to salvation. To repeat: faith alone justifies, but faith never remains alone. It is always active through love (Gal 5:6). Therefore, judgment is according to works.[41] Seventh, as a consequence, good works do not turn faith into a saving *fides viva*. For faith to exercise the saving power, it depends on the proclamation of the gospel (see second point above). God's word generates faith or revives a dead faith. If faith for some reason does not bring forth any good works, then there was no faith at all from the very outset. Good works cannot be annexed to faith. They have to develop or grow from within it. Indeed, they are the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22–23).[42] Eighth, instead, good works do increase and strengthen hope. The Greek phrase ὑπομονὴ ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ in Romans 2:7 does not stand for "endurance of good work" but, strictly speaking, rather for "endurance or persistence in good work." That sort of perseverance produces "(a proven) character" (ὑπομονή) and (a proven) character, in turn, produces "hope" (ἐλπίς), and hope does not "bring shame" at the last judgment (Rom 5:4–5).[43] This is the significance of good works in our relationship with God. To be sure, he does not need our good works. But we need them, and our neighbors need them as well. The Pauline insistence on good works enhancing hope instead of faith deserves both attention and reflection in modern ecumenical discussions. It is something that every so often has gone unremarked there.

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[40] Middendorf, *Romans 1–8*, 166. The grammar of 2:7 in itself can be read in two different ways. As a result, there are two alternate translations: (1) "to those who are seeking glory, honor, and immortality [he will render] eternal life"; or (2) "to those who are seeking eternal life [he will render] glory, honor, and immortality." The syntax strongly favors the first reading. See, e.g., Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 137n9.

[41] As already shown (see above), Rom 2:12–13 takes up the argument in 1:18–2:5 and explains that neither Gentiles nor Jews shall be justified by their own efforts.

[42] Laato, *Paulus und das Judentum*, 201–202; and Laato, *Paul and Judaism*, 159–161.

[43] Heinrich Schlier, *Der Römerbrief* (Freiburg: Herder, 1977), 73: "2 Kor 1,6 ist von der ὑπομονὴ τῶν παθημάτων, von der Geduld im Leiden, 1 Thess 1,3 von der ὑπομονὴ τῆς ἐλπίδος, von der Geduld in der Hoffnung, die Rede. Entsprechend wird hier nicht gemeint sein: ausdauernd gute Werke tun, sondern es wird von dem geduldigen, guten Werk, von dem guten Werk, in dem die Geduld, die ja ein Zeichen und ein Ausweis der Hoffnung ist (vgl. Röm 5,4), wirksam ist, gesprochen." At least in Pauline letters, the word ὑπομονή almost always stands together with (or in the context of) ἐλπίς. Cf. Rom 2:7; 5:3; 8:25; 15:4–5; 2 Cor 1:6; 6:4; Col 1:11; 1 Thess 1:3; 2 Thess 1:4; and 3:5.

Ninth and finally, the meaning of "doing" (evil or good) in Romans 2 still has to be specified more exactly. What are the works that will, or may not, prevail at the last judgment? Romans 2:1 affirms that the one who "passes judgment on others is doing the same things" they do. Without doubt, it alludes to the catalog of vices recorded in Romans 1:28–31. The passage encompasses a diversity of sinful acts as well as sinful words and even sinful thoughts. For instance, such iniquities as greed, depravity, envy, malice, slander, defamation, hatred against God, violence, arrogance, inventiveness in commencing and completing austere brutalities, senselessness, faithlessness, lovelessness, and unmercifulness in no case are confined or limited to doing something. Consequently, the list of vices embraces besides "big" offenses also "small" faults, including transgressions that a person does not necessarily *do*. Obviously, Paul uses the verbs ποιεῖν (Rom 1:28, 32; 2:3) or πράσσειν (Rom 1:32; 2:1–3) without making a clear-cut differentiation between thoughts, words, and acts. On account of his summary usage of speech, people do evil although it sometimes might be "only" a matter of the mouth or mind. Evidently, that way of speaking goes back to Jesus himself (see, e.g., Matt 5:21–30 and Mark 7:20–23). Similar language occurs also in the Septuagint. There are several exhortations to "do the law" (see, e.g., Exod 24:3, 7; Lev 19:37; Deut 5:1, 31–32; 6:1, 24; 28:58; and 31:12), although not every distinct commandment (e.g., to honor God, not to take his name in vain, not to bear false witness against one's neighbor, or not to covet one's neighbor's house) can be fulfilled through good works.[44] All in all: judgment according to works is also according to words and thoughts.

IV. Summary and Conclusions

Judgment according to works is an integral part of the teaching of Matthew and Paul. For sure, it must not be seen as a contradiction in their theology or an unexpurgated Jewish fragment from their past. What they say, they say in concert with other New Testament authors. The doctrinal statement on judgment according to works does not abrogate the emphasis on salvation by grace. Both aspects stand alongside each other at the same time.

It is simply wrong to regard either Matthew 25:31–46 or Romans 2:6–11 as "merely" preparatory for what comes later in their theology. The thought of judgment according to works is not loosened little by little nor does it disappear completely in the end. On the contrary, in the end, it will prove to be the central legal norm in the court of heaven. Then, all must appear before the judgment seat

[44] Laato, *Paulus und das Judentum*, 113–115, 157–160, 181–182; and Laato, *Paul and Judaism*, 90–91, 125–127, 143–145.

of God (Rom 14:10) or Christ (2 Cor 5:10) or the Son of Man (Matt 25:31) to receive what they have done, whether good or bad.

Matthew 25:31–46 is sometimes misread and, as a consequence, misunderstood in the light of the guiding principle that good works are necessary for salvation. The passage should be read and rightly understood in the light of another guiding principle that good works are necessary. Between the two readings, there is a tiny but all the more significant difference.

Romans 2:6–11 is not at all hypothetical. It takes for granted the common (Jewish and early Christian) idea of judgment according to works. Then, it underlines the double outcome and underscores the return of deeds to the doer. The chiastic structure of the text confirms the concise and consistent line of thought. Romans 2:6–11 continues the idea from 2:5 of God's righteous judgment. Then in 2:12, Paul harks back to his strict accusations against those "who sin apart from the law" (Gentiles) and those "who sin under the law" (Jews), concluding in 2:13 that only those "who obey the law" will be declared righteous. Here it becomes clear—as everywhere in Romans 1:18–3:20—that truly no one is righteous because of works of the law. And yet, there is judgment according to works (not tantamount to works of the law) on the last day![45]

Apology IV 194–195 is a fitting summary for this article:

> Here also we add something concerning rewards and merits. We teach that rewards have been offered and promised to the works of believers. We teach that good works are meritorious, not for the remission of sins, for grace or justification (for these we obtain only by faith), but for other rewards, bodily and spiritual, in this life and after this life, because Paul says, 1 Cor. 3:8: Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labor. There will,

[45] Let it be emphasized here that Snodgrass, "Justification by Grace," misinterprets Rom 2 totally as he insists on "justification by grace—to the doers." Romans 2:12–13, in contrast to 2:6–11 as a balanced chiastic unit, does no more account for the notion of judgment according to works but justification, which never occurs by works of the law. Cf. here also Ap IV 252: " 'To be justified' here does not mean that a wicked man is made righteous but that he is pronounced righteous in a forensic way, just as in the passage (Rom. 2:13), 'the doers of the law will be justified.' As these words, 'the doers of the law will be justified,' contain nothing contrary to our position, so we maintain the same about James's words, 'A man is justified by works and not by faith alone,' for men who have faith and good works are certainly pronounced righteous." Snodgrass, "Justification by Grace," 86, goes so far as to maintain: "Judgment according to works is not the contradiction of justification by faith, but its presupposition." Cf. p. 82. For the absolute impossibility of "doing the law," see Timo Laato, " 'Att göra lagen' enligt Gal 3,10," *Teologinen Aikakausikirja* 97 (1992): 216–219; " 'Das Tun des Gesetzes' in Gal 3,10," in *Ich will hintreten zum Altar Gottes*, eds. J. Junker and M. Salzmann (Neuendettelsau: Freimund Verlag, 2003), 193–200; and "Paul's Anthropological Considerations: Two Problems," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul*, eds. D. A. Carson, P. T. O'Brien, and M. A. Seifrid (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 353–359.

> therefore be different rewards according to different labors. But the remission of sins is alike and equal to all, just as Christ is one, and is offered freely to all who believe that for Christ's sake their sins are remitted.

Certainly, this quotation has an authentic ring to it. It sounds so great because it is biblical.[46] Needless to say, it is for the very same reason also Lutheran.

[46] For similar conclusions, cf. Lieselotte Mattern, *Das Verständnis des Gerichtes bei Paulus* (Zürich/Stuttgart: Zwingli, 1966), and Kent L. Yinger, *Paul, Judaism, and Judgment According to Deeds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

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Communion at Philippi

John G. Nordling

Scholarship on the *koinōn-* word group in the New Testament is extensive but by no means uniform—and I have not read it all.[1] Often translated "fellowship" or "communion," κοινωνία actually possesses differing meanings in the New Testament itself and no one meaning suits every context—leading to a host of methodological problems.[2] Other renderings of the word κοινωνία in English include "association," "close relationship," or even "sharing/participation" in something—where the thing "shared in" occurs in the genitive case.[3] It all depends on the particular document and context, which varies from passage to passage. I thought it helpful, in my own coming to terms with Philippians, to investigate how Paul uses the fellowship (or communion) language within the letter in the following passages:

κοινωνία—Phil 1:5; 2:1; 3:10
κοινωνέω—Phil 4:15
συγκοινωνός—Phil 1:7
συγκοινωνέω—Phil 4:14[4]

[1] Most helpful for this article have been the following: J. G. Davies, *Members One of Another: Aspects of Koinonia* (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co. Limited, 1958); B. M. Ahern, "The Fellowship of His Sufferings (Phil 3:10)," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 22 (1960): 1–32; J. Y. Campbell, "ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ and Its Cognates in the New Testament," in *Three New Testament Studies* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), 1–28; J. M. McDermott, "The Biblical Doctrine of ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 19 (1975): 64–77, 219–233; Peter T. O'Brien, "The Fellowship Theme in Philippians," *The Reformed Theological Review* 37, no. 1 (1978): 9–18; L. Sabourin, "Koinonia in the New Testament," *Religious Studies Bulletin* 1 (1981): 109–115; Andrew T. Lincoln, "Communion: Some Pauline Foundations," *Ecclesiology* 5 (2009): 135–160; Jeffrey J. Kloha, "Koinonia and Life Together in the New Testament," *Concordia Journal* 38, no. 1 (2012): 23–32; Julien M. Ogereau, "Paul's κοινωνία with the Philippians: *Societas* as a Missionary Funding Strategy," *New Testament Studies* 60 (2014): 360–378; Julien M. Ogereau, "A Survey of Κοινωνία and Its Cognates in Documentary Sources," *Novum Testamentum* 57 (2015): 275–294.

[2] It has become "a rather elastic term." So Lincoln ("Communion," 136) who also complains about historical anachronism. See also Ogereau, "A Survey of Κοινωνία and Its Cognates in Documentary Sources," 276.

[3] W. Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 552–553; henceforth BDAG.

[4] I shall be using the words *fellowship*, *communion*, and *partnership* interchangeably throughout the paper, even though, for the purpose of clarity, I have settled on the title "Communion at Philippi." Plainly, κοινωνία can have these meanings—and even more—in English, as already demonstrated.

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It will not do simply to work through this material in order of occurrence, which would be wearisome. However, how Paul uses the occurrences of κοινωνία and its cognates to paint a picture of his dealings with the Philippians could be interesting—provided, of course, that an acceptable way of approaching the problem can be established and maintained.

I shall begin, then, with the first citation: Philippians 1:5. This text establishes, in so many ways, the type of communion that existed between Paul and the contractually minded letter recipients at Philippi and other Christians within the Pauline assemblies. By rendering sufficient justice to the first passage, we will also in due course touch on the other passages in the letter and come away with a heightened sense of the fellowship language's pertinence to the original situation at Philippi and other relationships operable still today within the body of Christ.

I. The Philippians' "Partnership in the Gospel" (Phil 1:5)

In the lengthiest and most extravagant thanksgiving of the Pauline corpus,[5] the apostle thanks God for the Philippians' "partnership in the gospel [ἐπὶ τῇ κονωνίᾳ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον] from the first day until now" (Phil 1:5 ESV[6]). "First day" could be an allusion to hospitality extended to Paul by Lydia, that "seller of purple goods [πορφυρόπωλις]" (Acts 16:14 ESV) from Thyatira, whose heart the Lord opened to "pay heed to what was being said [to her] by Paul" (Acts 16:14[7]) when that apostle first set foot in Philippi. Recall Luke's placement of the incident in his accounting of the second missionary journey in Acts: following the nighttime vision of the Macedonian man urging Paul to "come over and help us" (Acts 16:9), the apostle and his entourage[8] set sail from Troas (Acts 16:11) and within two days were in Philippi, "a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony" (Acts 16:12 ESV). On the Sabbath day, Paul and his team went outside the city to a so-called "place of prayer [προσευχή]" (Acts 16:13 ESV), where a group of women had assembled.[9] Paul and the others sat down and began to speak (ἐλαλοῦμεν) to the

[5] It is, so far as Pauline thanksgivings go, "more than unusually earnest." Thus, J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (London: Macmillan & Company, 1913), 82.

[6] Scripture quotations marked ESV are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

[7] Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture translations are my own.

[8] This part of the narrative is comprised of the first "we" section (Acts 16:10–17), indicating that Luke—the author of Acts—was present and so an eyewitness of the events recorded. So F. F. Bruce (*The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951], 311) and many commentators.

[9] Though, as used among Jews, προσευχή is nearly always equivalent to συναγωγή in the sense of a cultic place (see BDAG, 963), many consider that the προσευχή in Acts 16:13 and 16 was not a

women (Acts 16:13), who gave them an overwhelmingly positive reception. Luke himself tells the story best:

> One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods [πορφυρόπωλις], who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us [καὶ παρεβιάσατο ἡμᾶς]. (Acts 16:14–15 ESV)

So much for Lydia. In a longer and much more involved passage, we read of the conversion of the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:16–34) and how he, too, in a manner reminiscent of Lydia, was baptized at once—"he and all his family [ἐβαπτίσθη αὐτὸς καὶ οἱ αὐτοῦ πάντες παραχρῆμα]"—and set food before them (Acts 16:33–34 ESV).

These early contacts are significant because with such people—insistently generous Lydia and the converted jailer—Paul maintained relations with Christians at Philippi "from the first day," as stated in Philippians 1:5. Neither Christian is mentioned by name in the letter, though it seems possible that Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4:2) were among those women who, with Lydia, heard Paul's words at the "place of prayer" just outside Philippi and gave to the apostle and his entourage a favorable response (Acts 16:13–14).[10] Other Christians Paul memorializes in Philippians are: Epaphroditus, who actually delivered the gift to the apostle in prison (4:18; cf. 2:25); the "genuine yoke fellow"—whoever he was—who was to help Euodia and Syntyche to reconcile (4:3); a certain Clement (4:3), now no more than a name—yet a Roman name at that;[11] and an otherwise undisclosed group of persons whom Paul designates as "the rest of my fellow workers [τῶν λοιπῶν συνεργῶν μου], whose names are in the book of life" (4:3 ESV). When one adds the similarly undisclosed "all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi [πᾶσιν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Φιλίπποις]" and the "overseers and deacons [ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις]" (1:1 ESV), it appears that there were a number of Christians in that Macedonian city whom Paul knew and with whom he shared

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regular synagogue because it seems to have been attended only by women (see Acts 16:13) and συναγωγή is used in like contexts elsewhere in Acts (e.g., 17:1, 10, 17). Indeed, the προσευχή in Acts 16:13 and 16 could have been "an informal meeting place, perh[aps] in the open air." Thus BDAG, 879.

[10] Lightfoot calls Euodia and Syntyche "ladies of birth and rank" (*Philippians*, 55). Other Macedonian women well-disposed to the gospel and helpful to Paul in his ministry were at Thessalonica (Acts 17:4) and Berea (Acts 17:12).

[11] Such persons bearing Roman names in colonies where Latin was the official language may have belonged to the original stock of colonists "who tended to get ahead." So Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), 56. For other names in the same category, see Lucius (Rom 16:21), Quartus (Rom 16:23), Achaicus, and Fortunatus (1 Cor 16:17), in Corinth.

communion. But what was the nature of that communion, and what significance did it have for the Christians that inhabited Philippi originally? Let us consider these questions next.

In the late seventies and early eighties, J. Paul Sampley argued that that slippery term κοινωνία in the New Testament expressed the partnership, mutuality, and reciprocity so representative of *societas*—a rather loosely defined legal contract between two or more parties in the Roman world to share profits and losses.[12] The contractual relationship among the partners (Lat. *socii*) came about through simple consent (Lat. *consensus*);[13] for example, one Gaius Fannius Chaerea was sole owner of Panurgus, a slave who early in life showed great dramatic potential. So Fannius contacted Quintus Roscius, the famous actor,[14] and the two agreed to enter a partnership along the following lines: Panurgus, initially Fannius's slave, would serve both his original master and Roscius if the latter would train him to become an actor. It was further agreed that the two joint-owners of the slave would split the profits Panurgus might eventually earn. The legal means by which this agreement was reached was the consensual *societas*. Fannius and Roscius agreed to try to make a profit by contributing different things to the arrangement: Fannius, a half interest in his slave Panurgus; the professional actor Roscius, his invaluable experience, training, and skills. To effect this arrangement legally, no papers or written contracts were ever signed. Simple consent (Lat. *consensus*) was binding. To make a long story short, Panurgus turned out to be an outstanding actor—making Fannius and Roscius scads of money. However, the murder of Panurgus by Quintus Flavius, a third party, led eventually to Roscius's suing of Flavius and an out-of-court settlement for reasons we cannot go into here. Indeed, the reason we know about this particular *societas* at all is because Cicero eventually represented Roscius against Fannius in *Pro Quinto Roscio Comoedo* ("In Defense of Quintus Roscius the Comedian"), an oration possibly dated to 66 BC.[15]

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[12] See J. Paul Sampley, "*Societas Christi*: Roman Law and Paul's Conception of the Christian Community," in Jacob Jervell and Wayne A. Meeks, eds., *God's Christ and His People: Studies in Honour of Nils Alstrup Dahl*, (Oslo, Bergen, Tromsö: Universitetsforlaget, 1977), 158–174; J. Paul Sampley, *Pauline Partnership in Christ: Christian Community and Commitment in Light of Roman Law* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980).

[13] So Adolf Berger, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1953), 708–709.

[14] Handsome in appearance (Cicero, *Pro Archia*, 17), he had a squint (Cicero, *De natura deorum*, 1.79) and wore a mask (Cicero, *De oratore*, 3.221). For these and other details, see G. C. Richards, "Roscius Gallus, Quintus," in N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard, eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), 937.

[15] For the date of the speech (complicated factors are involved), see J. H. Freese, trans., *Cicero: The Speeches*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; and London:

The pertinence of the contractual *societas* for Paul's letter to the Philippians can now be discerned: in the New Testament, the Greek κοινωνία takes the place of the Latin *societas*, as scholars have long recognized.[16] I submit that many of the times κοινωνία and its cognates appear in the Pauline epistles, and they appear often,[17] some version of the consensual *societas* is at play—especially in Philippians, the references for which appear in bold in the preceding footnote. Remember, *societas* was a rather loosely defined contractual relationship between two or more parties to split profits and losses—and this would have been the arrangement between Paul and the Philippians too, even if details cannot quite be worked out at this remove. What Paul would have contributed to the compact was: his obligation to preach the gospel to them (Phil 1:5), and indeed to all people (1 Cor 9:16); his vast experience as a missionary and an apostle; his boundless energy—and indeed zeal—turned now from hating and persecuting the church (Phil 3:6) to preaching Christ energetically in lands where the gospel had not been proclaimed before (Rom 15:20; cf. 2 Cor 10:15–16).

What the Philippians contributed to the compact may be summarized crassly by just one word: money—for they were apparently wealthy and generous Christians, as we shall see; but then they contributed to the partnership by what may be termed "sweat equity," as Paul shows more subtly several times in the letter.[18] For example, as Paul puts it rather understatedly in 1:29, it was "granted" to the Philippians (ὑμῖν ἐχαρίσθη)[19] not only "to believe in him [that is, in Christ], but also

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William Heinemann, Ltd., 1945), 271–273. For the consensual *societas* involving Fannius, Roscius, and Panurgus, see Sampley, *Pauline Partnership in Christ*, 11–12.

[16] E.g., J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 351; F. Hauck, "κοινός, κτλ," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols., ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1976; henceforth *TDNT*), 3:798; Sampley, "*Societas Christi*," 161, 165; Sampley, *Pauline Partnership in Christ*, 12, 45n26, 60; Ogereau, "Paul's κοινωνία with the Philippians," 370n69.

[17] κοινωνία –ας, f.: 1 Cor 1:9; 10:16 (twice); 2 Cor 6:14; 8:4; 9:13; 13:13; Gal 2:9; **Phil 1:5; 2:1; 3:10**; Phlm 6; κοινωνέω: Rom 12:13; 15:27; Gal 6:6; **Phil 4:15**; 1 Tim 5:22; κοινωνός –οῦ, m.: 1 Cor 10:18, 20; 2 Cor 1:7; Phlm 17; συγκοινωνός –οῦ, m: Rom 11:17; 1 Cor 9:23; **Phil 1:7**; συγκοινωνέω: Eph 5:11; **Phil 4:14**.

[18] By "sweat equity," I mean nonfinancial contribution to a project in terms of labor and effort.

[19] The so-called divine passive could be at play here—that is, "it was granted *by God* to you," etc. So, Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Nottingham, UK and Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1987), 97; Peter T. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans and Carlisle: Paternoster, 1991), 159n93; Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians*, rev. ed., Word Bible Commentary 43 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 76; Stephen E. Fowl, *Philippians*, The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 70; Bonnie B. Thurston and Judith M. Ryan, *Philippians & Philemon*, Sacra Pagina Series 10 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 70; John Reumann, *Philippians. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 271–272.

to suffer on his behalf [τὸ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχειν]"—by no means indicating directly just what their suffering consisted of (some think that the Christians in Philippi presented a "constant challenge" and even "rebuke" to their pagan neighbors[20]). In a similarly contrived passage, Paul states that all the Philippians were "joint partners with [him] in grace [συγκοινωνούς μου τῆς χάριτος]," both in "[his] own imprisonment [ἔν τε τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου]" and "in [his] defense and confirmation of the gospel [ἐν τῇ ἀπολογίᾳ καὶ βεβαιώσει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου]" (Phil 1:7). It is difficult to know from this vantage point just how the Philippians were partners with Paul in his own "imprisonment" and "defense and confirmation of the gospel." Clearly they supported him financially, as their gift to him by way of Epaphroditus shows (Phil 4:18); but then there was their suffering for Christ in league with Paul's own, (as stated in 1:29), their "having the same struggle [τὸν αὐτὸν ἀγῶνα ἔχοντες]" as they had "seen in Paul and now heard in him" (1:30), and most of all, their praying for a positive outcome to his trial (1:19) and the type of assiduous prayer and petition "in everything" and "with thanksgiving" that Paul asks of them in 4:6. So, reckless prayer for Paul amid adversity, sharing the apostle's same struggle and even suffering with him, being participants with him in grace (χάρις)—which may be thought of, perhaps, as "God's riches at Christ's expense" (the old Sunday School adage)[21]—these are all evidences that the Philippians shared with their apostle in the sweat equity (if I may call it that) of actually being a minority Christian in the thoroughly paganized Philippi when Paul wrote to them in prison in perhaps AD 59–61.[22]

However, it was primarily in their financial support of and generosity toward Paul and his ministry that the Philippians distinguished themselves from other congregations with whom the apostle corresponded during his lengthy ministry. For, Paul writes near the end of the letter that "at the beginning of the gospel"—again, the apostle must mean at the beginning of his gospel *ministry* at Philippi, such as Luke records in Acts 16:11–15—"not one single church partnered with me in the

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[20] O'Brien, *Philippians*, 160. Also, Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 75; Reumann, *Philippians*, 282–283; and G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), 103–104.

[21] Much more than this can be said about grace, of course: First, Christians are saved by God's grace alone, through faith (Eph 2:5, 8–9). Then, grace is shown to the sinner (Rom 3:23–24) and represents the totality of salvation (2 Cor 6:1–2). Every Christian has it (1 Cor 1:4). To the embodiment of grace in Christ Jesus corresponds that of the *sola gratia* (Rom 4:4), the *sola fide* (Rom 3:24–25; 4:16), and in Paul's understanding of the grace given to him uniquely in his office as an apostle (Rom 12:3, 6; 1 Cor 3:10; Eph 3:2, 7, 8; 2 Tim 1:9). See H. Conzelmann, "χάρις, κτλ," *TDNT* 9:394.

[22] For the complicated matters associated with dating the epistle, see John T. Fitzgerald ("Epistle to the Philippians," in D. N. Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 vols. [New York: Doubleday, 1992], 5:322) who dates Philippians either to ca. AD 58–60 or 60–62—if, indeed, Paul wrote Philippians from Rome.

matter of giving and receiving, save only you [οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινώνησεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι]" (Phil 4:15). What Paul apparently meant by such a wide-ranging statement was that "not one single church" among the many frequented by the apostle in the early days had entered into a contractual relationship with him, but "only" the Philippians.[23] The terms of the contract are perceptible still in the phrase "in the matter of giving and receiving [εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως]."[24] "Giving and receiving" was a general expression for pecuniary transactions derived from two sides of the ledger—in other words, the giving by the Philippians and the receiving by Paul.[25] Or might it have meant Paul's giving of spiritual gifts to the Philippians (bringing them the gospel originally, and their resulting faith and life in Christ) and his reception of their material gifts in exchange (cf. Rom 15:27; 1 Cor 9:11)?[26]

Scholars have argued it both ways, as the literature cited in the two preceding footnotes demonstrates; what bears emphasis here is the vast sum of money that must have been involved. The prepositional phrase εἰς λόγον can be a technical term meaning "in the settlement of an account."[27] Paul's mercantile language reflects not only the economic realities of his day, but also, I think, the type of Christians the Philippians themselves were: wealthy and generous, to be sure, and more than willing to support Paul to the proverbial hilt. But maybe also, for that reason, they were more than a bit concerned at the prospect of Paul's imprisonment. Thus, there are those who suppose the Philippians had "backed a bad horse" financially, in that,

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[23] Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 442, 444; Markus Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, Black's New Testament Commentary (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998), 264; Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 270.

[24] Fee, *Philippians*, 442–443n18. For a summary of the ways in which this pregnant phrase has been interpreted, see Gerald W. Peterman, *Paul's Gift from Philippi: Conventions of Gift Exchange and Christian Giving*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 92 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 11–15.

[25] So M. R. Vincent, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897), 148; Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 270; Fowl, *Philippians*, 197; Reumann, *Philippians*, 663.

[26] So J. Hugh Michael, "The First and Second Epistles to the Philippians," *Expository Times* 34 (October 1922–September 1923): 108; F. Hauck, "κοινωνός, κτλ," *TDNT* 3:808; Martin, *Philippians*, 185; Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, 2nd ed. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 207.

[27] BDAG, 601. Also Sampley, *Pauline Partnership in Christ*, 53. I found additional examples of this prepositional phrase in my own research. E.g.: "Ptolemy shall give him per month for the settlement of sustenance [εἰς λόγον διατροφῆς] five drachmas, and at the conclusion of the entire period for the settlement of clothing [εἰς λόγον ἱματισμοῦ] twelve drachmas" (*P.Oxy*. 2.275.18–21; AD 66; my translation). I have been able to find several documentary papyri with expressions of this sort—e.g., "for the account of silver [εἰς | λόγον ἀργυρίου]" (*P.Oxy*. 2.281.7–8; AD 20–50); "for the account of interest [εἰς λ(ό)γον τόκου]" (*P.Oxy*. 3.530.15; 2nd cent. AD); "for the account of a loan [εἰς λόγον προχρείας]" (*P.Oxy*. 4.729.13; AD 137), etc.

far from proclaiming the gospel, Paul was now languishing in prison—and so prevented from upholding his part of the consensual *societas*.[28] Hence, a major reason for writing the letter was not only to acknowledge grateful receipt of the Philippians' gift borne to him recently by Epaphroditus (Phil 4:18) but also to convey the idea that, despite the imprisonment, the gospel was advancing beyond his own and the Philippians' wildest expectations:

> Now I want you to know, brethren, that what has happened to me has rather advanced the gospel, with the result that my imprisonment in Christ has become manifest among the whole praetorian [guard] and to all the rest, and that more of the brothers—confident in my imprisonment in the Lord—dare the more abundantly to speak the word without fear. (Phil 1:12–14)

II. Fellowship Language Put to Theological Use at Philippi and Beyond

Thus far, we have investigated aspects of the fellowship language that pertained to the original situation at Philippi; presumably, however, the Christians there shared much in common with others who comprised the Pauline assemblies in the New Testament—and indeed with all others who have ever been, or regarded themselves as, Christians, including ourselves. That is to say, κοινωνία and its cognates must have theological relevance still today—even while conceding the point that attempts to construct a "theology of κοινωνία" may be burdened with "methodological problems."[29] While that may be true, the attempt to connect the fellowship language to the church of every time and place, including our own, seems highly desirable—lest we focus too much on documentary papyri, legal rescripts, and the historical situation at Philippi, as interesting as those matters are in their own right. No: κοινωνία and its cognates possess, of course, a rich theology, even if a complete accounting cannot be provided here. To conclude this article appropriately, therefore, I shall focus on four passages—1 Corinthians 10:16; Philippians 2:1; 3:10; and 4:14—that provide some sense of Paul's rich theological use of the fellowship language and its ongoing pertinence still for us today.

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[28] So, e.g., Brian J. Capper, "Paul's Dispute with Philippi: Understanding Paul's Argument in Phil 1–2 from His Thanks in 4:10–20," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 49, no. 3 (1993): 209; Hansen, *Philippians*, 67.

[29] So Ogereau, "A Survey of Κοινωνία and Its Cognates," 276n4. Ogereau supposes that Lincoln's essay ("Communion: Some Pauline Foundations") is "quite instructive" in pointing out problems in this regard.

1 Corinthians 10:16

Κοινωνία is used, first, to express what is offered in the Lord's Supper—namely, the body and blood of Christ. Paul states, "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a communion with the blood of Christ [οὐχὶ κοινωνία ἐστὶν τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ;]? The bread loaf that we break, is it not a communion with the body of Christ [οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐστιν;]?" (1 Cor 10:16). The grammatical form of these rhetorical questions requires the answer *yes*:[30] yes, the cup of blessing *is* (ἐστιν) a communion with the blood of Christ, and the bread we break *is* (ἐστιν) a communion with the body of Christ. Here ἐστιν appears twice, as in the Words of Institution from the synoptic Gospels: "This *is* [ἐστιν] my body," etc.[31] Paul appealed to what the Corinthians knew about the Lord's Supper from their shared communion practice[32]—which must be thought of as *the church's* communion practice: what obtained at Corinth obtained also at Philippi and, in fact, in all the Pauline assemblies. Basil explained κοινωνία in this passage as a μετάληψις ("partaking, receiving"), and Chrysostom as a μετοχή ("participation").[33] In either case, the fathers—as the church in Paul's day—interpreted κοινωνία as a literal sharing in, and participation of, Christ's blood and body in the Lord's Supper.[34] As Lockwood puts it: "Through the sacramental bread and wine there is direct oral reception of the Lord's crucified and glorified body and blood."[35] The passage is cited by the Small Catechism to support the notion that the Sacrament of the Altar

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[30] The negative particle οὐ (οὐχί) requires the answer *yes* (H. W. Smyth, *A Greek Grammar for Colleges* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1920], §2651.a; James W. Voelz, *Fundamental Greek Grammar*, 4th ed. [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014], 261).

[31] The only exception is Luke 22:20, where ἐστιν does not appear in reference to the cup (it does appear in Luke 22:19 in reference to the host). Otherwise, ἐστιν appears twice (once with each element) in three of the four places wherein the Words of Institution occur—namely, in Matt 26:26, 28; Mark 14:22, 24; and 1 Cor 11:24, 25.

[32] So Gregory J. Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 340.

[33] Martin Chemnitz, *The Lord's Supper*, trans. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 140, citing Basil, *Homilies on First Corinthians*, homily 24 (PG 61:202), and Chrysostom, in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series*, ed. P. Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 12:139–140. See Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 342n22.

[34] "This has also been the unanimous teaching of the leading Church Fathers, such as Chrysostom, Cyprian, Leo I, Gregory, Ambrose, Augustine," FC Ep VII 15, in Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 483. The references are listed in SD VII 66, in Tappert, *The Book of Concord*, 581n4.

[35] This quotation is italicized in Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 341.

is rightly called "Holy Communion,"[36] and that the consecrated bread and wine are Christ's body and blood by sacramental union (*unio sacramentalis*).[37]

Finally, when a genitive is used with κοινωνία (as happens here), "It is highly probable that it is a genitive of the thing shared."[38] Hence, according to the normal rules of Greek usage, the phrases naturally can mean only " 'participation (with others) in the blood of Christ' and 'participation (with others) in the body of Christ.' "[39] So Paul expresses here not only a "communion" between the earthly elements and Christ's body and blood in the sacrament (the Lutheran understanding), but also a "communion" between the communicants and Christ, who offers himself corporeally in the consecrated bread and wine (vertical dimension) and betwixt and among the communicants themselves (horizontal dimension). One sees in this sacramental understanding a movement from life in Christ through the shared means of grace to a more tangible—one might almost say, corporeal—fellowship with other Christians in whom the Spirit resides. So it has always been in the church and among Christians:

> At the Eucharist, celebrated in the private house on the common dining-table with an every day cup and plate and with ordinary food and drink—bread, water, and wine—the believer could see for himself and know for himself that by these divinely appointed means through the simple tokens of his day to day existence in the world that existence was sanctified and drawn into the orbit of Christ's redeeming work. God, who in Christ had met man at the level of his daily life, continued to meet him through the Sacrament. In the *koinonia* of the Church and through the *koinonia* of the Body and Blood all that was *koinos* was hallowed, i.e., through communion in the community all that was common was sanctified.[40]

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[36] *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), §285. The other names for this sacrament are the Lord's Supper, the Lord's Table, the Breaking of Bread, and the Eucharist. See also Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 3 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950–53), 3:292n4.

[37] *Luther's Small Catechism*, §291. See also FC SD VII 35, in Tappert, *Book of Concord*, 575; Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 3:296–297, 342n78, 343n79.

[38] Campbell, "ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ and its Cognates in the New Testament," 6.

[39] Campbell, "ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ and its Cognates in the New Testament," 23. Cf., e.g., "a participation in the present undertakings [ἐπὶ κοινωνίᾳ τῶν παρόντων]" (Appian, *Bella civilia*, 1.8.67.13); "a participation in rule [ἐπὶ κοινωνίᾳ τῆς ἀρχῆς]" (Appian, *Bella civilia*, 5.8.71.17); "a certain sharing in the foul deed [κοινωνία τις τοῦ μιάσματος]" (Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium*, 1.1.332.6); "a sharing in excellence [ἐπὶ κοινωνίᾳ τῆς ἀρετῆς]" (Maximus of Tyre, *Dialexeis*, 19.3b.2); "a sharing in the deeds of others [τῇ κοινωνίᾳ τῶν ἔργων]" (Synesius, *Oratio de regno*, 13.7). My translations. Most of these passages appear in BDAG, 553.

[40] Davies, *Members One of Another*, 25.

Philippians 2:1

Paul uses the expression "sharing in [the] Spirit" as part of a highly rhetorical series intended to encourage the Philippians:

> If, accordingly, [there is]
> any encouragement in Christ,
> any consolation of love,
> **any sharing in [the] Spirit** [εἴ τις κοινωνία πνεύματος],
> any compassions and mercies,
> complete my joy
> [by] thinking the same thing,
> having the same love,
> united in spirit,
> thinking the one thing. (Phil 2:1–2)

Most commentators interpret πνεῦμα here as referring to the Holy Spirit, as indicated by the capitalized S in the above translation.[41] A more difficult problem is the type of genitive that πνεύματος may be. If subjective, the meaning is "the Spirit's fellowship"—in other words, fellowship created by the Holy Spirit, which only this person of the Godhead can give through what Lutherans would call the means of grace.[42] If objective, the meaning is "fellowship *in* the Spirit" (note emphasis)—in other words, fellowship brought about through the Spirit's indwelling presence in the congregation and a Christian's personal communion with the third person of the Trinity.[43] Probably the objective genitive works best here: Paul encourages the Philippians by reminding them of their "joint stock" in the Spirit by which they are partners with him, he with them, and they jointly with one another.[44]

"Sharing in the Spirit" is third in the series, the first two members of which are "encouragement in Christ [παράκλησις ἐν Χριστῷ]" and "consolation of love [παραμύθιον ἀγάπης]"—concerning which there is no opportunity to elaborate here.

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[41] Thus, Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 107–108; Vincent, *Philippians and Philemon*, 54; Martin, *Philippians*, 99; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 163; Fee, *Philippians*, 174; Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 104; Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 80; Fowl, *Philippians*, 77; Silva, *Philippians*, 85, etc.

[42] This understanding of the means of grace surfaces repeatedly in the Lutheran Confessions, e.g., SA III VIII 10–13, in Tappert, *The Book of Concord*, 313; Ep II 13, in Tappert, *The Book of Concord*, 471; Ep XII 22, in Tappert, *The Book of Concord*, 499; SD II 4, in Tappert, *The Book of Concord*, 520; SD XI 76–77, in Tappert, *The Book of Concord*, 628–629, etc. Also, "Baptism . . . [is] the occasion when the individual is drawn into the unity of the Spirit" (Davies, *Members One of Another*, 14).

[43] So O'Brien, "The Fellowship Theme in Philippians," 16n23, and most commentators.

[44] Just as Simon and his associates possessed "joint stock" in the two boats and several nets wherein they shared (this is the technical meaning of μέτοιχοι, Luke 5:7), so Christians possess "joint stock" in the Holy Spirit. Thus Davies, *Members One of Another*, 14.

I should like to point out, however, that παράκλησις, παραμύθιον, and κοινωνία are "head nouns"[45] that possess a special relationship with ἐν Χριστῷ, ἀγάπης, and πνεύματος, respectively. Superficially, the construction resembles the construct chain in the Hebrew language,[46] and grammarians have referred to the attached genitives as the "Attributive Genitive," "Hebrew Genitive," or "Genitive of Quality."[47] Such genitives are grammatically loose and so difficult to pin down precisely.[48] The words in 2:1 are big in meaning yet boil down to brief verb-less phrases rarely found elsewhere. Overall, Paul may have been searching for a rhetorically powerful way to get the Philippians to feel deeply about their shared unity in Christ (2:2–4) in spite of sinful tendencies to put themselves first (2:3). Likewise, Paul's emphasis on thinking "the same" (2:2, 5) prepares the Philippians for the "thinking" among themselves that Christ exemplifies in the hymn that immediately follows (2:5–11).

Philippians 3:10

Paul states his earnest desire to "know him [Christ] [τοῦ γνῶναι αὐτόν] and the power of his resurrection and share his sufferings [καὶ [τὴν] κοινωνίαν [τῶν] παθημάτων αὐτοῦ], being conformed to his death" (Phil 3:10). This sentiment follows that résumé of seven items that would have set Paul apart as an exemplary Jew in his pre-Christian days (3:5–6),[49] his having been brought to see such "gains" as "loss" and even "rubbish" for the sake of Christ (3:7–8), and his earnest desire that he might be found in Christ not having his own law-oriented "righteousness" but

[45] So Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 87.

[46] Wallace (*Greek Grammar*, 86): "The category is very common in the NT, largely due to the Semitic mindset of most of its authors."

[47] So Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 86, with the application to Phil 2:1 on p. 88. See the helpful studies in A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 496–497; Maximilian Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, trans. and adapted by Joseph Smith (Rome: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1990), §§40–41; F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), §165.

[48] Some comparable expressions, rendered hyper-literally, might be: "the hell of fire [τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός]" (Matt 18:9); "baptism of repentance [βάπτισμα μετανοίας]" (Mark 1:4); "the body of sin" [τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας]" (Rom 6:6); "the body of our humility [τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν]" and "the body of his glory [τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ]" (Phil 3:21); "sons of light [υἱοὶ φωτός]" (1 Thess 5:5), etc.

[49] Namely, his (1) circumcision on the eighth day; (2) being of the race of Israel and (3) of the tribe of Benjamin; (4) a Hebrew of Hebrews; (5) a Pharisee according to the law; (6) a persecutor of the church according to zeal; and (7) blamelessness according to a righteousness which is in the law.

rather the "righteousness" that comes through faith in Christ and on the basis of faith (3:9–10).

For the grammatical construction κοινωνία + objective genitive ("sharing in his [Christ's] sufferings"), see "if [there is] any sharing in [the] Spirit [εἴ τις κονωνία πνεύματος]" (Phil 2:1) immediately above. Another parallel to the passage is "sharers in our sufferings [κοινωνοί . . . τῶν παθημάτων]" (2 Cor 1:7). The antecedent of the αὐτοῦ is Χριστοῦ in Philippians 3:9, and the expression "his sufferings" seems reminiscent of "the sufferings of the Christ [τὰ παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ]" in 2 Corinthians 1:5.[50] Earlier, Paul wrote that the Philippians were granted not only to believe in Christ but also to "suffer for his sake [ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχειν]" (Phil 1:29). However, the phrase has been interpreted as suggestive of Jesus' passion and death and the sufferings of Paul—or of Christians in general.[51] Further, suffering with Christ is a prerequisite for being glorified with him (Rom 8:17; 2 Cor 1:5; 4:10; Col 1:24; 1 Pet 4:13). Such participation in Christ's sufferings is not a sharing in their expiatory quality as such, but rather it results on account of the world's hatred of Jesus extended to believers because of their connection to him in Holy Baptism: "the plural [παθημάτων] refers to all the sufferings of Christ and not only to the final ones; they climaxed in his death."[52] In several passages, Paul refers to suffering on behalf of Christ as the ordinary lot of believers (Rom 8:17; 2 Cor 1:5; 4:7–18; Phil 1:29; Col 1:24; 1 Thess 1:6; and 3:2–3).

Philippians 4:14

Near the end of the letter, Paul states that the Philippians had "done well" to share with him in his trouble: "Only you did well [καλῶς ἐποιήσατε] to partner with me in my trouble [συγκοινωνήσαντές μου τῇ θλίψει]" (Phil 4:14). In the New Testament, the idiom καλῶς ποιεῖν + aorist participle occurs at Acts 10:33 and 3 John 6 (in 2 Pet 1:19, the present participle occurs).[53] Such New Testament occurrences likely replicate a pattern encountered in the papyri—for example, "you will do well to say [καλῶς ποιήσεις εἰπώ(ν)] that the loaves [have been baked] and that you've pickled the olives for me."[54] Elsewhere in the New Testament, the verb συγκοινωνέω

[50] So O'Brien, *Philippians*, 405. See the related "the afflictions of Christ [αἱ θλιψεῖς τοῦ Χριστοῦ]" (Col 1:24).

[51] See the various possibilities in Reumann, *Philippians*, 501. The idea is developed at greater length in Ahern, "Fellowship of His Sufferings," passim.

[52] R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians and to the Philippians* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1937), 842–843. Also Fee, *Philippians*, 332.

[53] For the NT idiom "do well" (καλῶς ποιεῖν), see Mark 7:37; Luke 6:27; 1 Cor 7:37.

[54] *P.Ryl.* 2.231.3–5, Arsnome, AD 40; my translation. Clear examples of this pattern occur in the following papyri: *BGU* 1.93.6; 2.596.4; 3.829.1; *P.Aberd.* 189.3; *P.Cair.Zen.* 1.59057.3; *P.Col.* 4.87.7–8; *P.Corn.* 5.5–7; *P.Eleph.* 18.3.

is used negatively—namely, of "partnering in" the works of darkness (Eph 5:11) or in fallen Babylon's sins (Rev 18:4). Here, however, the meaning is quite positive: Paul warmly commends the Philippians for having partnered with him in his "trouble"—whatever that was.[55] The weighty compound συγκοινωνήσαντες likely recalls Paul's more cumbersome statement in the Thanksgiving that the Philippians—"all" of them—were "joint partners" with the apostle in grace (συγκοινωνούς μου τῆς χάριτος πάντας ὑμᾶς ὄντας, 1:7). Again, Paul's mentioning of "trouble" here possibly bookends his earlier witticism that the rival preachers were supposing that they were raising (i.e., resurrecting) "trouble" for Paul in his imprisonment (see οἰόμενοι θλῖσιν ἐγείρειν τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου, 1:17). For the use of θλῖψις to describe difficult—yet otherwise undifferentiated—circumstances,[56] see 2 Corinthians 8:13 and James 1:27. The "trouble" could have consisted of Paul's financial constraints[57] or of his imprisonment.[58] We shall never know for sure. But the definite article τῇ with noun-head θλίψει quite suggests that Paul had some definite problem (or at least irregularity) in mind; that impression is reinforced by the moving forward of the genitive pronoun μου here for emphasis: "with me in my affliction."[59] The very phraseology of these weighty Greek words could suggest, therefore, that the Philippians had partnered with Paul in *his* singular, unique, and personal "trouble"—whatever that was. Paul phrases it this way because the Philippians had proved their mettle by sharing with him not only in the holy things (the gospel and sacraments) and in affection, of course, but even in adversity, where true friendships are tested and forged: a friend in need is a friend indeed.

Elsewhere, Paul states that the Corinthians were called into a fellowship with God's Son ("εἰς κοινωνίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ"), "Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor 1:9), and the author of 1 John states that his fellowship—a fellowship he is keen to share with his epistolary audience—is "with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ [ἡ κοινωνία . . . ἡ ἡμετέρα μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ]" (1 John 1:3 ESV). And in a liturgical formula probably well established by the time Paul used it, the apostle desires that the "fellowship of the Holy Spirit [be] with you all [ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν]"—meaning the Corinthians originally (2 Cor 13:13–14). In Holy Baptism, initially, then, as one grows in the life

[55] Paul's use of the aorist participle συγκοινωνήσαντες indicates that, at time of writing, he envisioned some specific occasion in the past when he had experienced "trouble."

[56] BDAG, 457.

[57] So, e.g., O'Brien, *Philippians*, 528.

[58] Lenski, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians*, 891; Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, 262; Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 268; Fowl, *Philippians*, 196.

[59] So Reumann, *Philippians*, 659. Cf. Fee, *Philippians*, 439n9; Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 268.

of Christ through the means of grace, the Christian communes with all three persons of the Holy Trinity at once: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (vertical dimension).[60] When one is in Christ, however, the communion becomes at once outward-looking, external, corporeal, and involved with other believers in the messy problems and predicaments wherein the church finds herself this side of heaven (horizontal direction).[61]

Thus it was in the earliest church following the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost: the believers were devoted to the teaching of the apostles, to the fellowship (τῇ κοινωνίᾳ), the breaking of the bread, and the prayers (Acts 2:42). Next, Acts relates that "all" who believed were together and had "all things in common [κοινά]"; and that they sold their possessions and goods and apportioned them to "all," to any as had need (Acts 2:44–45). So, the κοινωνία wherein the believers were devoted apparently consisted in the sharing of material goods: an outward expression of their having shared in the divine things.[62] The practice did not persist—it was probably too unsound financially—but Paul soon organized a system of monetary contributions, with which he was not a little preoccupied, that moved from wealthier to more destitute Christians. The churches of the Gentile converts sent collections to impoverished members of the mother church in Jerusalem (Rom 15:25–27; cf. 1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Cor 8–9).

Now it happens that Paul twice refers to the collection as the κοινωνία: first he speaks of "the generosity of your κοινωνία" (2 Cor 9:13), which the ESV translates as "contribution," and he states that the Christians of Macedonia and Achaia have been good enough to "make a certain κοινωνία [ESV, contribution] for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem" (Rom 15:26). Here, κοινωνία means the Christians' tangible and financial concern for other members within the body of Christ with whom one shares the holy things. Some version of this occurred at Philippi, too, where Paul states that Christians there had "done well" to commune with him in some "trouble" that cannot be recovered here (Phil 4:14). I submit that pretty much the same happens today when wealthier Lutherans support poorer Lutherans in a foreign country, or even—if I may use myself as an example—when stateside Lutherans "partner" with me so that I am enabled financially to teach New Testament exegetical courses at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Pretoria, South Africa, as I have for ten of the past eleven years. In thank-you letters to the donor congregations, I usually commend them for having partnered with me "in the

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[60] "We enter into communion with God." So Davies, *Members One of Another*, 9.

[61] For scholars who conceive of the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the fellowship, see Sabourin, "Koinonia in the New Testament," 110; and Davies, *Members One of Another*, 28–35.

[62] Davies, *Members One of Another*, 28. Cf. Bruce, *Acts*, 100; Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles. A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 191.

gospel"—citing Philippians 1:5, the passage with which this paper began. We have come full circle.

III. Conclusion

What emerges from this study is the ongoing ambiguity of κοινωνία when subjected to exegetical scrutiny. Frequently bandied about by glib churchmen and Christians of every kind nowadays, "fellowship" actually possesses a quite richly textured pattern of interpretation, as we have seen. With the Philippians, Paul was involved in some type of contractual relationship, which Sampley has called the consensual *societas*—a complicated legal contract that Paul and his associates took over from current business practice. However, it did not stay there. Paul was a working man, to be sure, as were a good many of his contemporaries in the mid-first century AD;[63] but this apostle never ceased to be a theologian of the first order who used common things and everyday relationships to communicate the fullness of the gospel in Christ Jesus—things like, for example, the Stoic notion of "advancement" (προκοπή –ῆς, f.) to convey the idea that Paul's imprisonment tended "for the advancement of the gospel [εἰς προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου]" (Phil 1:12; cf. 1:25; 1 Tim 4:15),[64] or that the apostle's repayment of Onesimus's debt actually showed on a smaller scale how the Lord Jesus Christ paid, and still pays, sinful humanity's debt fully before God the Father in heaven (Phlm 18–19).[65]

I suspect that the fellowship language possessed similar purchase in the world Paul and the first Christians inhabited. It came to have, to be sure, thoroughly financial—and even secular—applications in Greco-Roman antiquity, as we have seen; but in Paul's capable hands, "fellowship"—or "communion," as it appears in this article's title—acquired also a profound theological meaning. Indeed, as I have come to see, κοινωνία is christological at core—expressive of nothing less than the relationship between God and man in Christ Jesus. As expressed in the

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[63] See, e.g., Ronald F. Hock, *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980); Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 17, 64–65; P. W. Barnett, "Tentmaking," in Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 925–927; John G. Nordling, "Attitudes toward Work: The Classical Ideal versus That of Scripture," in *Philemon*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004), 128–137; Todd D. Still, "Did Paul Loathe Manual Labor? Revisiting the Work of Ronald F. Hock on the Apostle's Tentmaking and Social Class," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 125 (2006): 781–795.

[64] In Stoicism, the "advancement" from folly and vice to wisdom and virtue depended on one's "disposition, will, choices, instruction from philosophy teachers, and influences and examples from friends." So Reumann, *Philippians*, 194.

[65] See Nordling, "Paul's Promise to Make Amends (vv 18–19a)," in *Philemon*, 272–275; John G. Nordling, "The Gospel in Philemon," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 71 (2007): 71–83.

Athanasian Creed, Christ is "one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh [*unus autem non conversione divinitatis in carnem*], but by taking the manhood into God [*sed assumptione humanitatis in Deum*]."[66] Thus, the unity of the two natures in Christ is not merely a moral or intellectual unity, although both of these factors are involved. It is instead an organic unity, because, in Christ Jesus, the divine and human natures become one person, and Christ's personhood is the locus of unity between God and man: "Thus koinonia involves organic unity and to interpret it merely in terms of 'fellowship' is misleading. The koinonia of Christ is the participation in the very being of the God-man, and it involves sharing His life. To partake of Christ is indeed to partake of His life."[67]

[66] Athanasian Creed 33, as translated in *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 35.

[67] Davies, *Members One of Another*, 9.

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Sola Scriptura in Luther's Translations

Brian T. German

Studies of Martin Luther as a translator of Scripture have routinely demonstrated the profound influence that Luther's theological convictions had on his rendering of the Old and New Testaments into German. Johann M. Reu, for example, in his classic work *Luther's German Bible*, concludes that chief among the distinctive characteristics of Luther's translation was his belief that "its content [was] illuminated by Christ."[1] Heinz Bluhm, similarly, in his various studies of Luther as a "creative translator," contends that Luther's "ultimate standards were theological and religious. To these considerations his final allegiance was due."[2] More recently, Birgit Stolt has reiterated from the perspective of modern linguistics that "as a Bible translator, Luther is always in the first instance a responsible theologian. This approach . . . shapes his individual translating decisions."[3] Perhaps the most famous example of an "individual translating decision" fueled intensely by Luther's theology is his addition of "alone" to Romans 3:28, a move that he later defended at some length in his *On Translating: An Open Letter* (1530).[4]

Luther as a translator, of course, is a massive topic, with implications theological, historical, and sociopolitical. The aim of the following study is a modest one, and that is to bring greater precision to the longstanding observations above by examining three instances in Luther's translations where his most central conviction about Holy Scripture—that Christ is its subject matter—clearly takes precedence over matters of grammar and syntax. To what extent does Luther allow

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[1] Johann M. Reu, *Luther's German Bible: An Historical Presentation, Together with a Collection of Sources* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1934), 259. Reu further explains: "This illumination through Christ is what the rabbinical commentators had lacked and what the Christian commentators before him had not adequately used" (258). Reu's conclusion lines up nicely with the earlier study of E. Hirsch, *Luther's deutsche Bibel* (1928), whom the former cites approvingly on pp. 259–260.

[2] Heinz Bluhm, *Martin Luther: Creative Translator* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 123. Again, Bluhm notes that "Luther's highest set of values was not aesthetic or literary but definitively and unalterably theological and religious" (123).

[3] Birgit Stolt, "Luther's Translation of the Bible," *Lutheran Quarterly* 28, no. 4 (2014): 377.

[4] Vol. 35, pp. 175–202, in *Luther's Works, American Edition*, vols. 1–30, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1976); vols. 31–55, ed. Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–1986); vols. 56–82, ed. Christopher Boyd Brown and Benjamin T. G. Mayes (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009–), hereafter AE. Luther also defended his approach to translating one year later in *Defense of the Translation of the Psalms* (1531), AE 35:203–223.

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the meaning of a text to overshadow its form? What happens, moreover, when the *res* appears to be at odds with its *litterae*? While it is quite common to characterize Luther as a "historical-*grammatical*" theologian,[5] a close look at how he chooses to translate three well-known Old Testament texts—Genesis 4:1; Psalm 2:12; and 22:16—should cause us to qualify how we use this popular descriptor for the reformer. As we will see from the discussion below, Luther's chief concern in translating these passages was consistently the text's subject matter, not its grammar. One way of capturing this phenomenon is to affirm that Luther's *sola Scriptura*, in the sense of his persistent appeal to Scripture as the final source and norm for the theological task, reigned supreme in his work as a translator as well.

I. Genesis 4:1

We turn first to Genesis 4:1, which recounts Eve's rather cryptic announcement after giving birth to her firstborn son, Cain. What follows is the last phrase of this celebrated verse, which captures the extent of Eve's response, in the Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT), the Greek Septuagint (LXX), and the Latin Vulgate (Vul), as well as Luther's preferred translation underneath these three versions of the text that were readily available to him.

MT: קָנִיתִי אִישׁ אֶת-יְהוָה
"I have gotten a man [direct object marker] Yahweh"
LXX[6]: ἐκτησάμην ἄνθρωπον διὰ τοῦ θεοῦ
"I have gotten a man through God"
Vul[7]: Possedi hominem per Dominum
"I have gotten a man through the Lord"
Luther: Ich habe den Man des HERRN[8]

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[5] For more on this nomenclature, including its history and its presuppositions, see Raymond F. Surburg, "The Presuppositions of the Historical-Grammatical Method as Employed by Historic Lutheranism," *The Springfielder* 38, no. 4 (1974): 278–288.

[6] Passages marked "LXX" are from Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart, eds., *Septuaginta: id est Vetus Testamentum Graece iuxta LXX interpretes*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006).

[7] Passages marked "Vul" are from Robert Weber, Roger Gryson, and Bonifatius Fischer, eds., *Biblia sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007).

[8] Luther, *Deutsche Bibel* (1545): vol. 8, p. 47 in *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Deutsche Bibel*, 12 vols. in 15 (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1906–), hereafter cited as WA DB. Admittedly, one can find several different renderings of this phrase in Luther throughout his various discussions of it (e.g., "I have gotten the man of the Lord," "I have the Man, the Lord!," "I have gotten the Man, Jehovah," etc.), but they all form a kind of constellation around the import of the translation given here.

"I have the Man of the Lord"[9]

While Luther naturally references Genesis 4:1 a number of times throughout his career, our focus here will remain on two of his more popular and extended treatments of it: those found in his *Lectures on Genesis* (1535–1545/1544–1554) and in his *Treatise on the Last Words of David* (1543). In the first of these, Luther begins his discussion of Eve's words by asserting that one can see in Eve the conviction that "Cain would be the man who would crush the head of the serpent."[10] Genesis 3:15 clearly influences Eve's confession in Luther's view, which suggests to him that "Eve was a saintly woman and . . . believed the promise concerning the future salvation through the blessed Seed."[11] Eve's excitement about this perceived fulfillment of God's promise is so great, in fact, that she even foregoes the expected term *son* for *man* because of it. This, as we will see below, is a kind of first principle for Luther before deciding how best to translate Genesis 4:1: Eve is convinced that "[Cain] is the man of God who was promised and provided by God."[12]

In his later work *Treatise on the Last Words of David*, composed roughly seven years after the lecture referenced above,[13] Luther is even more explicit about the nature of the one Eve has in mind. In a polemical treatise written against those who would deny that doctrines such as the Trinity and the two natures of Christ could indeed be found in Old Testament texts, Luther sets out on a prolonged detour from David's words in 2 Samuel 23:1–7 in order to garner further support from other Old Testament passages that he deems well-suited to make his case, and this includes Genesis 4:1. In this treatment of the verse, one quickly senses that Luther is not only interested in rehearsing his earlier position about what Eve is supposed to have believed, but he also wants to reiterate the divine nature of the promised Seed in even sharper terms. A good example of this can be seen in how he chooses to paraphrase Eve's pronouncement: "Eve means to say here: 'I have borne a son, who will develop into a real man, yes, he is *the* Man, God Himself. . . .' How is this possible? How could the idea come to her which induced her to say of this child: 'I have the Man, the Lord!,' if she had not understood God's statement to mean that the woman's Seed would have to be God, who would carry out what God had

[9] Except for those appearing in quotations from other sources and those marked ESV, all Scripture translations are my own.

[10] Luther, *Lectures on Genesis* (1535–1545/1544–1554), AE 1:242. Luther's *Die Deutsche Bibel* of 1545 includes a marginal notation to the same effect: "Ey Gott sey gelobt, Da hab ich den HERRN den Man, den Samen, der dem Satan oder Schlangen den Kopff zutretten sol, Der wirds thun" (WA DB 8:47; "God be praised, for I have the LORD, the man, the Seed, who will crush the head of Satan, or the serpent; he will do it").

[11] Luther, *Lectures on Genesis* (1535–1545/1544–1554), AE 1:242.

[12] Luther, *Lectures on Genesis* (1535–1545/1544–1554), AE 1:242.

[13] See the remarks of Pelikan in AE 1:ix–x, which would put Luther's lecturing on Genesis 4 most likely in 1536.

told them?"[14] In short, for Luther, Eve confesses that this firstborn son of hers is none other than "the Man Jehovah."[15]

Once he establishes this, however, Luther is still quite aware that he will also have to defend his understanding of Eve's words with a faithful translation of the Hebrew text, even if it means going against the many other options for rendering it that preceded him in the history of its transmission. Luther senses that this obvious objection could be raised and addresses it in the following way.

> Someone may interpose here: How do you account for it that no Christian or Jew has seen such a meaning in this passage? *All other translators do it differently*. The Latin reads: "I have gotten a man through God." Other Hebraists say: "I have gotten the Man from the Lord." That does not interest me now. . . . If it pleases no one else, it is sufficient that it pleases me. The little Hebrew word אֶת means "the." As all grammarians will agree, it is the accusative case article.[16]

In order for his translation (and, ultimately, his interpretation) to stand, Luther recognizes the need for the אֶת in Eve's speech to function as the direct object marker, which is what Luther gets at when he says that this "little Hebrew word אֶת means 'the'" in this instance. So, as one would expect of Luther, he then searches the Scriptures diligently for corroborating examples and comes up with no lack of support, citing Genesis 1:1, 5:22, and 6:9 among other passages that in his view are more than sufficient to prove his point. At the same time, Luther also includes a couple of counterexamples to demonstrate his awareness of some instances where the same word is used to show means or agency instead (e.g., "from"); for this, he quotes Genesis 44:4 ("They went out *from* the city" [הֵם יָצְאוּ אֶת־הָעִיר]) and Exodus 9:29 ("When I have gone out *from* the city" [כְּצֵאתִי אֶת־הָעִיר]).

What is striking about this discussion is what Luther gives as the *ultimate* basis for determining whether "the little Hebrew word אֶת" functions in Genesis 4:1 as a direct object marker or as a marker of agency. Rather than pointing to any syntactic clues or contextual matters or kindred concerns, Luther contends that the decision *ultimately* comes down to the subject matter (*res*) of sacred Scripture. He explains:

> *Since [the Jews] cannot tolerate the truth that God became incarnate through a woman, this text and all of Scripture must stand mistaken*, or they must give it an entirely new face. All other Hebraists would also be obliged to admit this if

[14] Luther, *Treatise on the Last Words of David* (1543), AE 15:319 (emphasis original).

[15] Luther, *Treatise on the Last Words of David* (1543), AE 15:320. Again, a bit later, "This Seed of the woman is Jehovah" (323).

[16] Luther, *Treatise on the Last Words of David* (1543), AE 15:320 (emphasis added).

> they scrutinized the text closely *and if they believed that this Seed of the woman is Jehovah, that is, God and man.*[17]

Yes, a close scrutiny of the grammar and syntax of Genesis 4:1 is certainly necessary for any interpretation to stand, but it is also the case that the best translation of this verse will depend finally on one's "believ[ing] that this Seed of the woman is Jehovah, that is, God and man." Until then, for Luther, "The Jews cannot know the meaning of all the words as the subject reveals them."[18] Again, this is not at all to suggest that matters of Hebrew grammar or divergent parallel passages are essentially trivial in nature, but it is to claim for Luther that the best translation of Genesis 4:1 *first* considers the subject matter at hand and only secondarily asks how best to extol that very subject matter through a translation of the words that does not violate any syntax or grammar *as found elsewhere in Scripture*.

II. Psalm 2:12

Another example of Luther's passionate concern for translating Scripture in accordance with its subject matter takes place when he journeys through the last verse of Psalm 2. What follows below are, once again, the three versions of the text that were most central for Luther's work as a translator (the MT, the LXX, and the Vulgate), this time with their respective texts for the opening phrase of Psalm 2:12 (the bracketed portion of the MT is given for the sake of what immediately follows the phrase in question). Here, however, because Luther shows an awareness of two different editions of the Vulgate Psalter—one that Jerome translated from the MT (*Liber Psalmorum iuxta Hebraicum*) and one that Jerome emended to make it agree more closely with the Greek of Origen's Hexapla (*Liber Psalmorum iuxta Septuaginta Emendatus*)[19]—these two renderings are also provided, with "Vul (MT)" referring to the former and "Vul (LXX)" referring to the latter. As before, Luther's preferred translation is then noted as well.

> MT: נַשְּׁקוּ-בַר [פֶּן-יֶאֱנַף וְתֹאבְדוּ דֶרֶךְ]
> "Kiss the son [lest he become angry and you perish in the way]"
> LXX: δράξασθε παιδείας
> "Seize discipline"
> Vul (LXX): Adprehendite disciplinam
> "Seize discipline"
> Vul (MT): Adorate pure

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[17] Luther, *Treatise on the Last Words of David* (1543), AE 15:321 (emphasis added).
[18] Luther, *Treatise on the Last Words of David* (1543), AE 15:322.
[19] For more on this, see Weber et al., *Biblia sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, xxxiii.

"Worship purely"

Luther: Kusset den Son[20]

"Kiss the Son"

To set the stage for the ensuing discussion: Psalm 2 opens with peoples and nations raging "against the LORD and against his Anointed" (v. 2, ESV[21]). We then hear that the Lord has chosen to respond to this raging by setting his king, who is also his son, on Zion, his holy hill (vv. 6–7). Because of this king's/son's anointing, all worldly kings are then admonished to be wise, to "serve the LORD with fear, and [to] rejoice with trembling" (vv. 10–11, ESV). At the end of the psalm, these rulers are even told, in Luther's rendering, to "*kiss the Son*, lest he be angry and you perish in the way" (v. 12, ESV). Our discussion of how Luther translates the first words of this psalm's last verse will draw exclusively from his lecture series on Psalm 2 from 1532.

Before commenting specifically on any verse of this widely influential psalm in the history of interpretation, Luther begins by stating that "David in this psalm depicts the kingdom of Christ according to all its circumstances."[22] The tumult depicted in the first part of the psalm, then, refers to what happens when "Satan and the godless world" hear the gospel preached, a phenomenon that continues for Luther in many respects in his own day when he considers "the Turk, the pope, kings and rulers, when they set themselves against this King."[23] The Lord's response to this hostility, as we may expect from such a christological reading, is to set a king on Zion who is also his beloved son, begotten from all eternity.[24] This king, for Luther, is one who breaks any and all resistance by the power of his word, convicting the world of sin and laying bare any false hopes of security. While Luther does not imply that these worldly kings are to forsake their offices and run from their respective vocations, he does urge that "they should acknowledge this King, humbly bow before Him, and embrace His Word."[25]

Luther continues to see a stern warning lodged against worldly kings as the psalm concludes, but he sees the force of the psalm's closing admonition severely

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[20] Luther, *Deutsche Bibel* (1531/1545), WA DB 10/1:111.

[21] Scripture quotations marked ESV are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

[22] Luther, *Commentary on Psalm 2* (1532/1546), AE 12:7.

[23] Luther, *Commentary on Psalm 2* (1532/1546), AE 12:15.

[24] See Luther's defense of this view—that verse 7, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you," refers to the son's eternal generation—in *Commentary on Psalm 2* (1532/1546), AE 12:41–54, esp. 46–47. Following is one of several snippets: "For 'today' in the case of God . . . has no beginning and has no end. Thus the present text joins together the divine and the human so that they are one, so that you may correctly say: This man is God" (47).

[25] Luther, *Commentary on Psalm 2* (1532/1546), AE 12:74.

weakened if he follows either edition of the Vulgate. The first order of business for Luther, then, is to clarify the first word of verse 12, נַשְּׁקוּ. "As a point of grammar, those who understand Hebrew know that one must here read 'kiss' and not 'seize,' as the Latin text has it."[26] That is to say, first of all, that *adprehendite*, which follows suit with the LXX's δράξασθε, is not, in Luther's view, as accurate as *osculamini* for the MT's נַשְּׁקוּ.[27] So far, so good.

It is the second word, בַּר, however, that stirs up a much longer discussion. The issue stems in large part from the use of (the Aramaic) בַּר for "son" at this point in the psalm instead of the far more common בֵּן, especially given the latter's occurrence earlier in the same psalm at verse 7. Luther begins to tackle the issue by granting up front that "the meaning of this word is quite broad, for it is an adjective and means pure or elect. Jerome, therefore, translates: 'worship purely' [i.e., in Jerome's translation of the MT]."[28] But there is much more to say here for Luther, because in his further searching the Scriptures, he notices how the same word can *also* be used at times to signify something or someone far more specific through a rhetorical device that falls under the category of antonomasia.[29] Luther cites "grain" in Scripture as a prime example: "On account of its special excellence, wheat or grain is called בַּר, as something elect. In that way we understand 'the Apostle' to mean Paul; 'the Prophet,' David; 'the Philosopher,' Aristotle; 'the Soldier,' Georg von Frundsberg, etc. For often, because of its excellence, a common noun comes to be used as a proper noun."[30] While Luther is aware that בַּר could

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[26] Luther, *Commentary on Psalm 2* (1532/1546), AE 12:82.

[27] Luther refers to this preferred Latin term several times in *Commentary on Psalm 2* (1532/1546), AE 12:82–83 (WA 40/2:297–299).

[28] Luther, *Commentary on Psalm 2* (1532/1546), AE 12:82. Already in his first psalms lectures (the *Dictata super Psalterium* of 1513–1515), Luther has a problem with the Vulgate's "disciplinam" as a translation for the MT's בַּר (cf. the LXX's παιδείας) because of its lack of support elsewhere in the Scriptures: "Nowhere else is this noun בַּר translated by 'discipline,' as it is here. Therefore it should read 'kiss the son,' נַשְּׁקוּ-בַר, as Lyra says" (*First Lectures on the Psalms* [1513–1515], AE 10:38). Several years later, in his next lecture series on the psalms (the *Operationes in Psalmos* of 1519–1521), Luther recognizes that בַּר may also signify "pure" or "elect" in addition to "son," but he is still unable to find anywhere in Scripture where it signifies "discipline" and so decides to merge all of these meanings with the text of the Vulgate in the following way: "And with respect to the other word BAR, which has been translated 'son,' 'pure,' and 'discipline,' let us proceed to harmonize these renderings thus. Faith in Christ is, rightly, our discipline. And therefore he who believes in Christ, that is, kisses the Son, truly lays hold on discipline, carrying the cross of Christ in himself. . . . Therefore our translation, though by no means correct with regard to the literal meaning of the Hebrew, is yet most agreeable to truth and experience" (Martin Luther, *Martin Luther's Complete Commentary on the First Twenty-Two Psalms*, vol. 1, trans. Henry Cole [London: W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, 1826], 84).

[29] Pelikan offers the following definition for this literary phenomenon: "The substitution of a title, class name, or epithet for a proper name" (see *Commentary on Psalm 2* [1532/1546], AE 12:82n32).

[30] Luther, *Commentary on Psalm 2* (1532/1546), AE 12:82.

simply be an adjective ("pure or elect"), he finds other occurrences of the word functioning elsewhere in Scripture as a *noun* that in his judgment extol even more vividly the subject matter of the psalm under discussion, and he uses this alternate rendering as a basis to see in בַּר a special reference to Christ. As he explains it, "Thus because of His excellence Christ is spoken of as the Righteous One, the Wise One, the Priest, the Son of Man, the King, etc. In this way בַּר, used substantively, means also 'son,' as something especially elect, beloved, and pleasing to the parents."[31]

What is particularly remarkable about Luther's way of proceeding here, however, is what he is willing to grant to the other possible renderings of Psalm 2:12, *so long as the subject matter of the psalm remains as clear as possible*. Regarding Jerome's "worship purely," for example, one might suppose that Luther, with his strong conviction that Psalm 2 speaks everywhere about "the kingdom of Christ according to all its circumstances" (see above), would not budge an inch on the translation of בַּר in verse 12 as "son." It turns out, however, that this is not the case, as Luther grants that Jerome's rendering of בַּר as "pure" could indeed be allowed to stand so long as it is made clear that this word *pure* refers (by way of antonomasia) to the purest One and not to the quality of one's worship. He explains, "If [Jerome] had translated it as a noun, he would have done it correctly: 'worship the Pure One, the Elect, the Light.' "[32] Jerome's translation of בַּר as "pure," in other words, would have been acceptable to Luther had Jerome taken the further liberty *made available to him on the basis of other scriptural examples* of rendering בַּר as a noun and hence (in Luther's view) as a more explicit reference to Christ, *even if it means departing from Luther's own preferred translation of* בַּר *as "son."* Why, finally, in Luther's opinion, does the psalm switch from בֵּן for "son" in verse 7 to בַּר for "son" in verse 12? He surmises: "[David] uses the vocable בַּר in order to make the prophecy obscure for the devil and the impious, who are not worthy of seeing it."[33]

III. Psalm 22:16

Our last example of the extent to which the subject matter of Scripture governs Luther's translations—arguably one of the clearest windows into his thinking and modus operandi in this regard—comes from another psalm that is equally as rich as

[31] Luther, *Commentary on Psalm 2* (1532/1546), AE 12:82.

[32] Luther, *Commentary on Psalm 2* (1532/1546), AE 12:83. Luther later elaborates in this way: "He is my Beloved, my Pure One, my Elect One, in whom alone I rejoice, my Heart, my Delight. Therefore worship Him who is the Only-Beloved of God and most pleasing to Him, and you will be worshiping God. You will be doing God a pleasing service. Bend the knee to Him, kiss His feet" (83).

[33] Luther, *Commentary on Psalm 2* (1532/1546), AE 12:82.

Psalm 2 in its reception history, Psalm 22. Our focus here is the last part of verse 16 (MT v. 17), which is another cherished piece of psalmody that not only comes to us by way of the standard ancient versions but also contains a few textual variants in the ancient manuscripts. What follows below are again the versions of the text that were most central for Luther's translations (including both editions of the Vulgate mentioned above), accompanied by the textual variants for the first word of the phrase in the MT, all followed by Luther's preferred translation.

MT: כָּאֲרִי* יָדַי וְרַגְלָי

*A few Hebrew manuscripts have כארו, while 2 have כָּרוּ

"As a lion (they are at) my hands and my feet"

LXX: ὤρυξαν χεῖράς μου καὶ πόδας

"They dug my hands and feet"

Vul (LXX): foderunt manus meas et pedes meos

"They dug my hands and my feet"

Vul (MT): vinxerunt manus meas et pedes meos

"They bound my hands and my feet"

Luther: Sie haben meine Hende und Fusse durchgraben[34]

"They pierced my hands and feet"

By way of summary, Psalm 22 is a breathtaking psalm of David that transitions rather jarringly from severe lamentation to majestic deliverance. After opening with the memorable words, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (v. 1, ESV), David speaks of overwhelming scorn and contempt, extreme mockery and physical affliction, even as he also shows signs of sure trust in God. A sudden shift then comes at verse 21, which the ESV (along with many other modern English translations) signals by rendering עֲנִיתָנִי in the *past* tense: "Save me from the mouth of the lion! *You have rescued me* from the horns of the wild oxen!" (emphasis added). David concludes the psalm by describing in its last ten verses how this striking deliverance will be proclaimed to his brothers in the congregation (v. 22), to those who fear God (v. 23), to the ends of the earth (v. 27), and even to those who have yet to be born (v. 31). All four evangelists make reference to Psalm 22 through allusion or direct citation in their passion narratives (see Matt 27:35, 39, 43, 46; Mark 15:24, 29, 34; Luke 23:34–35; John 19:24), and the author of Hebrews quotes verse 22 ("I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you," ESV), albeit with a slight modification ("I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will *sing your praise*," ESV, emphasis added), in Hebrews 2:12.

[34] Luther, *Deutsche Bibel* (1531/1545), WA DB 10/1:167.

With all of this at the forefront of his mind, Luther's discussion of his translation—and eventual interpretation—of verse 16 takes a considerable amount of time (seven pages of commentary in modern printed editions). His first order of business is to acknowledge that the first word of the phrase in question in the MT, כָּאֲרִי, simply does not look the way that it should:

> The Jews here pertinaciously contend that this passage should not be read "*they pierced*," but, "*like a lion*:" alleging this excuse,—that the verb "*they pierced*," is written in the Hebrew with a *Caph*, a *Raish*, and a *He*, without an *Aleph*; but that, on the contrary, in this passage the word is written with an *Aleph* between the *Raish* and the *He*, and is read CARRI not CARU; and that CARRI signifies "*like a lion*," but CARU, "*they pierced*."[35]

The basic issue at the outset, as Luther sees it, is the presence of the aleph in כָּאֲרִי, leading one to believe that this word should really be translated as "as/like a lion" and not "they pierced," which would simply be כָּרוּ, the third masculine plural of כָּרָה, meaning "to dig, excavate." Luther admits that the presence of the aleph here is indeed a problem: "I do not see how they [the Jews] can be forced by the rules of grammar to understand CARRI in this passage to signify '*they pierced*.' Most certainly *outward appearance* stands strongly in favor of them, and not at all for us, *as far as outward appearance and grammar are concerned*."[36] The ordinary rules of grammar, Luther concedes, will not be of much help this time around. Even so, his repeated qualifications about mere "outward appearance" suggest to his hearers that he has much more to say about the issue at hand, and at this point in our study, perhaps we can guess where Luther intends to go with this. He continues:

> We who believe in Christ, and who hold it as a certainty, from the authority of the Gospels, that the whole of this Psalm refers to Christ, may easily be convinced that the passage should here be read "*pierced*," not "*like a lion*." . . . We illustrate the Old Testament by the Gospel; and not, the meaning of the latter from the sense of the former: and thus we make them both look, like the cherubim on each side the mercy-seat, toward Christ. . . . As, therefore, we are fully assured that the hands and the feet of Christ were pierced upon the cross, so, we are not less certain that this Psalm wholly agrees with Christ, and that

[35] Martin Luther, *Martin Luther's Complete Commentary on the First Twenty-Two Psalms*, vol. 2, trans. Henry Cole (London: W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, 1826), 404. Note that this is the *second* p. 404 in the book, as pp. 261–308 have mistakenly been printed as 381–428, thus leaving duplicates of every page number within the range 381–428. All citations from this work in the upcoming discussion will be in reference to the *second* occurrence of that respective page number in this particular volume of Luther's work on the psalms. This volume will be cited hereafter as "Cole 2."

[36] Cole 2:405 (emphasis added).

> the rest of the sense wonderfully applies to him, and requires us to read it, "*they pierced*;" and *especially so as no grammatical rigor resists such a reading*; and therefore, without controversy and without hesitation, we read it "*they pierced.*"[37]

Because the subject matter of Scripture's two testaments is Christ, with each testament facing him like the twin cherubim facing the mercy seat, Luther sounds forth his verdict that כָּאֲרִי should most certainly be translated as "they pierced," even if it flies in the face of the strongest "grammatical rigor."

But the word is still not spelled correctly if one wants it to mean "they pierced," so Luther also knows that his work is far from over. In order to strengthen his case, he first takes up the alternative ("Jewish") contention that the phrase should be rendered "as a lion (beset) my hands and my feet." This option is itself beset with problems for Luther, primarily because "the Scripture always speaks of a lion with an open mouth, and as roaring and seizing, that he may wholly devour."[38] Luther's strongest line of attack against rendering כָּאֲרִי as "as/like a lion," then, is based on his searching of the Scriptures all the same, only this time with polemical purposes in mind. Ask the Jews whether Mordecai and Esther, for example, ever were attacked by a lion, or if any other individual in Scripture could clarify by way of experience what this attack is all about. In short, for Luther, "They can adduce nothing applicable to a lion, and to hands and feet, which any one of the saints ever suffered."[39] He, on the other hand, has Christ, "who is memorably known to have suffered a signal affliction in his hands and his feet; and it is this to which the whole verse, with evident application, refers, and with which it agrees."[40]

Tearing down the opponent's position, however, is only half the battle. Even after refuting the "Jewish" option, Luther knows that a glaring "grammatical difficulty" remains.[41] What kind of corroborating evidence could he possibly muster on his end for seemingly disregarding the aleph in כָּאֲרִי? Once again, Luther returns to the same Scriptures in search of any similar phenomena and believes that he has indeed found something of the sort in the first word of Isaiah 9:7 (MT 9:6), לְסַרְבֵּה. Luther exclaims,

> Who knows but that the prophet [of Psalm 22], using a license of his own, put *Aleph*, instead of *Vav*, on account of the new and singular event? For we read

[37] Cole 2:405 (emphasis added).
[38] Cole 2:406.
[39] Cole 2:407.
[40] Cole 2:407.
[41] "Nothing now remains, therefore, but the grammatical difficulty, and this ought to give way to the theological evidence; . . . the word must yield to the evident sense, and the letter be subservient to the spirit" (Cole 2:407).

> in Isaiah, chap. ix. the same license as used by that prophet, where he puts the *Mem* final in the middle of the word LEMARBE [לְמַרְבֵּה], contrary to all the custom and usage of the Hebrew language, and that too, on account of the signal and peculiar mystery of the kingdom of Christ, which, though confined and narrow in the things there mentioned, is nevertheless multiplied and opened abroad throughout the whole world.[42]

The very strange appearance of the *final* mem in the *middle* of לְמַרְבֵּה in Isaiah 9, in other words, is analogous for Luther to the appearance of the aleph (instead of the vav) in כָּאֲרִי in Psalm 22. Scripture itself offers a parallel example of a letter appearing mysteriously, and that in another passage quite rich in reception history for its testimony to the person and work of Christ. Luther continues his reasoning for these two textual oddities by way of christological conjecture:

> And what if the prophet inserted *Aleph* on purpose that he might prevent the elusion of equivocation on the one hand, and meet it by absurdity on the other, so that they might not dare to say CARRI; that is, "*like a lion;*" and yet that he might, at the same time, by this signal admonition call them away, by this *Aleph*, from their equivocation, and thus hold them in the middle, shut in between both, so that they should not be able to escape from the true sense and meaning which agrees and harmonizes with the thing that took place in fact. And yet, that which was contrived to prevent their pertinacity,—that very thing their pertinacity perverts in order to support itself. And who knows but that the Spirit changed this word for this intent, that it might be a hidden mystery until it should be fulfilled[?][43]

The strange appearance of the aleph in כָּאֲרִי serves a twofold purpose for Luther: to support those who adhere to the proper subject matter of Scripture, while at the same time to befuddle those who operate without it. Similar to what we observed above in Psalm 2:12, where Luther held that the unusual presence of בַּר in that verse was "to make the prophecy obscure for the devil and the impious," this one Hebrew letter in Psalm 22:16 is thus also its own kind of stumbling block, a stone holding up those with the proper confession of Christ but simultaneously smashing to pieces the arguments of those wishing to pervert it. And with that in place, Luther sounds forth the final blow: "We have hitherto ever held fast our faith and have defended our reading of the passage, so that they cannot, by any

[42] Cole 2:407.

[43] Cole 2:408. Eventually Luther summarized this by simply saying that "[David] is at the same time the most clear and the most obscure in the same words" (410).

grammatical rigor, nor by any seeming appropriateness of sense, nor by any arguments of facts, compel us to read it otherwise than thus,—'*they pierced.*' "[44]

Far from merely searching for clever ways to disregard the plain sense of a text for something fashioned after his own devices (in this case, a word's common spelling for a different word altogether), Luther remains convinced that even the linguistic peculiarities of a given text are able to bear witness in their own ways to the overarching subject matter of Scripture, *provided this can be demonstrated from analogous passages elsewhere in the Bible* (in this case, one from Isaiah 9). Once this kind of support is invoked, even the most hostile "grammatical rigor" cannot prevail against such a translation, in Luther's view, because it now stands on what he believed to be the highest authority available to any translator, able to shed light even on words whose outward appearance defies human reason.

IV. Conclusion

To be sure, Luther highly esteemed grammar throughout his life, and he even praised it to the point of saying that "Among all the fields of knowledge discovered by man, chiefly grammar is useful for extending theology."[45] At the same time, however, Luther also believed that "the Holy Spirit has his own grammar,"[46] and this meant for him, among other things, that grammar as a kind of self-contained philological discipline would always take on a subordinate role in relation to the subject matter of sacred Scripture. While this was noted as taking place in Luther periodically throughout our study, consider also the following closely related statements from elsewhere in his writings about the role of grammar in translating the Bible:

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[44] Cole 2:409.

[45] Luther, *Conclusiones quindecim tractantes, An libri philosophorum sint utiles aut inutiles ad theologiam* (1519), WA 6:29.7; cf. Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 27. See also the superb study of the profound role that Hebrew grammar played in Luther's interpretation of the royal psalms in Christine Helmer, "Luther's Trinitarian Hermeneutic and the Old Testament," *Modern Theology* 18, no. 1 (2002): 49–73.

[46] "*Spiritus sanctus habet suam grammaticam.*" This phrase comes in the context of a disputation from 1540 on the humanity and divinity of Christ and can be found at *Disputation de divinitate et humanitate Christi* (1540), WA 39/2:104.24. For a recent and helpful treatment of its implications, see Robert Kolb, *Martin Luther and the Enduring Word of God: The Wittenberg School and Its Scripture-Centered Proclamation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016), 89–91, as well as the insightful analysis of it in Joachim Ringleben, "Theological Language," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Martin Luther*, ed. Derek R. Nelson and Paul R. Hinlicky, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 403–416. Ringleben writes, for example, that "this grammar does not fit into the predetermined narrow forms of intellectual thought and its syllogisms" (407).

> Languages themselves do not make a theologian but they are of assistance, for it is necessary to know the subject matter [*rem*] before it can be expressed through languages.[47]

> It's not enough to know the grammar. One must observe the sense, for a knowledge of the matters treated [*rerum*] brings with it an understanding of the words.[48]

> Nor can anyone restore Hebrew grammar except the Christians, who comprehend the substance [*rem*] of Holy Scripture, that is, Christ, the Son of God; and if He is known, everything else becomes plain and perspicuous.[49]

> Whoever wants to study Hebrew should first of all possess a proper New Testament and confidently commend himself to Christ as the sun, light and guide. If anyone fails in this response and simply depends on the grammar like Muenster and Sanctes he will err.[50]

> Indeed grammar is necessary for declining words, conjugating verbs and construing syntax, but for the proclamation of the meaning and the consideration of the subject matter, grammar is not needed. For *gram-mar should not reign over the meaning*.[51]

When we speak of Luther as a "historical-*grammatical*" theologian, then, we must be careful to clarify how Luther himself spoke of the role of grammar within the various facets of theology; in his work as a translator, it simply does not tell the whole story. Since "the Holy Spirit has his own grammar," any act of biblical translation for Luther would always be working with a unique subject matter expressed by a unique corpus of (divine) speech. As such, Luther believed that the best way to translate one portion of the Spirit's speech was to compare it with another portion of the Spirit's speech from elsewhere in the same Spirit's

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[47] "*Linguae per se non faciunt theologum, sed sunt adiutorium. Oportet enim ante rem scire, quam linguae illam possunt exprimere*." Luther, table talk recorded by Conrad Cordatus (Sept. 28–Nov. 23, 1532), vol. 2, p. 639, no. 2758a, lines 14–15 in *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Tischreden*, 6 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1912–1921), hereafter WA TR, as quoted in W. Schwarz, *Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation: Some Reformation Controversies and Their Background* (Cambridge: University Press, 1955), 210.

[48] Luther, *Table Talk* (1540), AE 54:375.

[49] Luther, *Lectures on Genesis* (1535–1545/1544–1554), AE 7:285.

[50] Luther, table talk recorded by Kaspar Heidenreich (winter of 1542–1543), WA TR 5:220.7–11, no. 5535, as quoted in Reu, *Luther's German Bible*, 265.

[51] Luther, table talk recorded by Anton Lauterbach (March 27, 1538), WA TR 3:619.28–30, no. 3794, as quoted in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: Psalms 1–72*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 119 (emphasis added).

speaking. In the examples cited above, he was primarily concerned with how best to extol the person and work of the one about whom the Spirit is speaking *on the basis of* the Spirit's other speech about him. In our judgment, Luther's most basic question as a translator was *how can a particular text be translated such that it gives the clearest testimony to the person and work of Christ while at the same time remains grammatically justifiable when compared to other passages of Scripture?* It was Scripture itself, therefore, that served as the ultimate source and norm for Luther as he carried out the task of translating, and another way of saying that, of course, is that his deeply held convictions about *sola Scriptura* reigned supreme in this area of his life and work as well.

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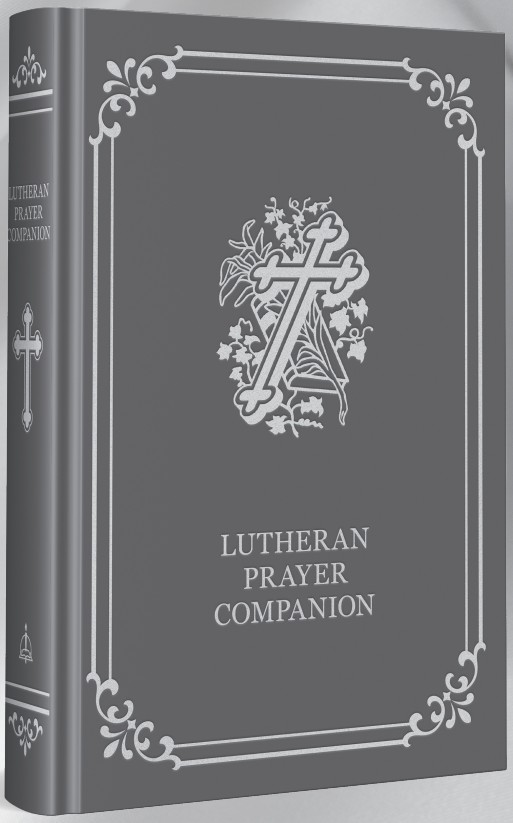

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Is *Sola Scriptura* Obsolete? An Examination and Critique of Christian Smith's *The Bible Made Impossible*

Jack D. Kilcrease

I. Introduction

Over the last few years, the conversion of prominent Evangelical scholars and clergy to Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy has become a common event on the American theological scene.[1] Francis Beckwith,[2] Hank Hanegraaff,[3] and Christian Smith[4]—whose book I will examine below—are three significant examples. Such a phenomenon provokes the question: What can account for this attraction to Rome and Constantinople? There are, of course, a number of factors, but converts frequently cite the inadequacy of the scriptural principle of the Reformation.

These converts' disappointment with *sola Scriptura* must be placed in its proper context. Increasingly, Christians have become disenchanted with the radical pluralism and relativism of Western culture. In light of this, many who join Rome, in particular, do so because they believe that scriptural principles of the Reformation gave rise to interpretative pluralism. This, in turn, has supposedly brought about the corrupt relativism of Euro-American society.[5] For those who wish to resist this relativism, the only antidote is seen to be the unifying interpretative authority of Rome. As a universal society with a clear and authoritative notion of the common

[1] See several stories of this in Robert Plummer, ed., *Journeys of Faith: Evangelicalism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Catholicism, and Anglicanism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012). Also see David Currie, *Born Fundamentalist, Born Again Catholic* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996); and Dwight Longenecker, ed., *The Path to Rome: Modern Journeys to the Catholic Church* (Herefordshire, UK: Gracewing, 1999).

[2] Francis J. Beckwith, *Return to Rome: Confessions of an Evangelical Catholic* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009).

[3] See Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra, " 'Bible Answer Man' Converts to Orthodoxy," *Christianity Today*, April 12, 2017, http://www.christianitytoday.com/gleanings/2017/april/bible-answer-man-hank-hanegraaff-orthodoxy-cri-watchman-nee.html.

[4] Christian Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible: Why Biblicism Is Not a Truly Evangelical Reading of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2012), xiii. Also see Christian Smith, *How to Go from Being a Good Evangelical to a Committed Catholic in Ninety-Five Difficult Steps* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011).

[5] See example in Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2012).

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good, the Roman Catholic Church is seen by many as the only realistic counterculture to Western decadence, nihilism, and decay.

In order to engage this argument, I will review below the recent work of Notre Dame sociologist of religion Christian Smith. In examining Smith's criticisms of *sola Scriptura*, I will point out the following. First, Smith's own criticisms often are profoundly lacking in their understanding of actual theology of the Reformation. Second, Smith's theological counterproposals labor under the same problematic theological assumptions as his Evangelical opponents. Third, Smith's arguments against *sola Scriptura* work best when aimed at popular American Evangelicalism. Although Smith acknowledges this fact, he has a tendency to lump all those who hold the doctrine of *sola Scriptura* with the lowest common denominator of American Evangelicalism. Hence his criticisms have little to do with teachings of the Lutheran Reformation.

Ultimately, I will argue that Smith implicitly projects the inadequacies of modern American Evangelicalism onto the Reformation itself. If Smith properly understood the teaching of the Lutheran Reformation on Scripture, then he very well might have been forced to consider the Lutheran Church a more intellectually viable alternative to Rome.

II. Smith's Critique of *Sola Scriptura*

Smith states in the beginning of *The Bible Made Impossible* that it is not his goal to reject the authority of the Bible or its inspiration. He goes on to say that he will not even address the question of the validity of the historical-critical method. Rather, he wants to criticize a particular approach to the Bible and its authority. He contends that the assumptions of American Evangelical Protestants about the Bible are not merely wrong, but are, in actual practice, "impossible" without massive intellectual dishonesty.[6] Smith terms this dishonest approach "Biblicism."[7] He lists ten distinct and highly problematic assumptions of Biblicism:

1. Divine Writing: The Bible, down to the details of its words, consists of and is identical with God's very own words written inerrantly in human language.

2. Total Representation: The Bible represents the totality of God's communication to and will for humanity, both in containing all that God has to say to humans and in being the exclusive mode of God's true communication.

[6] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, x.
[7] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 3.

3. Complete Coverage: The divine will about all of the issues relevant to Christian belief and life are contained in the Bible.
4. Democratic Perspicuity: Any reasonably intelligent person can read the Bible in his or her own language and correctly understand the plain meaning of the text.
5. Commonsense Hermeneutics: The best way to understand biblical texts is by reading them in their explicit, plain, most obvious, literal sense, as the author intended them at face value, which may or may not involve taking into account their literary, cultural, and historical contexts.
6. Sola Scriptura: The significance of any given biblical text can be understood without reliance on creeds, confessions, historical church traditions, or other forms of larger theological hermeneutical frameworks, such that theological formulations can be built up directly out of the Bible from scratch.
7. Internal Harmony: All related passages of the Bible on any given subject fit together almost like puzzle pieces into single, unified, internally consistent bodies of instruction about and wrong beliefs and behaviors.
8. Universal Applicability: What the biblical authors taught God's people at any point in history remains universally valid for all Christians at every other time, unless explicitly revoked by subsequent scriptural teaching.
9. Inductive Method: All matters of Christian belief and practice can be learned by sitting down with the Bible and piecing together through careful study the clear "biblical" truths that it teaches.
10. Handbook Model: The Bible teaches doctrine and morals with every affirmation that it makes, so that together those affirmations comprise something like a handbook or textbook for Christian belief and living, a compendium of divine and therefore inerrant teachings on a full array of subjects—including science, economics, health, politics, and romance.[8]

Of course, Lutheran Christians would agree with Smith in rejecting many of these claims. This is particularly true of the denigration of the hermeneutical value of creeds and confessions, as well as the tendency of many Protestants to see Scripture as a grab bag of legalistic advice. Nevertheless, along with other heirs of the Reformation, Lutherans cannot agree with Smith that it is theologically poisonous to believe that the Bible is the inerrant word of God and verbally inspired. Neither can confessional Lutherans agree with Smith when he denies that Scripture

[8] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 4–5.

is clear and self-interpreting, or that it possesses an ultimate authority as a *norma normans non normata*.[9]

Smith argues that this belief in the clarity of Scripture represents a form of epistemologically naive realism. Much like George Marsden and Theodore Dwight Bozeman,[10] Smith claims that the naive realism of the Evangelical Protestants ultimately stems from the Princeton school of the nineteenth century. The major theologians of this school—Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, and Benjamin Warfield—appropriated the common-sense realist tradition of philosophy.[11] Smith cites Hodge's famous statement comparing a theologian who gathers facts from Scripture to a scientist who gathers data from the natural world.[12] Whether this is a fair interpretation of Hodge or not, this passage has been widely interpreted as supporting a kind of crass Baconian and Reidian empiricism.[13]

In contrast to this tradition of naive realism, Smith believes it self-evident that Scripture is unclear. Therefore, it cannot serve as the ultimate authority of all theological discourse, because people will inevitably disagree about how to interpret it: "My line of reasoning in this book will run as follows. First, I will argue that most biblicist claims are rendered moot by a more fundamental problem (which few biblicists ever acknowledge) that undermines all the supposed achievements of biblicism: the problem of *pervasive interpretive pluralism*."[14] In other words, if the Bible is really internally consistent and clear, then everyone should be able to agree with one another about what it says. Since that is not the case, then it must be that the Bible is not really clear after all. Furthermore, implicitly, if Scripture is unclear, there must be some higher principle or authority to arbitrate its meaning for readers.

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[9] "Norming norm, not normed." Classic Lutheran theology views Scripture as the "norming norm," the ultimate authority, and the church's creeds and confessions as "normed norms," authorities subordinate to Scripture.

[10] See Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science: The Baconian Ideal and Antebellum American Religious Thought* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1977); Theodore Dwight Bozeman, "Inductive and Deductive Politics: Science and Society in Antebellum Protestant Thought," *Journal of American History* 64 (December, 1977): 704–722. Also see George Marsden, "Everyone's Own Interpretation? The Bible, Science, and Authority in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America," eds. Nathan Hatch and Mark Noll, *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 79–100.

[11] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 57–58. See Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (New York, London, and Edinburgh: C. Scribner and Co., T. Nelson and Sons, 1872–1873).

[12] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 58.

[13] See Thomas Reid, *An Inquiry into the Human Mind: On the Principles of Common Sense* (Edinburgh: Bell and Bradfute, 1810). Also see Francis Bacon, *The Complete Essays* (New York: Dover Books, 2008).

[14] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, x.

Smith does not write explicitly as a Catholic apologist, but those familiar with Catholic apologetics (both popular and more sophisticated versions) know that this is an all too common argument.[15] Ironically, what this line of reasoning reveals about Smith and other Catholic apologists is that they share a common anthropology and understanding of the word of God with some of their Evangelical Protestant opponents. First, they assume that the human will and mind are only minimally bound to sin and spiritual blindness. Even in sin, humans remain rational and autonomous beings who can engage and truthfully expound the Bible like any other book. Second, both traditions implicitly assume that the Bible is simply an inert, dead letter, whose meaning can be controlled by humans.[16]

Seen from this perspective, the Roman Catholic and certain Evangelical understandings of the power of the word and the role of human agency in the process of interpretation are simply two sides of the same coin. From the side of the crude popular Arminianism that characterizes much of American Evangelicalism, the meaning of Scripture may be easily discerned by rational and autonomous human agents without the special illumination of the Holy Spirit or intervening secondary authorities, such as creeds or confessions. For Roman Catholics, the freedom and autonomy of humans in relationship to the word makes all interpretation apart from the infallible institutional church suspect. As free agents, humans can manipulate or falsely interpret the word as easily as they can correctly interpret it. With a multitude of possible interpretations within the marketplace of religion, the only way to gain intellectual certainty regarding the content of revelation is to possess a supernaturally guided teaching authority that is *a priori* guaranteed to not be subject to the capricious winds of free will.

III. Luther's View of Scriptural Clarity

The Evangelical and Roman Catholic anthropology and theology of the word of God is precisely what Luther rejects in his most comprehensive treatment of the doctrine of scriptural clarity at the beginning of *The Bondage of the Will* (1525).[17]

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[15] See the following: Louis Bouyer, *The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism* (Princeton, NJ: Scepter Publishers, 1956), 142–211; C. DeVolld, *In Defense of the Faithful: The Scriptural Truth of Catholicism* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, Inc., 2007), 136–137; Stephen K. Ray, *Crossing the Tiber: Evangelical Protestants Discover the Historical Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), 42–92.

[16] Gerhard writes: "The papists clearly are presenting to us such an idea of Scripture which is, so to speak, a sort of skeleton and dumb and dead statues which must first be brought alive through the Spirit and through that Church, that is, through the pope as he speaks" (Johann Gerhard, *On the Legitimate Interpretation of Holy Scripture*, trans. Richard Dinda [Malone, TX: Repristination Press, 2015], 21).

[17] See Luther's comments in vol. 33, pp. 24–28 of *Luther's Works, American Edition*, vols. 1–30, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1976); vols. 31–55, ed. Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–1986); vols. 56–82, ed.

For Luther, Scripture is clear, but not because humans are rational and autonomous beings. Humans are bounded by sin and grace. For this reason, their ability to comprehend and respond to the word of God depends on whether they labor under the dominion of sin or under the liberating power of God's grace.

Therefore, although Scripture is clear, its clarity functions on two distinct yet interlocking levels. First, there is the internal clarity of Scripture. This is the clarity by which God manifests the truth of the Scriptures to humans through the work of the Holy Spirit operative in the gospel. Second, there is the external clarity of Scripture. This consists in the grammatical-historical meaning of the Bible as it is discernible through the study of its language and historical background.[18]

In contrast to the semi-Pelagianism (or perhaps at the popular level, simply Pelagianism) of contemporary Roman Catholic and popular Evangelical theories of scriptural clarity and human agency, Luther's view of how God makes himself known to us through the Bible stands as a logical corollary of his anthropology. Much like the clarity of Scripture, human agency operates on two levels. First, there is our agency regarding those things that are above us (spiritual things); and second, there is our agency regarding those things below us (temporal things). In regard to spiritual things, Luther teaches that we are bounded creatures. We cannot respond to God by our own reason or strength. Since God manifests himself to us through his word, it follows that we cannot understand Scripture unless the Spirit clarifies it through the proclamation of the gospel. In his description of the inner clarity, Luther says, based on Paul's teaching in 2 Corinthians 3:14–18, that those without faith (in this case, non-Christian Jews) read the Scriptures with a veil over their hearts. They are spiritually blind and do not genuinely understand the meaning of Scripture, which is summed up in Christ. When they come to faith, the Spirit removes the veil and believers see the glory of God in Christ's face.[19] Hence, when people have faith in Christ, they understand the central meaning of Scripture; the

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Christopher Boyd Brown and Benjamin T. G. Mayes (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009–), hereafter AE. For Luther's understanding of scriptural clarity, see the following sources: Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 76–78; Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, trans. Thomas Trapp (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 83–90; Friedrich Beisser, *Claritas scripturae bei Martin Luther* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966); Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development*, trans. Roy Harrisville (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1999), 268–277.

[18] Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* (1525), AE 33:24–28. See the same notion in the Lutheran symbols in Ralph Bohlmann, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1983), 59–64. Also see Gerhard, *On the Legitimate Interpretation of Holy Scripture*, 118–119.

[19] Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* (1525), AE 33:64–70.

content of Scripture, especially the articles of the faith, fall into their proper place. Therefore, in contrast to the Roman Catholic and popular Arminian view of the word of God as being merely a dead and inert letter, the Lutheran view of Scripture is that it is a powerful and living word that creates faithful and receptive creatures out of sinful and blind ones.

In regard to earthly things, such as understanding grammar, linguistic structure, and history, humans are free and rational.[20] Therefore, humans can discern and debate the grammatical-historical meaning of specific passages. As should be clear, many errors in interpretation can arise from a lack of knowledge of the original languages of Scripture. Similarly, as Luther himself notes, not all passages are equally clear, and our ignorance of language pertaining to certain passages of Scripture prevents our full understanding.[21] Nevertheless, no doctrine is unclear, and there are enough grammatically clear passages (i.e., scholastic orthodoxy's *sedes doctrinae*[22]) to provide us with an unassailable core of Christian proclamation.[23]

Hence, contrary to Smith's model, Luther correctly discerns that the existence of disputes regarding the meaning of Scripture in no way militates against its clarity. Being bound to legalism and sin, the postlapsarian human default is to reject the gospel as the burning center of the Bible.[24] This has the predictable effect of distorting the other articles of the faith. For example, Roman Catholicism's belief in the intercession of the saints, the penitential system, and the sacrifice of the Mass is invariably tied up in its legalism and its failure to understand the gospel and read Scripture from its perspective. The Arian, Mormon, and Jehovah's Witness rejection of the divinity of Christ is simply an expression of their legalistic belief that creatures can save themselves by their works.

In the same manner, Luther's model also makes sense of other disagreements that arise from a rejection or misunderstanding of the external clarity. Many disagreements between Catholics and Lutherans on the interpretation of Scripture can be chalked up to the differences between the Vulgate's translations (canonized at Trent) and the original Hebrew and Greek texts.[25] Likewise, the Reformed tradition's rejection of Lutheran teaching on the sacraments is not a result of the

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[20] Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* (1525), AE 33:70.

[21] Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* (1525), AE 33:25.

[22] Robert Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, vol. 1 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), 35, 44–49.

[23] Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* (1525), AE 33:27–28.

[24] Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* (1525), AE 33:52.

[25] See the classical example on the issue of justification in Kevin Vanhoozer, *Biblical Authority after Babel: Retrieving the Solas in the Spirit of Mere Protestant Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2016), 75.

ambiguity of the simple grammatical-historical meaning of the text of Scripture, but rather is caused by the Reformed belief that humans ought to ignore the literal meaning of the text in favor of more rational interpretation.[26]

Finally, Luther's model of external and internal clarity implicitly entails greater appreciation for the hermeneutical value of the creeds and confessions. According to the internal clarity, it is God who ultimately clarifies his own word. He is faithful to his church (Matt 16:18); and therefore, he is ever present in it, creating faith and a true confession of the faith through word and sacrament. From this it follows that there is always a valid tradition within the church, albeit as a *norma normata* in relationship to the ultimate authority of the Bible. This tradition as embodied in creeds and confessions is ultimately aimed at faithfully applying the word to situations that the biblical authors did not face.[27]

Conversely, if one accepts the semi-Pelagianism or outright Pelagianism of much of contemporary Evangelicalism, it would theoretically be possible for no one to use his free will and rationality to interpret the Bible correctly between John's penning of Revelation and the founding of one's megachurch or parachurch ministry.[28] Likewise, for Rome, the power of the word itself does not preserve the catholicity of the church's confession of faith. Only the miraculous intervention of an infallible magisterium against the ever-changing winds of human free will can do this.

IV. Smith's View of Scriptural Authority

Beyond his attack on the naive realism of Evangelical exegetical theory, Smith decries what he considers to be the popular belief that Scripture is a universal guidebook. He notes the manifestation of this tendency in the propensity of Christian bookstores to carry books entitled *A Biblical Guide to X*.[29] Beyond implicitly viewing this as a sort of crass legalism, Smith holds that the Bible is not clear, and therefore the application of its values will result in contradiction. Smith

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[26] Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. 1 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), 25–29.

[27] This view of Scripture and tradition is what Heiko Oberman calls "Tradition I." See Heiko Oberman, "*Quo Vadis Petre*? Tradition from Irenaeus to *Humani Generis*," in *The Dawn of the Reformation: Essays in Late Medieval and Early Reformation Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 269–298. Also see Jaroslav Pelikan, *Obedient Rebels: Catholic Substance and Protestant Principle in Luther's Reformation* (London: SCM Press, 1964); Quentin Stewart, *Lutheran Patristic Catholicity: The Vincentian Canon and the Consensus Patrum in Lutheran Orthodoxy* (Zürich: LIT Verlag, 2015).

[28] In the spirit of Oberman, Alister McGrath calls this view "Tradition 0." See Alister McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1993), 107–108.

[29] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible,* 8–10.

describes this lack of clarity in terms of the ambiguity that it creates in relation to specific Christian practices.

> Consider the following four hypothetical scenarios. Imagine first an official state road map that four people all wanting to drive to the same destination consult for directions; each person decides on a different route as the best one to take to that destination. Picture next a pair of army-certified binoculars that five commanding officers who are meeting in war council use to assess their distant enemy's position, strength, and movements; each officer reports quite different accounts of what they see of their enemy's situation, and each one therefore recommends different battle strategies. Then imagine a manufacturer-authorized owner's manual for a fancy new camera that all the shutterbug members of a family study carefully; each individual comes away insisting on very different methods for proper use of the camera. Finally, consider a well-known cookbook containing a recipe that all the contestants in a particular cooking-skills competition must prepare; the contestants, though they vow that they cooked up the same recipe from the same cookbook, each produce a dish that is in some way distinct from all the others.[30]

The interesting thing to notice in this passage is that Smith does not actually question the idea that Scripture is a sort of guidebook; rather, he simply asserts that Scripture is an ambiguous and insufficient guidebook. As a former Evangelical, it is not surprising that Smith's Roman Catholic view of the function of Scripture is merely the flipside of his Evangelical view. Hence, as correlative of his hermeneutical semi-Pelagianism, he shares the assumption with his former co-religionists that the Bible must be a legalistic guidebook. Indeed, he writes that the goal of the ministry of the church (and hence, implicitly, the goal of interpreting Scripture) should be to communicate "how best to live in any given sociolcultural context."[31] Although Smith decries the guidebook model, his own statements about Scripture seem to suggest that he regards Scripture primarily as a rulebook, albeit a more ambiguous and less useful one than his popular Evangelical brethren suppose.

Since Scripture is unclear, people end up deriving different rules from it. This is unacceptable for Smith, because it makes for denominational and theological disunity. When looking through the kaleidoscope of Scripture, people discover simply whatever rules they wish to find there. Moreover, they ignore or explain away rules that they do not like.[32] Among these, Smith claims that Christians arbitrarily ignore the Levitical injunctions against eating rabbits and having sex during

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[30] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 16–17.
[31] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 148.
[32] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 44–45.

menstruation.[33] Oddly, Smith adopts a common line of argument used by secularist provocateurs who believe that they, too, have cleverly uncovered the inconsistency of Christian appeals to the authority of Scripture.[34]

In response to this, it should be noted that across denominational boundaries, the historic Christian Church has understood that the Levitical code is no longer applicable to the Christian Church. There is a clear and solid exegetical basis for this in God's revelation to the apostle Peter in Acts 10 and the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15. Moreover, one might also appropriately cite the books of Colossians and Hebrews, which make a very clear distinction between the moral and the ritual law of the Old Testament (see Col 2:16–23 and Heb 9:1–10:18).[35] It is strange that Smith is unaware of these texts and the nearly universal consensus of Christian interpreters about them.

Beyond this, the supreme authority of the Bible cannot be maintained, according to Smith, because it contains passages that he deems "strange"[36] or simply immoral. No reasonable person could believe that these passages come from God himself; consequently, in Smith's mind, they prove that accepting the full authority of Scripture is simply wrong. The main example that Smith uses is Titus 1:12–13, where St. Paul uses strong language to characterize people on the island of Crete. The apostle quotes an ancient Greek poet in stating, "All Cretans are liars."[37] Smith finds this passage utterly shocking and cannot fathom what a pastor might preach on such a text. Moreover, Smith thinks that the remark is inconsistent with other statements of Paul about kindness and gentleness.

Nevertheless, the simple fact is that the Bible is full of harsh language and hyperbolic statements against God's enemies (one example far harsher than that cited above can be found in Ezek 23:20). Moreover, Smith's argument lacks cogency for at least two reasons. First, he claims that he has some kind of privileged knowledge of what God, who is by definition transcendent, would and would not do. Second, through the history of salvation, God performed many acts of judgment against those who rejected his truth. He judged the world in the flood and tasked Israel with the violent expulsion of the Canaanites from the land of Palestine. In light of these acts of judgment, it is not at all implausible that the same deity would inspire

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[33] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 72–73.

[34] One of the more childish examples of this popular argument can be found in A. J. Jacobs, *The Year of Living Biblically: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008).

[35] See comments on this issue in Luther and the Lutheran Confessions: *Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and Sacraments* (1524/1525), AE 40:97–98; AC XXVIII 57–60.

[36] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 72.

[37] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 72.

Paul to say a few harsh things about the inhabitants of Crete who were undermining the faith.

Ultimately, it would appear that Smith's concern is not with the clarity of the word but with its all too clear content. Smith himself claims to know in the seat of his inner heart what God is like above and beyond the external word. He himself can discern what God would say and not say through his prophets and apostles. Consequently, his position is actually predicated on a form of enthusiasm that claims there is another and higher word of God above the historical-grammatical meaning of the Bible.

V. Smith's Theological Alternative

After arguing that the popular (and, to some extent, academic) Evangelical approach to the Bible is impossible, Smith proposes his alternative using a Christomonistic (as opposed to a Christocentric) approach to revelation. As we will see below, this approach embodies the enthusiasm also present in his earlier criticism of the traditional understanding of scriptural authority. According to Smith, Christ is the single Word of God, and Scripture is merely a witness to his revelation:

> Jesus Christ: The True and Final Word. Jesus Christ is the true and final Word of God, in relation to whom scripture is God's secondary, written word of witness and testimony. This line of reasoning carries the prior point one important step further. Biblicists are often so insistent that the Bible is God's only complete, sufficient, and final word that they can easily forget in practice that before and above the Bible as God's written word stands Jesus Christ, who is God's living Word and ultimate and final self-revelation. . . .
>
> The *evangelion*, the gospel, is not simply some cognitive information gleaned from the Bible to which we have to give intellectual assent. Jesus Christ himself *is* the gospel. . . .
>
> The Bible is a secondary, subsidiary, functional, written word of God. . . . The Bible is passing. Jesus Christ is eternal. The Bible points us to the truth, proclaims God's truth; Jesus Christ himself *is* that Truth. Biblicism borders on idolatry when it fails to maintain this perspective.[38]

Hence, the Bible is itself not really a form of revelation, but rather a mere witness to revelation. Jesus is the single revelation of God. Thus, there is a Word of God (Jesus) above the word of God (the written text of the Bible). The theologian may, in a sense, see beyond the text of Scripture to Jesus, who is the measure of the text.

[38] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 116–118.

In practical terms, this implicitly means isolating the parts of the text that reflect Jesus and his message from parts that do not. Although Lutheran Christians would certainly agree with Smith that Christ is the center of Scripture, it is important not to play Christ off against the inspiration and authority of the Bible.[39] In many ways, Smith's approach seems quite similar to what John Warwick Montgomery famously termed "Gospel-Reductionism."[40]

Beyond this, Smith appeals to the centrality of the *regula fidei* of trinitarian faith, which he claims was authoritative in the early church before the Scriptures became "Scripture" in the act of canonization in the fourth and fifth centuries.[41] Here, Smith misconstrues the relationship of Scripture to the early church's act of canonization. In response to this mischaracterization, one should observe a couple of things. First, the *regula fidei* is simply a summary of truths contained in the Scriptures and therefore cannot be isolated and exalted above the Scriptures. It is, of course, correct to say that the *regula fidei* summarizes apostolic teaching that initially existed in an unwritten form (2 Thess 2:15). Nevertheless, in the present, the *regula fidei* is only accessible in its pure form as set down by the witness of the apostles in the Scriptures. The confessional Lutheran's claim was never that the word of God was always accessible only through the Bible at every point throughout the history of salvation. Obviously, during the apostolic age, the opposite was the case. Rather, the Lutheran claim is that in the present, the only fully reliable means of access to God's revelation is through the inerrant and inspired written deposit of the word of God in the Bible.[42]

Second, Smith's remark presupposes that there were no Scriptures before the church's act of canonization. This is yet another common Roman Catholic polemic based on a category confusion.[43] Leading scholars of canonical studies rightly point out that canonization cannot be conflated with a community having an authoritative Scripture.[44] Possessing a "Scripture" refers to a community recognizing and using a text based on a belief in its divine authority, whereas "canon" comes about by an official act of a community's leaders affirming that a text is authoritative. The ante-Nicene fathers spoke of and authoritatively quoted the Bible long before the councils

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[39] David Scaer, "Christ or the Bible?" *Christianity Today* 12 (November 10, 1967): 9–10.

[40] John Warwick Montgomery, *Crisis in Lutheran Theology*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967), 81–123.

[41] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 154.

[42] Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 1:193.

[43] See an argument of this nature in Peter Kreeft, *Catholic Christianity: A Complete Catechism of Catholic Beliefs Based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001), 100.

[44] See the classical article by Albert Sundberg, "Towards a Revised History of the New Testament Canon," *Studia Evangelica* 4, no. 1 (1968): 452–461.

of Carthage and Hippo made decisions about the canon in the fourth and fifth centuries.[45] Moreover, Lutherans affirm that the Scripture's authority is founded on Christ's dominical authorization of the authority of the Old Testament and the infallible teaching of the apostles. It is not based on the institutional church's judgments about the canonical list.[46]

Returning to Smith's Christomonism, such an approach to Scripture was pioneered in the twentieth century by the Reformed theologian Karl Barth. Smith lauds Barth's approach to scriptural authority as being truly evangelical insofar as it centers on "the gospel."[47] Barth centers his understanding of the Bible on the great things God has done in Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is not a manual for mundane tasks like dating or managing one's finances.[48] According to Smith, the reason Evangelicals have typically resisted Barth's approach is largely because his writings were translated in the period immediately after the Modernist/Fundamentalist debate. Evangelicals were too traumatized by Modernists who rejected scriptural authority *in toto* to give ear to someone like Barth who had a more balanced approach.[49]

Smith rejects the notion that Barth's approach has anything to do with theological Liberalism, a common charge among Barth's conservative Protestant detractors. Indeed, Barth did possess a visceral dislike of Schleiermacher and the subsequent German liberal Protestant tradition.[50] Nevertheless, in spite of Barth's antipathy, his own program is reminiscent of Schleiermacher's theological approach in some key ways. Both theologians ultimately reject the final authority of Scripture in favor of the higher authority of historic revelation lying beyond its text. Both ultimately view revelation in Christomonistic terms.[51]

For Schleiermacher, human religion is a byproduct of a generalized "feeling of absolute dependence,"[52] which is itself ultimately an experience of God. In light of his Reformed background, it is not surprising that this notion bears much

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[45] Harry Gamble, *The New Testament Canon: Its Making and Meaning* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2002), 23–72.

[46] For example, see this approach in J. A. O. Preus, *It Is Written* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971); David Scaer, *The Apostolic Scriptures* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971).

[47] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 124–125.

[48] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 124.

[49] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 122.

[50] See Karl Barth, *The Theology of Schleiermacher* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982); Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Brian Cozens and John Bowden (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

[51] See Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, trans. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (New York: T & T Clark, 1999).

[52] Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 12–18.

resemblance to Calvin's *sensus divinitatis*,[53] albeit developed within the categories of Kant's epistemology.[54] According to Schleiermacher, what is unique about Christian religious experience is that it is the experience of absolute dependence on God as mediated through Jesus. The man Jesus possessed perfect "God-consciousness" (i.e., the feeling of absolute dependence), which he in turn transmitted to the church.[55] The believer can progressively increase his God-consciousness through fellowship with the church.[56]

Because Christianity is centered on a God-consciousness present in Jesus as the sole source of Christian revelation, Schleiermacher's theology is Christomonistic in some of the same ways as Smith's. Scripture is not the word of God per se, but only insofar as it represents the revelation of Christ as it has been expressed in many and various ways by the early Christian community. In fact, Schleiermacher's position is so Christomonistic that he went so far as to suggest that since the Old Testament did not contain an experience of God mediated through Jesus, it should be removed from the Christian Bible.[57]

Although Barth's theology superficially attacks Protestant Liberalism in general and Schleiermacher's theology in particular, it nevertheless retains many of its structural priorities. Barth essentially agrees with Schleiermacher's Christomonism as well as his Reformed emphasis on the sovereignty of God. For Barth, God's revelation is God himself as he has executed his covenant with humanity in Jesus Christ.[58] Similarly, in the same divine-human person, God asserts his sovereignty by choosing humanity while simultaneously rejecting its sin.[59] As true man, Christ is the human person who is perfectly responsive to sovereign divine love and election.[60] As a result, he both bears God's condemnation of sin and nothingness and at the same time serves as a righteous representative of the human race. In this, he becomes the archetype and sole basis of election.[61] The Bible is authoritative

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[53] See Edward Dowey, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 50–56; David Steinmetz, "Calvin and the Natural Knowledge of God," in *Calvin in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 23–39.

[54] See brief comment in Thomas M. Kelly, *Theology at the Void: The Retrieval of Experience* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2002), 15.

[55] Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 355–475.

[56] Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 560–581.

[57] Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 608–611.

[58] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*. 4 vols. trans. G. T. Thomason et al. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1936-77), 1.1:295–296.

[59] Barth, *Church Dogmatics* 2.2:94–195.

[60] Barth, *Church Dogmatics* 3.2:203.

[61] Barth, *Church Dogmatics* 2.2:94–195.

because it is a witness to this event of divine self-disclosure and redemption.[62] Nevertheless, Scripture is not identical with revelation.

What is essentially different about these approaches is that Barth inverts Schleiermacher's focus on the interior experience of divine sovereignty.[63] Instead, Barth makes the revelation of divine sovereignty a public and objective event outside of the believer. Nevertheless, the Christomonism of revelation remains, as does the Reformed emphasis on the content of divine revelation being the knowledge of divine sovereignty. Ultimately, then, Barth's theology (and that of those who followed his trajectory) is in many regards structurally indistinguishable from the theology of Protestant Liberalism as Schleiermacher classically formulated it. Christ alone is the Word of God, and the Scriptures are merely a witness to that revelation. There is (to use a spatial metaphor) a distance between revelation in Christ and the Scriptures.

Though we can only address a few issues here, from a logical and epistemic perspective, the main difficulty with positing Jesus as the single principle of revelation to which Scripture is merely the witness is that it places the theologian in the position of rather arbitrarily deciding which texts convey Christ and which do not. Since we have no access to Christ apart from the testimony of the prophets and apostles, this is an impossible task. One cannot "see past" the Bible text and find another Christ on the other side.

Moreover, Christ's redemption would not make any sense apart from the perspective of the total history of salvation and mediation through specific, concrete writings inspired by God. Even in regard to secular knowledge, no piece of data makes sense apart from being understood within an overall framework or, perhaps, "paradigm."[64] Therefore, to isolate the revelation of Christ and play it off against the notion that the Scriptures are revelation in themselves makes it possible to drag the Lord out of the original, divinely mandated context of the whole of the Bible and place him into an alternative framework of our own liking. For Schleiermacher, this alternative framework was religious consciousness as understood through the lens of Pietism, Romanticism, and German Idealism.[65] For Barth, Christ became a means

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[62] Barth, *Church Dogmatics* 1.2:501.

[63] See critique in Alister McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 363. McGrath draws on the interpretation of Balthasar. See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Karl Barth: Darstellung und Deutung seiner Theologie* (Cologne: Jakob Hegner, 1962), 210.

[64] See the parallel to the philosophy of science in Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970).

[65] For Schleiermacher's upbringing and intellectual environment, see the following: C. W. Christian, *Friedrich Schleiermacher* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1979), 19–42; Jack Forstman, *A Romantic Triangle: Schleiermacher and Early German Romanticism* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press,

of reasserting the sovereignty of God in the face of liberal theology and a Europe that had gone into civilizational meltdown after the First World War.[66] Ultimately, Smith's (as well as Barth's and Schleiermacher's) approach allows theologians to create arbitrarily their own Christs through selective use of Scripture. Ironically, this is precisely what Smith accuses his biblicist opponents of doing.

Beyond this, it should be observed that Smith promotes a form of enthusiasm. By distancing God's revelation in Christ from the actual text of the Bible, Smith places himself and his own interior subjective spiritual insight into the breach in order to fill the gap. Ultimately, discerning between the inauthentic and authentic revelation of God in Christ in the text of Scripture is a matter of enthusiastic judgment.

For Lutheran Christians, this is unacceptable. Lutherans have consistently asserted against the Reformed tradition that just as there is no gap between the heavenly Christ and the earthly elements of the Lord's Supper, so, too, there is no gap between the living Word of Christ and the literal word of the Bible. As Gustaf Wingren aptly says, "The Word of the Bible contains within itself the coming of Christ as its general aim to which all tends. . . . It is in the simple words, in what is human in the Bible, that God's power is hidden; divine and human must not be separated." Indeed, Wingren states that "even in the passage and even in preaching, *communicatio idiomatum* holds sway."[67]

VI. Scriptural Ambiguity and Ecclesiastical Consensus

Because Smith considers Scripture largely ambiguous, he is relatively tolerant of what constitutes orthodox Christianity: "Scripture is sometimes confusing, ambiguous, and incomplete—we have to admit and deal with that fact." Indeed, "We do not need to be able to explain everything all the time. It is fine sometimes simply to say, 'I have no idea' and 'We really just don't know.' "[68] Nevertheless, even if the application of the ethical teachings present in Scripture is unclear, or in many cases not addressed, the Christomonistic nature of revelation is apparently clear to Smith: "But the real *matter* of scripture is clear, 'the deepest secret of all,' that God in Christ has come to earth, lived, taught, healed, died, and risen to new life, so that we too

1977); Martin Redeker, *Schleiermacher: Life and Thought*, trans. John Wallhausser (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), 6–34.

[66] See the following discussion of Barth's theological epiphanies in light of World War I: Bruce McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development, 1909–1936* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 78–184.

[67] Gustaf Wingren, *The Living Word: A Theological Study of Preaching and the Church*, trans. Victor C. Pogue (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), 208.

[68] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 131.

can rise to life in him."[69] Although, to many, this may sound very Lutheran, as we saw earlier, Smith seems to see Scripture as primarily a legal authority, and therefore Christ's revelation is implicitly identified with a higher and better law.

Smith believes that because the Bible is clear on the centrality of Christ but not on other issues, Evangelicals should try to minimalize much of what they consider essential to the faith: "Evangelical Christians need to much better distinguish dogma from doctrine and both of those from opinion, in a way that demands much greater humility, discernment, and readiness to extend the fellowship of communion to those who understand scripture differently."[70] Hence, conservative Protestants should discern various levels of authority.[71]

Incidentally, Smith does not mention that the distinction he invokes between "dogma" (statements of magisterium of unchanging truth) and "doctrine" (temporary and mutable applications of dogma) is one derived from Roman Catholicism. Roman Catholic theologians typically divide theological propositions into various degrees of authority by distinguishing between dogma, doctrine, and mere theological opinion (*theologoumenon*).[72] Also, contrary to what Smith implies, aspects of this approach are not totally alien to the tradition of the Magisterial Reformation. Both Lutherans and the Reformed theologians of scholastic orthodoxy did in fact distinguish between fundamental and nonfundamental dogmas.[73] Indeed, as we observed earlier, even Luther did not hold that the clarity of the Bible demanded that every passage of Scripture be absolutely grammatically clear.

Nevertheless, unlike historic Roman Catholicism and the magisterial reformers, Smith holds that differing degrees of doctrinal authority necessitate theological relativism that may in turn bring about ecumenical *détente*. Since only a few points can be agreed on across denominational lines, areas of difference should be treated with extreme tolerance for the sake of unity. Smith states that Pentecostals should be aware that few Christians down through the ages have thought miracles and speaking in tongues were not important. Consequently, they should be tolerant and

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[69] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 132.

[70] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 134.

[71] See a fairly standard summary of the modern Catholic treatment of this subject in Richard Gaillardetz, *By What Authority? A Primer on Scripture, the Magisterium, and the Sense of the Faithful* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 90–106.

[72] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 134.

[73] See Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 406–429; Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. Charles Hay and Henry Jacobs (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 96–100. See the early Lutheran treatment of this in Nicolaus Hunnius, *Diaskepsis Theologica: A Theological Examination of the Fundamental Difference between Evangelical Lutheran Doctrine and Calvinist or Reformed Teaching* (Malone, TX: Repristination Press, 2001).

not consider these things central to the Christian faith. Likewise, Calvinists should recognize that most Christians have not believed in double predestination. From this, they must conclude that their own theological principles embodied in TULIP are peripheral to the Christian faith.[74]

Therefore, the consensus of the visible church plays a significant role for Smith in discerning what is sufficiently clear in Scripture and what is not. Indeed, Smith mentions Vincent of Lérins and his famous maxim "*quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est*."[75] This truth by consensus is tempered somewhat by Smith's assertion that consensus cannot be an absolute and definitive standard of discerning correct doctrine.[76]

Lutheran Christians will find most of these assertions problematic. First, while not every statement of Scripture is absolutely grammatically clear, no doctrine of the faith is ambiguous.[77] Beyond this, truth by consensus is an extremely shaky principle, as Smith himself acknowledges. Of course, we must agree with Chemnitz that insofar as the Holy Spirit has always been guiding the church through word and sacrament, legitimate interpretations of the Bible must not be totally without precedent in the previous catholic tradition.[78] Nevertheless, turning to examples from the Scriptures themselves, it has often been noted that the majority of ancient Israelites were apostates (1 Kgs 19:18; Rom 11:4). If consensus was the basis of appropriate theological judgment in the Old Testament church, then something like a mixture of Mosaic and Canaanite worship could be regarded as the true religion. If, then, the Old Testament church was mistaken in its consensus, could not the same be said of the visible church in the present age? It is for this reason that Melanchthon in his reflection on church history argued that God preserves a true catholic remnant in every era of history, while most remain under the thrall of unbelief.[79]

Moreover, it is particularly odd for Smith to argue that Calvinists and Pentecostals can remain what they are while relativizing their beliefs. By definition, Calvinists are Calvinists and Pentecostals are Pentecostals insofar as they are committed to the notion that their doctrinal stances are in fact the essential teaching

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[74] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 138.

[75] See Vincent of Lérins, *The Commonitory*, trans. Paul Böer (Veritatis Splendor Publications, 2012). Also see Thomas G. Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013).

[76] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 138.

[77] Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* (1525), AE 33:27–28.

[78] Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, vol. 1, trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), 208–209.

[79] See Peter Fraenkel, *Testimonia Patrum: The Function of the Patristic Argument in the Theology of Philip Melanchthon* (Geneva: Librairie E. Droz, 1961), 69, 100–118.

of Christianity. Indeed, Pentecostals call their understanding of the gospel the "full gospel."[80] Similarly, for Lutherans, what makes Christianity the true religion over against heretical forms of Christianity and other world religions is the fact that it is based on grace alone.[81] Apparently, Smith cannot even make grace the center of Christianity, in that he claims that those who affirm substitutionary atonement (which stands at the very heart of the gospel, 1 Cor 15:3) should tolerate those who reject it.[82]

Ultimately, Smith believes that Evangelicals need to become comfortable with a greater degree of uncertainty regarding the teachings of Scripture.[83] Such a proposal is rather strange in light of Smith's conversion to Catholicism. That is to say, it is odd that Smith derides Evangelicals and conservative Protestants in general for demanding intellectual and ethical certainty, yet he joined a denomination whose main selling point is the intellectual and moral certainty that it supposedly provides through its infallible magisterium.

In point of fact, both the emphasis on Christomonism as well as the belief that Christians need to accept theological ambiguity and be broadly tolerant is more characteristic of the American mainline Protestant denominations than it is of Roman Catholicism.[84] A difficulty with this open-ended approach to doctrine and morals is that it is ultimately impractical. Despite claiming to be supremely tolerant as a result of minimizing the guidance from the Scriptures or confessions and creeds, the mainline Protestant denominations must make theological and ethical decisions for the sake of practical ends. Nevertheless, without the anchor of the infallibility of Scripture, such decisions are largely the arbitrary byproduct of the surrounding culture. This can be seen no more clearly than in the recent decisions of many mainline Protestant denominations to embrace homosexual behavior as morally legitimate.

Since such decisions are transparently arbitrary and based on culturally based preference, they more often than not result in extreme resistance from the more conservative members of these denominations. To solve the problem of legitimacy,

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[80] See discussion of the origin and a synopsis of this theology in Charles Nienkirchen, *A. B. Simpson and the Pentecostal Movement: A Study in Continuity, Crisis, and Change* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 2–3.

[81] See Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 7–21.

[82] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 135.

[83] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 131–132.

[84] "Christology became the trump card which took every trick. Freedom in doctrine and practice is allowed as long as the doctrine of Christ remains in place, Barth's followers argued (and still argue). This position came to be known as Gospel reductionism, a phrase which originated with the majority position of the faculty of Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, in the 1970s, and is still used for this radical Christomonism" (David Scaer, "All Theology Is Christology," *Modern Reformation* 8, no. 5 [1999]: 3).

many mainline Protestant theologians have claimed that the Holy Spirit is "doing a new thing"[85] through the voting assemblies. The decisions of the voters' assemblies is therefore to be regarded as superseding scriptural revelation. The implicit logic of this line of reason is that whereas the Bible is fallible, denominational voting assemblies are infallible.

Two observations should be made here. First, yet again, the issue is not whether the word of the Bible is clear on a particular subject. Rather, mainline Protestants simply prefer their own enthusiastic concept of the theological authority, rather than the objective external word. Second, Smith's own preference for biblical errancy, ambiguity, and broad tolerance is, in practice, utterly unworkable. Ultimately, the moment one abandons the infallibility and clarity of revelation in one source (the Bible), one must necessarily begin to impute infallibility and clarity to another source of authority so that practical doctrinal and moral decisions can be made authoritatively. This source of authority may take a number of forms: religious experience (Protestant Liberalism), a voting assembly's decisions (mainline Protestantism), or an infallible magisterium (Roman Catholicism).

VII. Overall Evaluation and Conclusion

In evaluating Smith's position, one should observe that what he finds fundamentally problematic about *sola Scriptura* is the institutional disunity that interpretive disagreements within Protestantism that it causes. For Smith, these disagreements and divisions make Christian witness less coherent and therefore less strong and appealing to those outside the community of the faithful:

> The more Christians insist on making long lists of theological "essentials" that real or true Christians ought to believe in order to be recognized as within the

[85] "We are not doing any of this in order to catch a wave in popular culture or to get more people to come in. We are doing this because we felt motivated by our understanding of Scripture and of our own confessional tradition that maybe this *was something that God was doing that was new and it would be important for us to allow this kind of inclusion*" ("Rev. Elizabeth Eaton Speaks About Being First Female Lutheran Bishop," interview by Huffpost Live. Accessed October 16, 2018. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/rev-elizabeth-eaton-speaks-about-being-first-female-lutheran-bishop_us_5b5079c5e4b0cf38668f737e, emphasis added). See the following places where mainline Protestants use the phrase in order to justify going against biblical injunctions against homosexuality. Note that Wink even admits that this is in contradiction to Scripture. Marvin Ellison, "Practicing Safer Spirituality: Changing the Subject and Focusing on Justice," in Miguel A. De La Torre, ed., *Out of the Shadows Into the Light: Christianity and Homosexuality* (Danvers, MA: Chalice Press, 2009), 12; David N. Glesne, *Understanding Homosexuality: Perspectives for the Local Church* (Minneapolis: Kirk House, 2004), 134; Walter Wink, "Homosexuality and the Bible," in Walter Wink, ed. *Homosexuality and Christian Faith: Questions of Conscience for the Churches* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1999), 47.

> bounds of the true faith and deserving the fellowship of communion, the more the body of Christ becomes conflicted, divided, and disunified—*and the more the credibility of its witness is compromised.*[86]

As we saw earlier, for Smith, Christian revelation is primarily a higher and better set of values (i.e., the law) revealed almost exclusively through the witness of Christ. Indeed, according to Smith, the goal of Christian witness in the world should be to communicate "how best to live in any given sociocultural context."[87] Hence, the subtext of his concerns about institutional disunity is clear. By definition, commandments that cannot be put into practice are meaningless. Consequently, for Smith, the institutional weakness of the church is a significant problem since it makes the church unable to exercise an appropriate level of moral influence on society. Hence, for the sake of social and political power, Christians should abandon their doctrinal differences and get behind the effort to enforce their unique value system through stronger and more unified institutions. Therefore, in spite of the fact that Smith's theology seems to resemble something more like mainline Protestantism than Roman Catholicism, his attraction to Rome makes a great deal of sense. Rome is, after all, the most institutionally powerful and unified church and, therefore, the one best able to enforce its values.

In response to this line of reasoning, a number of observations may be made. First, the moral influence of the church over society is certainly desirable and has indeed played an extremely important role in the development of Western civilization.[88] Nevertheless, from a confessional Lutheran perspective, Smith has almost entirely misunderstood the central mission of the Christian Church. The central task of the church is to proclaim the gospel (Luke 24:47; 1 Cor 2:2). By relativizing doctrinal differences, one will inevitably lose the gospel in a sea of false doctrine. Likewise, if Smith's ideal of supreme tolerance within the church is taken to its logical conclusion (which, in all fairness, Smith does not do), the ultimate result is supreme moral indifference. Those who take such an attitude will inevitably lose not only the gospel but also the law along with it. They thereby compromise the goal of transformative cultural influence that Smith considers to be most important. When one tolerates all values, he will inevitably have none left to promote. This fact can be seen all too clearly in the fate of the mainline Protestant denominations as well as the Catholic Church under the pontificate of Pope Francis.

Smith's second major concern is the question of humility. He uses the term frequently throughout the sixth and seventh chapters. From Smith's perspective,

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[86] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 146. Emphasis added.

[87] Smith, *The Bible Made Impossible*, 148.

[88] See Rodney Stark, *The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success* (New York: Random House, 2006).

to claim that one's denominational tradition has correctly read Scripture arrogantly privileges one's own noetic capacities over all others. Yet again, Smith implies that he believes the Bible is a book read like any other book by rational and autonomous human beings.

Nevertheless, as we have already seen, the Lutheran reformers claimed that the Bible is not a book like other books. Holy Writ is clear to the extent that God himself acts as his own exegete and makes it clear by illuminating the darkened hearts and minds of sinners (1 Cor 2:14–15). Through the power of the Holy Spirit operative in law and gospel, Scripture becomes clear to the believer. Rather than puffing up the conceit of sinners, the clarity and certainty that the Spirit provides humbles sinners by revealing the truth that they are totally dead in their trespasses (i.e., the law, John 16:8–11) and wholly dependent on the work of Christ for their salvation (i.e., the gospel, see 1 Cor 1:18–31). This knowledge of God's word makes believers humble precisely because it is certain. Indeed, if this categorical message of total judgment and total grace were uncertain, the sinner would still be allowed the possibility of self-justification and, therefore, pride.

Overall, though well intentioned and containing many valid criticisms, Smith's response to the contemporary Evangelical misuse of the scriptural principle of the Reformation is not entirely adequate. Much like other conservative Protestant converts to Catholicism, Smith does not take into consideration that the Lutheran Reformation's insistence on the power of the external word provides a better solution to the problems posed by the incoherence of popular American Christianity than do Rome's claims of authority.

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Luther's Heidelberg Disputation Revisited in Light of the Philosophical Proofs

Eric G. Phillips

The year 2018 marks the five-hundredth anniversary of Luther's *Heidelberg Disputation*. Harold J. Grimm's English translation in volume 31 of the American Edition of *Luther's Works* is not quite that old, but was published in 1957. Now, sixty-one years does not make it old enough for the English to sound dated, but it is old enough for the translation to be challenged in other ways. The *Heidelberg Disputation* consists of forty theses; the first twenty-eight are theological, and the last twelve are philosophical.[1] Volume 31 includes translations of all forty theses, but it provides the proofs that Luther prepared to explain and support them only for the theological theses—not because the editors discriminated against the philosophical proofs, but because they did not have them. However, twenty-two years later, in 1979, Helmar Junghans published nine of the missing proofs, those for theses 29–37, material that had previously been mostly unknown to modern Luther scholars.

The new proofs make it clear that Grimm's translations of the philosophical theses missed a lot of their meaning. This is a problem not only for the philosophers among us, but also for anyone reading them; because, as this paper will show, an appreciation for the philosophical side of the *Heidelberg Disputation* is of some importance if one is correctly to understand the theological side too. As translated in AE 31, the philosophical theses are not very philosophical. It is easy to get the impression from them that Luther, having concluded the real work of the twenty-eight theological theses, was just trying to fulfill an assignment in which he had no real interest; throwing together some disparate, nontechnical thoughts on the subject; trying to push the buttons of anyone in the audience who liked Aristotle too much—not really *doing philosophy*. In this one-sided environment, interpreters seem inevitably to exaggerate the degree to which the theological theses are opposed to philosophy. For example, Gerhard Forde, in his influential 1997 commentary *On*

[1] Martin Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation* (1518): vol. 31, pp. 39, 41, in *Luther's Works, American Edition*, vols. 1–30, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 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 Publishing House, 2009–), hereafter AE.

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Being a Theologian of the Cross, sees the deprecated "theologian of glory," as anyone who thinks that philosophy can help him learn about God:

> Theologians of glory operate on the assumption that creation and history are transparent to the human intellect, that one can see through what is made and what happens to peer into the "invisible things of God. . . ." We can, that is, figure out something of what God is like by looking at the world he has made and how it works. The "invisible things of God" we can supposedly "see" by this operation are, in Luther's mind, such things as "virtue, godliness, wisdom, justice, goodness, and so forth." They seem to be a collection of those things humans are to strive for and that find their perfection in God, essences and qualities, both divine perfections and therefore also human goals . . . a glory road, which should eventually lead to God.[2]

Beginning with the new data from the philosophical proofs and working backward to the pivotal theological thesis 19, I will show that these are bad conclusions from the *Heidelberg Disputation*, misrepresenting Luther's actual arguments.

Theses 29 and 30, the first two philosophical theses (and not coincidentally the only two whose proofs were published between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries[3]), do not prepare the reader for much more than what modern interpreters have expected: a broadside against philosophy.

> Thesis 29: Whoever wishes to philosophize safely in Aristotle must first become thoroughly foolish in Christ.
>
> Thesis 30: Just as no one uses the evil of lust well unless he is married, so no one philosophizes well unless he is a fool, that is, a Christian.[4]

Grimm takes one small liberty in his translation of thesis 29: "without danger *to his soul*," in place of "without danger," or "safely," as I have translated it, but that does capture Luther's meaning. Grimm has no trouble with thesis 31 either: "It was easy for Aristotle to suppose that the world was eternal when the human soul, in his

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[2] Gerhard Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 72–73.

[3] "Resolvtiones Dvarvm Conclvsionvm In Dispvtatione Heidelbergensi. D. Mart. Lvtheri. 1518," in Johann Franz Buddeus, ed., *Supplementvm Epistolarum Martini Lvtheri* (Halle: Orphanotrophium, 1703), 297–298; cf. the introduction to Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation* (1518): vol. 1, p. 352, in *Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* [*Schriften*], 73 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–2009), hereafter WA.

[4] "*29. Qui sine periculo volet in Aristotele Philosophari, necesse est ut ante bene stultificetur in Christo. 30. Sicut libidinis malo non utitur bene nisi coniugatus, ita nemo Philosophatur bene nisi stultus, id est Christianus*" (Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation* [1518], WA 1:355.2–5). Here and throughout this paper, unless otherwise indicated, the translation of the *Heidelberg Disputation* is my own; it will appear in the forthcoming AE 72.

opinion, was mortal."[5] But then there are difficulties. The proof Luther offers for thesis 31 is the second-longest proof in the whole disputation, excepting only the additional proof for thesis 6 that appears at the end in WA 1:365–374 and AE 31:58–70.[6] It takes up 211 lines in the Weimar Edition. For purposes of comparison, if you add up all the lines devoted to the proofs that appear beneath each of the 28 theological theses, the tally comes to 284, an average of just over 10 lines apiece.

So, by the time we get to thesis 32, the disputation has become technical and precise in ways that Grimm (not having the proofs) was not prepared to appreciate. In thesis 31, Luther writes, "It was easy for Aristotle to suppose that the world was eternal when the human soul, in his opinion, was mortal."[7] Then in thesis 32, he writes, "Once it was accepted that there were as many Substantial Forms as composite things, it necessarily also had to be accepted that there were just as many Matters."[8] But Grimm translates, "After the proposition that there are as many material forms as there are created things has been accepted, it was necessary to accept that they are all material."[9]

There are three significant problems with this rendering. First, *substantialis* does not mean "material." It has to do with independent subsistence, not the presence of matter. And a substantial *form* in Aristotelian metaphysics is specifically the *non*material part of the substance in question. Second, *composita* are not "created things," but composite things. The rendering is lexically possible, but it leaches most of the philosophy out of the thesis, and in context, it is clearly wrong, since one of the arguments that Luther offers to prove that Aristotle considered the human soul to be mortal, is this: "Second, according to Aristotle (*Physics*, book 1), a composite is corruptible; and soul and body make up a corruptible continuum or composite, just as matter and form do. It is clear from this that his definition of the soul describes the matter and form of man."[10] Third, Luther does not say that the end result of Aristotle's premise is to make all things *materiales* (material); he says it is to postulate a number of *materias* (matters) equal to the number of substantial forms. This intention is clear in the proof that follows:

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[5] Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation* (1518), WA 1:355; cf. Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation* (1518), AE 31:41.

[6] The additional proof for thesis 6 runs 319 lines by itself.

[7] "*Facile fuit Aristoteli mundum aeternum opinari, quando anima humana mortalis est eius sententia*" (Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation* [1518], WA 1:355.6–7).

[8] "*Postquam receptum est tot esse formas substantiales quot composita, necessario et tot esse materias fuerat recipiendum*" (Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation* [1518], WA 1:355.8–9).

[9] Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation* (1518), AE 31:41.

[10] "*Secundo, quod secundum Aristotelem 1 Physicorum compositum corrumpitur, at anima et corpus sicut materia et forma faciunt corruptibile continuum vel compositum; unde et definitio animae exprimit materiam et formam hominis, ut patet*" (Luther, *Philosophical Theses of the Heidelberg Disputation* [1518], WA 59:412.6–9).

> Second, the definition of matter in book 1 of the *Physics* runs as follows: "Matter is that which is the first substratum[*subiectum*] of every single thing, from which a being comes to be." Surely this pronouncement holds that *every individual being has its own substratum,* not that all things have the same one.
>
> Third, if it is not so, we will fall back into Plato's opinion, although he is criticized by Aristotle for his matter, or chaos, in [*Metaphysics* 12.6].[11]

In other words, Luther argues that Aristotle's matter is not an undifferentiated universal substratum, but one divided into as many different substrata as there are substantial forms, and therefore as there are composite things. Neither form nor matter can have being apart from the other. By teaching this, Aristotle implied that the human soul could not continue existing once the body-soul composite of a living man had been dissolved by death. This is a clear case where Luther argues philosophically or, rather, as a *Christian* philosopher. The philosophical proofs clarify and correct misunderstandings (such as Grimm's) on his meaning in thesis 32.

Thesis 34 is another that looks very different in light of the philosophical proofs: "If Aristotle had known the absolute potency of God, he would still [*adhuc*] have maintained that it is impossible for matter to remain unformed."[12] Grimm translates, "If Aristotle would have recognized the absolute power of God, he would accordingly have maintained that it was impossible for matter to exist of itself alone."[13] *Adhuc* does not mean "accordingly," though; it means "thus far, as yet; still." And even more tellingly, Aristotle *does* maintain that it is impossible for matter to exist alone, without form. We saw that in the proof for thesis 32, and we see it again here, in different terms: "First, it is clearly the case that in creatures, it is impossible to have actuality [*actum*] without potency, as all declare. But matter is potency, and form is actuality, so they cannot be separated."[14] And notice a third problem with Grimm's translation: *potentia Dei* would seem at first glance to mean simply "the power of God," but here, just two lines later, *potentia* is one half of the

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[11] "*Secundo, quia sic explicat definitio materiae 1 Physicorum: 'Materia est id, quod est primum uniuscuiusque subiectum, ex quo aliqud fit'. Quae oratio certe id habet, quod uniuscuiusque rei est suum subiectum, non omnibus idem. Tertio, nisi sic tunc relabimur in opinionem Platonis, qui tamen reprehenditur ab Aristotele in sua materia seu caho . . .*" (Luther, *Philosophical Theses of the Heidelberg Disputation* [1518], WA 59:420.11–16).

[12] "*Si Aristoteles absolutam Dei cognovisset potentiam, adhuc impossibile asseruisset materiam stare nudam*" (Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation* [1518], WA 1:355.12–13; 59:422.11–12).

[13] Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation* (1518), AE 31:41.

[14] "*Primo sic patet, impossibile est actum esse sine potentia in creaturis, ut omnes dicunt. Sed materia est potentia, forma vero actus, ergo non possunt separari*" (Luther, *Philosophical Theses of the Heidelberg Disputation* [1518], *WA* 59:422.13–14).

metaphysical pair *actus et potentia* ("actuality and potency") and thus is not "power," but "potency," which is power of a kind, but passive, requiring *actuality* to shape it and make it real. Here Luther postulates that Aristotle's error with respect to the human soul must also adversely affect his doctrine of God. He says, "*If* Aristotle had known the absolute potency of God," because according to Aristotle, God is the prime mover, *Actus purus*—pure actuality, with no potency at all. And even if Aristotle had come to recognize this as a half-truth, and had attributed to God absolute potency as well, his insistence that the two could exist only in composition with each other would have turned the power of God into necessity instead—into potential that he had no choice but to realize—and would have made *even of him* a soul that could not exist apart from its body, the cosmos. Luther is doing real philosophy here, something you would never guess from the rendition in AE 31. We have seen two examples of it, and there are more. The philosophical proofs make a great difference in our understanding of the philosophical theses.

Now, do they have a similar impact on our understanding of the *theological* theses? We would not expect the impact to be so great, so determinative to their very *translation* as the proofs are for the philosophical theses, which they directly explain. But they were composed along with the theological theses as part of the same document and defended as part of the same academic exercise. They are two halves of the same whole, so they should shed light on each other.

Until now, this exchange has been almost entirely a one-way street. Gerhard Forde summarized the philosophical theses briefly as having been "aimed at the Aristotelian premises undergirding a theology of glory."[15] There is some truth to this characterization, but it is far too general; Luther was offering specific examples of *how* Aristotle's unchaste use of philosophy went wrong, not critiquing the foundations of "theology of glory" as a whole. And it is hardly just Forde who takes this one-way approach. Vítor Westhelle, writing in the 2014 *Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, develops the same idea at greater length:

> This distinction [between the theologian of glory and the theologian of the cross] became the sharpest expression of Luther's rejection of the dominant canons of rationality that have been accepted as ancillary partners of theology (*ancillae theologiae*) guiding and ordering the theological discourse. . . . The theses of the Heidelberg Disputation, the *locus classicus* of the *theologia crucis*, conclude with an often overlooked section on philosophy, which explains what those accepted canons were for the contemporary reader. The frequent polemical references to Aristotle (in all but three of the twelve theses) are

[15] Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross*, 105.

> figurative expressions or metonymies for speculative and rational theological constructs in general.[16]

Again, Luther is not critiquing "dominant canons of rationality," but very specific conclusions that Aristotle did not share even with most medieval Aristotelians, let alone with other philosophers. Not only does Luther do robust and serious philosophy in the last third of the *Heidelberg Disputation*, but he also praises several philosophers by name—not only in the philosophical proofs, but also even in the *theses*, which should have been a clue. He praises Plato in theses 36 and 37, Pythagoras in thesis 37, Parmenides in thesis 38, and Anaxagoras in thesis 39. And with Plato, he goes *far* beyond just giving him a good word in passing. He states in thesis 36, "Aristotle wrongly criticizes and mocks the philosophy of Platonic ideas, which is better than his own."[17] Grimm's translation is good evidence that he did not believe he was really translating *philosophical* theses: "Aristotle wrongly finds fault with and derides the ideas of Plato, which actually are better than his own."[18] He not only misses the reference to Plato's famous theory of the forms in the phrase "*Platonicarum idearum . . . philosophiam*," but he also is willing to translate *sua* as if it were a plural referring to Aristotle's generic "ideas" in order to make the mistranslation work. The word *philosophy*, to which the *sua* actually refers, does not even appear in his translation.

In the proof for thesis 36, Luther goes into explicit detail:

> That Plato's philosophy is better than Aristotle's philosophy is plain from the fact that Plato always strives for divine and immortal things, separate and eternal things, insensible and intelligible things. Because of this, he held that particular, inseparable, sensible things should be forsaken, since they could not be knowable on account of their instability. Aristotle, being opposed to him in every way, mocks those separate and intelligible things, and ascribes them to sensible and particular and entirely human and natural things. . . . Second, this kind of form is just whatness,[19] and is the whole of his metaphysics, and thus he has destroyed all the ideas already, putting in their place his own forms and whatnesses, conjoined with matter, and mocking and denying ideas separate from matter, as is clear in many passages. . . . But that Plato's ideas are separate is plain from blessed Augustine, Iamblichus, and all the Platonic

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[16] Vítor Westhelle, "Luther's *Theologia Crucis*," in Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and Ľubomír Batka, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 156–157.

[17] "*Aristoteles male reprehendit ac ridet Platonicarum idearum meliorem sua philosophiam*" (Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation* [1518], WA 1:355.16–17; 59:424.5–6).

[18] Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation* (1518), AE 31:42

[19] Or *Quiddity*.

> disputants. And so it is clear that Aristotle's philosophy crawls in the dregs of corporal and sensible things, while Plato is occupied with separate and spiritual things.[20]

Far from taking an indiscriminate wrecking ball to the philosophical knowledge of God, Luther here tells you why Plato's philosophy makes a better preparation for Christian theology than Aristotle's, and in the process, he strays into territory that Forde and quite a few others would immediately flag as "theology of glory." Namely, he demeans "the dregs of corporal and sensible things" in comparison with Plato's spiritual, separately-existing ideas.

As if that were not shocking enough, he proceeds in thesis 37 and its proof to offer a glowing description of the argument in Plato's *Parmenides* for the philosophically-derived, ultimately-transcendent-*and*-immanent conception of God that the Neoplatonists later called "the One Beyond Being":

> Thesis 37: The imitation of numbers in beings is ingeniously maintained by Pythagoras, but more ingeniously is the participation of ideas maintained by Plato.[21]
>
> The second part is clear from Plato in the *Parmenides*, whereby a most beautiful argument he draws out that first One and Idea until he takes all things away from it and leaves it to be nothing. Then he goes back and clothes that same One with all things, until nothing is left in which that One is not, and there *is* nothing that has being unless the One is implanted within. In this way, it is beyond all things, and nevertheless within all things, just as blessed Augustine also contends in *On True Religion*, bk. 1. But that peculiar participation and separation of the One, or of Idea, can be understood better than it can be expressed, and understood of number better than [of how] it truly is.[22]

If Luther engages so approvingly in this kind of theological philosophizing in the very same disputation in which he starkly distinguishes the theology of the cross and the theology of glory, then he must not think of it as theology of glory at all, at least until it takes priority over the revelation of the cross. And if it is not theology of glory to philosophize in this way, then quite a few of his modern interpreters have misunderstood what he meant.

Now, it must be acknowledged that Luther went after Aristotle so ruthlessly because Aristotle was "*the* Philosopher" in the high and late Middle Ages, the one

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[20] Luther, *Philosophical Theses of the Heidelberg Disputation* (1518), WA 59:424.8–14, 425.1–4, 425.6–9.

[21] *"Imitatio numerorum in rebus ingeniose asseritur a Pythagora, sed ingeniosius participatio idearum a Platone"* (Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation* [1518], WA 1:355.18–19; WA 59:425.11–12).

[22] Luther, *Philosophical Theses of the Heidelberg Disputation* (1518), WA 59:426.3–10.

invoked almost every time one of his contemporaries forced divine revelation to fit a shape devised by human cleverness. If there had been a rash of *Platonically*-inspired bad theology in the early sixteenth century, I have no doubt he would have written different theses that were not so favorable to Plato. And that is not just guessing on my part. Two years later, in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, we see him dismiss the authority of the ancient author Dionysius the Areopagite (modern scholarship calls him Pseudo-Dionysius, but Luther had only suspicions to go on) because "in his work *Mystical Theology* . . . he is more Platonizing than Christianizing."[23] If he had been in a different intellectual milieu, surrounded by Eastern Palamites instead of Western Thomists and Ockhamists, we might have seen a lot more of *that* kind of criticism. Christian doctrine can be warped by Plato too; Aristotle has no monopoly on that. But it is clear that Luther in 1518 finds Plato *more* amenable to the task, *closer* to the truth than Aristotle. The theses in which he criticizes Aristotle are *not* just "figurative expressions or metonymies for speculative and rational theological constructs in general," as Westhelle claims.[24] Luther has specific complaints about Aristotle and his influence on the theologians of his day, complaints that expressly do not apply to all philosophers or to philosophy in general.

This leads us to take another look at what Westhelle calls "the epistemological implications of the scandal of having a crucified God,"[25] the broad claim we meet in his article, in Gerhard Forde, in Oswald Bayer,[26] and in most treatments of the *Heidelberg Disputation's* ramifications for philosophy[27] that Luther here rejects the traditional role of philosophy as a prolegomenon to theology, and along with it any number of traditional doctrines, including but not limited to divine impassibility, immutability and eternality, and the whole category of theodicy. How could Luther do that with the theological theses and then turn right around and say such effusive things about the beautiful and all-fruitful immanence and transcendence of the Platonic One?

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[23] Luther, *Babylonian Captivity* (1520), WA 6:562.9–10; cf. AE 36:109.

[24] Westhelle, "Luther's *Theologia Crucis*," 157.

[25] Westhelle, "Luther's *Theologia Crucis*," 156.

[26] E.g., *Theology the Lutheran Way* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 26–27, especially as it connects to his discussion that follows on pp. 28–32.

[27] An example is Heino O. Kadai, "Luther's Theology of the Cross," *CTQ* 63, no. 3 (1999): 180: "In Thesis 19 Luther speaks primarily to scholastic theologians when he warns that true theologians should know better than to try to speculate about God on the basis of the created world and historical data. The 'invisible things of God,' His eternal power and deity, cannot be properly derived from a knowledge of things. Luther clearly rejects the Thomistic type of natural theology. But he does not reject a 'natural' knowledge of God. As far as Luther is concerned, to move from below to above, from creation to the Creator via *analogia entis*, is not sound theology."

And when we take this second look, we find that the philosophical theses are not the only ones mistranslated in AE 31. The heart of the *Heidelberg Disputation*'s supposed attack on philosophy's ancillary (handmaidenly) usefulness for theology is thesis 19, which in AE 31 reads, "That person does not deserve to be called a theologian who looks upon the invisible things of God as though they were clearly perceptible in those things which have actually happened [Rom. 1:20]."[28] Readers working with this translation will think that Luther is denying that the invisible things of God *can* be perceived "in those things which have actually happened." Surely that is the import of "as though." But Luther did not write "as though." The translator inserted this key phrase without any warrant from the Latin. Luther's actual words are "*Non ille digne Theologus dicitur, qui invisibilia Dei per ea, quae facta sunt, intellecta conspicit.*" ("He is not worthily called a theologian who looks upon the invisible things of God, understood through those things that have been made."[29]) The single Latin participle *intellecta* ("having been understood") has been expanded into "as though they were clearly perceptible."

If Luther had used a verb of deeming, such as *opinatur* or *habet*, instead of *conspicit* ("looks at, perceives, observes, contemplates"), then such a rendering might be lexically defensible. Yet, not only does he use a simple observing verb, but also it is the same verb found in the Vulgate version of Romans 1:20. Grimm's translation offers this reference along with thesis 19, so we can tell that Luther's allusion was not missed entirely, but it is by no means clear in AE 31 that more than half the text of the thesis is simply a quotation of that verse:

> Thesis 19: *Non ille digne Theologus dicitur, qui* ***invisibilia*** *Dei* ***per ea, quae facta sunt, intellecta conspicit****.*
>
> Rom. 1:20, Vulgate: ***invisibilia*** *enim ipsius a creatura mundi* ***per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur*** *sempiterna quoque eius virtus et divinitas ut sint inexcusabiles.*[30]

[28] Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation* (1518), AE 31:40.

[29] For comparison and by way of a second opinion, here is Alister McGrath's translation of the same thesis: "Anyone who observes the invisible things of God, understood through the things that are created, does not deserve to be called a theologian" (*Luther's Theology of the Cross* [Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1985], 202).

[30] The proof for thesis 19 quotes more of this verse (Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation* [1518], WA 1:361.34–36; cf. AE 31:52). Notice how the first two items in the following list are the two mentioned by St. Paul: "*Porro invisibilia Dei sunt virtus, divinitas, sapientia, iustitia, bonitas, etc.*" ("Furthermore, the invisible things of God are power, divinity, wisdom, righteousness, goodness, etc."). The translation in AE 31:52 ("virtue, godliness") does not reflect this.

Since Luther quotes word-for-word, we should not try to translate thesis 19 without reference to the meaning of those words in their original context. And what is St. Paul's argument in Romans 1:20?

> [19] For **what can be known about God is plain to them**, because God has shown it to them. [20] For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, **have been clearly perceived**, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. [21] For **although they knew God**, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. [22] Claiming to be wise, they became fools. (Rom 1:19–22)[31]

The only original thought Luther contributes in thesis 19—the whole substance of thesis 19, in other words—is that the people St. Paul describes in Romans 1:19–22 do not qualify as worthy theologians. The first sentence of Luther's brief proof drives this home further: "This is clear through those who were like this (*tales*), and were nevertheless called 'fools' by the Apostle in Romans 1."[32] And the people described in Romans 1 explicitly *do* perceive the invisible things of God, understanding them from "the things that have been made."

So, thesis 19 in AE 31 is not just mistranslated; it is mistranslated in such a way as to state exactly the opposite conclusion that Luther assumes about the question of whether the invisible things of God *can* in fact be understood and contemplated "through those things that have been made." Luther assumes along with St. Paul that they *can* be, but that sinners are so wrongheaded that they *still* go astray, even where they have known better, proving themselves to be hopeless fools, unworthy theologians. The tendentious insertion of the phrase "as if they were" has caused a great deal of mischief in English-language Luther scholarship since 1957.[33] In fact,

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[31] From The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Emphasis added.

[32] Luther, *Heidelberg Disputation* (1518), WA 1:361.34–36; cf. AE 31:52.

[33] Alister McGrath avoided this by translating the thesis himself (see n. 32 above), but did not call attention to the problem the way he did with Grimm's rendering of thesis 20 (see n. 39 below), probably because he had not consulted the philosophical proofs, and his own emphases fit well enough with the mistranslation. German scholarship has obviously not been hindered by the American Edition. It has also responded to the publication of the philosophical proofs with much greater alacrity than English scholarship, with a German translation published in 1989 (Gerhard Ebeling, *Lutherstudien*, vol. 2 [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1989], 472–489) and (among other studies) an in-depth commentary by Theodor Dieter in 2001 (*Der junge Luther und Aristoteles: Eine historisch-systematische Untersuchung zum Verhältnis von Theologie und Philosophie* [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001], 431–631).

the Gerhard Forde quotation from near the beginning of this article,[34] comes from his commentary on thesis 19. It begins, "Theologians of Glory operate on the assumption that creation and history are transparent to the human intellect, that one can *see through* what is made and what happens so as to peer into the 'invisible things of God.' "[35] Many readers of these words have doubtless been perplexed (as I was, the first time I read them) by the fact that Forde seems to be contradicting St. Paul on the subject, and worse, that Luther seems to support him. Until now, we have blamed this on Luther, or more likely, ceded the point in confusion. Let this be done no longer.

The man who runs afoul of thesis 19 does not deserve to be called a *theologian*, it is true. Aristotle is such a thinker—and so is Plato, despite all the approving things Luther says about him in the philosophical theses—but he might still be a good *philosopher*. And if he, unlike the semi-Pelagian scholastics in Luther's crosshairs at Heidelberg, should "become thoroughly foolish in Christ" (thesis 29), humbly accepting "the visible rearward parts of God as observed in suffering and the cross" (thesis 20),[36] he can then proceed to "philosophize safely in Aristotle" (thesis 29), or preferably in Plato (theses 36–37), and still "deserve to be called a theologian" (thesis 20). What else could Luther mean in thesis 30 when he likens a *Christian* use of philosophy to the *good* use that a married man makes of lust? There is, in fact, a good use.

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[34] See above, p. 236.

[35] Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross*, 72.

[36] As translated by Alister McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, 202. McGrath finds Grimm's translation of thesis 20 to be as bad as I find thesis 19. "Thesis 20 of the Heidelberg Disputation is ineptly translated in the standard American edition of Luther's works. . . . This translation is linguistically and theologically indefensible: *posteriora Dei* is there incompetently and incomprehensibly rendered as 'the manifest things of God,' which is a flagrant mistranslation that makes no sense within the context of Luther's emerging 'theology of the cross' " (204).

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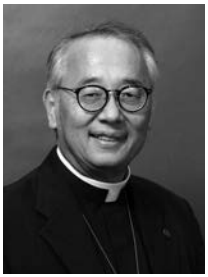

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Moral Warriors: A Contradiction in Terms?[1]

Jonathan E. Shaw

Kings, strategists, and prophets have long debated the morality of warfare. Some have viewed war as the mere exercise of power, with practitioners excused from moral liability. Others have regarded war as an intrinsic violation of human dignity, with soldiers branded as barbarians. Yet others have focused on the demands of justice to limit war, with warriors embodying those demands. Lutheran Christians have traditionally followed St. Paul in framing war within God's rule of the civil realm, with state leaders authorizing war and soldiers prosecuting war to punish evil and protect good (Rom 13:1–6). To add complexity, these categories of assessing warfare sometimes overlap.

This essay examines the morality of warfare in terms of those who fight. Is "moral warriors" a contradiction in terms? The question asks whether it is morally problematic to be a warrior, a soldier, a uniformed member of the military Services.[2] The paper offers two approaches to this question. The first is internal to the profession of arms. This approach asks: Is the very exercise of the profession of arms inherently immoral, or at least practically so? Does being a soldier and doing what soldiers must do necessarily cause moral transgression? For example, does being part of the military, exercising command authority, or, quite bluntly, killing in combat make one morally censurable?

The second approach is "interprofessional," that is, between the profession of arms and the profession of faith. This approach asks: Do the mandates of the military and the state, and the teachings of the church and her Lord, exercise authority in such a way that the service member is caught in the middle, with requirements that contradict one another? Are soldiers able to meet military requirements and live out their faith? Are chaplains able to fulfill professional officer service requirements and conduct ministry according to their ordination oaths? Confessional Lutherans would ask pointedly: Can you serve honorably, with career

[1] This essay was first delivered in an abbreviated format on January 19, 2018, at the 41st Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN. The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policy of the US Army, the Department of Defense, or the US Government.

[2] References to soldiers and the profession of arms are shorthand for all who serve in the US Army, US Marine Corps, US Navy, US Air Force, and US Coast Guard.

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viability, and be straightforward about your faith, or must you hide your faith in public, affirm same-sex marriage, compromise on unionism, and so on?

The first part of this study applies the moral-warrior question within the profession of arms. It investigates moral dimensions of the profession through the lenses of just war, moral injury, killing and the conscience, and battlefield empowerment. Here I make the case that military effectiveness and the well-being of service members require that certain moral, spiritual, and religious elements be strengthened in the service ethic, in military training, and in religious support practice. The second part considers the question between the profession of arms and the profession of faith. It reviews current moral flashpoints, advances two Lutheran confessional principles for negotiating the intersection of the realms of civil and spiritual authority, applies Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms to show the proper scope of civil and spiritual authority,[3] and examines religious freedom provisions in US law and military policy. The study concludes with a way forward to address the moral-warrior question and whether churches may with confidence send their members to serve as soldiers and their clergy to serve as chaplains.

I. Moral Challenges Internal to the Profession of Arms

Does the very exercise of the profession of arms compromise the morality of the warrior? It is important to note at the outset that the military is not a mere killing machine, but a profession of arms, providing society with a valued service through individuals trained, certified, and called to make difficult moral judgments in the exercise of that profession. For example, the US Army has five essential profession characteristics: military expertise, noble service, trust, esprit de corps, and stewardship of the profession. Soldiers put these elements into practice in their vocation.[4]

This professional practice is governed by the Army Ethic—those laws, values, and beliefs embedded in Army culture. The Army Ethic, as currently documented, asserts a legal and moral framework.[5] The Army as profession rests on legal and moral foundations, such as the US Constitution and the just war tradition. The individual as professional has legal and moral supports, such as the oath of office

[3] Nomenclature regarding Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms is fluid. The following terms tend to be used interchangeably: *kingdom* and *realm*; *left*, *civil*, and *temporal*; and *right*, *spiritual*, and *eternal*.

[4] See US Department of the Army, *The Army Profession*, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1 (Washington, DC: US Department of the Army, June 14, 2015), http://data.cape.army.mil/web/repository/doctrine/adrp1.pdf.

[5] See Table 1.

and the golden rule. But what you will not find here is any reference to the soldiers' own religious beliefs, spiritual values, or family commitments which shape their identity and empower their service.

Table 1. The Legal and Moral Framework of the Army Ethic[6]

	Legal Foundations	**Moral Foundations**
Army as Profession (Laws, values and norms for performance of collective institution)	**Legal-Institutional** • The U.S. Constitution • Titles 5, 10, 32, USC • Treaties • Status-of-forces agreements • Law of war	**Moral-Institutional** • The Declaration of Independence • Just war tradition • Trust relationships of the profession
Individual as Professional (Laws, values and norms for performance of individual professionals)	**Legal-Individual** Oaths: • Enlistment • Commission • Office USC—Standards of Exemplary Conduct UCMJ Rules of engagement Soldier's Rules	**Moral-Individual** Universal Norms: • Basic rights • Golden rule Values, Creeds, and Mottos: • "Duty, Honor, Country" • NCO Creed • Army Civilian Corps Creed • Army Values • The Soldier's Creed, Warrior Ethos
NCO noncommissioned officer U.S. United States		UCMJ Uniform Code of Military Justice USC United States Code
The *Army Ethic* is the evolving set of laws, values, and beliefs, embedded within the Army culture of trust that motivates and guides the conduct of Army professionals bound together in common moral purpose.		

[6] US Department of the Army, *The Army Profession*, Table 2-1, p. 2-3. Public domain.

Table 2. An Alternative Model for a Professional Ethic[7]

A Professional Ethic with Morals, Ethics, and Law	A Professional Ethic to Strengthen Members
Morals: • Authoritative beliefs and practices about right and wrong, good and bad (aspirational) • Deals with the character and conduct of people in actual life situations	• To achieve highest moral standards of character and conduct
Ethics: • Intellectual discipline that studies right and wrong, good and bad (scientific) • Examines how people make moral judgments	• To use critical reasoning astutely in making related moral judgments
Law: • Binding laws, rules, and policies for a community (minimum acceptable standard) • Often functions as baseline through prohibition	• To meet or exceed minimum requirements of law or policy
A Professional Ethic that Recognizes the Foundations of • The member's personal moral, spiritual, religious identity and meaning (purpose and empowerment) • Society's basis in natural law	

An alternative model for a professional ethic would include the legal and moral elements of the current expression of the Army Ethic, but add to these. The nomenclature is open to debate, but the elements are essential.[8] A professional ethic needs morals—aspirational beliefs and practices about the character of conduct

[7] This table is the author's work and draws broadly on a variety of moral and ethical frameworks.

[8] See Table 2.

of people in actual life situations. It needs ethics—an intellectual discipline for reasoning clearly and making moral judgments. It needs laws, rules, and policies—minimum, binding standards. But a military professional ethic also needs a foundation. It needs to recognize that its members do not enter as a *tabula rasa* but with their own empowering religious and moral beliefs and practices, and that the profession itself rests on a society undergirded by natural law. A profession that calls its members to be willing to make the ultimate sacrifice and to use deadly force on behalf of society would be well served to recognize and reinforce these foundations. Otherwise, the profession of arms places its warriors at grave risk of moral and spiritual harm.

Just War

The importance of recognizing and reinforcing these foundations may be illustrated from the just war tradition, using an adapted parable.[9]

> Two men went up to the temple to pray. One was a realist, the other a just war practitioner. The realist stood and prayed thus with himself, "God, I thank you that I am not like other men—those who feign piety, virtue, and values—or even like this just war practitioner. I am honest about power. 'The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.'[10] Power justifies its own use, and might makes right." And the just war practitioner, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes up to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "'War is the mournful work of sustaining relative goods in the face of greater evils.'[11] War is morally dubious and must be undertaken with greatest care and as a last resort.[12] God, be merciful to me, a part of the military instrument of national power!" I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other, for everyone who wields power exultantly will be humbled, and he who wields power humbly will be exalted.

This parable highlights the enduring moral contribution of the Western just war tradition—to restrain war and promote the state's mournful, careful application of military power, aiming at a better, more just peace. Between the extremes of "might makes right" (realism) and "peace at all costs" (passivism), the state will

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[9] The following parable is the author's work, adapted from Luke 18:10–14.

[10] Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* (5.89), in *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, ed. Robert B. Strassler, trans. Richard Crawley (New York: Touchstone, 1998), 352.

[11] Attributed to Augustine, based on his *Letter to Boniface* (189), in *Augustine: Political Writings*, ed. Ernest L. Fortin and Douglas Kries, trans. Michael W. Tkacz and Douglas Kries (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), 219–220.

[12] Michael Walzer stakes out this position in his classic *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, 4th ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

at times turn to military power to achieve "a better, more just peace" (just war tradition). God willing, justice will be served, but the warrior must still bear the human cost.

This is where the Western just war tradition runs into the problem of morality and the soldier's soul. It is what I call *jus ad se*, justice toward the self. Justice itself is a wonderful thing. Indeed, it is a gift of God. But it comes at great personal cost for the warfighter, who must coerce and take life as the instrument of the state. Thankfully, the just war tradition provides the state with *jus ad bellum*, that is, criteria for going to war justly. The state should ensure legitimate authority, just cause, last resort, just intent, and so on before committing military forces in combat. The just war tradition also gives the military *jus in bello*, that is, criteria for prosecuting a war justly. Rules of engagement must honor the criteria of discrimination and proportionality.[13] But the state rightly going to war (*jus ad bellum*) and the military rightly prosecuting war (*jus in bello*) do not address the justification that likely matters most to the warfighter (*jus ad se*). How should the warfighter justify his own violent actions to himself or to God? This is where justice must be applied to the self, to the warfighter who metes it out.[14]

Addressing the struggles of the soldier's soul requires recognizing a common moral framework against the claims of relativism. Moral objectivism makes the case for a common morality that imprints human nature. By natural or divine law, people possess reason and share a basic understanding of good and bad, right and wrong. People should follow the Golden Rule and treat others as they would like to be treated (Matt 7:12). This implies bringing comfort to the afflicted, justice to the

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[13] For a brief introduction to *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* criteria within the just war framework, see Martin L. Cook, *The Moral Warrior: Ethics and Service in the U.S. Military* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 26–34. *Jus in bello* criteria form the basic principles of the law of armed conflict: military necessity, distinction, proportionality, and unnecessary suffering. See "The Law of Armed Conflict" in *Operational Law Handbook 2015*, ed. David H. Lee (Charlottesville, VA: The Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School, 2015), 9–46, http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/operational-law-handbook_2015.pdf.

[14] I intend *jus ad se* as a just war category that (1) maintains the good and necessary nature of the soldier's service in wielding military power to achieve just ends, (2) recognizes that in so serving, the soldier immerses himself in a sinful, broken world, which can subject his conscience to severe attack, and (3) seeks justice, or personal justification, in the soul of the soldier in light of such attacks. Martin Luther's dictum, *homo incurvatus in se* (sinful man curved in on himself, and away from God and others), provides the context for the second element of *jus ad se*. On man's "curvedness," see Martin Luther, *Lectures on Romans* (1515-1516): vol. 25, pp. 291-292, 345, in *Luther's Works, American Edition*, vols. 1–30, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1976); vols. 31–55, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–1986); vols. 56–82, ed. Christopher Boyd Brown and Benjamin T. G. Mayes (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009–), hereafter AE.

oppressed, and justification to the warfighter who must practice coercion and killing for the state.

If the enduring moral contribution of the Western just war tradition is to restrain war and promote the state's mournful, careful application of military power to achieve a better, more just peace, *jus ad se* seeks that peace for the peacemaker, the warfighter.[15]

Moral Injury

If *jus ad se* reveals a just war problem in the human dimension, moral injury confirms the actual pain and suffering. The writing of Pulitzer Prize winner David Wood provides powerful documentation:

> How do we begin to accept that Nick Rudolph, a thoughtful, sandy-haired Californian, was sent to war as a 22-year-old Marine and in a desperate gun battle outside Marjah, Afghanistan, found himself killing an Afghan boy? . . .
>
> Can we imagine ourselves back on that awful day in the summer of 2010, in the hot firefight that went on for nine hours? Men frenzied with exhaustion and reckless exuberance, eyes and throats burning from dust and smoke, in a battle that erupted after Taliban insurgents castrated a young boy in the village, knowing his family would summon nearby Marines for help and the Marines would come, walking right into a deadly ambush.
>
> Here's Nick, pausing in a lull. He spots somebody darting around the corner of an adobe wall, firing assault rifle shots at him and his Marines. Nick raises his M-4 carbine. He sees the shooter is a child, maybe 13. With only a split second to decide, he squeezes the trigger and ends the boy's life.
>
> The body hits the ground. Now what?
>
> "We just collected up that weapon and kept moving," Nick explained. . . .
>
> There is a long silence after Nick finishes the story. He's lived with it for more than three years and the telling still catches in his throat. Eventually, he sighs. "He was just a kid. But I'm sorry, I'm trying not to get shot and I don't want

[15] Modern just war ethicists are generally silent on the human dimension of just war. Lieutenant General James M. Dubik, US Army (Ret.), is an exception. He has raised the issue in terms of *jus post bellum*, a nascent just war category that examines moral requirements that may apply to those who "win" wars, e.g., to restore authority, rebuild infrastructure, or provide security. See his Foreword, "Expanding Our Understanding of the Moral Dimension of War," in Nancy Sherman's recent, insightful work on moral injury: *Afterwar: Healing the Moral Wounds of Our Soldiers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), xi–xvii.

> any of my brothers getting hurt, so when you are put in that kind of situation . . . it's [expletive deleted] that you have to, like . . . shoot him.
>
> "You know it's wrong. But . . . you have no choice."
>
> Almost 2 million men and women who served in Iraq or Afghanistan are flooding homeward, profoundly affected by war. Their experiences have been vivid. Dazzling in the ups, terrifying and depressing in the downs. The burning devotion of the small-unit brotherhood, the adrenaline rush of danger, the nagging fear and loneliness, the pride of service. The thrill of raw power, the brutal ecstasy of life on the edge. "It was," said Nick, "the worst, best experience of my life."
>
> But the boy's death haunts him, mired in the swamp of moral confusion and contradiction so familiar to returning veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
>
> It is what experts are coming to identify as a *moral injury*: the pain that results from damage to a person's moral foundation. In contrast to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which springs from fear, moral injury is a violation of what each of us considers right or wrong. . . . [It] is increasingly acknowledged as the signature wound of this generation of veterans: a bruise on the soul, akin to grief or sorrow, with lasting impact on the individuals and on their families.[16]

David Wood's account is compelling, and his distinction between PTSD and moral injury is endorsed by a mountain of recent works and studies. Distinguishing between PTSD and moral injury is critical, because the military determines capabilities needed to help soldiers from its strategic requirement. If no distinction is made, then capabilities required for helping soldiers will retain the current PTSD focus, and the problem will become circular. Adapting the proverb, if all you have is a PTSD hammer, everything looks like a PTSD nail. We *need* that hammer, but also other tools.

The American Psychiatric Association offers official PTSD diagnostic criteria that run to over fifty lines of text, but also provides a simplified definition. PTSD is "an anxiety problem that develops in some people after extremely traumatic events,

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[16] David Wood, "The Grunts: Damned If They Kill, Damned If They Don't," first in a three-part series on moral injury, *Huffington Post*, March 18, 2014, http://projects.huffingtonpost.com/projects/moral-injury/the-grunts. Quotation used with the express written permission of the author. For a more comprehensive treatment of the moral injury experienced by soldiers in modern wars, see Wood's well-researched and insightful volume, *What Have We Done: The Moral Injury of Our Longest Wars* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2016).

such as combat, crime, an accident or natural disaster," often accompanied by flashbacks, nightmares, avoidance of event reminders, and severe, disruptive anxiety.[17] Symptoms include a highly mobilized state of mind and body, persistent perception of danger, chronic health problems, feelings of fear and helplessness, and alcohol and drug abuse.

Only in the last twenty-five years have experts rigorously sought to define moral injury and distinguish it from PTSD. Jonathan Shay, a medical doctor and clinical psychiatrist, launched his seminal 1994 work *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* after years of providing support for Vietnam veterans.[18] For Shay, moral injury results when a person with legitimate authority betrays "what's right" in a high-stakes situation.[19] Moral injury is a complicating overlay to physical and psychological injury. He notes, "Veterans can usually recover from horror, fear, and grief once they return to civilian life, so long as 'what's right' has not also been violated."[20]

Ten years after Shay's work appeared, Larry Dewey, chief of psychiatry at the Boise (Idaho) Veterans Affairs Medical Center and professor of psychiatry at the University of Washington School of Medicine, published his comprehensive work, *War and Redemption*.[21] It is based on his experiences spanning over twenty years in treating combat veterans diagnosed with PTSD. For Dewey, PTSD reflects physiological and psychological symptoms caused by traumatic stress, but moral injury reflects "moral, spiritual and existential pain" caused by killing, or being part of the killing enterprise, in war. This results in "estrangement from God and humanity."[22]

Edward Tick, psychotherapist and executive director of Soldier's Heart, a veterans' healing initiative, authored his groundbreaking *War and the Soul*

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[17] The simplified definition is adapted from the *Encyclopedia of Psychology*; see "Post-traumatic Stress Disorder," American Psychological Association (APA) (website), accessed August 18, 2018, http://www.apa.org/topics/ptsd/index.aspx. On diagnosis and treatment, see "What is Posttraumatic Stress Disorder?" APA (website), accessed December 7, 2018, https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/ptsd/what-is-ptsd. On changes in diagnostic criteria, see "*DSM-5* Fact Sheets, Updated Disorders, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder," APA (website), accessed December 7, 2018, https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/educational-resources/dsm-5-fact-sheets.

[18] Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (New York: Scribner, 1994).

[19] Shay, "Betrayal of 'What's Right,' " in *Achilles in Vietnam*, 3–21. In war, "when a leader destroys the legitimacy of the army's moral order by betraying 'what's right,' he inflicts manifold injuries on his men" (6).

[20] Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 20.

[21] Larry Dewey, *War and Redemption: Treatment and Recovery in Combat-related Posttraumatic Stress Disorder* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2004).

[22] Dewey, *War and Redemption*, 189.

in 2005.[23] Tick sees the arena of war as wounding the warrior's soul and entire community. For Tick, moral injury damages self-awareness, rationality, volition, aesthetics, love, intimacy, imagination, and participation in the divine. Moreover, the more unjust the war and its conduct, the greater the moral injury.[24]

An important 2009 study by Brett T. Litz and others provides a useful overview of PTSD and moral injury, establishes terms of reference, and offers a helpful conceptual framework.[25] The study finds that PTSD is triggered when death, threatened death, or serious injury affects a victim or witness so as to bring fear, horror, or helplessness. Personal safety is lost. Moral injury, on the other hand, is triggered when an event violates deeply held moral values so as to bring guilt, shame, or anger. The morally injured individual may be the perpetrator, the victim, or a witness. Personal trust is lost.[26]

Table 3. Distinctive Elements of PTSD and Moral Injury[27]

	PTSD	**Moral Injury**
Triggering Event	Actual or threatened death or serious injury	Acts that violate deeply held moral values
Individual's role at time of event	Victim or witness	Perpetrator, victim, or witness
Predominant painful emotion	Fear, horror, helplessness	Guilt, shame, anger
Physiological arousal?	Yes	No
What necessity is lost?	Safety	Trust

[23] Edward Tick, *War and the Soul: Healing Our Nation's Veterans from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder* (Wheaton, IL: Quest, 2005).

[24] "When the cause is unjust, whether it is the immediate individual action or the pursuit of an entire war, moral injury is inevitable" (Edward Tick, "Military Service, Moral Injury, and Spiritual Wounding," *The Military Chaplain* 89, no. 1 [2016]: 4–8, quote at 5).

[25] Brett T. Litz et al., "Moral Injury and Moral Repair in War Veterans: A Preliminary Model and Intervention Strategy," *Clinical Psychology Review* 29, no. 8 (2009): 695–706.

[26] See Table 3.

[27] Table 3 presents the work of the Veterans Administration's Center of Excellence for Stress and Mental Health, used by Jonathan Shay to summarize Litz et al., "Moral Injury and Moral Repair in War Veterans," in "Moral Injury," *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 31, no. 2 (2014): 182–191.

The 2012 work of Rita Nakashima Brock and Gabriella Lettini, *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War*, is noteworthy for its insights into moral injury and its critique of a related military program. For Brock and Lettini, "Moral injury results when soldiers violate their core moral beliefs, and in evaluating their behavior negatively, they feel they no longer live in a reliable, meaningful world and can no longer be regarded as decent human beings."[28] Brock and Lettini find that such guilt can arise in a broad range of circumstances, from honorable conduct in combat operations, to passive conduct in witnessing suffering, to patently immoral conduct in war crimes or prisoner abuse.

Ironically, they further find that a US Army program designed to build spiritual resilience may unwittingly deepen moral injury. They assess the Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness (CSF2) program as inculcating a spirituality devoid of conscience.[29] According to Brock and Lettini, CSF2 resilience exercises ask soldiers "to practice seeing events in a neutral light instead of labeling them as good or bad. . . . Conscience is grounded in empathy and compassion for others and the capacity to recognize what is good and to know when something is profoundly wrong." Obscuring the conscience increases moral injury, runs roughshod over religious and moral traditions, and pressures warriors to "abandon their souls."[30]

To sum up, the research shows that moral injury may overlay the physical and mental trauma of war, but moral injury must be addressed on its own terms. Any acts that violate deeply held spiritual meaning and moral values can lead directly to debilitating guilt, shame, and anxiety in the soul. This magnifies the problematic nature of omitting the soul in the service ethic. Military resilience, fitness, and medical concepts focus almost exclusively on the neurobiological. Standard PTSD treatment targets trauma to the body and mind through cognitive behavioral

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[28] Rita Nakashima Brock and Gabriella Lettini, *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012), xv. Brock is a research professor and co-director of the Soul Repair Center at Brite Divinity School, Fort Worth, TX. Lettini is Dean of Faculty, the Aurelia Henry Reinhardt Professor of Theological Ethics, and Director of Studies in Public Ministry at the Starr King School for the Ministry, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA.

[29] CSF2's stated goals include building physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and family fitness. See US Department of the Army, *Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness*, Army Regulation 350–53 (Washington, DC: US Department of the Army, June 19, 2014), https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/r2/policydocs/r350_53.pdf. CSF2 is part of the US Army's larger Ready and Resilient (R2) campaign. R2's stated goals include building mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual resilience, as measured by its Global Assessment Tool accessible only through a digitally-encoded military network. See "U.S. Army Ready and Resilient," US Army (website), accessed December 7, 2018, readyandresilient.army.mil. On the power of religion and spirituality for personal resilience, and their omission within the CFS2 and R2 programs, see Brian Koyn, "Religious Participation: The Missing Link in the Ready and Resilient Campaign," *Military Review* 95, no. 5 (2015): 2–12, https://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20151031_art017.pdf.

[30] Brock and Lettini, *Soul Repair*, 101–102.

therapy, prolonged exposure therapy, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing, and medication, but it usually bypasses moral and spiritual injury. For the well-being of service members, the service ethic must integrate the soldier's moral and spiritual foundation, and officially recognize and address moral injury.

Killing and the Conscience

Silence on moral injury may reflect a general military discomfort with all things moral, spiritual, and religious, but there is a deeper issue. The military is made for killing, but societies generally prohibit it. *Men against Fire*, an epic work on World War II combat effectiveness, illustrates how this tension can play out in war. US Army combat historian S. L. A. Marshall found that only about one quarter of American soldiers fired on the enemy when engaged in combat. He credited American morality, but questioned the combat efficiency.

> The average and normally healthy individual—the man that can endure the mental and physical stresses of combat—still has such an inner and usually unrealized resistance toward killing a fellow man that he will not of his own volition take life if it is possible to turn away from that responsibility. . . . At the vital point, he becomes a conscientious objector, unknowingly. That is something to the American credit. But it is likewise something which needs to be analyzed and understood if we are to prevail against it in the interests of battle efficiency.[31]

Dave Grossman's volume *On Killing* explores the related pain of citizens raised by a society never to kill, serving as soldiers trained to kill.[32] Grossman argues, "Killing is what war is all about, and killing in combat, by its very nature, causes deep wounds of pain and guilt."[33] Waging war necessarily presents an internal, as well as an external, struggle: "The force of darkness and destruction within us is balanced with a force of light and love for our fellow man. These forces struggle and strive

[31] S. L. A. Marshall, *Men against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command* (New York: William Morrow, 1947), 79. Some scholars have questioned Marshall's World War II data.

[32] David A. Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*, rev. ed. (New York: Back Bay Books, 2009). Grossman argues that combat is necessarily impulsive, i.e., exercised according to the impulse to defend one's life or the life of a comrade. Battle drills hinge on taking such impulses and forming effective, often lethal, "instinctive" responses. For Grossman, close-quarters killing merges experientially with the procreative act. "The link between sex and war and the process of denial in both fields are well represented by Richard Heckler's observation that 'it is in the mythological marriage of Ares [the god of war] and Aphrodite [the god of sex] that Harmonia is born' " (137).

[33] Grossman, *On Killing*, 92.

within the heart of each of us. . . . We cannot know life if we do not acknowledge death."[34]

Here our inquiry necessarily engages theology. The struggle to find life in the context of death has been documented in liturgical proclamations of the Easter resurrection for two thousand years. Grossman's quote touches the Latin antiphon *Media vita in morte sumus* ("In the midst of life we are in death"), dating perhaps from AD 750. The entire antiphon reads:

> In the midst of life we are in death;
> From whom can we seek help?
> From You alone, O Lord,
> Who by our sins are justly angered.
> Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and merciful Savior,
> Deliver us not into the bitterness of eternal death.[35]

Media vita expresses well the existential and theological struggle of soldiers who, in taking life, face their own culpability and mortality. Werner Elert calls this struggle (which may be identified as a form of moral injury) *Urerlebnis:* the primal experience of God.[36] It includes guilt from sin but grows into hostility toward God. A corrupted world leaves none uncompromised, so even "doing one's best" condemns the conscience before a hidden God who controls all and who holds each person accountable. For some, this struggle leads to the personal brokenness of contrition, which in turn makes room for the healing of forgiveness in the community of reconciliation. The wounded seek help in community before the revealed God, who brings peace by participating in their pain, taking their punishment, and overcoming it. Elert's iconic community is the Christian Church, composed of wounded sinners who find forgiveness and peace in the redemptive words and deeds of the Son of God made flesh. This is the power of religious redemption (i.e., redemption in Christ) for human reconciliation and moral healing. The morally injured soul requires authentic moral engagement.[37]

To find redemption from complicity in the brutality of war, returning warriors require rites of purification and absolution. Jonathan Shay frames Odysseus's ten-year journey home in Homer's *Odyssey* as the archetypal soldier's search

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[34] Grossman, *On Killing*, 137.

[35] Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Pastoral Care Companion* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2007), 126.

[36] Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism: The Theology and Philosophy of Life of Lutheranism Especially in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. Walter A. Hansen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 17–35.

[37] Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism*, 59–73.

for wholeness.[38] Edward Tick documents rituals from ancient Roman baths to Native American sweat lodges to US Army reintegration services, where returning warriors have sought cleansing from the corruption of war.[39] Scripture records that for ancient Hebrew soldiers returning from combat, the Lord commanded a seven-day rite of purification before they could reenter the camp (Num 31:19–24).

For Christians, the search for purification from the corruption of the flesh and the brutality of this world leads to the waters of Holy Baptism. Here, God pours out his grace in Christ, washing away all sin, bestowing life in the Spirit, and securing eternal salvation for all who hold to these promises. Wittingly or not, returning warriors beset with guilt and shame image the crucified Christ who draws them to himself in this sacrament. To atone for the sins of the world, the Son of God became man, entering into the corrupted world. He took on human sin, bore its consequences, was forsaken by the Father on the battlefield of the cross, died, and *then* was vindicated, being raised to life again. Soldiers' work is fundamentally different, but analogous. To bring in a better, earthly peace, soldiers enter a dark and corrupted battlefield of death, immerse themselves in it, do what must be done, suffer the attacks of conscience and the wicked one, and *then* seek a return to life. For Christians, this life is bestowed in Baptism, received now by faith and one day in the body at the resurrection. Holy Absolution is the quintessential healing rite for returning soldiers who are wounded in spirit: it brings Baptism into an existential moment of redemption, where sins are laid bare (confession), Christ's word works forgiveness (absolution), and life begins anew.

This consideration of religious experiences helps us sense the depth of moral injury suffered by veterans, and the possibility of an open horizon through religious, spiritual, and moral means. Notions of moral injury as mere deficiency in spiritual fitness and positive thinking are clearly inadequate.

Society needs effective warriors for its defense, but the very practice of warfighting attacks the empathy, conscience, and faith needed to sustain soldiers. This is the paradox of the moral warrior. This tension recapitulates *jus ad se*, which seeks inner peace for the peacemaker. It is a strategic military requirement to offer soldiers a way of redemption that brings help and healing for such deep wounds.

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[38] Jonathan Shay, *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming* (New York: Scribner, 2002), 1–18.

[39] Edward Tick, *Warrior's Return: Restoring the Soul After War* (Boulder, CO: Sounds True, 2014), 175–204.

Battlefield Empowerment

Moral, spiritual, and religious empowerment has long been a military strategic requirement that leaders have worked to ensure. In 1941, as the US anticipated the war that lay ahead, General George C. Marshall affirmed the operational importance of the soldier's soul:

> The soldier's heart, the soldier's spirit, the soldier's soul, are everything. Unless the soldier's soul sustains him he cannot be relied on and will fail himself and his commander and his country in the end. . . .
>
> It is true that war is fought with physical weapons of flame and steel but it is not the mere possession of these weapons, or the use of them, that wins the struggle. They are indispensable but in the final analysis it is the human spirit that achieves the ultimate decision.[40]

General William Slim similarly credited the spiritual foundation of morale over the physical and mental foundations. Reflecting on having turned the completely demoralized Fourteenth Army into an effective fighting unit in the Burma Campaign, Slim wrote,

> Morale . . . is that intangible force which will move a whole group of men to give their last ounce to achieve something, without counting the cost to themselves; that makes them feel they are part of something greater than themselves. If they are to feel that, their morale must, if it is to endure—and the essence of morale is that it should endure—have certain foundations. These foundations are spiritual, intellectual, and material, and that is the order of their importance. Spiritual first, because only spiritual foundations can stand real strain.[41]

In his 1962 Thayer Award Address, General Douglas MacArthur offered an assessment of the soldier's spirit as being anchored in the divine. After more than fifty years of military service, he concluded,

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[40] From George C. Marshall's speech on June 15, 1941, at Trinity College, Hartford, CT, as quoted in Larry I. Bland, Sharon Ritenour Stevens, and Clarence E. Wunderlin, Jr., eds., *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall*, vol. 2, "*We Cannot Delay," July 1, 1939–December 6, 1941* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 534–538, http://marshallfoundation.org/library/digital-archive/speech-at-trinity-college. General Martin Dempsey, while serving as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, echoed Marshall's view that weapons alone do not bring victory: "Iraqi security forces weren't 'driven from' Ramadi, they 'drove out of Ramadi' " (Bill Roggio, "Iraqi forces not driven from Ramadi, they drove out of Ramadi," *Threat Matrix: A Blog of the Long War Journal*, May 21, 2015, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/05/iraqi-forces-not-driven-from-ramadi-they-drove-out-of-ramadi.php).

[41] Field-Marshal Viscount Slim, *Defeat into Victory: Battling Japan in Burma and India, 1942–1945* (New York: Cooper Square, 2000), 182.

> The soldier, above all other men, is required to practice the greatest act of religious training—sacrifice.
>
> In battle and in the face of danger and death, he discloses those divine attributes which his Maker gave when he created man in his own image. No physical courage and no brute instinct can take the place of the Divine help which alone can sustain him.[42]

This strategic requirement for strength of soul cannot be relegated to the mists of history. Harold G. Koenig, Dana E. King, and Verna Benner Carson have compiled a monumental collection of peer-reviewed quantitative research demonstrating the positive correlation of religion to health: 1,200 studies from the years 1872 to 2000, and 2,100 studies from the years 2000 to 2010.[43] Over two-thirds of the studies found religious/spiritual people to be healthier, emotionally more positive, and socially more stable with lower rates of depression, suicidal ideation, and substance abuse. In a 2012 review, Koenig emphasized the requirement for spirituality within human care: "The research findings, a desire to provide high-quality care, and simply common sense, all underscore the need to integrate spirituality into patient care. . . . At stake is the health and well-being of our patients and satisfaction that we as health care providers experience in delivering care that addresses the whole person—body, mind, and spirit."[44] The US Army's own 2009 combat soldier survey, Excellence in Character, Ethics, and Leadership (EXCEL), reached similar conclusions on the operational importance of religion and spirituality to well-being and human empowerment.[45]

What Does This Mean?

In sum, the demands of justice within the warfighter, the distinctive nature of moral injury, the cost of killing accrued in the conscience, and the historic requirements of battlefield empowerment show that, for its own viability,

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[42] Douglas MacArthur, "Thayer Award Acceptance Address" (speech, West Point, NY, May 12, 1962), http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/PDFFiles/Douglas%20MacArthur%20-%20Thayer%20Award%20Address.pdf.

[43] Harold G. Koenig, Dana E. King, and Verna Benner Carson, *Handbook of Religion and Health*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[44] Harold G. Koenig, "Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications," *International Scholarly Research Notices: Psychiatry* 2012, no. 278730 (2012): 1–33.

[45] Franklin Eric Wester, "Soldier Spirituality in a Combat Zone and Preliminary Findings about Correlations with Ethics and Resilience," *Journal of Healthcare, Science and the Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2011): 67–91. Of 2,572 soldiers surveyed, 1,366 completed the spirituality portions, with 1,263 of these completed sufficiently for tabulation and analysis (72). "Three specific factors emerged as correlative and included within the domain of spirituality: connection to others, religious identification, and hopeful outlook" (84).

the profession of arms needs to provide moral, spiritual, and religious strength to the soldier.

In today's military, chaplains work hard to provide that support, and most soldiers greatly value their chaplains. Chaplains deliver the Department of Defense (DoD) Title 10 religious support and pastoral care for all soldiers, families, and authorized civilians. The chaplain team's deployed presence is essential for walking with soldiers in "the valley of the shadow" of moral injury, darkness, and death (cf. Ps 23:4), and their garrison presence is equally critical for comprehensive religious support for soldiers and families.

Chaplains are one essential part of the larger team that addresses internal moral challenges. The military Services are well known for high moral standards, rigorous discipline, teamwork built on trust, warfighting competence, and commitment to improving the profession. The profession of arms generally meets its moral challenges well, but regarding the internal moral challenges that I have highlighted here, the profession of arms has a ways to go. From the perspective *internal* to the profession of arms, "moral warriors" is not a contradiction in terms. It is a call for critical adjustments: to integrate moral, spiritual, and religious foundations into its service ethic, training, and education; and officially recognize and address moral injury.[46]

This is an assessment *internal* to the exercise of the profession of arms. We now turn to the "interprofessional" assessment, in which the profession of arms dialogues with the church.

II. Moral Challenges between the Profession of Arms and the Profession of Faith

Do the mandates of the military and the conscience of the church exercise authority in such a way that the service member is caught in the middle, with requirements that contradict each other? Can people exercise their faith with integrity and serve in the military loyally? Can confessional Lutherans serve honorably as enlisted personnel, officers, and chaplains?

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[46] For recommended critical adjustments in the areas of Army doctrine, organization, training, leader development and education, and policy, see Jonathan E. Shaw, "Integrating the Soul from War to Peace: Required Capabilities for Just War, Moral Injury, and the U.S. Army Operating Concept," in *Engagement Between Peace and War: How Soldiers and Military Institutions Adapt*, ed. William G. Braun III, Stéfanie von Hlatky, and Kim Richard Nossal (Kingston, Ontario, Canada: Queen's University Press, 2016), 71–91, required capabilities at 88–91, https://www.queensu.ca/kcis/pubID9781553396031.

Current Flashpoints

These questions are open to debate. On November 21, 2017, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's Information Center took the significant step of launching an email to its subscribers with the subject line "Religious Freedom and Military Service Becoming Incompatible." It stopped short of announcing a divorce, but it disclosed relational problems. Civil-spiritual challenges, especially for the military, make the press.[47]

On January 1, 2018, the DoD moved to allow those self-identifying as transgender to serve in the military based on a US district court judge disallowing President Trump's earlier ban. The policy moves away from physiologically and genetically based identity to the gender-marker identity as recorded in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, or DEERS. The policy, if fully implemented, would mean that if a soldier's gender marker is changed in DEERS through official processes, the soldier would use the barracks, bathrooms, and common showers associated with that gender marker, irrespective of actual genitalia.[48] This challenges biblical concepts of human identity, modesty, morality, and marriage.[49]

In 2017, US Air Force Colonel Leland Bohannon, a Christian with a biblical view of marriage, declined to sign a certificate expressing appreciation for a same-sex spouse of a retiring airman. Instead, he sought out a two-star general to sign the certificate, to give command recognition without personally violating his own faith. As a result, he was suspended from command and issued an official letter recommending that he not be promoted to Brigadier General. After many appeals, on March 27, 2018, the Secretary of the Air Force reversed the earlier substantiated finding of discrimination based on sexual orientation, expunged all derogatory

[47] The email read, in part: "The U.S. military has been heavily influenced by atheist and LGBT activist groups, and this presents challenges for LCMS military chaplains and Lutheran service members who wish to remain faithful while serving our country in the armed forces" (Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Communications Information Center, email to author, November 21, 2017).

[48] Vignette 4 of official Army training makes this point. See US Army, "Policy on the Military Service of Transgender Soldiers Training Module, Tier 3: Units and Soldiers," *YouTube*, video file, September 16, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zzx4Na3wrA4.

[49] More recent policy advisement would limit such moral effects by disqualifying the vast majority of transgender individuals from military service. See US Secretary of Defense James Mattis, "Military Service by Transgender Individuals," Memorandum for the President, Washington, DC, February 22, 2018, https://media.defense.gov/2018/Mar/23/2001894037/-1/-1/0/Military-Service-By-Transgender-Individuals.pdf.

references in Bohannon's file, and ordered a new board to consider Bohannon for promotion.[50]

In 2016, US Air Force Colonel Michael Madrid received a Letter of Admonishment from a new commander based on an investigation concluded two years before, which had charged Madrid but then cleared him of making derogatory remarks about homosexuality. The new commander wanted to press the issue. Madrid openly holds to the scriptural view of marriage.[51]

In 2013, US Marine Lance Corporal Monifa Sterling was court-martialed for refusing to obey an order to remove a religious text posted at her workspace. In asserting her religious freedom, the young Marine apparently lost her bearing and showed disrespect, but religious infringement was the presenting problem.[52]

On the pastoral front, some military chaplains have reported pressure from senior chaplains or commanders to make their public prayers, private counselings, and unit classes religiously neutral, and their chapel services unionistic. Mikey Weinstein's atheistic Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF) has brought lawsuits and threats against religious expression in the military. The MRFF seeks a military where "there is only one religious scripture: the American Constitution."[53]

Given these moral challenges between the civil government (the military) and the spiritual estate (the church), should religious communities (including confessional Lutherans) encourage their young adults to serve in the military and, more particularly, in the military chaplaincy?

First, it is important to note that most people in the military go about their duties morally, following law and policy, and this includes respecting the free exercise of religion—but a small percentage do not. Soldiers can go to chapel, discuss faith issues with friends, and keep a Bible on their desk which they read over lunch. That said, there is a growing secularism affecting military culture. Some individuals feel empowered to go beyond law and policy, and try to root out any religious expression in the public square.

I can conceive of no vocation more dependent on a proper understanding of the two kingdoms than military service. Soldiers must be spiritually empowered

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[50] For case summary and documents, see "Col. Bohannon Case," n.d., *First Liberty* (website), accessed August 18, 2018, https://firstliberty.org/cases/bohannon.

[51] For case summary and documents, see "Col. Michael Madrid Case," n.d., *First Liberty* (website), accessed August 18, 2018, https://firstliberty.org/cases/madrid.

[52] Based on Isa 54:17, the text read, "No weapons formed against me shall prosper." See Roger Drinnon, "Synod, Other Advocates Speak for Religious Liberty in Secularized Military," *Reporter* (blog), April 10, 2017, updated July 20, 2018, https://blogs.lcms.org/2017/religious-liberty-in-secularized-military.

[53] See Mikey Weinstein's quote in the header of the website for the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, accessed August 18, 2018, https://www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org.

and confident to stand in the jaws of death for the defense of the nation. Even more, chaplains as officers exercise military power through mission planning, staff coordination, and command advisement, while as clergy they exercise spiritual power through word and sacrament. Moral challenges between the profession of arms and the profession of faith could put both at risk. A proper understanding of the two kingdoms is needed.

To examine these challenges, I will raise two Lutheran confessional principles to frame the discussion, apply Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms in its historical context to show the proper scope of civil and spiritual authority, and then review US law and military policy to assess protections for military religious freedom. I will conclude with a way forward to address the question of "moral warriors" and whether churches should send their members to serve as soldiers and their clergy to serve as chaplains.

Two Confessional Principles

Two confessional principles must be honored in order for the church in good conscience to send her laity to serve as soldiers and her clergy to serve as chaplains. First, the power of the spiritual realm must not be mixed with the power of the civil realm. Second, doctrine and sacramental practice in the spiritual realm must be kept pure and unadulterated by false confession. From the standpoint of the Lutheran Confessions, these two principles are binding for Lutherans as they negotiate the intersection of the two kingdoms.

These principles are expressed in the Augsburg Confession (*Confessio Augustana*). Lutheran political authorities presented this document in 1530 to Holy Roman Emperor Charles V as a confession of their faith.[54] Article XXVIII highlights the first principle of not mixing the power of the two realms by contrasting the power of the gospel, or of bishops, with the power of the civil government, or

[54] For a discussion of the Augsburg Confession (AC) signatories and document sources, including the Marburg, Schwabach, and Torgau Articles and the involvement of Philip Melanchthon (chief author), Martin Luther, John Bugenhagen, and Justus Jonas, see F. Bente, "Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," Historical Introductions pp. 15–23 in *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, German-Latin-English*, trans. and ed. W. H. T. Dau and F. Bente (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), hereafter *Trigl.* Page numbers refer to the confessional documents section, unless preceded by "Historical Introductions," which section has its own page numbering. See also M. Reu, *The Augsburg Confession: A Collection of Sources with An Historical Introduction* (Chicago: Wartburg, 1930).

of magistrates—a principle that, admittedly, was difficult to implement in the sixteenth century.[55]

> According to the gospel, the power of the keys or the power of the bishops is the power of God's mandate to preach the gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer the sacraments. For Christ sent out the apostles with this command [John 20:21–23]: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you. . . . Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." And Mark 16[:15]: "Go . . . and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. . . ."
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> . . . Civil government is concerned with things other than the gospel. For the magistrate protects not minds but bodies and goods from manifest harm and constrains people with the sword and physical penalties. The gospel protects minds from ungodly ideas, the devil, and eternal death. Consequently, the powers of church and civil government must not be mixed.[56]

The second principle is implied by the first: doctrine and sacramental practice in the church must be kept pure and in agreement with the Word of God. Article VII defines the church in terms of purity of gospel preaching and sacramental administration.

> There must at all times be and remain one holy Christian Church, which is the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel. For it is sufficient for the true unity of the Christian Church that the gospel be unanimously preached there in its pure understanding and that the sacraments be administered in conformity with the divine word.[57]

One might well trace the development of these principles from Jericho (Josh 6) to Worms,[58] in a three-thousand year history of the interface of the two kingdoms in clergy and chaplain support to soldiers. That valuable account is beyond the scope

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[55] James D. Tracy, "Magistracy: Germany and the Low Countries," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 2:487–493.

[56] AC XXVIII 5–7, 11–12 Latin, p. 93 in Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. Charles Arand et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), hereafter KW.

[57] AC VII 1–2 German (*Trigl.*, 46), my translation. Article X of the Solid Declaration (SD) of the Formula of Concord (FC) reasserts this as agreement "in the doctrine and all its articles, also in the right use of the holy Sacraments" (FC SD X 31 in *Trigl.*, 1063). Here, "the doctrine" refers to the central doctrine of justification. On the related divine right of the office of bishop, see AC XXVIII 21–22.

[58] On the Diet of Worms of 1521, a congress of the Holy Roman Empire, see Rainer Wohlfeil, "Worms, Diet of," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, 4:300–301.

of this study. What is nonnegotiable for the Lutheran understanding of the two kingdoms, however, is the political context beginning in 1519 with Charles V.

Luther's Two Kingdoms in Historical Context

In 1519, when the electors of the Holy Roman Empire chose nineteen-year-old Charles as the new emperor, he inherited an empire with a weak central government. He was determined to build a Christian political dynasty supported by the Roman Catholic Church, but he never achieved his vision. Pope Leo X had opposed the choice of Charles over Francis I, but Leo had taken some solace in the fact that Charles was of the Hapsburg line and so could be expected to rein in Luther, the German. When this did not happen, the pope took matters into his own hands and condemned Luther of heresy in the June 1520 papal bull *Exsurge Domine*. Luther reached out to Charles V (along with the German princes) with his pamphlet *An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility* (1520),[59] calling for reform and the right use of political authority, but Charles would not sign up. The German people sided with Luther against the pope and Elector Frederick III of Saxony insisted that Luther be given a fair hearing, so Charles agreed that Luther's case would be considered at the 1521 Diet of Worms.[60]

In the edict that followed, Charles V enforced the papal bull against Luther, declared him guilty of heresy, and placed him under the imperial ban, depriving him of civil protections within the empire. But the emperor could enforce this ban only in Roman Catholic territories and in cities directly under imperial control, not in Electoral Saxony where Frederick the Wise could protect Luther, nor in other evangelical territories—such was the nature of the decentralized Holy Roman Empire. The Edict of Worms did not achieve the success for which Charles had hoped.[61] Now Luther, excluded from the established church and state (at least at the national level), was forced to find an alternative construct for living in both kingdoms.

Following Worms, the Lutheran princes faced massive church-state challenges. Luther had personally defied the emperor's authority, Luther's followers in some

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[59] Luther, *An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estates* (1520), AE 44:123-217.

[60] On the chain of events leading from the 1519 election of the emperor through the 1521 Diet of Worms, see Harold J. Grimm, "Luther's Break with Rome," in *The Reformation Era: 1500–1650*, 2nd ed. (New York: MacMillan, 1973), 99–116.

[61] Additional political maneuvering occurred in the background. Before signing the edict, Charles V secured the promise of needed aid from the estates to prosecute the war against Francis. In return, he restored the council of regency, increasing territorial powers (Grimm, *Reformation Era*, 115–116).

places were forbidden to read his books, and the limits of spiritual and political authority seemed unknowable. Elector John of Saxony asked Luther to address these critical topics, and Luther responded in his treatise *Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed* (1523).[62] It is hard to overstate the significance of the treatise. It countered the Roman Catholic claim to be the source of both civil and spiritual authority by distinguishing the power and goal of each, setting a moral arc for the Western differentiation of church and state.

In *Temporal Authority*, Luther examines the distinctive nature and purpose of the two kingdoms. To begin, he divides humanity into two parts. First are the "true believers who are in Christ and under Christ."[63] They have heard the gospel, they have Christ's Spirit, and they belong to the kingdom of God. As regards themselves, they have no need of any civil government, law, or punishment. Later, Luther and his heirs would clarify that Christians still need to be taught God's law and are subject to civil laws, being righteous and at the same time sinners (*simul justus et peccator*).[64] But in 1523, Luther comments,

> The righteous man of his own accord does all and more than the law demands. . . . I would take to be quite a fool any man who would make a book full of laws and statutes for an apple tree telling it how to bear apples and not thorns, when the tree is able by its own nature to do this better than the man with all his books can describe and demand. Just so, by the Spirit and by faith all Christians are so thoroughly disposed and conditioned in their very nature that they do right and keep the law better than one can teach them with all manner of statutes; so far as they themselves are concerned, no states or laws are needed.[65]

Moreover, Christians patiently bear the unkindnesses of others, as regards themselves, without turning to the law for vengeance.[66] "This is also why Christ did not wield the sword, or give it a place in his kingdom. For he is a king over Christians and rules by his Holy Spirit alone, without law."[67]

Luther also distinguishes a second group, "all who are not Christians," which includes those who are Christians in name only.[68] They have refused to believe the

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[62] Luther, *Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed* (1523), AE 45:81–129. See the fine editorial introduction by Walther I. Brandt, AE 45:77–80.

[63] Luther, *Temporal Authority* (1523), AE 45:88.

[64] Luther, *Against the Antinomians* (1539), AE 47:109, 112–113; FC Ep VI 4.

[65] Luther, *Temporal Authority* (1523), AE 45:89.

[66] Luther refers here to Matt 5:38–41.

[67] Luther, *Temporal Authority* (1523), AE 45:93.

[68] Luther, *Temporal Authority* (1523), AE 45:90.

gospel, to follow its call for mercy, and to resist evil. These people belong to the kingdom of the world and are under its coercive law.

> [God] has subjected them to the sword so that, even though they would like to, they are unable to practice their wickedness, and if they do practice it they cannot do so without fear or with success and impunity. In the same way a savage wild beast is bound with chains and ropes so that it cannot bite and tear as it would normally do, even though it would like to.[69]

Based on this two-fold anthropology, Luther argues that each kingdom has its own purpose. In the kingdom of God (the spiritual realm), the Holy Spirit is active through the preaching of the gospel to produce Christians who stand righteous before God. In the kingdom of this world (the civil realm), God is active in a hidden way through temporal law and punishment to restrain evil and achieve a measure of external peace. Without the spiritual, the world would produce hypocrites at best. Without the civil, anarchy and chaos would ensue.[70]

With such a stark distinction between the two kingdoms, why would a Christian serve as a soldier or participate in other civic duty? Certainly not to bring in the kingdom of God, for only the internal power of the preached gospel can do that. Perhaps he would do so to contribute to a more moral society, even though laws and punishments are finally only coercive, modifying behavior somewhat, but leaving untouched the corrupt inner man.[71]

What moves the Christian to serve in the kingdom of the left, as Luther sees it, is the love of Christ. The obedience of his holy life, the bitterness of his atoning sacrifice, and the glory of his justifying resurrection have freed Christians from the bonds of sin and death and made them citizens of the kingdom of God. Christians willingly bend low to serve others in the kingdom of this world. They do this because they desire to help others, reflecting the love first shown them. For Luther, this explains why the apostles regularly preach obedience to earthly authorities.

> Because the sword is most beneficial and necessary for the whole world in order to preserve peace, punish sin, and restrain the wicked, the Christian submits willingly to the rule of the sword . . . serves, helps, and does all he can to assist the governing authority. . . . Just as he performs all other works of love which he himself does not need—he does not visit the sick in order that he himself may be made well, or feed others because he himself needs food—so he serves

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[69] Luther, *Temporal Authority* (1523), AE 45:90.

[70] Luther, *Temporal Authority* (1523), AE 45:91–92.

[71] Even in the field of moral philosophy, law generally assumes only a baseline function, articulating minimum acceptable standards, without raising humanity to aspirational levels.

> the governing authority not because he needs it but for the sake of others, that they may be protected and that the wicked may not become worse. . . . If he did not so serve he would be acting not as a Christian but even contrary to love.[72]

On this basis, Luther encourages all Christians to serve the state dutifully, wherever they are qualified, be it in government or the military, or simply as honorable citizens. He cites the example of holy martyrs who waged war under pagan Roman emperors to secure peace. The Christian undertakes such service not for the sake of wielding power or seeking revenge, but "for the good of your neighbor and for the maintenance of the safety and peace of others."[73]

Luther's reference to the holy martyrs bears further comment. Extant sermons show that St. Augustine and others taught that parishioners should fight alongside Roman soldiers as an expression of Christian love, in defense of their neighbors' safety, and in support of Roman authority. This occurred even though the Roman army frequently sacrificed to pagan gods. Accounts record that Christian soldiers served loyally but refused to offer such sacrifices. During persecution, the emperor sometimes ordered the torture or decimation of Christian soldiers. The most extreme case is said to have occurred in AD 286, when the entire Theban Legion—numbering at least 6,600 Christian soldiers—was martyred under Emperor Maximian.[74]

To summarize, in his 1523 treatise *Temporal Authority*, Luther praises the civil realm as a great gift of God. It wields external power to restrain evildoers and secure external peace. The limit of temporal authority is that it applies only to external things—the human body and property—and has no power in the spiritual realm. In the spiritual realm, the gospel alone rules, bringing salvation in Christ. The limit of spiritual authority is that it applies only to internal things—faith and matters of conscience—and has no power to rule in the temporal realm. Although the coercive power of temporal authority does not properly apply to the Christian as new man,

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[72] Luther, *Temporal Authority* (1523), AE 45:94. Here, Lutheran orthodoxy's third use of the law finds traction in Luther's theology: the Christian places himself under the law for the sake of others, including the wicked, which includes his own sinful flesh.

[73] Luther, *Temporal Authority* (1523), AE 45:96.

[74] Luther, *Temporal Authority* (1523), AE 45:99. See n. 44 in the Luther text, in which the editor relates the account of the martyrdom of 66,000 Christian soldiers serving under the Roman emperor Maximian Herculius (AD 285–310). They were willing to serve under Caesar but refused to sacrifice to the pagan gods. Most other sources list the number at 6,600 or 6,666, closer to the typical 6,000-man Roman legion. Biblical numerology may explain the discrepancy conveyed in certain accounts. In biblical numerology, the number ten symbolizes perfection and the fullness of God's law. In this case, the actual number of soldiers (6,600) multiplied by the number of perfection (10) would yield that victory in Christ fully realized in the martyrdom of the Theban Legion (66,000).

still Christians honor the temporal authority and, where qualified, serve in positions of authority and use its sword out of Christian love in service to others.[75]

Table 4. The Exercise of Power in Luther's Two Kingdoms[76]

	Kingdom of Left/Civil	**Kingdom of Right/Spiritual**
Type of Power	Hard Power / Coercive Law	Soft Power / Gospel Word
Principles	Order and Justice	Faith and Love
Authority over	Externals: Body / Works	Internals: Soul / Faith
Produces	External Peace • Prevents, punishes evil deeds • Protects the good	Internal Righteousness of Faith • Brings eternal salvation • Serves others in love
Citizens	The Unregenerate ~ "Resident Aliens" ◄	The Faithful serving in freedom and love
How God Rules	As Hidden	As Revealed

Luther's counsel to Elector John in *Temporal Authority* largely guided Lutheran princes, but not emperor or pope. When Charles V issued his 1530 summons for the Diet of Augsburg, his dual purpose was to enlist the Lutherans to fight the Turkish forces invading Europe and to resolve theological differences by preserving the "single, true religion."[77] In the summons, he brought these two purposes into one, key sentence: "For just as we are all under one Christ and fight, so also we are all to live in one communion, church, and unity."[78] For the emperor, both purposes were cut from the same cloth—being under one Christ to fight the enemy Turk implied living in a single, united church.

For the Lutherans, this was a confusion of the kingdoms. It is true that at Augsburg, the Lutherans hoped to gain consensus in the gospel. Failing that, they would assert freedom to live in their own territories with the gospel purely preached and sacraments rightly administered. But from the Lutheran perspective, a

[75] See Table 4.
[76] This table is the author's work.
[77] AC Preface 1–3 German (KW, 30).
[78] AC Preface 4 German (*Trigl.*, 38), my translation.

theological break did not itself rule out marching side by side with imperial forces to drive the Turk from Europe.

This context drives the Augsburg Confession's distinction of the kingdoms. In the spiritual realm, the proper work of the office of bishop is "to preach the gospel, to forgive sin, to judge doctrine and reject doctrine that is contrary to the gospel, and to exclude from the Christian community the ungodly whose ungodly life is manifest—not with human power but with God's Word alone."[79] Within the spiritual office, there is no room for accepting false doctrine or misleading sacramental practice,[80] nor for using coercive, temporal authority.[81]

In the civil realm, the proper work of government and princes is to protect "body and goods against external violence."[82]

> All political authority, orderly government, laws, and good order in the world are created and instituted by God. . . . Christians may without sin exercise political authority; be princes and judges; pass sentences and administer justice according to imperial and other existing laws; punish evildoers with the sword; wage just wars; serve as soldiers; buy and sell; take required oaths; possess property; be married; etc.[83]

Regarding the emperor, the Augustana lauds his power as instituted by God, worthy of obedience, and vital for justice,[84] but faults the Roman Catholic bishops for introducing false doctrine and usurping civil power.[85] The 1531 Apology of the Augsburg Confession makes explicit that the Lutherans were willing to unite under the emperor and his God-given, temporal authority, but they objected to the opponent bishops' prerequisite that the Lutherans compromise the truth of the gospel.

> We greatly wish for public harmony and peace. . . . We do not wish to differ with His Majesty the Emperor, whom we revere not only on account of the dignity of the imperial office but also on account of the truly heroic virtues with which we have known him to be endowed. However, the opponents do not permit us to unite in peace except under the condition that we agree with those who condemn the manifest truth of the gospel, which the church

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[79] AC XXVIII 21 German (KW, 94).

[80] AC VII 1–2.

[81] "However, where bishops possess secular authority and the sword, they possess them not as bishops by divine right but by human, imperial right, given by Roman emperors and kings for the secular administration of their lands. That has nothing at all to do with the office of the gospel" (AC XXVIII 19 German [KW, 94]).

[82] AC XXVIII 11 German (KW, 92).

[83] AC XVI 1–2 German (KW, 48).

[84] AC XVI 1–2, 5–7; AC XXVIII 11.

[85] AC XXVIII 1–3, 12–19, 34–37.

> needs. This we cannot do. For "we must obey God rather than any human authority" [Acts 5:29]. Therefore the opponents, who by a new and unheard-of cruelty are destroying the churches, will have to render to God an account of the schism. Nor is there any doubt that this cruelty will produce some change in public affairs.[86]

In short, the Augsburg Confession follows Luther's treatise *Temporal Authority* in requiring the purity of the gospel, honoring proper temporal authority, and in rejecting the intrusion of power from one kingdom into the other—of secular authority into the internal matters of faith and conscience, or of spiritual authority into the external matters of civil rule and coercive force. Here we have returned to the two confessional principles cited earlier. For the church to send members to serve as soldiers and clergy to serve as chaplains, first, the power of the spiritual realm must not be mixed with the power of the civil realm. Each kingdom must exercise its power properly, in its own realm. Second, doctrine and sacramental practice in the spiritual realm must be kept pure and unconstrained.

Protections under US Law and Military Policy

We now must ask: Do American protections align with these principles? The First Amendment to the US Constitution protects the freedom of religion as a fundamental right: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."[87] The establishment clause forbids governmental authority from mandating a religion or form of spirituality. The civil realm must remain religiously neutral. For example, commanders cannot legally direct soldiers to attend Christian services or pray the Lord's Prayer, and neither can they legally direct chaplains to pray generic prayers to sanction a generic spirituality.

The free exercise clause, the second part of the First Amendment, guarantees individuals the right to believe and practice what their religion requires and their conscience dictates. The free exercise clause forbids governmental authority from prohibiting individuals from exercising their faith. Positively, the civil realm must give deference to religious exercise. This is why the US Congress and federal courts have consistently recognized the necessity of the military chaplaincy for ensuring the religious free exercise rights of service members.[88] It would be

[86] Ap XXVIII 24–25 (KW, 292).

[87] US Constitution, Amendment I.

[88] Katcoff v. Marsh, 755 F.2d 223, 234 (2nd Cir. 1985). In an important challenge to the constitutionality of the military chaplaincy, the Second US Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the

absurd if those charged with defending the US Constitution with their lives could not enjoy its free exercise provision.

It is important to note that the military chaplaincy helps protect the establishment clause by requiring ministry given inside the DoD to be done according to normative standards that come from outside the DoD. This means that chaplains are expected to preach, teach, pray, and counsel according to the standards of their endorsing religious organizations. If the military set the faith standards for religious support, this would violate the establishment clause.

Recent National Defense Authorization Acts (NDAAs) passed by the US Congress further strengthen the freedom of religion of service members and the chaplains who serve them.[89] NDAA 2013 includes Section 533, "Protection of Rights of Conscience of Members of the Armed Forces and Chaplains of Such Members."

> The Armed Forces shall accommodate the beliefs of a member of the armed forces reflecting the conscience, moral principles, or religious beliefs of the member and, in so far as practicable, may not use such beliefs as the basis of any adverse personnel action, discrimination, or denial of promotion, schooling, training, or assignment.
>
> No member of the Armed Forces may require a chaplain to perform any rite, ritual, or ceremony that is contrary to the conscience, moral principles, or religious beliefs of the chaplain; or discriminate or take any adverse personnel action against a chaplain, including denial of promotion, schooling, training, or assignment, on the basis of the refusal by the chaplain to comply with a requirement prohibited by paragraph (1).[90]

NDAA 2014 places into law three related sections that further strength the provisions of NDAA 2013 for military religious freedom and chaplain religious integrity. Section 532, "Enhancement of Protection of Rights of Conscience of Members of the Armed Forces and Chaplains of Such Members," requires the Secretary of Defense to consult with military faith-group chaplain endorsers before changing any DoD policy instruction on religious freedom. Section 533, "Inspector General Investigation of Armed Forces Compliance with Regulations for the Protection of Rights of Conscience of Members of the Armed Forces and Their Chaplains," requires an investigation and report on any "adverse personnel actions, discrimination, or denials of promotion, schooling, training, or assignment

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chaplaincy was constitutional, since it was the government's mechanism to ensure the free exercise of religion for those in the armed forces.

[89] Such protections under law are not necessarily new but may be included within NDAAs to demonstrate congressional commitment and ensure continuing compliance.

[90] *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013*, H.R. 4310, Public Law 239, 112th Congress, 2nd sess. (January 2, 2013), 97, excerpts.

for members of the Armed Forces based on conscience, moral principles, or religious beliefs." Section 534, "Survey of Military Chaplains Views on Defense Policy regarding Chaplain Prayers Outside of Religious Services," required the Secretary of Defense to survey military chaplains on "restrictions placed on prayers offered in a public or non-religious setting," to assess if chaplains had been hindered in exercising their faith and if service members and their families had been hindered in receiving religious support.[91]

Citing these laws, the NDAA 2018 Senate Report directs the Secretary of Defense to consult with the military Chiefs of Chaplains and "develop curriculum and implement training concerning religious liberty in accordance with the law. Recipients of this training should include commanders, chaplains, and judge advocates."[92]

On the executive branch side, on October 6, 2017, the Attorney General issued rigorous guidance to ensure federal religious freedom protections applicable to the DoD. The twenty-five-page memorandum quotes James Madison, arguing that religious liberty is "precedent, both in order of time and in degree of obligation, to the claims of Civil Society."[93] It lays down twenty principles for accommodating all religious practices in government activities to the greatest extent permitted by law. It also provides detailed guidance on the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 (RFRA), which requires strict scrutiny for "substantially burdening any aspect of religious observance or practice."[94] In sum, the memorandum protects religious freedom and guards against the federal government encroaching into spiritual matters.

DoD Instructions (DoDIs), the top level of military policy publications, further reinforce religious freedom in the military. DoDI 1300.17, *Accommodation of Religious Practices Within the Military Services*, affirms, "DoD places a high value on the rights of members of the Military Services to observe the tenets of their respective religions or to observe no religion at all." It requires the Services

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[91] *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014*, H.R. 3304, Public Law 66, 113th Congress, 1st sess. (December 26, 2013), 89–90, excerpts.

[92] *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018*, Report 125, S. 1519, 115th Congress, 1st sess. (July 10, 2017), 149–150.

[93] US Attorney General Jeff Sessions, "Federal Law Protections for Religious Liberty," memorandum for all Executive Departments and Agencies, Washington, DC, October 6, 2017, https://www.justice.gov/crt/page/file/1006786/download. James Madison cited from "Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments" (June 20, 1785), in Philip B. Kurland and Ralph Lerner, eds, *The Founders' Constitution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 5:82 (Sessions, "Federal Law Protections for Religious Liberty," 1).

[94] On RFRA, see Sessions, "Federal Law Protections for Religious Liberty," 3–6, 5a–15a, quote at 3.

to "accommodate individual expressions of sincerely held beliefs," subject to the limits of military necessity. Where a service member's free exercise of religion would be substantially burdened, RFRA's strict scrutiny standards must be met:

> Requests for religious accommodation from a military policy, practice, or duty that substantially burdens a Service member's exercise of religion may be denied only when the military policy, practice, or duty furthers a compelling governmental interest, [and] is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest.[95]

DoDI 1304.28, *Guidance for the Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments*, sets forth DoD policy on appointing chaplains "to represent their religious organizations to the Military Departments." A chaplain is defined as "an individual endorsed to represent a religious organization and to conduct *its* religious observances or ceremonies."[96] This means that military chaplains represent the churches or religious organizations that endorse them, and conduct the religious observances and rites of those churches or religious organizations in the military context.

Religious protections of the Constitution, federal law, and DoDIs are also elaborated in Service-specific regulations and manuals. Army Regulation 165–1, *Religious Support: Army Chaplain Corps Activities*, well represents Service-level religious support policy.

> Chaplains are required by law to hold religious services for members of the command to which they are assigned, when practicable. Chaplains provide for religious support, pastoral care, and the moral and spiritual well-being of the command. . . .
>
> Chaplains will perform their professional military religious leader ministrations in accordance with the tenets or faith requirements of the religious organization that certifies and endorses them.
>
> Chaplains will not be required to perform a religious role . . . in worship services, command ceremonies, or other events, if doing so would be in variance with the tenets or practices of their faith.[97]

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[95] US Department of Defense, *Accommodation of Religious Practices Within the Military Services*, Department of Defense Instruction 1300.17 (Washington, DC: US Department of Defense, February 20, 2009, as amended), 2–3.

[96] US Department of Defense, *Guidance for the Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments*, Department of Defense Instruction 1304.28 (Washington, DC: US Department of Defense, June 11, 2004, as amended), 11, my emphasis.

[97] US Department of the Army, *Religious Support: Army Chaplain Corps Activities*, Army Regulation 165–1 (Washington, DC: US Department of the Army, June 23, 2015), 7–8.

Where soldiers require religious support based on a different faith, the chaplain facilitates support through another chaplain or other resource in accord with the policy: "Chaplains cooperate with each other, without compromising their religious tradition or ecclesiastical endorsement requirements, to ensure the most comprehensive religious support opportunities possible within the unique military environment."[98]

This legal and policy review has shown remarkable protections for military religious freedom and chaplain service, and for the spiritual realm against civil realm encroachments. What we have not seen is concern for protecting the civil realm against spiritual realm encroachments.[99] Gone is sixteenth-century Europe, where confessional Lutherans confronted a religious authority threatening a double encroachment: first, of using papal armies against civil authorities toward religious ends and, second, of requiring doctrinal compliance (against the gospel, as the Lutherans saw it) before allowing a military alliance against a common enemy. This significant change in the strategic environment, with the spiritual realm emptied of coercive force, largely explains a constitutional lack of concern for spiritual realm encroachment into the civil realm. But there is more: far from a threat, the Founding Fathers saw religion as a critical reinforcement for morality in the body politic. They expected individuals to live out their faith in the public square and to effect moral ends—not by coercive force, but by moral persuasion.

To Serve or Surrender

The review of US constitutional, legal, and policy protections *for* religious free exercise and *against* civil power infringement into religious matters is encouraging. Military members and their chaplains should be able to serve with integrity and meet Service requirements while living out their faith.

That said, there remain the troubling aspects of a few well-publicized individual free exercise infringements, some reports of pressure on chaplains to compromise their faith in ministering to soldiers, certain same-sex and nascent transgender policy issues, and a military culture that is increasingly wary of religious expression in the public square. Some of these problems can be attributed to aggressive individuals going beyond policy, sometimes on both sides of the equation. Chaplains enjoy robust legal protections for their faith-based ministry, but may experience repercussions if they exercise them. The 2013 Supreme Court overturning of the Defense of Marriage Act means that commands will continue

[98] US Department of the Army, *Religious Support: Army Chaplain Corps Activities*, 1.

[99] Only a few voices, such as the MRFF and certain liberal lobbies, have argued that soldiers publicly living out their faith encroach on civil realm authority or neutrality.

to honor the career sacrifices of same-sex military and their spouses, and provide equal marriage benefits. Leaders with a biblical view of marriage will need to find ways to ensure command support without violating their own faith. Plans for integrating transgender individuals into the military will challenge those with biblical concepts of moral identity grounded in the physiological, gendered gifts of God. Citizens will need to engage political representatives to preclude transgender soldiers from sharing open showers irrespective of genitalia. Chaplains will need to press forward with the healing word of the gospel for those who suffer. The problem of an increasingly secularist culture will continue—inside and outside the military—but in the profession of life-and-death ground combat, soldiers generally seek a word of grace over political correctness. Troops have an instinctual connection with the Christ, who shows that greater love has no one than this, than to lay down his life for a friend (John 15:13).

The moral challenges I have highlighted will undoubtedly cause some laity and clergy to say no to military service. That will be as it is and, perhaps, here discretion is the better part of valor. Not all are cut out for military service with its warrior ethos and pluralistic setting. Moral challenges will be present for Christian soldiers and the chaplains who serve them. Indeed, there will be friction wherever the word is brought to bear in the world. The servant is not above the Master (John 15:20). We are baptized into his cross, for our own purification and as the testimony of his body to the world.

But why would we *not* encourage our members to serve as soldiers, and our clergy to serve as chaplains? Our legal protections align well with the Lutheran confessional principles of not mixing the powers of the spiritual and civil realms, and of enabling doctrine and sacramental practice to be kept pure. No one can meet the requirements of the profession of arms better than soldiers with strong faith and fortitude. Christian soldiers are baptized into the righteousness of Christ to stand with firm confidence before God, and to serve with sacrificial love in vocation. Who could be better prepared to meet the demands of justice within the warfighter, the spiritual strife of moral injury, the cost of killing accrued in the conscience, and the historic requirements of battlefield empowerment? And what an honor for the chaplain to walk with those called by God to serve in the valley of the shadow, to bind up their moral and spiritual wounds, to minister the sword of the Spirit and the sacrificial gifts of Christ.

From the warrior perspective, there is only one choice: bring your best to the fight, or surrender the battle to the weaker. If you do not send the best to serve as a

soldier or chaplain, those military positions will of necessity be filled, but by others less spiritually formed for the fight.[100]

And if culture or even civil authority extracts a personal cost for such service, we must consider it little compared to the 6,600 of the Theban Legion, or to the countless other Christian soldiers who served in pagan armies to protect neighbor and honor civil authority, fulfilling all military duties up to the point of sacrificing to false gods, which they would not do, for they did not love their lives unto the death (cf. Rev 12:11).

It turns out "moral warrior" is not a contradiction in terms. It is a description of our life in Christ. The epic Epiphany battle hymn applies:

> From God the Father, virgin born
> To us the only Son came down;
> By death the font to consecrate,
> The faithful to regenerate.
> Lord, once You came to earth's domain
> And, we believe, shall come again;
> Be with us on the battlefield,
> From ev'ry harm Your people shield.[101]

[100] This is what I call the "Scott Simpson Argument." Scott E. Simpson is a graduate of the US Military Academy (West Point), an LCMS clergyman, and a US Army chaplain. He currently serves as Theater Security Cooperation Chaplain, US Army Central. The Simpson Argument summarizes the more comprehensive Simpson Rule, composed of three assumptions, the Rule itself, and second and third order effects. The Rule establishes the duty to serve out of love for the neighbor. Clergy must be rigorously educated, pastorally shaped, and physically fit.

[101] "From God the Father, Virgin-Born," in Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 401:1, 5. The text of this hymn is in the public domain.

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Theological Observer

A Response to Day-Age Creationism

In an article in the Summer 2017 issue of *Concordia Journal*, John Jurchen explained the position known as old earth creationism or day-age creationism.[1] Here I would like to respond to the idea of old earth creationism. There will also be limited discussion of another position: theistic evolutionism or evolutionary creationism.[2]

The proposal by day-age creationists and theistic evolutionists that each of the days mentioned in Genesis 1 and 2 was an era consisting of millions or billions of years is generally due to one of two reasons. One reason is to allow for evolution, as does theistic evolutionism. The other is to accommodate, as does old earth creationism, a "scientific" analysis of the available evidence (including the fossil record and evidence from the fields of geology and astronomy) which concludes that the earth is billions of years old.

By "evolutionism," I do not mean belief in microevolution (changes within a species), which has occurred. Rather, the term *evolutionism* in this article refers

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[1] John Jurchen, "The Age of the Earth and Confessional Lutheranism: Speaking the Truth in Love," *Concordia Journal* 43, no. 3 (2017): 64–74. To be clear, my article *is not* an attack on Jurchen or his article. Jurchen wrote a letter on January 6, 2018 (printed in the Winter 2018 issue of *Concordia Journal* [44, no. 1, pp. 13–14]), in which he stated, "A Young Earth Creation perspective with six normal days is taught throughout the clear Word of God"; "I consider the 5th article of A Brief Statement an excellent exposition of our LCMS Doctrine of Creation"; "I did not mean to imply in my article that pastors and teachers should promote an extended duration for the days of creation"; "I did not endorse in my article . . . biological evolution, Theistic or otherwise"; and "I was in error to imply that the LCMS has acknowledged Day-Age theory as an acceptable exegesis of the Creation account of Genesis 1 & 2." Indeed, Jurchen has asked *Concordia Journal* "to withdraw the article due to the lack of clarity and concerns raised." Here I am dealing simply with the issues raised in that article, since it is a matter of public record and summarizes positions taken by others elsewhere. Since Dr. Jurchen has withdrawn the article, I do not consider the positions in that article as reflecting his own views.

[2] On the terms *young earth creationism*, *old earth creationism*, and *evolutionary creationism*, see the following articles: Charles P. Arand, "A Travel Guide to the Evangelical Creation Debates: Introduction," *Concordia Theology* (blog), December 12, 2017, https://concordiatheology.org/2017/12/evangelical-creation-debates-travel-guide; Charles P. Arand, "A Travel Guide to the Evangelical Creation Debates: What Is Young Earth Creationism?," *Concordia Theology* (blog), February 23, 2018, https://concordiatheology.org/2018/02/a-travel-guide-to-the-evangelical-creation-debates-what-is-young-earth-creationism; Charles P. Arand, "A Travel Guide to the Evangelical Creation Debates: What Is Old Earth Creationism?," *Concordia Theology* (blog), February 21, 2018, https://concordiatheology.org/2018/02/a-travel-guide-to-the-evangelical-creation-debates-what-is-old-earth-creationism; Charles P. Arand, "A Travel Guide to the Evangelical Creation Debates: What Is Evolutionary Creationism?," *Concordia Theology* (blog), February 28, 2018, https://concordiatheology.org/2018/02/a-travel-guide-to-the-evangelical-creation-debates-what-is-evolutionary-creationism.

to the position that seeks to explain the origin of the universe and of biological species according to completely mechanical processes (or principles) of nature. In this view, a cosmic "big bang" happened to occur, and then life developed according to survival of the fittest, or natural selection. Its proponents admit that this type of evolution of life forms (macroevolution)—which they claim came about mainly because of random mutations—takes billions of years for species to develop into new species and the various life forms to emerge. This is the evolutionism that had its classical formulation with Charles Darwin; its purpose is to describe development from a one-celled organism to Homo sapiens.

This evolutionism is popularly referred to as a theory, but a more accurate term is *model*. A theory has all the available evidence behind it; a model is an attempt to put the evidence together. Macroevolution by no means is scientifically proven fact. That is, it has not been demonstrated in the laboratory to be true by repeatable and verifiable experimentation. Further, evolutionism is a model with a multitude of problems, as demonstrated by very capable creationist scientists.[3] It is well beyond the scope of this short article to go into a review of the arguments against evolutionism put forth by these scientists.

It is important to recognize that how one interprets the evidence which is available regarding the primeval history—origins and the early history of this earth—depends on one's starting point. Evolutionism has atheism as its foundation. That is, in speaking of the primeval history, evolutionism does so, once again, by referring to completely mechanical processes of nature, entirely and intentionally leaving out from the discussion any intervention by a Supreme Being. Creationism has as its foundation the assumption that there is a God, and this Supreme Being is responsible for the primeval history—that the whole universe with all of its complexity and different life forms is due entirely to his personal creative work, his direct intervention.

The question arises as to why one would try to bring evolutionism—with its stance of excluding God from consideration—together with the notion that a Supreme Being was involved in the existence of this universe and biological species. This effort by theistic evolutionists or evolutionary creationists really is illogical—like trying to be a meat-eating vegetarian, or a Lutheran Calvinist (to borrow the phraseology of David Kaufmann[4]). They certainly should not feel compelled from an intellectual standpoint to accept evolutionism to a certain degree. On the one hand, evolutionism has been shown to be a model with serious, indeed fatal,

[3] See, e.g., the multitude of publications from organizations such as Answers in Genesis and the Institute for Creation Research.

[4] David Kaufmann, "Theistic Evolution – No Way!," *Affirm* (October 1994): 4.

flaws. On the other hand, theistic evolutionists or evolutionary creationists seem to ignore, or not take seriously, the scientific and legitimate explanations put forth by young earth creationists in distinction from evolutionary proposals.[5]

Similarly, old earth creationists have put aside these explanations and have chosen an interpretation of the available evidence that concludes the earth is billions of years old. In contrast to theistic evolutionism and old earth creationism, let it be stated clearly that young earth creationism is perfectly viable for the scientist studying origins.

Most theistic evolutionists, in trying to bring together evolution and the activity of a Supreme Being, are content with proposing that God created matter, life, and energy, following which he set in motion the process of evolution and then let everything develop via evolution. Along with this, they hold that it took billions of years for the changes to take place and, wanting to bring in Scripture, explain that the six days of creation were really six eras or epochs.

Old earth creationism (or day-age creationism) varies from theistic evolutionism to a lesser or greater extent. Jurchen explains that according to old earth creationists, God, during the billions of years, "periodically intervened in creative acts" and he notes that "old-earth creation . . . posits that God worked actively throughout his creation." Those adhering to old earth creationism believe they "can accept the standard, secular interpretation of the geological record [that is, billions of years] while still holding to an exegetically credible six-day (*yom*) creation."[6]

However, the old-earth- or day-age-creation position is seriously challenged by the following observations and questions.

1. Genesis reports that God made Adam and Eve on the sixth day and God "rested" on the seventh day; then, after the seventh day, Adam and Eve fell into sin, and after the fall, they lived on earth for a period of time. So, Adam and Eve lived through part of the sixth day, all of the seventh day, and for quite a while beyond that. Are the day-age creationists prepared to say that Adam and Eve lived for billions of years? If so, this would contradict Genesis 5:5, which reports that Adam lived 930 years. Each day, according to Genesis 1, consisted of a time of light

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[5] Young earth creationists vary in their understanding concerning the age of the earth. Most would take a position on a spectrum ranging from a little over 6,000 to about 15,000 years. The 6,000 figure derives from taking the genealogies of Genesis as complete and as providing all the information necessary to calculate how old the earth is. I side with those young earth creationists who believe that the earth is older than 6,000 years, due in part to the conclusion that there are gaps in the genealogies. See, e.g., Andrew Steinmann, "Gaps in the Genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11?," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 174, no. 694 (2017): 141–158. The impression given by Scripture, though, is that the gaps are not that many or that large so as to venture an estimation beyond 10,000–15,000 years for the earth's age.

[6] Jurchen, "The Age of the Earth and Confessional Lutheranism," 71.

and a time of darkness. If a day was a billion years, were there periods of darkness lasting millions of years? On the sixth day, God made Eve somewhat later than Adam. If a day was a billion years, did God make Eve, say, about 100,000 years after Adam?

2. Outside of Genesis 1 and 2, whenever a number occurs in the rest of Genesis in connection with the Hebrew word יוֹם ("day"), the sense is always a twenty-four-hour period of time.[7] If that is the meaning elsewhere in Genesis, one would think that should also be the sense in Genesis 1 and 2. Moses wrote Genesis 1 and 2 (and 3) to be interpreted as historical and not as figurative or mythological accounts. There is no decisive reason to take these chapters as figurative language. Rather, Genesis 1–3 consists of historical narrative prose, as indicated, for example, by the frequent use of the definite direct object marker אֶת־ and the *waw*-consecutive imperfect.[8] The language of Genesis 1 can be called exalted, and there is repetition of phraseology, but this is due to the nature of the event Moses describes, which was a one-time, awesome event. Moses does the same thing in Genesis 1–3—relating what actually happened and was spoken—as he does in the rest of Genesis and the rest of the Torah. Genesis 4–50, the remainder of the Old Testament, and the entirety of the New Testament all take Genesis 1–3 as historical.

3. In the Old Testament, outside of Genesis 1 and 2, when the words עֶרֶב ("evening") and בֹּקֶר ("morning") occur together in the same verse, the reference is

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[7] The passages are Gen 7:4, 10, 12, 17, 24; 8:3, 6, 10, 12; 17:12; 21:4; 22:4; 24:55; 27:45; 30:36; 31:22, 23; 33:13; 34:25; 40:12, 13, 18, 19, 20; 42:17; 42:18; 50:3, 10. Gen 27:44 and 29:20 do not pertain to this discussion. These verses use the word אֲחָדִים (the plural of "one"), with the sense "few" or "some" (F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907], אֶחָד, 1; *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, ed. D. J. A. Clines [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993–2011], 1:181, 1c; L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 4 vols. [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994–1999], 1:30, e). Also not pertinent are those passages in which "days" occurs along with a number that is associated with "years" (e.g., throughout Gen 5, starting with v. 4; Gen 6:3; 9:29; 11:32; 25:7; 35:28; 41:1; 47:9, 28). An article by James Stambaugh published by the Institute for Creation Research ("The Meaning of 'Day' in Genesis," *Impact: Vital Articles on Science/Creation* no. 184 [October 1988]: ii) asserts that outside of Gen 1 and 2, throughout the rest of the Old Testament, whenever a number occurs in connection with יוֹם, the sense of the Hebrew word is always a twenty-four-hour period of time.

[8] Walter Kaiser ("The Literary Form of Genesis 1–11," in *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, ed. J. Barton Payne [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1970], 59–60) correctly observes with regard to the genre of the first major portion of Genesis, chs. 1–11: "Genesis 1–11 is prose and not poetry. The use of the *waw* consecutive with the verb to describe sequential acts, the frequent use of the direct object sign and the so-called relative pronoun, the stress on definitions, and the spreading out of these events in a sequential order indicates that we are in prose and not in poetry. Say what *we* will, the author plainly intends to be doing the same thing in these chapters that he is doing in chapters 12–50."

always to a twenty-four-hour day.[9] If that is the case elsewhere in the Old Testament, including the writings of Moses, one could argue that should also be the understanding within Genesis 1 and 2.

4. If Moses had wanted to relate that creation involved long periods of time, he would not have used the noun *day* but instead phrases that clearly expressed this reality, such as "many years," "many generations," "ten thousand times ten thousand years" (cf. Dan 7:10), or something else.[10]

5. Most theistic evolutionists believe that God set evolution in motion and then through evolution, everything came about, including animals. This position goes against a natural reading of Genesis 1 and 2, which presents God as directly and immediately making the animals and does not lead one to think of the evolution of any creature. For example, in Genesis 1, the same verb—בָּרָא, "create"—is used for God making the water creatures and the winged flying creatures, and for his making man (Gen 1:21, 27). In Genesis 2:7, Yahweh formed (the verb יָצַר) the man of dust from the ground. But in Genesis 2:19, the same verb appears again, also associated with the ground: "Now Yahweh God had *formed* from the ground every living thing of the field and all the birds of the heavens."[11] This shows that as God formed the man, so also God formed the field creatures and the birds, and that they did not come into existence by evolution.

Many old earth creationists reject altogether the notion that all or some of the animals came into existence via evolution. Rather, they would explain that God over billions of years periodically intervened in a direct manner to create each and every new species of life.[12]

However, all old earth creationists (as all theistic evolutionists) affirm that there was death, including animal death, before the fall of Adam and Eve into sin. They take such a position because the animals, according to their way of thinking, existed millions or even billions of years before the fall and because of their interpretation of the fossil record. Jurchen writes that the old earth, day-age perspective "carries

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[9] Representative passages are Gen 49:27; Exod 16:8, 12, 13; 18:13, 14; 27:21; 29:39, 41; Lev 6:13 (E 20); 24:3; Num 9:21; 28:4; Deut 16:4; 28:67; 1 Kgs 17:6; 2 Kgs 16:15; 1 Chr 16:40; 2 Chr 2:3 (E 4); 31:3; Esth 2:14; Ezra 3:3; Job 4:20; Ps 30:6 (E 5); 55:18 (E 17); 65:9 (E 8); 90:6; Eccl 11:6; Isa 5:11; Ezek 24:18; 33:22; Dan 8:26; Zeph 3:3. The word לַיְלָה ("night") occurs with בֹּקֶר in, e.g., Lev 6:2 (E 9); Judg 16:2; Ruth 3:13; 1 Sam 19:11; Ps 92:3 (E 2); and Isa 21:12, but the combination refers to a twenty-four-hour day. Also with this sense is the combination of נֶשֶׁף ("twilight") with בֹּקֶר in Isa 5:11. In Dan 8:14, "evenings" and "mornings" refer to evening and morning sacrifices. See Andrew Steinmann, *Daniel,* Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2008), 404–406.

[10] See Douglas Judisch, "The Length of the Days of Creation," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 52 (October 1988): 265–271.

[11] All Scripture translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

[12] Arand, "A Travel Guide to the Evangelical Creation Debates: What Is Old Earth Creationism?"

with it the associated fossil record and the expectation that myriads of organisms lived and died in the ages that constitute the creation week and predated the sin of Adam."[13]

This could be seen as having a terrible consequence with regard to the gospel. One could logically conclude that if death preceded man and was not a result of Adam's sin, then sin is a fiction; and if sin is a fiction, then there is no need for a Savior.[14]

Yet, old earth creationism does not accept this conclusion. Day-age creationism tries to bypass this issue by asserting that Scripture does not say whether animals died before the fall.[15] Thus, according to this view, one is free to believe that long before the sin of Adam and Eve, animals were dying because of fatal mutations, not being fittest for their environment, disease or parasites, old age, or because they were killed by other animals.

In response, one could begin by saying that this position holding to animal death before the fall presents a different characterization of God and a different view of the world than what is derived from a straightforward reading of Genesis 1 and 2. With such a reading, those chapters portray a benevolent God whose word is almighty and who gave the plants and the fruit of the trees as food not only to the first humans but also "to every living thing of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to every creeping thing on the earth" (Gen 1:30; thus, all these creatures were vegetarians), a God who at the end of the sixth day saw that all he had made "was very good" (Gen 1:31). Yahweh looked on a beautiful, harmonious, peaceful earth.

This picture of God and the earth is drastically altered by the idea that animal death preceded the sin of Adam and Eve. If pain and death were a part of pre-fall history, then it follows that pain and death were part of God's plan before the fall into sin. One could ask, "How can God be considered benevolent?"[16] Wayne Grudem observes that "the kind of earth we have today, with . . . poisonous snakes and venomous scorpions, malaria-spreading mosquitoes, and . . . [dangerous] sharks and lions, can hardly be thought to be the best kind of creation that God

[13] Jurchen, "The Age of the Earth and Confessional Lutheranism," 72.

[14] See, e.g., Richard Bozarth, "The Meaning of Evolution," *The American Atheist* 20, no. 2 (1978): 19, 30.

[15] Jurchen, "The Age of the Earth and Confessional Lutheranism," 72.

[16] Garrett DeWeese, "Theistic Evolution and the Problem of Natural Evil," in *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique*, ed. J. P. Moreland et al. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 683–684.

could make, a creation that would cause God to say, 'and behold, *it was very good*.' "[17]

Moreover, old earth creationists, with their thinking that the present reality of animal death basically matches, and in essence is a continuation of, the reality in the pre-fall animal world, go against Romans 8:19–22. The apostle Paul writes,

> For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.[18]

As Guy Waters comments, "That creation 'was subjected to futility' means two things. First, the present state of affairs here described by Paul did not characterize creation at its inception. Second, creation did not choose, as it were, its present condition. God has consigned the creation to its present condition."[19] The "present state of affairs" or "present condition" mentioned by Waters includes animals dying for various reasons. God consigned creation to its present condition because of the fall by the first humans. Romans 8:19–22 is an obvious reference to Genesis 3 and a partial commentary on Genesis 3:17–18, where God curses the ground due to Adam's sin. Further, in Romans 8, Paul proclaims that this present groaning creation longs for the ultimate liberation of the children of God, which will take place on judgment day. Then this sin-ruined, cursed creation will be destroyed and God will bring forth a glorious, perfect, new creation.[20]

Old earth creationist William Dembski recognizes that animal death is not compatible with God's pre-fall good creation and that such death is due to God's judgment on human sin. Yet, he also believes that, given an old earth, "natural evil" (which includes animal death) must have been widely prevalent before the creation of humans. He resolves the issue of how the fall into sin could then be responsible for natural evil that predates humanity by proposing that just as the death and resurrection of Christ are responsible for the salvation of believers throughout all

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[17] Wayne Grudem, "Theistic Evolution Undermines Twelve Creation Events and Several Crucial Christian Doctrines," in *Theistic Evolution*, 818 (italics original).

[18] From the New American Standard Bible® (NASB), Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. www.Lockman.org.

[19] Guy Waters, "Theistic Evolution Is Incompatible with the Teachings of the New Testament," in *Theistic Evolution*, 897.

[20] See also, e.g., the discussion of Michael Middendorf, *Romans 1–8*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2013), 669–675; and Ps 102:25–28; Isa 51:6; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33; 1 Cor 7:31; 2 Cor 4:18; Heb 1:10–12; 12:26–28; 2 Pet 3:7, 10–13; 1 John 2:17.

time, so the fall of Adam and Eve is responsible for every natural evil throughout all time (future, present, past, and distant past preceding the fall).[21] However, if that was the reality, there was never a time when God would have looked at the world and announced that it was "very good."

This leads to another response that can be given to those taking the position that animals died before the fall, in part because some animals killed other animals and then often devoured them. The prophet Isaiah portrays the peace and blessedness of God's spiritual kingdom here on earth, and the peace and blessedness of heaven and of the new creation, as paradise restored.[22] There was once an Eden; that Eden was lost; but God in his grace grants to those who have saving faith an Eden-like existence already now, in greater measure in heaven, and to the fullest degree in the world to come on judgment day. Consider the language used by Isaiah to describe the peace of this restored experience of Eden:

> And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze; their young will lie down together; and the lion like the ox will eat straw. Also the nursing child will play on the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will stretch out his hand over the viper's tunnel. (Isa 11:6–8)

To be sure, the prophet under inspiration uses figurative language to depict spiritual realities and realities beyond the reach of our human language and our limited comprehension. But one can assume that this imagery chosen by Isaiah comes from his and other believing Israelites' comprehension of how it was in the first Eden, *before the fall into sin*, and that their understanding was correct. What they believed was the opposite of the vicious, violent scenario in which animals attack and kill other animals.[23]

Judging from how they wrote, Moses, Isaiah, other Old Testament authors, and the New Testament authors never thought of the six days of creation as each consisting of millions or billions of years, that evolution was mainly or entirely the way the universe developed, nor that there was death before the fall into sin—nor

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[21] William Dembski, *The End of Christianity: Finding a Good God in an Evil World* (Nashville: B and H, 2009), 50, 110–111, 130, 162.

[22] So also does, e.g., Ezekiel. One such passage in his book is Ezek 47:1–12. See Horace Hummel, *Ezekiel 21–48,* Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2007), 1332–1347.

[23] See also, e.g., Edward Young, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1–18* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 389–391. Note Isaiah's description of the new creation in Isa 65:17–25 (especially v. 25), and see, e.g., R. Reed Lessing, *Isaiah 56–66,* Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014), 441–443.

did later readers of their writings until (a) the advent of evolutionism or (b) the "scientific" interpretation of fossil, geological, and astronomical evidence that leads to the assumption of billions of years for the age of the earth. Then exegetes with a prior commitment to that interpretation of the evidence or to evolution tried to force an interpretation other than the natural one onto, or into, the biblical texts.

This leads to a concern caused by old earth, day-age creationism (and also by theistic evolutionism). J. P. Moreland's comment regarding theistic evolutionists also applies to old earth creationists:

> Given the widespread scientism—the view that the hard sciences are the only or the vastly superior way to know things, especially in comparison to theology and ethics—in our culture, theistic evolutionists reinforce this view by constantly revising biblical teachings and interpretations because science says so. Thus, by adopting this unbiblical epistemological outlook, theistic evolutionists weaken the rational authority of biblical teaching among Christians and non-Christians. As a result, the Bible is no longer regarded by many as a genuine source of knowledge, and fewer and fewer people take the Bible seriously. In this way, perhaps unintentionally, those who adopt theistic evolution marginalize Christian truth claims in the church and the public square.[24]

Further, this fiddling with Scripture by interpreters until they get it to turn out the "right way"—that is, so that it conforms to *so-called* science—has made, or will make, it easier to alter the natural, traditional interpretations of other portions of God's word.

In summary, old earth, day-age creationism (along with theistic evolutionism) is antagonistic to the Lutheran hermeneutical principle of the perspicuity of Scripture. It puts "science" over the clear teaching of God's word. It has no place in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Walter A. Maier III

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[24] J. P. Moreland, "How Theistic Evolution Kicks Christianity Out of the Plausibility Structure and Robs Christians of Confidence that the Bible Is a Source of Knowledge," in *Theistic Evolution*, 633–634.

Creation, Science, and God's Omnipotence

The *Concordia Journal*, published by our brothers at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, set forth an issue last year that focused on the doctrine of creation and challenges to that doctrine from natural science, particularly as these issues have been debated recently among American Evangelicals.[25] One of the articles in that issue provoked controversy and later was withdrawn by the author,[26] after which other clarifications related to this issue were published.[27] This issue of *Concordia Journal* raised discussion here at CTSFW, too, as well as at a joint meeting of the LCMS seminary faculties in Milwaukee on May 23, 2018, at which I gave a few remarks. The editors of our journal then asked me to share these remarks with our readers, which I do here below, along with other observations.

Concordia Journal had an opportunity to help the church in dealing faithfully with the question of how Scripture and science relate to each other, but two possibly unintended messages came across in that issue: that secular science should not be challenged on biblical grounds,[28] and that Christians can hold secular scientific worldviews as long as they also hold to some kind of double truth in which, according to their faith, central aspects of the scientific worldviews are false.[29]

I'm thankful that *Concordia Journal* discussed this question, but as the subsequent controversy showed, that issue of the journal did not present the most helpful pastoral and theological response. What I looked for in that issue and did not find was a clear rejection of evolutionary creationism (often called "theistic

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[25] *Concordia Journal* 43, no. 3 (2017).

[26] "Regarding the Article by Dr. John Jurchen in Concordia Journal," *Concordia Theology* (blog), January 7, 2018, https://concordiatheology.org/2018/01/regarding-the-article-by-dr-john-jurchen-in-concordia-journal. Charles Arand, speaking for the editorial board of *Concordia Journal*, opines that it is improper to comment further on Dr. Jurchen's article, since Dr. Jurchen has requested that it be withdrawn. (Charles P. Arand, "Regarding the Editorial Process for the Concordia Journal," *Concordia Theology* [blog], January 11, 2018, https://concordiatheology.org/2018/01/regarding-the-editorial-process-for-the-concordia-journal). I agree that it should no longer be regarded as a statement of Dr. Jurchen's views. Nevertheless, the fact that it was published makes it indelibly part of the public, historical record. Therefore, one may not be forbidden to discuss the ideas set forth therein, so long as Dr. Jurchen's and *Concordia Journal's* distance from the article is acknowledged.

[27] E.g., Arand, "Regarding the Editorial Process for the Concordia Journal."

[28] Charles P. Arand, "The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation: Lutherans & Science," *Concordia Journal* 43, no. 3 (2017): 8–9; Charles P. Arand, "The Scientist as a Theologian of the Cross," *Concordia Journal* 43, no. 3 (2017): 30; Charles P. Arand and Joel Okamoto, "Concordia Seminary and the Science for Seminaries Grant," *Concordia Journal* 43, no. 3 (2017): 80.

[29] Cf. Russell Moulds, "Science, Religion, and God's Two Kingdoms: A Lutheran Framework for Instruction," *Concordia Journal* 43, no. 3 (2017): 39–42; John Jurchen, "The Age of the Earth and Confessional Lutheranism: Speaking the Truth in Love," *Concordia Journal* 43, no. 3 (2017): 71.

evolution") and old earth creationism.[30] That issue of *Concordia Journal* also made ambiguous statements, such as that the Bible did not intend to teach science or cannot challenge science on statements of fact.[31] Such statements can be read and understood (or misunderstood) as though the Bible does not say anything historical or concretely factual if modern theories of the origin of the world disagree, and that people can and should believe whatever science tells them and reinterpret Scripture to correspond with science. The reinterpretation of Scripture is not what the editors of *Concordia Journal* intended, however.[32] It appears that at least one intention was that we should not identify with *any* party in the Evangelical science-revelation culture war, not even with young earth creationism, such as is set forth by Answers in Genesis and others.[33]

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[30] On these terms, see Charles P. Arand, "A Travel Guide to the Evangelical Creation Debates: What Is Young Earth Creationism?," *Concordia Theology* (blog), February 23, 2018, https://concordiatheology.org/2018/02/a-travel-guide-to-the-evangelical-creation-debates-what-is-young-earth-creationism; Charles P. Arand, "A Travel Guide to the Evangelical Creation Debates: What Is Old Earth Creationism?," *Concordia Theology* (blog), February 21, 2018, https://concordiatheology.org/2018/02/a-travel-guide-to-the-evangelical-creation-debates-what-is-old-earth-creationism; Charles P. Arand, "A Travel Guide to the Evangelical Creation Debates: What Is Evolutionary Creationism?," *Concordia Theology* (blog), February 28, 2018, https://concordiatheology.org/2018/02/a-travel-guide-to-the-evangelical-creation-debates-what-is-evolutionary-creationism.

[31] "Christians can fall into this danger as well. This can take at least two forms. . . . One might argue that it is not 'real science' or seek to reinterpret the data that scientists unearth to support a particular reading of the Bible that specifies a precise age for the universe. Even though the Bible gives the impression of a relatively young universe with its six-day creation it does not give an age; for this reason the age of the earth has not been considered a doctrinal issue. . . . The Bible doesn't address many scientific matters. That's okay, too, for the Bible wasn't written for that purpose" (Arand, "The Scientist as a Theologian of the Cross," 30, 32). "We need a theological approach to science that includes humility when it comes to interpreting the Bible in absolute terms about what must or must not be in the world" (Arand, "The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation," 9). "When science that informs the Christian about the world, its fallen condition, and Christian and non-Christian perceptions of that condition, is censored or silenced, Scripture reveals God's left-hand strategy. . . . And when other pronouncements exceed evidence, data, and theory in the sciences and begin making ultimate claims about the nature of existence itself, Scripture reveals God's right-hand strategy" (Moulds, "Science, Religion, and God's Two Kingdoms," 43).

[32] Arand, "The Scientist as a Theologian of the Cross," 32–33; Arand and Okamoto, "Concordia Seminary and the Science for Seminaries Grant," 79.

[33] "Other established insights from the Lutheran tradition about the world and God's activity provide the framework for teaching the sciences in their left-hand kingdom secularity and for teaching that science is a human construct not exempt from God's word and work. This framework distinguishes Lutheran higher education in the sciences from efforts among other Christian traditions to address the emergence of the natural and social sciences. Those efforts, informed by important but often limited themes from Scripture and selected in response to a particular controversy, have generally yielded a rather static approach toward the sciences. While well intended, such efforts tend to stall as, ironically, they become part of the controversy, mired in the secular arguments deployed by partisans" (Moulds, "Science, Religion, and God's Two Kingdoms," 43). "It has been something of a learning experience to see what kinds of positions are being taken in these sometimes heated debates within that conservative wing of Christianity

Yet it is important that a clear rejection of old earth creationism and evolutionary creationism be made, since groups outside the LCMS actively seek to weaken our doctrinal position in order to allow for an old earth (based on geological and astronomical observations) or even macroevolution (based on some biological observations and theories).[34] These must be rejected. The acceptance especially of macroevolution would be catastrophic for Christian dogma. If evolution was God's plan for the creation of life, then God's goodness has to be redefined: no longer would death be the wages of sin (Rom 6:23). If God created the world with defects and death, then there is no created perfection, and sin (or at least death, the wages of sin) is of God's will. If man evolved from other species, then the soul of man may have to be redefined as a function of man's physical nature, since to posit a special creation of the soul instead of an evolutionary development thereof would conflict with the evolutionary model. Finally, if evolution is true, then there was no historic Adam, in which case the parallel between Adam and Christ (Rom 5) would be destroyed or reduced to a metaphor. Thus, the doctrine of creation matters and must be a central concern for all Christians. The old-earth and evolutionary creation models should have been clearly rejected in that issue of *Concordia Journal*.[35]

At the same time, I commend *Concordia Journal*'s pastoral concern for scientists in our congregations and others who struggle with the seeming conflict between Scripture and science on creation. Yet are there not other ways to be a Bible-believing scientist than those set forth in that issue of *Concordia Journal*?

Models for Coordinating Scripture and Science

Recently, Christians discussing divine revelation and natural science have tended to think in terms of four or five categories, such as conflict, independence,

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broadly referred to as Evangelicalism. . . . For these reasons, I caution against identifying too closely with any specific camp or approach to the science-faith issues they address" (Charles P. Arand, "A Travel Guide to the Evangelical Creation Debates: Introduction," *Concordia Theology* [blog], December 12, 2017, https://concordiatheology.org/2017/12/evangelical-creation-debates-travel-guide).

[34] See, e.g., "The Lutheran Option?," The BioLogos Forum, accessed September 12, 2018, https://discourse.biologos.org/t/the-lutheran-option/37658.

[35] A subsequent blog post by Charles Arand discouraged readers from identifying too closely with any of the three Evangelical models for coordinating the biblical doctrine of creation with science (see Arand, "A Travel Guide to the Evangelical Creation Debates: Introduction").

dialogue, integration,[36] and paradox.[37] But these categories actually hide within themselves subcategories that are fundamentally at odds with one another, and the categories do not explain what happens when there are conflicting truth claims. For example, the model of independence, or non-overlapping magisteria, does not actually function that way in practice. Either the magisterium of revelation is held supreme, and it rules out whatever conflicting data science may set forth; or science is unrestrained and thus supreme, and it invades the turf of theology.

Christians have dealt perennially with the seeming conflict between what God revealed to humanity through his prophets and apostles on the one hand and our experience of this world and the way things work on the other. Through the centuries, certain basic positions of how to coordinate these two sources of knowledge can be observed.[38]

1. Science (empirical observation) is simply rejected whenever it conflicts with Scripture (divine revelation).
2. Science is affirmed, though it is hypothetical, explaining the world as it is observed empirically. Yet it is not allowed to overrule or reinterpret scriptural statements, even those that do *not* deal with ultimate truth. Scripture is seen as absolutely true; science is subordinated to it. This is a traditional Lutheran approach.[39]
3. Truth is regarded as double: the same thing can be true according to reason but false according to theology. This would allow one to say, for example, that macroevolution is true scientifically but false theologically.[40]
4. Science is regarded as trustworthy; scriptural exegesis must sometimes be accommodated to phenomena. For example, Joshua 10:13, "the sun stood still,"[41] refers to how the movement of the sun is perceived

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[36] Denis R. Alexander, "Models for Relating Science and Religion," Faraday Papers, no. 3 (2007), https://faraday-institute.org/resources/Faraday%20Papers/Faraday%20Paper%203%20Alexander_EN.pdf.

[37] Roger E. Timm, "Does Luther vs. Copernicus = Luther vs. Science?," *Lutheran Forum* 51, no. 1 (2017): 34–37.

[38] Many of these categories played a role in seventeenth-century conflicts in Europe when new views of the world arose. See Klaus Scholder, *The Birth of Modern Critical Theology: Origins and Problems of Biblical Criticism in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. John Bowden (London; Philadelphia: SCM Press; Trinity Press International, 1990).

[39] This is the approach of Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *In Christ All Things Hold Together: The Intersection of Science & Christian Theology* (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 2015).

[40] Cf. Russell Moulds's application of "two kingdoms" to this question (Moulds, "Science, Religion, and God's Two Kingdoms").

[41] Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

from the standpoint of the biblical writer but does not rule out the possibility that a simpler model for understanding the movement of the solar system puts the sun in the center.

5. Science is regarded as trustworthy; scriptural exegesis must be accommodated to the *prejudices* of Scripture's original audience. In this way, Enlightenment thinkers ruled out angels, demons, and miracles.
6. Reason (including empirical observation) interprets Scripture, but some things are above reason and nature. In this way, early seventeenth-century Socinianism ruled out the Trinity but still affirmed miracles.[42]
7. Reason (including empirical observation) interprets Scripture, and nothing is above reason or against nature. Similar to point 4 above, center-Cartesianists in the seventeenth century argued in this way.
8. Reason attacks the reliability of Scripture and undermines its credibility (the Enlightenment).
9. Progressive divine revelation beyond Scripture is posited. This fits well with evolution and Process Theology but presents a different god than the eternal, immutable, ever-blessed Trinity.

Those who operate according to models 5 through 9 are united in placing knowledge gained from experience or reason above knowledge gained from special revelation. In these models, to varying degrees, one puts confidence in one's experience and on that basis contradicts or reinterprets Scripture. On the issue of creation, one would say that if geology, astronomy, or biology present data that conflicts with Genesis 1–2 and with the age of the earth based on the chronology of the rest of Scripture, then Scripture must be negated or reinterpreted allegorically. But Christians should not do this. Those who do so risk hearing: "Who *is* this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? . . . Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?" (Job 38:2, 4).

Perhaps most Missouri Synod pastors think in terms of options 1, 2, or 4 above. Within any of these ways of thinking, there are then specific ways of dealing with empirical data that might indicate an old earth. For example, stars and supernova millions of light-years away would seem to argue that the universe has existed long enough for that light to travel at a constant speed and reach our eyes. Yet we have divine authority that on the fourth day of creation, stars were already

[42] Perhaps George Murphy's attempt to use the slogan "theology of the cross" to posit the goodness of death and evolution would fit here (see BioLogos Editorial Team, "Surveying George Murphy's Theology of the Cross," BioLogos, December 4, 2012, https://biologos.org/blogs/archive/surveying-george-murphys-theology-of-the-cross).

visible, and presumably these are the same stars that we see now (Gen 1:14–19). Perhaps trees were created with many rings, already on day three (Gen 1:11–13). Maybe Adam and Eve were created with belly buttons. This observation, formally dubbed the "omphalos [navel] hypothesis," may be the default worldview for most LCMS pastors.[43] This worldview is commonly dismissed as implying that God was deceptive and implanted false evidence in the world to make it look very old when it actually is about six thousand years old. It is also dismissed because it is unfalsifiable—a tidy way to deal with uncomfortable scientific observations.[44] Yet these are the arguments used by unbelief throughout the ages against every aspect of the Christian faith, and they should not trouble anyone who believes in divine revelation. As David Adams and Charles Arand rightly observe in one of the clarifications to the oft-mentioned issue of *Concordia Journal*, "These creative acts (the initial *opera ad extra* of the Trinity) are *miracles*, and miracles are by definition not accessible to human reason or empirical science."[45]

Resources from the Lutheran Tradition

If we want a distinctively Lutheran voice in this discussion, we should learn from the pre-Enlightenment Lutherans in Germany, where the Enlightenment was forestalled for nearly a century. We should not pluck slogans from Luther and reapply them in new contexts in order to justify evolution, as some Lutheran theologians do.[46]

One such Lutheran slogan is "continuous creation."[47] In classic Lutheran theology, *creatio continua* meant the same thing as "providence," the fact that God maintains and preserves his creation, and if he did not, everything would fall back into nothing immediately. This was denied by the Deists and other eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinkers, who thought of the creation as not needing God's specific preservation. For them, the world was like a clock made by a clockmaker,

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[43] It was first proposed formally by Philip Henry Gosse, *Omphalos: An Attempt to Untie the Geological Knot* (London: J. Van Voorst, 1857).

[44] E.g., Pete Enns, "Al Mohler and the 'Apparent Age' of the Cosmos," *Pete Enns* (blog), October 13, 2011, https://peteenns.com/al-mohler-and-the-apparent-age-of-the-cosmos.

[45] David Adams and Charles P. Arand, "A Few Reflections on Creation in Genesis 1," *Concordia Theology* (blog), March 5, 2018, https://concordiatheology.org/2018/03/a-few-reflections-on-creation-in-genesis-1, emphasis original.

[46] E.g., BioLogos Editorial Team, "Surveying George Murphy's Theology of the Cross." Charles Arand cites Murphy on this topic with approbation in Arand, "The Scientist as a Theologian of the Cross," 20.

[47] Arand, "The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation," 8; Joel Okamoto, "Modern Science, Contemporary Culture, and Christian Theology," *Concordia Journal* 43, no. 3 (2017): 60. Related to this, Russell Moulds claims that there is "dynamic relation" between God and creation (Moulds, "Science, Religion, and God's Two Kingdoms," 38).

which now runs on its own. The Lutheran doctrine of God's *creatio continua* speaks against that error.[48] In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, however, various theologians have taken the phrase *creatio continua* and co-opted it for their own unwholesome purposes. They have used it crassly to justify macroevolution. And they have also used it more subtly to argue for progressive revelation and a mutable natural law, or even forms of pantheism.[49]

Such forays and misapplications of Lutheran slogans help nothing and prove nothing. It would be better to reappropriate the Lutheran, catholic doctrine of God's omnipotence and truthfulness. As Lutherans grappling with the conflict between revelation and empirical science regarding the origin of the world, we can and should draw on our heritage—the wisdom of the past—to find tools to assess our current issues. But rather than taking a theological maxim from Luther and applying it where he never did (such as "theology of the cross," "two kingdoms," or "two kinds of righteousness"), we should look for tools used by doctors of the church to deal specifically with the apparent conflict between experience and revelation.

Just such a tool was gifted to us by Matthias Flacius (1520–1575) in his *Key to Holy Scripture*, a work that Concordia Lutherans esteemed and used even after Flacius's views on original sin were rejected in the 1580 *Book of Concord*.[50] Here Flacius gives us a treatise entitled "Demonstrations of the Certainty of Holy Writ and of the Christian Religion."[51] After giving fifty-two scriptural-theological arguments for the plenary truthfulness of Scripture, Flacius gives some rational arguments that will help us, too, in our discussions on revelation and empirical science. Since this text has never before been translated, I include my translation here, with the original Latin in footnotes.

> *Principle 1*. One must not make judgments about God's nature on the basis of human reason or the order of this earthly nature, since he is its potter, so to speak, and he surpasses it in all points infinitely. Instead, one must state that his essence [*eius essentiae . . . rationem*] can be far different than what our mind

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[48] For more on this, see Robert D. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, vol. 2, God and His Creation (St. Louis: Concordia, 1972), 194.

[49] See Whitney Bauman, *Theology, Creation, and Environmental Ethics: From Creatio Ex Nihilo to Terra Nullius*, Routledge Studies in Religion 12 (Hoboken: Taylor & Francis, 2009); Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 209; cf. Emil Brunner, *Dogmatics*, vol. 2, The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1952), 33–35.

[50] Matthias Flacius, *Clavis Scriptvrae S. seu de Sermone Sacrarum literarum*, 2 vols. (Basel: Episcopius, 1580); Matthias Flacius, *Clavis Scriptvrae S. seu de Sermone Sacrarum literarum*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt: Bibliopolae Hasniensis, 1719). I cite the 1580 edition, vol. 2.

[51] *Demonstrationes Certitvdinis Sacrarvm Literarvm, Et Religionis Christianae* (Flacius, *Clavis Scriptvrae S.* [1580], 441).

can understand or think. Therefore, those who pursue the contrary do just as if someone were to see clay pots and conclude that the potter himself was made of clay.[52]

Principle 2. God is an utterly free doer or cause. Therefore, he does not always act in the same way, and just as he has now created and ordered this nature and humanity [*hominem*] in this way, so he will perhaps change some things[53] either now or at its own time, such as at the end of the world, bringing about the resurrection and making man to live [*agentem*] without food, procreation, and other things of [his] nature.[54]

Principle 3. God is all-wise. Therefore, he can think up infinitely more forms and ideas of things (so to speak), which by his choice he expresses in his works, than we can conceive and understand, even if they were explained to us. How infinite is the variety of natural things [*rerum Physicarum*], and of the individual species among them, such as of animals, plants, trees, and various fruits, and the supports necessary for humanity. Every region has many species unique to itself, of apples, pears, nuts, cherries, and other fruits. Therefore, just as before our eyes he has set forth an infinity and variety of ideas, so he is able now to have or later to create new species of things, creatures, and his own actions. Therefore, any would-be scholars or natural scientists or others who want to reason from the present nature of natural things—that "Nothing is made out of nothing," and "Time, what is moved, and what is movable are joined; and therefore the world is eternal"; again, "No individual thing is perpetual, therefore the soul is not immortal, nor is there a resurrection"—such wise people, I say, act just as if someone, with mediocre diligence, were to look at all the works now effected in the workshop of an excellent artificer and would deny that [the artificer] knows how to do works of another kind, or had ever made them, or would ever make them. Nevertheless, no one has dared to make this judgment about a human artificer, yet about the living God Epicurean men dare.[55]

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[52] *I. Principium. De Dei essentia non est iudicandum ex humana ratione, uel terrenae huius naturae ordine: quandoquidem ipse tum ueluti figulus eius est, tum etiam eam in infinitum excellit in omnibus: sed statuendum, posse eius essentiae longè aliam esse rationem, quàm nostra mens assequi uel cogitare possit. Quare qui contrarium sequuntur, perinde faciunt, ac si quis conspectis luteis ollis, etiam ipsum figulum luteum esse rationcinetur* (Flacius, *Clavis Scriptvrae S.* [1580], 444–445).

[53] Read *aliquae* instead of *aliqua*.

[54] *II Principium. Deus est liberrimum agens aut causa. Ergo non semper eodem modo agit: & sicut nunc hanc naturam & hominem sic condidit aut ordinauit: sic fortè aliqua uel iam, uel suo tempore, ut in fine mundi, mutabit, efficiens resurrectionem, & hominem agentem sine cibo, procreatione, & alijs naturalibus* (Flacius, *Clavis Scriptvrae S.* [1580], 445).

[55] *III Principium. Deus est omnisapiens. In infinitum igitur plures formas & ueluti ideas rerum, quas suo arbitrio operibus exprimat, excogitare potest, quàm nos, si nobis exponantur, animo*

> *Principle 4.* Everyone says that God is omnipotent. Therefore, even if something is handed down in Scripture as being done by God beyond the order of nature or the opinion of our reason, with regard to his omnipotence it is usually (as it should be) considered true, even by the heathen. For it must entirely be affirmed that nothing that God wills is impossible for him. For since he is the author of nature and [its] creator, and he created it in the way he chose, it is certain that also by his choice he can change it, and that all of nature stands firm by his command and power as long as he wills, and on the other hand if he does not will it, it all collapses. . . .
>
> Therefore, all things in Scripture that are absurd to reason can be referred to these principles and defended by them. Since not even reason itself can deny them, it is a false slander of atheists to say that Scripture completely conflicts with all reason.[56]

Flacius uses these arguments from God's omnipotence not to tweak the clear meaning of Scripture (as though God could work contrary to how he revealed his creative acts in Scripture) but to show that reason and our experience of this world are not in a position to conclude that what Scripture says is false or that it needs to be reinterpreted. This insight can help us today. Just because we see the world functioning in a certain, consistent way does not mean we can conclude that God could not act otherwise. For example, currently light travels at a constant speed, but

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concipere ac intelligere. Quam infinita uarietas est rerum Physicarum, & singularum inter eas specierum, ut animalium, herbarum, arborum & variorum fructuum, & homini necessariorum subsidiorum. Singulae regiones habent plurimas proprias species pomorum, pirorum, nucum, cerasorum, & aliorum fructuum. Sicut igitur nobis ante oculos infinitatem & uarietatem idearum proposuit: ita potest uel iam habere, uel postea condere nouas rerum, creaturarum & actionum suarum species. Qui ergo eruditi uel Physici, uel alij, ex praesenti naturalium rerum natura ratiocinari uolunt, Ex nihilo nihil fieri: & tempus, motum ac mobile esse coniuncta: igitur mundum esse aeternum. Item nullum indiuiduum est perpetuum: igitur anima non est immortalis, nec est resurrectio. Isti, inquam, tales sapientes perinde faciunt, ac si quis mediocri diligentia perspectis omnibus iam effectis operibus, in alicuius praestantis artificis officina, negaret eum alterius generis opera facere scire, aut unquam fecisse, uel facturum esse. Hanc tamen sententiam nemo de artifice homine ferre ausit: at de Deo uiuente audent homines Epicurei (Flacius, *Clavis Scriptvrae S.* [1580], 445).

[56] *IIII Principium. Deum esse omnipotentem omnes fatentur. Itaque etiamsi quid in Scriptura traditur à Deo fieri praeter naturae ordinem, uel rationis nostrae opinionem, omnipotentiae eius ratione habita, pro uero etiam à gentilibus haberi solet & debet. Omnino enim statuendum est, Deo nihil impossibile esse quod uelit. Quandoquidem enim ipse author naturae & creator est, eamque pro suo arbitrio ita creauit: certum est eum etiam suo arbitrio illam mutare posse: & in eius nutu ac potestate totam naturam consistere donec uelit, rursus cum nolit totam collabi. . . . Omnia igitur absurda rationi, quae in Scriptura sunt, possunt ad haec principia redigi, eisque defendi: quae cum nec ipsa ratio negare possit, falsa est atheorum calumnia, Scripturam penitùs cum omni ratione pugnare* (Flacius, *Clavis Scriptvrae S.* [1580], 445).

at the beginning, God could have made it otherwise, bringing the light of stars millions of light-years away to earth in a matter of days or seconds, or instantly. Christians who believe that God made the world out of nothing should not doubt his power to do this.

Lutherans are especially equipped to resist efforts to reinterpret the biblical doctrine of creation to conform to natural science. The doctrine of the Lord's Supper presents to us the same problems as the doctrine of creation. Let us use a thought experiment here. If we had a device that could scan the molecular composition of the consecrated, distributed bread and wine as they were being consumed, would we find human cells and human DNA? We would not. Scientific examination fails here, since it presents evidence that would seem to conflict with the clear words of Christ. And yet we believe, and must believe, that Christ's words are true. The bread in the Holy Supper is his body, and the wine is his blood. In this case, empirical evidence must be set aside, though not denied, and reason must be constrained simply to accept the word of Christ as true. So also with creation: if there is empirical evidence that conflicts with the word of God, the word of God must be believed. If a supernova millions of light-years away is observed on earth, yet the word of God says the universe was created less than ten thousand years ago, then the empirical evidence must be set aside, though not denied, and reason must be constrained to accept simply the word of God as true. People who cannot believe that the world is young and was created in six days, if they are consistent, will also not be able to believe that the Lord Jesus puts his body and blood into our mouths in the Holy Supper. Therefore, the Lutheran approach to the question of whether to believe Scripture or empirical science regarding creation is the same approach that is given to all the mysteries of the faith. We believe something that conflicts with experience because of the authority of divine revelation.

Pastoral Approach

So what should be our pastoral approach to people in our congregations and to Christians in our wider circles who have become persuaded that because of geological, astronomical, or biological science, the biblical accounts of creation cannot be taken literally? Here I will give my own suggestions. We can say the following. We were not there when the world was created, but God was, and he has revealed how it happened. God is credible. If we believe him in other areas, why not believe him in this area as well? We do not, however, need to deny or reject any data that science presents (though the theories and models that account for the data should be critically assessed). All scientific models are tentative, and all scientific findings must be scrutinized. And there should be room for Christian scientists

to challenge the models of an old earth and macroevolution. But if a Christian scientist finds evidence that indicates the world is older than a few thousand years, he should not let this bother him. When our scientists observe the created world, they must account for it as they find it. Yet at the same time, they should refrain from concluding rationally, on the basis of their experience, that God must have created the world at a time or in a manner different from what he has revealed.

As pastors work with congregation members and others who have been persuaded that the biblical doctrine of creation must be taken nonliterally, I think it is important to avoid one particular argument. The history of the seventeenth century should teach us not to set up all-or-nothing situations where we say, "The world must be so, since otherwise our faith would be false." This manner of argumentation was often used by Orthodox Lutherans against the Socinians and others, but its effectiveness in converting them is dubious. That is, we should not say, "Evolution is false *because* it would undermine nearly all Christian dogmas." Such an argument could lead someone who is on the doubting edge between faith and unbelief simply to cast off faith. Rather, we should simply oppose macroevolution and say that it is false and destructive of faith. At the same time, if our member still has a weak faith, then we must not use any argument that could snuff out the smoldering wick or crush the bruised reed of faith (cf. Matt 12:20). We should not argue as though by accepting an old earth or even macroevolution, the entire truth of the Christian religion is overthrown, even though a consistent application of reason to revelation would in fact lead there.

Perhaps we need a multi-layered approach that *rejects* some positions outright (such as old earth creationism and especially evolutionary creationism), *keeps distance* from others, claiming them as tentative or possible (such as young earth creationism and the omphalos hypothesis), teaches dogma clearly, and at the same time does not snuff out the smoldering wick of faith. We should also, with the aid of scientists, help our people to read *science* critically, and to be open also to scientific data that would indicate a young age of the earth or would conflict with macroevolution.

At the same time, we should help our people to realize that it is not narrow-minded to believe the literal sense of the Bible. Perhaps some conservative Christians are indeed narrow-minded, rejecting both the theories and the data of science whenever it seems to conflict with Scripture. But we must assert and constantly affirm that it is not narrow-minded to believe that the world was created over the span of six days, and that this happened about six thousand years ago. This is not narrow-minded, and we must not be ashamed of it.

At a scholarly conference several years ago in Fort Worth, I conversed with an editor of a reputable German publishing house. He expressed his shock at having met and talked with a Bible-believing Texan who asserted his faith in a six-day creation *ex nihilo*, and who reproached my German colleague for holding to a faith in an old universe and macroevolution. The German was shocked, opining that only narrow-minded rednecks from Texas could believe such a thing. So what was I to do? If I remained silent, I would have tacitly agreed to his rejection of what *God* has revealed about creation. If I confessed, then my colleague's vehemence would be turned against me, and the enjoyable evening would be at an end. "I believe that," I said. "The world was created in six days, and it's young." So he mocked me too. For him, my faith and mind were too narrow, since I clung to the literal sense of Scripture as God's word. He admonished me to open my mind to the whole realm of possibilities: extraterrestrial intelligent life, evolution, even the truth of other religions. I took the abuse for a while, said something about respecting science, but also said, "Nevertheless, I trust the words of the prophets and apostles. I am a Christian." The fun evening was over.

Why are the true Christians labeled "narrow-minded"? Just the opposite is the case. It takes a strong faith and an open mind to recognize the conflicts between Scripture and experience, to take them seriously, and yet still to believe the plain meaning of God's scriptural revelation more than one's own senses. It calls for a mind that is open not to reinterpreting Scripture (much less relegating it to myth!), but that is open to God's omniscience and omnipotence. Our minds must not be narrowly enslaved to our own sensory experience. Our minds are truly open when they are open to God and then to exploring his created world.

Benjamin T. G. Mayes

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***John Frederick the Magnanimous: Defender of Martin Luther and Hero of the Reformation*. By Georg Mentz. Translated by James Langebartels. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2018. 144 pages. Softcover. $14.99.**

I am glad that Concordia Publishing House has decided to translate and publish this work. The original German edition is difficult to access and, of course, takes more time and effort to read than does the English. This is just volume 1, so I look forward to volumes 2 and 3 that will describe John Frederick's years as elector and then ex-elector. This volume gives us his life before the death of his father (1532) as well as an appendix including 27 documents that provide the basis for the information in the text. However, I am not quite sure for whom CPH has chosen to publish this work other than myself. The subject is certainly worthwhile. Like his father (John the Constant) and his uncle (Frederick the Wise) before him, Elector John Frederick had an enormous impact on the course of the Lutheran Reformation and not just in Saxony. He was a leader in the Schmalkald League as well as ruler of electoral Saxony and just shortly after Luther's death, he fought—and lost—the Schmalkald War against the emperor, Charles V. Unfortunately, Mentz's work is not the best for today's readers.

For one thing, the original is quite old by scholarly standards. It came out in 1901, well over a century ago. History books are like most things: they go out of date after a while. Gradually, historians develop new sources, raise new questions, and provide new information for a particular subject like this one. For example, in 2006, the *Schriften des Vereins fuïr Reformationsgeschichte* devoted an entire volume to "John Frederick I—the Lutheran Elector," a collection of essays by contemporary historians who treat everything from the elector's role in the Schmalkald League to his pictorial representation by the Cranachs.

Of course, essays are no substitute for a biography but even in this respect, the volume at hand fails, i.e., if the publishers expect anyone to read it. First of all, the prose is pedestrian (well, okay, so is this review), just one fact laid out after another. Secondly, it assumes that the reader already knows a lot about the subject and especially his context. Consider this sentence, "We might wonder why the Hohenzollerns and not the Wettins gained the ascendancy in North Germany" (p. 17). I wonder about how many in 21st century America are still wondering

about this? Indeed, how many prospective readers are going to know who the Hohenzollerns were or the Wettins for that matter (John Frederick's family) or what is meant by "ascendancy in North Germany"? And, by the way, this is the first sentence of the first chapter! Nor is there a footnote in sight to help them. Likewise, what will prospective readers know about Charles V's efforts to make his brother King of the Romans or even why that was significant—let alone the nature of John Frederick's objection based upon the Golden Bull? Or how about the Pack Affair? And what about the young prince's library consisting of works like "the letters of Libanius, the *Instruction* of Aldus, and the grammar of Brassicanus" (p. 24)?

To be fair, there is the occasional explanatory footnote, but there aren't enough of them (Libanius, Aldus, and Brassicanus remain unidentified in the text although a *little* information is provided in the appendix, p. 97) and the notes that we do get aren't always that helpful. For example, regarding the Golden Bull, a footnote tells us that it was promulgated in 1356 and specified that "elections were to be handled by the seven electors . . . not by the Roman emperor" but does not tell us what the elections were for or that "the king of the Romans" was a title for the emperor's designated successor. We do get a footnote for this statement regarding John Frederick's books: "a Tristan was purchased for him at Michelmas 1515." It reads, "Reg. Bb. 4252. The reading is not completely certain" (p. 24). Now who is that supposed to help? On the same page, "Parzival" receives a useful identification in a footnote, so why not "Tristan"?

We need a good modern biography of John Frederick, but this isn't it. Of course, I certainly hope that there are potential buyers out there for this book. I really want CPH to succeed in making available hard-to-get and hard-to-read works of Reformation history. But I am just not sure how many buyers for this book will also turn out to be readers.

Cameron A. MacKenzie

***Faith That Sees Through The Culture*. By Alfonso Espinosa. St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2018. 264 Pages. Softcover. $14.99**

With *Faith That Sees Through The Culture*, Espinosa has supplied the church with an excellent resource for use in group study. The book is designed to be taught and discussed with other people rather than just read and contemplated by individuals. Each chapter concludes with a series of discussion questions designed to get the readers deeper into the meaning of what they just read and its implication for their lives as Christians.

As the title implies, the book offers a broad examination of how faith (as believed, taught, and confessed within the Lutheran tradition) shapes the Christian view of the world as well as the individual Christian's interaction with the world. This makes the book useful for use with those new to the Lutheran church as well as those with more experience in the pew.

Espinosa properly defines faith as a gift from God and not an exercise of will. It is this faith given by God that allows the Christian the proper vision to see through the claims made by the culture. More importantly it is the faith given by God that allows the Christian to see the God that is hidden in incarnation, word, and sacrament. While the book deals with some very weighty theological matters, Espinosa has succeeded in putting complex ideas into breezy accessible writing.

In each chapter Espinosa draws from the Scriptures, the Confessions, and other pertinent writings from Lutheran theologians as he explores his topics. In addition, Espinosa also features relevant stories from his many years as a parish pastor that illustrate how the different facets of Christian faith have played out in his life as well as the lives of those he has served. Some readers will resonate more with the stories while others will find more value in the doctrinal explanations but the presence of both throughout the book can only strengthen its usefulness at the parish level. In all, Espinosa's book should prove to be a valuable teaching tool for any Lutheran pastor.

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***Embracing Godly Character: The Christian Community's Response to a Godless Culture.* By Kenneth Kremer. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2018. 200 pages. Softcover. $14.99.**

In a relatively short book, Kenneth Kremer articulates some of the problems with secular culture, gives a succinct definition of godly character, and explains how such character exists. Kremer defines character as identity plus performance (in that order) and repeats this definition throughout the book. He contrasts it with a view of character that puts performance first. For him, a person's identity is given by God (in creating and redeeming the individual) and that is first and foremost in shaping an individual's character. Kremer stresses the importance of listening to the word of God, letting God shape a person's identity. Performance follows from a person's God-given identity.

Kremer's arguments are helpful in analyzing current trends and explaining how they do not encourage godly character. For example, he offers a helpful chart at the

end of his book which compares the fundamental assumptions behind Christian education with the assumptions of an education based on secular humanism. Furthermore, he offers a helpful analysis of the nature and timing of a shift in our culture's view of God and His Word. Kremer's analysis is therefore helpful for pastors in understanding their congregations, especially the younger members of those congregations.

Kremer attempts to pack a great deal into a short book and some of his points could use additional development. For example, the chart on education worldviews at the end of his book demonstrates that he could have written a good deal more on the basic assumptions of these different forms of education and how they form character. In addition, near the end of the book, in chapter twelve, Kremer discussed the need for people to communicate with one another through an analysis of the development of the internet. The chapter ended abruptly by raising a number of questions about the importance of having conversation with Jesus, with fellow Christians, and with non-believers. Kremer seems to be touching on an important point, but he could develop it more fully.

Kenneth Kremer offers a book which can be helpful in understanding the background for some cultural trends. It also encourages Christians to listen to the word of God, letting his word shape their identity and their performance for the purpose of having godly character. Kremer's book will be helpful for pastors to read as they seek to understand the worldviews influencing their people.

Pastor Daniel Burfiend
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***Old Testament Wisdom Literature: A Theological Introduction*. By Craig G. Bartholomew and Ryan P. O'Dowd. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2018. 336 pages. Softcover. $35.00.**

Torah, the Law of Moses, expresses the will of God. Wisdom guides the believer in how to live it. The two are intimately connected. That understanding undergirds Bartholomew and O'Dowd's thesis. Wisdom and Torah go hand in hand.

The focus of this book is on the theological interpretation of biblical wisdom literature. The authors limit their discussion to the three books that clearly meet the criteria, namely, Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes. Their goal is to create a discussion that will ultimately result in a theology of Old Testament wisdom. They begin with a general introduction, which is followed by a very helpful discussion of the similarities and the differences between the wisdom theology of the Bible and that

of the Ancient Near East. Furthermore, they compare and contrast the wisdom of Egypt with that of Mesopotamia. The Egyptian worldview subsumed all of creation into a harmonious substance while that of Mesopotamia lived in polytheistic naturalism. While pagan wisdom assumed polytheism, chaos, and the violent clash between the gods and nature, Israelite wisdom declared that God is not part of creation and is *ipsum esse subsistens*. Therefore, wisdom is not to be founded on human observation of nature and its processes, but is grounded in the fear of Yahweh.

Following a helpful section on Hebrew poetry, which would be valuable to any one studying the Old Testament, the authors outline Proverbs and give the reader an overview. Rather than understanding Proverbs as teaching a cause and effect dynamic, they argue that a character-consequence structure is more in keeping with the teaching of Proverbs. The foundation of that character is the fear of Yahweh. It is encouraging that they uphold Solomonic authorship of the sections assigned to Solomon. The following chapter is a deeper investigation of Proverbs 31, seeking to understand how it serves the theological purpose of the book as a whole.

The authors' treatment of Job takes the historicity of Job seriously. The echoes of the creation accounts in Genesis are clearly brought out in the discussion. Helpful charts showing parallels between Job and Genesis are enlightening. It was a delightful surprise to read the way in which the suffering of Job and the sufferings of Christ were held up and compared, especially how Job, like Christ, intercedes for others, even those who challenged him. The follow-on chapter is an in-depth reading of Job 28, which asks where wisdom can be found. The answer includes tie-ins to the writings of Paul.

Ecclesiastes is the final book treated at any length. The authors reject Solomonic authorship of Ecclesiastes, placing the book within the postexilic period, as late as the fourth century B.C. Nevertheless, treating Qoheleth as a Solomonic figure, they argue that the problem with Qoheleth is not found in his observations but in his methodology. The issue is not solved until the epilogue, where it is resolved in fearing God and keeping his commandments. A treatment of the well-known and often misinterpreted Ecclesiastes 3:1–15 follows. The book next moves to a discussion of Jesus as the Wisdom of God, followed by chapters on the theology of Old Testament Wisdom and its application in the world today.

For the person desiring a deeper study of the topics presented, the authors provide a ready bibliography for recommended reading with introductory studies, commentaries, and scholarly resources. These are very helpful. While this book is a good start for the development of a theology of Old Testament wisdom, and while the connection to the creation accounts in Genesis are excellent, it suffers from its failure to ground the study more deeply in Deuteronomy. Applying Torah to the

new situation of living in Ertz Yisrael is exactly what Moses is doing. Some discussion of that should have been included.

This book can be a helpful tool for the person preparing a Bible study on any of the three wisdom books. Paired with the commentaries in the *Concordia Commentary* series, this book can simplify the work. It would also be a good text for a continuing education course on wisdom literature.

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***Martin Luther and the Enduring Word of God: The Wittenberg School and Its Scripture-Centered Proclamation*. By Robert Kolb. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016. 528 pages. Hardcover. $50.00.**

Robert Kolb is the American master of all things Lutheran in the 16th century, the unofficial "dean" of Luther studies. In this volume he sets forth a comprehensive look at the biblical exegesis of Luther, his Wittenberg colleagues, and their 16th-century heirs, leading up to the 1580 Book of Concord. Kolb intends his book to be a bibliographical guide to a genre of theological literature that has been neglected: biblical commentaries and sermons by people other than Luther. The book also focuses on the theology set forth in these writings.

Chapter 1 deals with pre-reformation exegesis. Chapters 2–7 handle Luther's theology, view of the Bible, hermeneutics, Bible commentaries, preaching, and German translation of the Bible. Kolb busts some myths. The change from medieval to Lutheran exegesis did not mean the rejection of allegory; instead, allegory served to illustrate, though not to prove doctrine. Lutherans saw New Testament exegesis of the Old Testament as instructive for their own, and so types of Christ and His Church were identified even where the New Testament did not explicitly identify them, such as Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. All preachers (and homiletics students) should read pp. 185–191, on Luther's preaching advice.

The rest of the book (ch. 8–14) is about the understudied theologians who worked alongside or in collaboration with Luther, and the next generation that had learned from Luther and Melanchthon. In my estimation, these chapters are the best in the book and cannot be found anywhere else. Exegetes of the late Reformation preserved and also extended the exegetical heritage they had received from the Reformers.

Throughout the book, Kolb repeats certain assertions that function as recurring themes of the book. Luther stood at the center of the "Wittenberg team;" antitheses

between his theology and that of his circle have been exaggerated in the past century. Luther's exegesis did not undergo a Reformation breakthrough; it changed gradually throughout the 1510s (34). Yet there was a Reformation turn, and it was a turn away from ritualistic religion to a religion of God's Word and trust in it, a conversation between God and his human creatures (37–39). Luther conceived of salvation as "re-creation" brought about by the Word of God. The Word comes to human beings in various forms, and when Kolb speaks of the sacraments, he normally calls them "sacramental forms of the Word." The law is God's constant plan and will for human life, not just a word of accusation. Kolb asserts in a few places that for Luther, Christ made atonement by his death, but *not* by his active obedience to God's Law (e.g., 444–45). (How this assertion fits with contrary statements of Luther, such as LW 68:39–40, Kolb does not explain here.)

No book can cover every detail. What I would have liked to see, but did not, was more detail on Luther's hermeneutics. For example, how were Melanchthon's four rhetorical categories (257, 259) used in exegesis and preaching? Often when Kolb sets forth to describe hermeneutics, he instead summarizes the theology of Luther and other exegetes (e.g., 98–131, 195–207). This, as a rule of faith, was one aspect of hermeneutics, to be sure. But I would have appreciated more detail on how the rule of faith actually controlled and guided exegesis as a hermeneutic.

Yet not even a book this size can be comprehensive, and Kolb's goal was not to be exhaustive, but to show us what is out there. What he accomplished is astounding. The hope is that future generations will search out the buried treasures of Lutheran exegesis in the 16th century, for which Kolb has given us an excellent map.

Benjamin T. G. Mayes

***Luther's Christological Legacy: Christocentrism and the Chalcedonian Tradition.* By Johannes Zachhuber. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2017. 148 pages. Hardcover. $15.00.**

Commemorating the 2017 Reformation anniversary, Marquette University invited Johannes Zachhuber of Oxford to speak on Martin Luther for its annual Père Marquette lecture. Zachhuber, a Lutheran, noted the invitation to speak on Luther at a Jesuit university as a sign of ecumenical progress. In his presentation he frames remembrance of the Reformation as a resource for individuals making religious decisions. As in the Reformation, so today religious identity is more reliant on individual decisions than enculturation (11–17).

Zachhuber's topic in this book is the centrality of Christology in Luther's theology and more broadly in Christian thought. While acknowledging that Luther

did not write a theology in systematic form, Zachhuber identifies Christology as a kind of lynchpin that holds the various strands of Luther's theology together. Luther's Christology is built on three encounters that Zachhuber identifies from a survey of Luther's writings: the encounter of the believer with the suffering Jesus, the encounter of God in Jesus, and the encounter with the victorious Christ. Zachhuber argues that the points of Luther's Christology stand in tensional unity within a soteriological framework (27–29).

If, as Zachhuber argues, Christ's person is at the heart of all Christianity, and Luther holds his Christology to be Chalcedonian, then a central question of the book arises: how can Luther's insistence that traditional Christology be at the heart of theology lead to divisions within the church (18–24)? Zachhuber's answer is carefully nuanced. On the one hand, Zachhuber places Luther within a traditional theological framework. While Luther's soteriological concern leads him to push against the limits of Christology, this very tension between soteriological proclamation and the technical aspects of Christology is present already in the early church (94). On the other hand, Zachhuber argues that Luther's emphasis on soteriological concerns results in a cavalier attitude towards the coherence of Christology. In particular, Luther pushes the theopaschite formula further than traditionally done to insist on the reality of God suffering in Christ (51–53). Thus, Luther's cavalier attitude towards the coherence of Christology leads to divisions within the church as his opponents object to the incoherence they identify in Luther's Christology (130–137).

Underlying this argument is Zachhuber's view that doctrinal formulas are attempts to give a rational account of the Christian life that never quite map precisely onto the reality they seek to express (125–137). This view leans toward George Lindbeck's analysis of an "experiential-expressivist" theory of doctrine in *The Nature of Doctrine*, according to which doctrines express religious experience rather than propositional truths. While Zachhuber does not neatly fit within Lindbeck's category, the critical point is that the view of doctrine as a second-order task gives Zachhuber space to argue that Luther upholds soteriological proclamation of Christ aimed to promote the reality of the Christian life at the expense of the subtle technicalities of Christological doctrine. Should one see doctrine as something other than a second-order reflection on Christian experience, then Zachhuber's proposed gap between soteriological need and technical reflection may shrink accordingly.

The proposed gap might shrink further if Luther's Christology is placed alongside scholastic Christology. While Zachhuber admirably surveys Luther's key Christological works and relates Luther to the early church, he gives less attention

to Luther's relationship to the scholastics. Zachhuber predominately argues that Luther rejects scholastic Christologies as too technical for the needs of faith and Christian life. While this position is standard, Zachhuber's argument might look different if it conversed with recent works, such as Graham White's *Luther as Nominalist* and David Luy's *Dominus Mortis*, which offer different perspectives on Luther's relation to the nominalists and his position on the suffering of God. If, as these works suggest, there is greater coherence in Luther's Christology than Zachhuber grants, then Luther is more successful in reconciling the posited divide between doctrinal precision and the needs of Christian faith and life.

With those observations made, this short book is recommended to pastors working to apply doctrine to life, particularly to work out what it means that Christ and his person are at the center of theology, a place accorded to Christ in the Smalcald Articles and the Augsburg Confession. The centrality of Christ in Luther's thought analyzed in this book serves as a model for pastors aiming to put Christ in the center of all that they do.

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***The Beauty of the Lord: Theology as Aesthetics*. By Jonathan King. Bellingham, Washington: Lexham Press, 2018. 424 pages. Softcover. $24.99.**

Significant contributions have been made in recent decades to the relationship between theology and the topic of beauty (theological aesthetics). Jonathan King's *The Beauty of the Lord: Theology as Aesthetics* continues this rich field of study. However, what is of particular value is the impressive program of research he submits in defense of C. Caverno's contention that the Bible "is everywhere inspired and writ in an atmosphere of aesthetics" (7).

This defense is timely. Considerable amount of contemporary effort devoted to theological aesthetics engages with what the topic of beauty offers to theological discourse, specifically biblical and systematic theology. Perhaps what has been neglected, however, is what biblical and systematic theology offers to the topic of beauty. King's work then is certainly welcome.

King's outline of enquiry is of great value. Sensitive to those who are entering this conversation, he introduces the topic by way of a survey defining what theological aesthetics is and its various avenues of investigation. This is followed by an explanation of what he considers are the "christological contours" of his program of research (22). These contours appear as subsequent chapters giving attention to the dimensions of beauty located in the Trinity and their manifestation

in the theatre of man's existence: creation, incarnation, cross, and re-creation. Of further assistance is an appendix detailing the textual evidence of beauty throughout sacred scripture.

King's project is to be commended not only for its extensive biblical and systematic scope, but also for the assembly of theologians with whom he dialogues. However, Lutheran considerations are noticeably absent. This is not necessarily a critique of King; it is instead an encouragement for Lutheran theologians to enter the conversation. King's work certainly provides an attractive invitation for his Lutheran readers.

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Reviews Published Online at: www.ctsfw.edu/ctq/reviews

Remember the Poor: How the Earliest Christians Cared for the Needy. By Matthew C. Harrison. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2018. 80 pages. Softcover. $6.99. (Paul E. Deterding)

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Braaten, Carl E. *My Ecumenical Journey: Ecumenical Experiences and Perspectives of an Evangelical Catholic Theologian*. Delphi, New York: ALPB Books, 2018. 139 pages. Softcover. No price listed.

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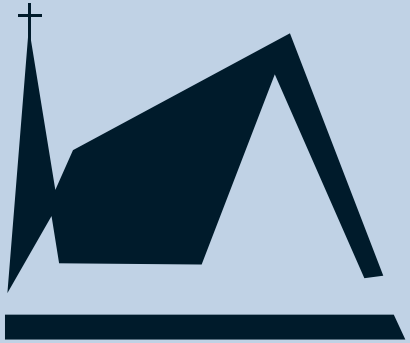

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