LOGIA

A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY

Vocation & Sanctification

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εἴ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λόγια Θεοῦ

LOGIA is a journal of Lutheran theology. As such it publishes articles on exegetical, historical, systematic, and liturgical theology that promote the orthodox theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. We cling to God's divinely instituted marks of the church: the gospel, preached purely in all its articles, and the sacraments, administered according to Christ's institution. This name expresses what this journal wants to be. In Greek, ΛΟΓΙΑ functions either as an adjective meaning "eloquent," "learned," or "cultured," or as a plural noun meaning "divine revelations," "words," or "messages." The word is found in 1 Peter 4:11, Acts 7:38, and Romans 3:2. Its compound forms include ὁμολογία (confession), ἀπολογία (defense), and ἀναλογία (right relationship). Each of these concepts and all of them together express the purpose and method of this journal. LOGIA considers itself a *free conference in print* and is committed to providing an independent theological forum normed by the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. At the heart of our journal we want our readers to find a love for the sacred Scriptures as the very Word of God, not merely as rule and norm, but especially as Spirit, truth, and life which reveals Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life—Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, we confess the church, without apology and without rancor, only with a sincere and fervent love for the precious Bride of Christ, the holy Christian church, "the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God," as Martin Luther says in the Large Catechism (LC II, 42). We are animated by the conviction that the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession represents the true expression of the church which we confess as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

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Cover Art

The cover art for this issue is a woodcut from the 1580 Latin edition of the Book of Concord published in Leipzig. The cut appears in Luther's Small Catechism under the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed. The scene depicted is Pentecost and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, fulfilling Jesus' promise that after his ascension he would send the Comforter (John 15:26).

The particular volume of the Lutheran Confessions that the cut is from is in the rare book collection at Concordia Historical Institute in St. Lous, Missouri. The Rev. Mark A. Loest, assistant director for reference and museum at Concordia Historical Institute, provided the art.

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FREQUENTLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

AC [CA]	Augsburg Confession
AE	*Luther's Works,* American Edition
Ap	Apology of the Augsburg Confession
Ep	Epitome of the Formula of Concord
FC	Formula of Concord
LC	Large Catechism
LW	*Lutheran Worship*
SA	Smalcald Articles
SBH	*Service Book and Hymnal*
SC	Small Catechism
SD	Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord
SL	St. Louis Edition of Luther's Works
Tappert	*The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.* Trans. and ed. Theodore G. Tappert
Triglotta	*Concordia Triglotta*
TLH	*The Lutheran Hymnal*
Tr	Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope
WA	*Luthers Werke,* Weimarer Ausgabe [Weimar Edition]

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Vocation: Fruit of the Liturgy

John T. Pless

The supper is ended.
Oh, now be extended
The fruits of this service
In all who believe (*LW* 247).

Omer Westendorf's popular hymn accents the linkage between the Lord's Supper and our life in the world. The words of the hymn are echoed in the Introduction to *Lutheran Worship* where we are told: "Our Lord gives us his body to eat and his blood to drink. Finally his blessing moves us into our calling, where his gifts have their fruition."[1] Indeed, this is "the liturgy after the liturgy,"[2] to use the helpful phrase that Carter Lindberg borrowed from the eastern tradition.

With the advent of *Lutheran Worship* in 1982, we have rediscovered something of the richness of the evangelical Lutheran understanding of *Gottesdienst,* Divine Service. The liturgy is not about our cultic activity; it is about God giving his gifts in sermon and sacrament to the people that he has gathered together in his name. Oswald Bayer notes, "Worship is first and last God's service to us, his sacrifice which took place for us, which he bestows in specific worship—'Take and eat! I am here for you' (cf. 1 Cor 11:24 with Gn 2:16). This feature of worship is lost if we want to do as a work what we may receive as a gift."[3] Here Bayer reflects Article iv of the Apology as it confesses, "Faith is that worship which receives the benefits that God offers; the righteousness of the law is that worship which offers to God our own merits. God wants to be honored by faith so that we receive from him those things that he promises and offers" (AP iv, 49; Kolb-Wengert, 128). In Lutheran liturgical theology God is the subject rather than the object. Christ is the donor and benefactor. He gives his gifts to be received by faith alone.

Rome had reversed the flow, making the Supper into a sacrifice to be offered, a work to be performed, rather than a gift to be received. Lutheran theology distinguishes between God's *beneficium* and man's *sacrificium.* To confuse the two is to muddle law and gospel. This is at the heart of the critique of the Roman Mass in the Augsburg Confession and the Apology. Luther and the Confessions understood liturgy not as the work of the priest or the people, but the very work of God himself as he comes to serve his church with the gifts of redemption won on the cross and now distributed in word and sacrament.

Salvation's accomplishment on Calvary and its delivery at font, pulpit, and altar are the work of God. This Luther confesses in the Large Catechism:

> Neither you nor I could ever know anything about Christ, or believe in him and receive him as Lord, unless these were first offered to us and bestowed on our hearts through the preaching of the gospel by the Holy Spirit. The work is finished and completed; Christ has acquired and won the treasure for us by his sufferings, death, and resurrection, etc. But if the work remained hidden so that no one knew of it, it would have all been in vain, all lost. In order that this treasure might not be buried but be put to use and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to be published and proclaimed, in which he has given the Holy Spirit to offer and apply to us this treasure, this redemption (LC ii, 38; Kolb-Wengert, 436).

All of this is *beneficium,* gift. Faith clings to the gift, drawing its life from the bounty of God's mercy and grace in Jesus Christ. He is the servant, the liturgist in the Divine Service.

Sacrificium, on the other hand, is the work of man. Luther rejected the Roman understanding of the mass as sacrifice because it was built on a presumption that God could be placated by man's efforts. This Luther deemed to be idolatrous. In the Large Catechism he wrote:

> This is the greatest idolatry that we have practiced up to now, and it is still rampant in the world. All the religious orders are founded upon it. It involves only that conscience that seeks help, comfort, and salvation in its own works and presumes to wrest heaven from God. It keeps track of how often it has made endowments, fasted, celebrated Mass, etc. It relies on such things and boasts of them, unwilling to receive anything as a gift of God, but desiring to earn everything by itself or merit everything by works of supererogation, just as if God were in our service or debt and we were his liege lords (LC i, 22, Kolb-Wengert, 388).

It was this conviction that compelled Luther to reform the canon of the mass so that God's speaking and giving were clearly distinct from the church's praying.

John T. Pless, Book Review Editor for *Logia,* is Assistant Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions, Concordia Theolgical Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Luther has not been without his critics. Yngve Brilioth judged Luther to be one-sided in his focus on the gift of the forgiveness of sins, while ignoring or downplaying such themes as thanksgiving, communion, commemoration, eucharistic sacrifice, and mystery.[4] More recently, Eugene Brand opined that Luther's liturgical surgery left the patient disfigured.[5] It took an Anglican scholar, Bryan Spinks,[6] to save Luther from the Lutherans as he demonstrated that Luther's revisions were a thoughtful unfolding of the liturgical implications of the doctrine of justification.

Lutherans are rightly uncomfortable with the slogan made popular after the Second Vatican Council that liturgy is the "work of the people."

The faithful come to church not to give, but to receive. Luther gives doxological expression to this in stanza 4 of his catechetical hymn "Here is the Tenfold Sure Command" (*LW* #331):

> And put aside the work you do,
> So God may work in you.
> Have mercy, Lord!

Vilmos Vatja explains:

> In no sense is this worship a preparatory stage which faith could ultimately leave behind. Rather faith might be defined as the passive cult (*cultus passivus*) because in this life it will always depend on the worship by which God imparts himself—a gift granted to the believing congregation.

This is confirmed in Luther's explanation of the Third Commandment. To him sabbath rest means more than a pause from work. It should be an opportunity for God to do his work on man. God wants to distract man from his daily toil and so open him to God's gifts. To observe sabbath is not a good work which man could offer to God. On the contrary, it means pausing from all our works and letting God do his work in us and for us.

Thus Luther's picture of the sabbath is marked by the passivity of man and the activity of God. And it applies not only to certain holy days on the calendar, but to the Christian life in its entirety, testifying to man's existence as a creature of God who waits by faith for the life to come. Through God's activity in Christ, man is drawn into the death and resurrection of the Redeemer and is so recreated a new man in Christ. The Third Commandment lays on us no obligations for specific works of any kind (not even spiritual or cultic works), but rather directs us to the work of God. And we do not come into contact with the latter except in the service, where Christ meets us in the means of grace.[7]

Lutherans are rightly uncomfortable with the slogan made popular after the Second Vatican Council that liturgy is the "work of the people." Liturgy does not consist in our action, but the work of God, who stoops down to give us gifts that we cannot obtain for ourselves. Does the passivity of the Lutheran definition leave no room for worship? Does not the Small Catechism bid us to "thank, praise, serve, and obey" God? If God serves us sacramentally, do we not also serve him sacrificially?

To address these questions, we turn to the post-communion collect that Luther included in his 1526 *Deutsche Messe*: "We give thanks to you, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore you that of your mercy you would strengthen us through the same in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever."[8]

In this collect, Luther gives doxological expression to a theological proposition that he had made six years earlier in *The Freedom of the Christian,* where he argued "that a Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and the neighbor . . . . He lives in Christ through faith, and in his neighbor through love" (AE 31: 371). The existence of the old Adam is focused on self. The old Adam is curved in on himself, to use the imagery of Luther. This egocentric existence stands in contrast to the life of the new man in Christ. The new man lives outside of himself, for his calling is to faith in Christ and love for the neighbor. Thus Luther continues, "By faith he is caught up beyond himself into God. By love he descends beneath himself into his neighbor" (AE 31: 371). Faith is active in love and so takes on flesh and blood in service to the neighbor just as Christ became incarnate not to be served, but to give himself in service to the world.

The post-communion collect has a pivotal place in the liturgy. It is the hinge that connects God's service to us in the sacrament with our service to the neighbor in the world. This thought is also demonstrated in Luther's hymnody. In his hymn on the Lord's Supper, "O Lord, We Praise You" (LW #238), Luther confesses the blessings bestowed by God in the body and blood of his Son in the first two stanzas. The final stanza is a prayer that the sacrament might be fruitful in the lives of those who have received the Lord's testament:

> May God bestow on us his grace and favor
> To please him with our behavior
> And live together here in love and union
> Nor repent this blest communion
> O Lord, have mercy!
> Let not your good spirit forsake us,
> But heavenly minded he make us.
> Give your Church, Lord to see
> Days of peace and unity,
> O Lord, have mercy!

Luther also translated and revised a fifteenth-century hymn generally attributed to John Hus, "Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior" (LW #236–237).[9] The ninth stanza of his hymn expresses the thought that the sacrament both nourishes faith and causes love to flourish:

> Let this food your faith nourish
> That by love its fruits may flourish

And your neighbor learn from you
How much God's wondrous love can do.

Luther's understanding of vocation is consistent with his liturgical theology. God serves us sacramentally in the Divine Service as we receive his benefactions by faith, and we serve God sacrificially as we give ourselves to the neighbor in love. The *communio* of the sacrament exhibits both faith and love, according to Luther. "This fellowship is twofold: on the one hand we partake of Christ and all saints; on the other hand we permit all Christians to be partakers of us, in whatever way they are able," wrote Luther in 1519 (AE 35: 67). In his 1526 treatise *The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ—Against the Fanatics,* Luther is more pointed:

> For it is necessary for each one to know that Christ has given his body, flesh, and blood on the cross to be our treasure and to help us receive the forgiveness of sins, that is, that we may be saved, redeemed from death and hell. That is the first principle of Christian doctrine. It is presented to us in the words, and his body and blood are given to us to be received corporeally as token and confirmation of this fact. To be sure, he did it only once, carrying it out and achieving it on the cross; but he causes it each day anew to be set before us, distributed and poured out through preaching, and he orders us to remember and never forget him. The second principle is love . . . . *As he gives himself to us with his body and blood in order to redeem us from our misery, so ought we too give ourselves with might and main for our neighbor* (AE 36: 352, emphasis added).

For Luther, the distinction between faith and love is necessary both in liturgy and vocation. In the liturgy, faith receives the gifts of Christ. In vocation, love gives to the neighbor even as Christ has given himself to us. The distinction between faith and love lies behind the discussion of sacrifice in Article XXIV of the Apology. The Apology notes that there are two kinds of sacrifice. First of all, there is the atoning sacrifice, the sacrifice of propitiation whereby Christ made satisfaction for the sins of the world. This sacrifice has achieved reconciliation between God and humanity and so merits the forgiveness of sins. The other type of sacrifice is the eucharistic sacrifice. It does not merit forgiveness of sins, nor does it procure reconciliation with God, but is rather a sacrifice of thanksgiving. According to Article XXIV of the Apology, eucharistic sacrifices include

> the preaching of the gospel, faith, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, the affliction of the saints, indeed all the good works of the saints. These sacrifices are not satisfactions for those who offer them, nor can they be applied to others so as to merit the forgiveness of sins or reconciliation for others *ex opere operato.* They are performed by those who are already reconciled (Ap XXIV, 24; Kolb-Wengert, 262).

Luther and the early Lutherans did not do away with the category of sacrifice. Luther relocated sacrifice. He removed it from the altar and repositioned it in the world. Sacrifice was offered to God indirectly through service to the neighbor. This is "the liturgy after the liturgy." God's gifts given us sacramentally in the Divine Service now bear fruit sacrificially as we go back into the world to thank, praise, serve, and obey the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. "The whole of a Christian's life is liturgical life,"[10] writes William Willimon.

God is not in need of our good works, but the neighbor is in need of them.

This understanding of sacrifice reflects Romans 12, where Paul writes, "I beseech you, therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). In the ancient world, everyone knew that a sacrifice was dead. The sacrificial victim was slaughtered. To the ears of those who first heard the apostle's letter, the term "living sacrifice" would have struck them as strange, as an oxymoron. Yet Paul is purposeful in his use of this imagery. The body of the Christian is rendered unto God as a living sacrifice, for the Christian has been joined to the death of Jesus in baptism. Plunged into Jesus' saving death in baptism, we now share in his resurrection from the grave (compare Romans 6:11). Baptism is the foundation for the Christian life of sacrifice.

Vilmos Vatja writes:

> The Christian brings his sacrifice as he renders the obedience, offers the service, and provides the love which his work and calling require of him. The old man dies as he spends himself for his fellowmen. But in his surrender of self, he is joined to Christ and obtains a new life. The work of the Christian in his calling becomes a function of his priesthood, his bodily sacrifice. His work in the calling is a work of faith, the worship of the kingdom of the world.[11]

The sacrifices offered by the royal priesthood are the "spiritual sacrifices" noted in 1 Peter 2:5, "You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." These spiritual sacrifices are what the Apology calls eucharistic sacrifices, and they embrace all that the believer does in love toward the neighbor flowing from faith in Christ.

Spiritual sacrifices are rendered in the bodily life of the believer as his life is a channel of God's love and care for the neighbor in need. These sacrifices do not merit salvation or make a person righteous, but rather express love for the neighbor. God is not in need of our good works, but the neighbor is in need of them. Freed from the notion that he must make himself good in order to earn eternal life, the Christian is directed toward the neighbor's well-being. In *The Freedom of the Christian* Luther wrote,

> Although the Christian is thus free from all works, he ought in this liberty to empty himself, take upon himself the form of a servant, be made in the likeness of men, be found in

> human form, and to serve, help and in every way deal with his neighbor as he sees that God through Christ has dealt and still deals with him (AE 31: 366).

Here the Christian is the *larvae Dei,* the mask of God, by which God gives daily bread to the inhabitants of the world. In this sense, the Christian is a "little Christ" to his neighbor. In *The Freedom of a Christian* Luther said:

> Just as our neighbor is in need and lacks that in which we abound, so we were in need before God and lacked his mercy. Hence, as our heavenly Father has in Christ freely come to our aid, we also ought freely to help our neighbor through our body and its works, and each one become as it were a Christ to the other that we may be Christ to one another (AE 31: 367–368).

Just as Christ sacrificed himself for us on the cross, we give ourselves sacrificially to the neighbor in love. This is expressed by Luther in the seventh of his Invocavit sermons, preached at Wittenberg on March 15, 1522:

> We shall now speak of the fruit of this sacrament, which is love; that is, that we should treat our neighbor as God has treated us. Now that we have received from God nothing but love and favor, for Christ has pledged and given us his righteousness and everything he has; he has poured out upon us all his treasures, which no man can measure and no angel can understand or fathom, for God is a glowing furnace of love, reaching even from the earth to the heavens. Love, I say, is a fruit of the sacrament (AE 51: 95).

In his 1530 treatise *Admonition Concerning the Sacrament,* Luther makes a similar point:

> Where such faith is thus continually refreshed and renewed, there the heart is also at the same time refreshed anew in its love of the neighbor and is made strong and equipped to do all good works and to resist sin and all temptations of the devil. Since faith cannot be idle, it must demonstrate the fruits of love by doing good and avoiding evil (AE 38: 126).

Luther's teaching on the dual existence of the Christian in faith and love leads us to observe a connection with the teaching of the two governments or two kingdoms. Leif Grane points out that for Luther "the place where the two kingdoms are held together is the calling."[12] This calling is lived within the structures of creation. Luther identified these structures as the three "hierarchies" of "the ministry, marriage, and government." It is within these structures of congregation, political order, and family life (which for Luther included the economic realm) that one exercises "the liturgy after the liturgy." The Christian does not seek to escape or withdraw from the world as in monasticism, but rather he lives out his calling in the particular place where God has located him.

In the Table of Duties of the Small Catechism Luther identifies these duties as "holy orders," in an obvious play on words over against monastic teaching. Holy people do holy work. Sacrifice is relocated. No doubt, Ernst Kaesemann was influenced by the older liberalism that pitted "priestly religion" against "prophetic religion." Nevertheless, he does echo a Lutheran theme in his exposition of Romans 12 as he states, "Christian worship does not consist of what is practiced at sacred sites, at sacred times, and with sacred acts (Schlatter). It is the offering of bodily existence in the otherwise profane sphere."[13] In a less polemic tone, Carter Lindberg makes a similar point: "Daily work is a form of worship within the world (*weltlicher Gottesdienst*) through service to the neighbor."[14] The "thank, praise, serve, and obey" in the conclusion of the explanation of the First Article find their fulfillment in the Table of Duties.

Luther identifies this service to the neighbor as a genuine *Gottesdienst.* "Now there is no greater service of God than Christian love which helps and serves the needy, as Christ himself will judge and testify on the last day" (AE 45: 172) said Luther in his 1523 writing *Ordinance of a Common Chest.*

***Luther identifies this service to the neighbor as a genuine* Gottesdienst.**

The Christian then lives the life of worship in the realm of creation, in the terrain of God's left-hand regime. This is affirmed in Article XVI of the *Augustana* as the point is made that the gospel does not undercut secular government, marriage, or occupations within the world "but instead intends that a person keep all this as a true order of God and demonstrate in these walks of life Christian love and true good works according to each person's calling" (AC XVI, 5; Kolb-Wengert, 50). Contrary to Rome's teaching that holiness is to be found in religious pursuits and the Anabaptist contention that discipleship means disengagement from the world, the Augsburg Confession maintains that evangelical perfection is to be found in the fear of God and faith, not in the abandonment of earthly responsibilities.

To flee from the demands that come to us by way of these earthly responsibilities is to flee from the cross that God lays upon us in order to put to death the old man. It is one of the enduring strengths of Gustaf Wingren's classic study *Luther on Vocation* that he demonstrates that in the place of our calling, God destroys the self-confidence of the old Adam who seeks to justify his existence by his own works:

> In one's vocation there is a cross—for prince, husband, father, daughter, for everyone—and on this cross the old human nature is to be crucified. Here the side of baptism, which is concerned with death, is fulfilled. Christ died on the cross, and one who is baptized unto death with Christ must be put to death by the cross. To understand what is meant by the cross of vocation, we need only remember that vocation

> is ordained by God to benefit, not him who fulfills the vocation, but the neighbor who, standing alongside, bears his own cross for the sake of others.[15]

The cross of vocation drives the baptized back to Christ as he enlivens us with his body and blood, thus renewing and strengthening them in faith and love. Einar Billing describes the Christian life going on between the two poles of the forgiveness of sins and our calling: "The forgiveness of sins continually restores us to our calling, and our calling . . . continually refers us to the forgiveness of sins."[16] Thus we see an ongoing rhythm between liturgy and vocation. Served with Christ's gifts in the liturgy, we are sent back into the world to live sacrificially as his royal priesthood. This is not a life that is lived by our own energies or resources but by the gospel of Jesus Christ alone. It is a life that is lived by the daily return to baptism in repentance and faith. It is a life sustained by Jesus' words and nourished with his body and blood. In a Maundy Thursday sermon (1529), Luther exhorted the congregation to use the sacrament as God's remedy against the world, the flesh, and the devil:

> For this reason, because Christ saw all this, he commanded us to pray and instituted the Sacrament for us to administer often, so that we are protected against the devil, the world, and the flesh. When the devil attacks, come for strength to that dear Word so that you may know Christ and long for the Sacrament! A soldier has his rations and must have food and drink and be strong. In the same way here: those who want to be Christian should not throw the Sacrament to the winds as if they did not need it."[17]

God's holy people live an embattled existence in their various callings in the world. They are ever in need of comfort and refreshment. Therefore the royal priesthood is constantly drawn back to the Divine Service to receive forgiveness of sins over and over again until the day when our baptism will be completed in the resurrection of the body and our earthly callings will be fulfilled in the eternal sabbath of the heavenly kingdom.

We conclude by asking the quintessential Lutheran question: "What does this mean" for faithful pastoral practice and the life of the church in our own day?

The evangelical understanding of the liturgy might help us recover the robust reality of the doctrine of vocation that has, in large part, been lost in contemporary American Lutheranism. Vocation has been collapsed into what Marc Kolden refers to as "occupationalism."[18] Vocation is thought of only in terms of what a person does for a job. By way of contrast, Luther understood that the Christian is genuinely bi-vocational. He is called first through the gospel to faith in Jesus Christ and he is called to occupy a particular station or place in life. The second sense of this calling embraces all that the Christian does in service to the neighbor, not only in a particular occupation, but also as a member of the church, a citizen, a spouse, parent, or child, and as a worker. Here the Christian lives in love toward other human beings and is the instrument by which God does his work in the world.

Luther abhorred self-chosen works both in liturgy and daily life. In his exposition of the Sermon on the Mount, he wrote:

> Reason is the devil's bride, which plans some particular course because it does not know what may please God . . . . The best and highest station in life is to love God and one's neighbor. Indeed, that station is filled by the ordinary manservant or maidservant who cleans the meanest pot.[19]

Medieval Roman Catholicism presupposed a dichotomy between life in the religious orders and life in ordinary callings. It was assumed that the monastic life guided by the evangelical counsels (namely, the Sermon on the Mount) provided a more certain path to salvation than secular life regulated by the Decalogue. American Evangelicalism has spawned what may be referred to as "neomonasticism." Like its medieval counterpart, neomonasticism gives the impression that religious work is more God-pleasing than other tasks and duties associated with life in the world. According to this mindset, the believer who makes an evangelism call, serves on a congregational committee, or reads a lesson in the church service is performing more spiritually significant work than the Christian mother who tends to her children or the Christian who works with integrity in a factory. For the believer, all work is holy because he or she is holy and righteous through faith in Christ.

Similar to neomonasticism is the neo-clericalism that lurks behind the slogan "Everyone a minister." This phrase implies that work is worthwhile only insofar as it resembles the work done by pastors. Lay readers are called "Assisting Ministers," and the practice of the laity reading the lessons is advocated on the grounds that it will involve others in the church, as though the faithful reception of Christ's gifts were insufficient. It is no longer enough to think of your daily life and work as your vocation. Now it must be called your "ministry." When this happens "the vocation of the baptized is no longer the liturgy after the liturgy, but a substitute liturgy."[20]

First things first. First God serves us with his gifts in word and sacrament. Then we serve God as we live in the freedom of the forgiveness of sins, attending to the neighbors that God has put into our world. It is the way of grace and works, faith and love, sacrament and sacrifice. The liturgy is the source of vocation as the gifts that God bestows now bear fruit in the callings of those who have been called out of darkness into light. LOGIA

NOTES

1. *Lutheran Worship* (St.Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), 6.
2. Carter Lindberg, *Beyond Charity: Reformation Initiatives for the Poor* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 164.
3. Oswald Bayer, "Worship and Theology," in *Worship and Ethics: Lutherans and Anglicans in Dialogue* (New York: Walther de Gruyter, 1996), 154.
4. Yngve Brilioth, *Eucharistic Faith and Practice: Evangelical and Catholic,* trans. A. G. Herbert (London: SPCK, 1963), 94–152, 276–288.
5. Eugene Brand, "Luther's Liturgical Surgery," *Interpreting Luther's Legacy: Essays in Honor of Edward C .Fendt,* ed. Fred W. Meuser, and Stanley D. Schneider (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969), 108–119.
6. Bryan Spinks, *Luther's Liturgical Criteria and His Reform of the Canon of the Mass* (Bramcote Notts: Grove Books, n.d.), 21–37.
7. Vilmos Vatja, *Luther on Worship,* trans. U. S. Leupold (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), 130.
8. *Lutheran Worship,*153. Also see AE 53: 137–138 and *Works of Martin*

Luther (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1932), 6: 329–332 for material on the background and usage of this collect.

9. See Robin Leaver, "Luther's Catechism Hymns 7. Lord's Supper," *Lutheran Quarterly* (Autumn 1998): 303–312, for an argument that Luther, in fact, substantially rewrites this hymn so that it reflects more clearly his teaching that the body and blood of Christ are present and received in the sacrament. Leaver also notes the parallel between stanza 9 and the post-communion collect (309).

10. William Willimon, *The Service of God: How Worship and Ethics are Related* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 18.

11. Vatja, 169.

12. Leif Grane, *The Augsburg Confession: A Commentary,* trans. John Rasmussen (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987), 174.

13. Ernst Kaesemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans , 1980), 329. Also note the comment of Paul Rorem in "The End of All Offertory Processions," *dialog* (Fall 1996), 249: "Forgiven and renewed, we offer ourselves once again to God, not in mystery and ritual at the altar but in the gritty realities of the poor and the mission fields of our neighborhoods and work places." Luther speaks in the same way when in a 1527 letter to John Hess he describes how Christians are to go to the aid of the sick: "I know for certain in that this work is pleasing to God and all angels when I do it in obedience to his will and as a divine service …. Godliness is nothing but divine service, and divine service is service to one's neighbor" (cited from *Letters of Spiritual Counsel,* ed. Theodore Tappert, [London: SCM Press, 1955], 238–239). Also note the remarks of Carl Wisloff: "We, not the Sacrament, are the sacrifice. But we live from the gifts of God's grace; that is, we are led through them from death to life. Sacrifice finds expression in just this. This event finds expression in worship through thanksgiving, praise, creed, and witness. But a true sacrifice is only this when it is consecrated through faith by daily walking in baptism, that is, walking in fear and faith, death and resurrection." Carl Wisloff, "Worship and Sacrifice," in *The Unity of the Church: A Symposium,* ed. Vilmos Vatja (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Book Concern, 1957), 164–165.

14. Lindberg, 108.

15. Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation,* trans. Carl Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), 29.

16. Einar Billing, *Our Calling,* trans. Conrad Bergendoff (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 38.

17. Martin Luther, *The 1529 Holy Week and Easter Sermons of Dr. Martin Luther,* trans. Irving Sandberg (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 78.

18. Marc Kolden, "Luther on Vocation," *Word and World* (Fall 1983): 385.

19. Wingren, 88.

20. Carter Lindberg, "The Ministry and Vocation of the Baptized," *Lutheran Quarterly* (Winter 1992), 396.

Third Use of the Law in Light of Creation and the Fall

Piotr J. Malysz

The proper distinction between law and gospel was, without much exaggeration, the most fundamental theological decision of the Reformation. The *Formula of Concord* calls it "an especially brilliant light which serves the purpose that the Word of God may be rightly divided and the writings of the holy prophets and apostles may be explained and understood correctly" (FC SD v, 1).[1] Embracing not only this hermeneutical process, the distinction lies at the very foundation of the doctrine of justification by grace through faith, or any other article of faith for that matter. It serves to preserve the integrity of Christ's atoning sacrifice, while at the same time ensuring due condemnation of unbelief.

While the nature of the gospel seemed quite clear to all those involved in the elaboration and application of the law-gospel distinction, the character and the place of the law in relation to the gospel remained subject to much dispute and discord. Some of the debates continued well into the twentieth century, only to leave the issue muddier than ever. Among them an especially prominent place is occupied by the lengthy discussion concerning the so-called "third use of the law."

Rather than offer an evaluation of the historico-theological data, this article will seek to demonstrate that no satisfactory presentation of the third use of the law can be given without an overt reference to creation and the fall. It will begin by synthetically delineating the role of the law—with special focus on the third use—as it has been traditionally understood in Lutheran theology. After certain unresolved problems have been identified, our discussion will then proceed to deal with the complex question of anthropology in the context of Creation, which will eventually form the basis for the proposed adjustment in the concept of the third use of the law.

THIRD USE: WHENCE AND WHERE TO?

Even a cursory glance at the New Testament will reveal a strong emphasis on Christian living. Believers are encouraged to "live a life worthy of the calling you have received" (Eph 4:1).[2] As God's beloved children, they are to be "imitators of God," living "a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph 5:1). The richness of expression is quite staggering. For the most part, however, the emphasis is conveyed through admonitions, whose sense of immediacy reflects the crucial link between Christian life and Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross as its source and driving force.

The admonitions are, of course, quite similar to, not to say identical with, the demands of the law. One need look no further than the Ten Commandments for comparison. What makes them markedly different, even though the mode of expression remains largely the same, is their relation to salvation. Whereas the demands made by the law present themselves as a means to a goal (Lk 10:25–28), the apostolic injunctions are clearly the result of that goal. Put differently, what requires attainment under the law has now been accomplished apart from it. Of course in actuality, under the law, the accomplishment of salvation though objectively possible remains an unattainable goal in view of the reality of human sin. Hence the law can only make accusations, as it hurls one into despair and makes one yearn for respite.

Dogmatically it has become customary to refer to this accusatory function of the law as its second use (*usus elenchiticus*). *Lex semper accusat* runs Melanchthon's oft-quoted adage (Ap IV, 38, 128, 285, 319), underscoring the soteriological significance of the law in confronting the sinner. The mechanics are somewhat complex. The law holds out a promise of salvation. Deceived by sin, the sinner attempts to reach this goal, but no sooner does he make such an attempt than he finds himself under divine judgment. When it comes to external behavior, it is quite possible to conform to the law's demands.[3] This function of preserving social structures is known as the law's first use (*usus politicus*). But the law hardly aims at what is external; rather, it must reach the inner self to make the outside change meaningful.

At this point the sinner's heart—bent on self-justification—is forced to recognize that it invariably defies the law and would only accept it out of a vested interest, which—if one is honest to oneself—is no acceptance at all. Two possibilities open up here: either the self-deception continues, in which case the human heart "despises the judgment of God in its smugness," or the law penetrates into the self-acknowledged sinner's being and engulfs him in despair. If the latter is the case, humans react by hating and fleeing from the judgment which God, through the conscience, passes on them (Ap IV, 34; cf. FC SD v, 10). To prevent the disintegration of the self, in a last-ditch attempt, they will desperately try to construct some semblance of security only to realize that relief is short-lived (Ap IV, 212). It is at that moment, when there are no more straws to clutch at, that the sinner is ready to be

Piotr J. Malysz is a seminary student at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

pulled out of the depths of anguish by the Word of the gospel, proclaiming the accomplishment of his salvation by Christ.

From now on the law takes on an entirely new dimension. What makes this crucial difference is faith.

> After we have been justified and regenerated by faith . . . we begin to fear and love God, to pray and expect help from him, to thank and praise him, and to submit to him in our afflictions. Then we also begin to love our neighbor because our hearts have spiritual and holy impulses (Ap IV, 125).

This spiritual desire to live according to God's law comes spontaneously, insofar as the Christian is a redeemed and renewed being. He is attuned to the law, which he now gladly accepts as "the immutable will of God according to which man is to conduct himself in this life" (FC SD VI, 15). In this way though believers "are never without the law, they are not under but in the law, they live and walk in the law of the Lord, and yet do nothing by the compulsion of the law" (FC SD VI, 18).

Sin however is still a powerful reality in the life of the Christian, even more so than in the life of an unbeliever. In fact, Christian life is one of constant struggle with temptation and failure. Consequently believers require that the law be taught to them, on the one hand, continuing its work of accusation, and on the other, ensuring "that they will not be thrown back on their own holiness and piety and under the pretext of the Holy Spirit's guidance set up a self-elected service of God without his Word and command" (FC SD VI, 20). This latter use has been customarily labeled "the third use of the law" (*tertius usus legis*). Pointing back to the atonement as the source of its motivation, it rests on the Christians' new identity in faith and admonishes them to "conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Phil 1:27).

This is how—in broad outline—the work of the law is usually presented in Lutheran theology. Setting aside the technical questions of how a formal concept of the third use developed,[4] one is led to ask how the third use relates to the other two. To put it yet another way, why is it that Christians are now to keep the much-hated law from whose curse they longed so much to be liberated? Following Melanchthon, the *Formula of Concord* interprets the law as the immutable will of God (FC SD V, 17; VI, 15), affirming simply that "it is God's will, ordinance, and command that believers walk in good works" (FC SD IV, 7). It states, in addition, that good works, though not a part of faith, invariably flow from faith (AC XX, 29; Ap IV, 275; FC SD IV, 12). They are necessary (AC VI and XX; Ap IV, 141, 189, 200, 214; FC SD IV, 14) because, first, such is the divine will; second, because they secure temporal blessings; and third, because they indicate, though do not preserve, salvation. Undoubtedly correct, this answer, however, does not seem to satisfy the question why—in an apparently arbitrary fashion—God actually wills that believers do good works, why he should reward them with temporal blessings, and why the works of the law should be an indication of salvation.

It is the view of the present author that no satisfactory answer can be given to the above questions as long as the third use of the law is seen as a mere flipside of and as derived from the second use. The latter mistake is easily made. Lutheran theology has by no stretch of the imagination remained invulnerable here. The law accuses prior to the gift of salvation; the law guides afterwards. This scheme is only reinforced by the fact that in the believer's life both the second and third uses are present (FC SD VI, 9). Thus the third use of the law is frequently little more than the second without a "sting," with salvation serving as a catalyst. What results is an undesirable internalization of the law.[5]

Sin however is still a powerful reality in the life of the Christian, even more so than in the life of an unbeliever.

To illustrate, the accusation of the Law has its locus in the God-initiated self-reflection of the soul; good works follow the gospel as a consequence of rebirth and the soul's spontaneous conformity to God's will; for no apparent reason—despite their imperfection—they are the believing individual's way of procuring temporal blessings but not salvation; finally, as an inseparable outcome of inner faith, they are an outer indicator of salvation. The soul thus becomes the seat of God's dealings with man. There is no broader context, other than the private, divine-human relationship—the immutable and eternal will of God as it reaches man in his conscience—that could justify the significance of the law in Christian life. Consequently it is difficult not to walk away with the impression that for believers good works are an issue of morality, of appreciation of the gift of salvation, with the gospel followed by the law, which now must be conformed to, albeit in a non-threatening way.[6]

By contrast, a glance at the New Testament admonitions, commonly understood to be the law in its third use, will reveal that we are dealing here not merely with the opposition of the unredeemed state to the state of redemption, but also, if not primarily, with the state of redemption treated as a return to the pre-fall creation. For example, Saint Paul begins his epistle to the Ephesians by pointing out his addressees' new calling. They are something else than what they used to be—"you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord" (Eph 5:8). This means that a change has occurred, a renewal in which darkness has given way to light. One need only think of the divine "Let there be light" (Gn 1:3) in this context. In the Galatians epistle we find an even clearer statement: "what counts is a new creation" (6:15). However the most emphatic witness to this creationally-construed transformed identity of those who are now in Christ can be found in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians in which believers are "a new creation; *the old has gone, the new has come!* All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ" (2 Cor 5:17–18).

Since the essence of the new creation lies in the healing of the broken relationship between God and man, that is, *reconciliation* and *restoration*, Christian life must not be interpreted in isolation from the old, pre-fall, creation. To take the atonement seriously requires that everything that can be said about those who are now

in Christ necessarily reflect the primal *wholeness* and the unspoiled fellowship that Adam and Eve had with God. Not without deeper theological motivation is Christ portrayed as the counterpart of Adam (Rom 5:12–21; 1 Cor 15:45). What all this means is that redemption can no longer be seen in individualistic terms but should rather be placed in the context of the entire creation as it awaits liberation "from its bondage to decay" and participation in "the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rom 8:21). In this light, the third and second uses of the law derive from the first, which is the foundational one, even though, soteriologically speaking, the importance of the second use can hardly be overestimated. Accordingly to arrive at a creational interpretation of the *tertius usus legis*, we must now turn to the anthropology of creation.

GOD'S IMAGE: THE RIDDLE OF HUMANITY

Among all the various questions that arise out of human experience, some of the most baffling ones concern self-experience. In one way or another, all people face Hamlet's dilemma:

> What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason!
> how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how
> express and admirable! in action how like an angel!
> in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the
> world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me,
> what is this quintessence of dust?[7]

Much as we would like to see ourselves as the noble product of our own mental and physical capacities, we are constantly confronted by our baseness on the ethical plane and by our insignificance in the categories of science.

Paradoxically, the more we learn about ourselves and the world that surrounds us, the more undesirable affinity we seem to find between us and the rest of the universe. The foundation of our claim to uniqueness is crumbling. First, as ethical beings, we never cease to face the overpowering ambiguity of our dealings with others and theirs with us. As we interact with one another, the ultimate goal is the preservation of our security as both individuals and groups. Human life is a struggle to maintain and guard the sources of our security at all costs. We define ourselves in terms of what makes us secure, because it provides a necessary point of reference and, in so doing, prevents the disintegration of our being. But this process is true not only of human interaction. Closely related is our exploitation of creation's resources, as well as our use of them in order to assure an advantageous position among members of our own race. Second, in light of today's sciences—from genetics through psychology to ethnology—it is questionable whether a clear-cut distinction between humans and the rest of animate creation can at all be established on the basis of creation-internal data.[8] A powerful testimony to man's unparalleled intellectual capacity, science has at the same time undermined his uniqueness within his world. Scientifically it has been shown that humans are part and parcel of their environment, distinguished from it not by certain unique intrinsic characteristics but merely by the degree to which they possess them. Thus the question why we are the way we are and what it is that makes us *human* remains more elusive than ever.[9] Still it is a legitimate question whether all there is to man is a specific set of mathematically, physically, chemically, or biologically definable properties. Can the essence of the human be simply reduced to man's empirically ascertainable composition, to sheer matter, to mere struggle for preserving the particular atomic structure we know as the human being? It remains legitimate to ask whether it is only by force—exercised both ethically and through science—that our uniqueness can be established and maintained.

It is in this context of incomprehensibility and resignation that the question of meaning is inevitably raised—first of humanity and then of life and all existence. This question is raised because meaning is felt to be lacking.[10] The problem is not alien even to the Bible itself. The Psalmist asks, "what is man that you are mindful of him" (Ps 8:4). It must not be overlooked that, in contradistinction to the questions posed from within human experience, this one implies going beyond that experience; that is, a relationship. *The theological definition of humanity presupposes involvement on God's part.* Humanity can only be defined from the outside, and that because of the mindfulness of God. Only by making reference to this external perspective can the questions that originate within the world be given meaningful answers.

Human life is a struggle to maintain and guard the sources of our security at all costs. We define ourselves in terms of what makes us secure.

Nowhere in the Bible is man's uniqueness shown more clearly than in the creation account (Gn 1–2). Man was brought forth on the last, sixth day of God's creative activity. Unlike the rest of the created realm, he was fashioned out of the dust of the earth by the Creator himself (Gn 2:7), made in God's very image and likeness (Gn 1:26–27). It is this image that determines human distinctiveness—a testimony to the dignity and worth of the person. Though it does not render man substantially divine, it underlies human subjectivity: man is not a mere object within creation, but an acting and responsible subject (Gn 1:28–30). While there is agreement among theologians concerning this raw Biblical data, in the history of dogma the problem of the make-up and the role of the *imago Dei* has been a rather complex one. Even a brief overview of all the interpretations would by far exceed the scope of this article. We shall, therefore, limit ourselves to an exposition of only several pertinent points and the dilemma they lead to.

Humans were originally created in holiness and perfect, intimate, knowledge of God. This state of original righteousness was, according to the Lutheran Confessions, characterized not only by a life of attentiveness to each others' needs but, in the first place, by "fear of God, faith and love toward him" (Ap II, 16). In other words, "original righteousness was intended to involve not only a balanced physical constitution, but these gifts as well: a surer knowledge of God, fear of God, trust in God, or at least the incli-

nation and power to do these things" (Ap II, 17). This righteousness the Confessions identify expressly with the image of God (Ap II, 18; FC SD I, 10). At the same time, while it is recognized that the fall brought about the loss of original righteousness, coupled with a thoroughgoing corruption of human nature, man's humanity has not been destroyed. Man has not totally lost his subjectivity, his rational capacities, or his sense of responsibility. He remains a *human* being whom God desires to renew in his image and likeness (Col 3:10).

The law, as a product of God's creative activity, enables humans, though in a highly deficient way, to gain some insight into God.

Several approaches have been put forth to account for this apparent discrepancy. Roman-Catholic theology, following the anthropocentric scholastic tradition, introduces a distinction between the image and likeness of God. The image, associated with human reason, remains in humans after the fall. What is lost is the likeness, identified with original righteousness, which, as a superadded gift (*donum superadditum*), has no bearing on man's essential humanity anyway. Correspondingly original sin has not, in any real sense, corrupted man's entire nature by rendering its powers inoperative in and opposed to all things godly. According to Roman-Catholic theology, original sin has only "wounded" and "weakened" human nature, making it inclined to sin, but has not destroyed man's humanity. With their humanity essentially intact, all people have retained some capacity for God.[11]

By contrast, taking seriously the exclusive centrality of the cross, the Protestant tradition does not share this optimistic view of sin. It considers the position that original righteousness was not an integral part of man's constitution, as well as the opinion that human nature remains essentially intact after the fall, to be anthropologically determined and unbiblical.[12] Consequently it sees no reason to introduce what is an exegetically unjustified distinction between "image" and "likeness." Unfortunately, by seriously taking cognizance of the fact that even after the fall human beings retain their subjectivity, it now has to speak of the *imago Dei* both in a wider and proper sense, with only the latter (i.e., "image" in the proper sense) being totally obliterated by the fall.[13]

In somewhat modified form, this distinction played a significant role in one of the most interesting theological debates of the twentieth century, namely, that between Emil Brunner and Karl Barth concerning nature and grace.[14] Brunner proceeded from the premise that sin has not abolished man's personhood, that even as a sinner man remains a human being, that is, one that is accountable and rational, and thus also capable, albeit in a passive way, of revelation. This he attributes to the presence of the *humanum*, the *formal* image of God, in sinful humanity.[15] As a responsible agent, man possesses some knowledge of the divine law derived from creation and is thereby able to recognize his sin. In other words, the law, as a product of God's creative activity, enables humans, though in a highly deficient way, to gain some insight into God and to see themselves in relation to him. This knowledge, however, is so distorted that any trust in God prior to grace is, of course, out of the question.[16] However once divine grace reaches out to the sinner, the restoration of the *material* image of God begins, which gives rise to true knowledge of and trust in God.

Opposed to Brunner's immanent-structural conception of humanity is Barth's transcendental-relational understanding. For Barth any knowledge of God, however incomplete and imperfect, is nevertheless *real* knowledge that cannot be irrelevant to salvation. Two criticisms are offered at this point. First, Barth agrees that the identity of the sinner before and after the act of faith remains the same; yet the transformation that occurs is so radical that it can only be the work of God alone, without anything in man to prepare him for grace. Second, Brunner's definition of the formal *imago*, contends Barth, places beyond the pale of humanity those "children of Adam" who do not exhibit sufficient rationality, responsibility, and ability to make decisions. According to Brunner's standard, they must be unfit for grace.[17] In sum, for Barth there is in the sinner no point of contact for divine grace, no capacity for God, however broadly or narrowly understood. It is solely through the relation of God to man that the latter, in faith and under grace, becomes a *human* being, re-created in the image of God, in radical discontinuity from his sinful existence.

The above is hardly more than a sketch of the contours of the debate, aimed to illustrate a significant discrepancy. Since even as a sinner man retains his subjective nature of a responsible agent and yet no longer possesses the original righteousness, identified with the *imago Dei*, in which he was inherently created, we are faced with the dilemma whether or not after the fall one should and can continue to speak about the *humanity* of the sinner. The above overview also shows that in both Roman-Catholic and Protestant theologies, extending well into the twentieth century, the predominant interpretation of the image, or likeness, of God has been focused on man's inherent powers and capabilities. Luther's own understanding is only too typical:

> In the remaining creatures God is recognized as by His footprints; but in the human being, especially in Adam, He is truly recognized, because in him there is such wisdom, justice, and knowledge of all things that he may rightly be called a world in miniature. He has an understanding of heaven, earth, and the entire creation. And so it gives God pleasure that He made so beautiful a creature.[18]

While this interpretation is not necessarily wrong, it seems to be lacking. As we have shown, to understand the image of God as man's capacity for God must lead either to its exclusion from among the essential components of human nature, as is evidenced by the Roman-Catholic construal of the likeness of God as a superadded gift; or it will result in a dilemma in regard to what exactly constitutes our humanity, requiring that we speak of an image of sorts prior to the act of faith and the image proper in the context of faith.

Contrary to this immanent-structural understanding, Barth is correct in seeing the *imago* as a transcendental-relational concept. Not in man by himself, but in the act of God relating to humanity, does the image find its essence. Consequently the image of God is not a device "tuned in" to receive a variety of divine waves for the benefit of one's intellect. Rather it is—as the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* puts it—"a wisdom and righteousness . . . implanted in man that would grasp God and *reflect* him" (II.18). This being the case, *to be human is not so much to have some capacity for God as to have God relate to one and to reflect his being oneself.* As will be shown, only this approach can resolve the discrepancy concerning the humanity of believers and unbelievers. Before this can be resolved, it is in order to inquire into the being of God, whose relationship to us and whose reflection in us we have determined to be humanity-constitutive.

GOD'S BEING: THE TRAGIC MISINTERPRETATION

Considered merely in light of divine omnipotence, God's act of creation *ex nihilo* remains somewhat of a mystery. If God is all-powerful, he obviously did not need as many as six days to bring the world into being. The easiest way of explaining this conundrum would be by appealing to some voluntaristically construed decision of the inscrutable divine will. This would be to miss the point of what revelation actually is. Through the act of creation, God reveals his own being. From this perspective, one cannot but notice the deliberation, symmetry, and order exhibited in the six-day account. What initially appears "formless and empty" (Gn 1:2) soon becomes characterized by an unprecedented level of complexity and organization. But order—ranging from laws regulating the motion of stars to those governing human life—is hardly the point of it all. It is merely a means to a goal. The goal is the creation of man in the image of God.

What is significant about Adam is that he alone becomes the locus of God's self-sharing. In Adam God reveals himself as self-giving, as *love.* Through creation, he who already perfectly and sufficiently affirms otherness within himself—as Father, Son and Holy Spirit—freely reaches out to another. In other words, man is the only creature willed by God for its own sake.[19] Such is the nature of love. It affirms another not because of a vested interest, but freely and disinterestedly, for the other's sake. It finds the other beautiful and interesting.

God's love, as it finds beauty and a source of interest in the other, truly creates the other to be beautiful and interesting. Thus, surveying his creative work, God was able to conclude approvingly that "it was very good" (Gn 1:31). The divine self-sharing manifests itself, in the first place, in the act of creation itself. But it goes much further. Man receives God's blessing, as he is told to "be fruitful and increase in number." All that God has created is now entrusted to him to rule over and to subdue (Gn 1:28). What this means is that creation is God's gift to be used in a meaningful and responsible way. Finally, God shares with man his own being. The latter not only has a direct and personal experience of his Creator, but is himself created to reflect the being of God.

Man is created with a capacity to love and to reciprocate love. Like God he has the ability to go beyond himself. In the same way that God affirms otherness within himself, man, too, is made to affirm another, so that the two "will become one flesh" (Gn 2:24). Further he is endowed with the capacity to affirm creation—it finds its meaning in his responsible and God-like stewardship. As one commentator put it, "while [man] is not divine, his very existence bears witness to the activity of God in the life of the world."[20] In other words, just as God finds Adam and Eve worthwhile and interesting in and of themselves, humans, likewise, are to find God's gift of creation worthwhile in and of itself. Creation is not to be abused. Humans are created to love God, their fellow man, and God's gift of creation. By definition, they are *social* and *vocational* beings, relating to others in such a way as to further their good through God-appointed means. In so doing, they surrender their being in all its individualism only to gain it back, in, with and through the being of another. Only by receiving and giving can they realize their humanity. Only thus can they be *human* beings.

It has already been indicated that love consists in *self*-giving. Naturally there can be no love under coercion. Thus with its origin in the divine love, human existence is one of *freedom.* God did not create automatons but beings that were beautiful, interesting and worthwhile for their own sake—individuals with the capacity, of their own free will, to reflect the love received. A loving relationship by nature implies an option for un-love. Love as self-*giving* implies the possibility of rejection. It is in this context of what love is that the presence in the garden of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil finds its purpose. To Adam and Eve was entrusted all that God had created with the exception of one tree, of which they were expressly forbidden to eat. In negative terms, the tree presents itself as an alternative to God's love; it makes the possibility of choosing un-love, or self-love, a real one. In positive terms, it underscores the free and self-giving character of the divine-human relationship, pointing to the centrality of love in the constitution of man. From man's perspective, it makes love possible. Finally, it points to the fundamental significance of trust as an inseparable aspect of love. Adam and Eve knew their creator intimately in his self-sharing. All they were and all that they had came from him. It would seem there surely was a sufficient basis for trust. And yet, incomprehensibly but in how familiar a way, they gave credence to the serpent's deceitful promise.

With its origin in the divine love, human existence is one of freedom.

The fall is often portrayed as a transgression of what seemed to be an otherwise arbitrary command. We have already demonstrated that the command was far from arbitrary. Neither was it meant to stress the importance of divinely established order, as if God's self-giving were a mere show. The command was not there to put man in place and show him who really was in charge. On the contrary, it was there to complete his humanness in its capacity for love and freedom.

Interpretations that view the command to Adam in arbitrary or legalistic terms fail to do justice to the complex mechanics of sin.

Such interpretations place a disproportionate emphasis on its moralistic aspect, rather than understanding the command in the context of God's being as love and of what this love actually is. The essence of the fall lies not so much in the violation of God's command, not even in the breach of trust, even though it is this breach that unequivocally places all responsibility and guilt on man. Rather, the fall, and with it all sin, consists in a misinterpretation and rejection of the being of God. Again, this misrepresentation is to be seen not so much in the attempt to make God into a liar, as in *the denial of God's being as love* (Gn 3:1–4). When the serpent promises to Eve that she and Adam "will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gn 3:5), he not only portrays God as being fundamentally dishonest and untrustworthy; the serpent also makes the man and the woman believe that divinity consists in *power and secret knowledge* instead of the so-familiar love, which gives to the other all that it has. It is this misrepresentation that leads Adam and Eve to forget that *they already are like God*! The consequences could hardly be more disastrous.

Sin is also enslavement to* imperium *— control and, if need be, violence—as a means of preserving one's integrity.

Rooted in man's failed attempt to acquire what he understood to be divine status, sin is by nature un-relational and counter-relational, and thus without doubt un-God-like. Sin goes against everything that humans were supposed to be as subjective creatures endowed with God's own image. Numerous characterizations and analogies could be evoked here to illustrate sin's deceitful and destructive nature. For our purposes, we will focus on isolation, enslavement, and the inability to trust and love.

Sin is *isolation* in that it severs man's ties with everything around him. By attempting to be like God, man separates himself from God. He forgoes the gift of freedom in favor of self-established and self-centered independence. He also separates himself from creation. A usurper of divinity, he can no longer accept himself as part of creation, resenting his God-given function as the recipient of divine gifts and blessings and as the steward of the created realm. He finally separates himself from his fellow humans. This he does, first of all, by avoiding responsibility and trying to shift the blame. But even without that, separation would be inevitable. By violating God's trust, man has now become painfully aware that the same could be done to him. His own act has brought him to the realization that it lies within human capacity to abuse another's self-giving. This is a terrifying and unbearable thought.

As inability to trust, isolation leads to *enslavement*. Because the sinner cannot rely on others, fearing his trust will be violated, he is forced to rely on himself alone. Like a black hole, he cannot go beyond his own "event horizon." His self-proclaimed independence has, in reality, turned him into a prisoner of himself. First, it has made him a slave to the lie that it is possible to be like God on one's own terms, that one owes what one is only to oneself, that one can make oneself into what one wishes to be in defiance of the relational aspect of being.

It cannot be otherwise. As lack of trust, sin makes a person shortsighted. Man can see no farther than himself and, instead of finding the meaning and purpose of humanness in mutual self-giving, he continues to search for it within himself. Without anybody or anything to fall back on, he is doomed to this endless and futile pursuit of "godhood." Of course, Adam and Eve had no intention of destroying their relationships. They sought, however, their reconstitution. God's essence, misconstrued as consisting in power and secret knowledge, seemed to them a threat to their own being. Since their trust in God had been undermined, receiving from another appeared in their eyes to be a sinister means of control that had to be shed at all costs. Their nature, as they saw it, could only be preserved through a similar exercise of control.

Secondly, sin is also enslavement to *imperium*—control and, if need be, violence—as a means of preserving one's integrity. Adam and Eve destroyed their relationships not only by fearing a violation of their trust on another's part but also by chronic suspiciousness of another's, that is, God's, self-giving. They saw in God's giving an attempt to confine them into reciprocation, thereby exerting control over their independence. Human life has thus become a struggle for control as a means of survival. This, in turn, has brought about the enslavement of man to creation. Man has abandoned his God-appointed role of creation's steward and endeavours to place himself above the created order as God's equal. But as a creature he can only claim equality with and independence from God by violently lording it over creation, not merely because this is the way he now understands God's being, but also because he recognizes his dependence on creation, which is God's work, and thus on God himself. Exploitation of God's things gives an illusion of power. In this way, creation is necessary for man as a means of self-assertion. The continued increase of his control over the created realm, including other human beings, creates the impression of approximating divinity. Put differently, in order to preserve his integrity, man must enslave. He is both *enslaved* and *enslaver*. Paradoxically this only deepens human dependence on the now-hostile creation.

The isolation and enslavement of sin underscore that—at bottom—it is a debilitating *inability to love and trust*, which "like a spiritual leprosy, has thoroughly and entirely poisoned and corrupted human nature" (FC SD I, 6). As such, sin undermines everything that human nature was created to represent. Instead of allowing oneself to receive another in his self-giving, and thus to gain oneself, the sinner attempts his self-realization by going in the opposite direction, to the inside. Sin, to use Luther's dictum, makes man into a *homo incurvatus in se ipsum*.[21] This turning in on oneself is the inevitable price of the trust-destructive misinterpretation of God's being, and thus also of failing to acknowledge one's humanity in its relational richness. In other words, the price of the knowledge of good and evil is the recognition of oneself as evil. Man cannot know evil without at the same time seeing it in himself, in his lovelessness and distrust.

The tree that Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat from was not, contrary to their expectations, a vehicle of secret wisdom. The knowledge originated within man together with the deed, with his

choice of un-love, with his rejection of God's self-giving. It came on the heels of man's attempt to be like God, in which the former isolated himself from his Creator and other human beings, abandoning his unique position within the created realm as the recipient of God's love and blessing. It came with man turning in on himself and the resultant collapse of his being. It is now with great difficulty that man preserves his integrity. He can do so only by a violent, self-centred and self-enslaving exercise of supremacy. Therefore, in so doing, he not only knows evil in himself but also actively propagates it.

Consider the dreadful ambiguity that underlies all human desire to be creative. Ethically speaking, even the best of human works are tainted by vested interests, resentment, or distrust. Moreover from the scientific perspective, man's harnessing of creation's resources exposes his potential for self-destruction and thirst for power, as much as it shows his ingenuity. Finally, much as he may wish to avoid or ignore it, man meets with disintegration throughout his life only to be confronted by it conclusively at the point of death. The all-consuming presence of death reveals that creation without its steward has gone wild—it dies both from lack of proper care and from the abuses it suffers from the hand of man. It has become the devil's playground. Man himself—having separated himself from the life-giving love of God—faces the same destiny as the creation he was so hasty to abandon in pursuit of self-realization. In isolation from God he is dust and to dust he must return (Gn 3:19). In a word, life without love and trust is deadly. It not only kills the isolated and enslaved human being but also spreads death around in spite and because of human attempts to avoid the inevitable. "Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it" (Lk 17:33).

THIRD USE: WHEREIN?

As self-inflicted solitary confinement, sin has completely destroyed the relational aspect of man's being. At this point, we must go back to our question concerning the sinner's humanity. We have shown that any interpretation of the image of God that views the latter as a perfection of the intellect, enabling man to know God and to be attuned to his will, leads to a serious discrepancy. On the one hand, we are confronted with the theologically inevitable conclusion that sinful man, through his opposition to everything that is God's, is no longer human. On the other hand, we cannot but acknowledge the fact—confirmed by both experience and Scripture—that even sinners remain rational, responsible and subjective creatures. In addition to this discrepancy, if our humanity were truly determined by an inherent intellectual capacity for God, we would be forced to conclude that some people are unfit for grace since they lack the necessary point of contact. Over against this immanent-structural conception of humanity, we have opted instead for a transcendental-relational understanding. An inobservant reader might respond that, by admitting the destruction of man's relationality, we have ended up with exactly the same dilemma. Since sin is an un-relational and counter-relational turning in on oneself, we can no longer speak of the sinner's relationally-construed humanity. This, however, could not be further from the truth.

Recall that, contrary to man's own futile attempts at self-definition, we have suggested that a definition of humanity, if it is to be all-inclusive and enduring, can only come from the outside. This outside connection is found in none other than the image of God. Let us repeat some of our earlier conclusions. *The theological definition of humanity presupposes involvement on God's part. To be human is not so much to have some capacity for God as to have God relate to one and to reflect his being oneself.* Divine involvement is decisive here. Without it, there would be no image. Note that the two are related far more closely than a mere cause and effect. The fact that God goes beyond himself and creates man as a creature worthwhile in itself determines the content of the *imago Dei*.

Ethically speaking, even the best of human works are tainted by vested interests, resentment, or distrust.

Creation, especially that of man, reflects the being of the Creator himself. In creating humans as subjective and free entities, with the capacity to reciprocate divine love, God is fundamentally consistent with himself. In creation, he reveals himself as love. Thus it is the nature of God, the very nature that has brought them into being, that humans are to reflect as those created in his image. Because God relates to them, it likewise belongs to their nature to reach out and to offer themselves to fellow men in acts of love. The model to emulate is God's giving of himself together with his gift of creation. Creation as a gift to man is not only a reflection of divine love, on account of which it is beautiful and interesting and worthy of care, but it is also a means of human self-giving. Man is to use it for the promotion of life—a goal which receives God's unqualified blessing (Gn 1:28). In short, the image of God implies not only social interaction but also responsible stewardship of creation's resources. To repeat, *humans, because they were created in the image of God, are by nature social and vocational beings.*

With the *imago Dei* so understood, sin—even though it has obliterated man's relational being, isolating, enslaving and incapacitating him for love and trust—has not deterred God or prevented his involvement in creation, particularly in human life. In the words of the apostle, "if we are faithless, [God] will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself" (2 Tim 2:13). *It is this fact of God's continued relationship to creation, his overwhelming and steadfast love for the world* (Jn 3:16) *and his desire that sinners should turn from their wicked ways and live* (Ez 33:11; 1 Tim 2:4) *that still determines our humanity.* Put differently, God's mindfulness prevents man's immediate dissolution into dust. It keeps original sin under control and extrinsically mitigates its radicalness. Even though man has done everything to destroy his being, God lovingly continues to uphold this being in an external way. He does so, first of all, by persistently creating life in the midst of death, which Adam's sin has brought into creation. "He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Mt 5:45). By creating life, he preserves—albeit, again, in an external

manner—the structures of society, which in turn facilitate the promotion of life.[22]

For example, despite its many structural ambiguities and the ease with which it can be misused, language continues to be a means of communication. Human interaction, challenging as it may be, is possible. Now, however, language is but a weak shadow of the inherently creative Word with which God brought creation into being.[23] Further, governments ensure that justice should prevail and wrongdoing meet with appropriate punishment, although they can only do so with great difficulty, facing an even greater temptation to abuse the powers vested in them. Through structures like these, especially the family, God's life-giving and life-preserving presence in creation is a real presence. For this reason Luther does not hesitate to call holy not only the works of order themselves, but also those who perform them, as he goes on to state, "Even the godless may have much about them that is holy without being saved thereby."[24]

The first use of the law is only a remnant of the thoroughly relational character of the primal creation.

What this means is that man's failure to carry out these functions, or his deficient fulfilment thereof, still serves the divine purpose. Thus not only respectable members of the community, but also the corrupt and the wicked, by virtue of living within God's sphere of action, carry out the works by which this sphere is defined. God's creating activity continues in spite of and against sin, as he uses even human blindness and ignorance to advance his life-creating goal. "The will of the Creator," observes Gustaf Wingren, "runs like an undercurrent beneath the stream of human works, and is not disturbed even when the surface is ruffled."[25] This, as the reader will have recognized, is what Lutheran theology calls the first, political, use of the law—now only a remnant of the original relationality built into creation.

It is a mere vestige, first of all, in that order within creation is now being preserved one-sidedly—by God alone. Originally it was a clear expression of divine self-giving, with creation's deliberate structure and symmetry underscoring God's love for man and being so understood by the latter. Prior to the fall, it was interpreted by man not only as an expression of God's disinterested affection, but also of his very being. It was an indicator of human dignity, for man himself was accorded a place of honor within that order. Now it is only external. True, as we have indicated, it still expresses God's loving involvement, but it is neither reciprocated nor understood for what it truly is. Man's sin has made him deaf and blind to God's offer of love.

Further, the first use of the law is only a remnant of the thoroughly relational character of the primal creation in that in this function the law is now permeated with deadly ambiguity. In sin, man has separated himself from creation, including fellow human beings. Instead of the much-craved God-like (though, in fact, God-*un*-like) independence, this attempted self-extraction from within creation has only led to his enslavement to its structures. Humans radically depend on creation for the pursuit of what they understand to be divinity. They are unable to create *ex nihilo*. As Eberhard Jüngel points out, "[s]in wants to be creative itself. It does not want to receive the good that God gives. It wants to be the giver."[26] Thus the creativeness of sin must lead to the abuse and destruction of God's creation. Humans can only build their security by controlling and violently subjugating everything around themselves. All they do always has the benefit of the self in view.

This should hardly be surprising. Since the shortsighted sinner cannot accept God's gift of humanity, it is imperative that he construct his own humanity or else disintegrate. In other words, *the ambiguity of human interaction, evident in the law's first use, results from the desperate, and hence violent, attempts to establish one's own identity over against what is God's in the context of a quest for godhood.* We are all well aware of that. Good works are defiled by ulterior motives as we try to procure another's favor, or perhaps count on reciprocation. Relationships fall short of vulnerable openness, marred by the fear of breach of trust. Knowledge—harking back to the misconstruction of God's being by Adam and Eve—is never neutral, but is power. Language separates and destroys as easily as it brings together. Governments must be subject to strict control because power corrupts.

At this point, by positing the humanity of the sinner as a consequence of God's steadfast and loving involvement in creation, it may seem that we are falling into Brunner's relativization of the knowledge of God. But consider the implications of the divine involvement in creation and of man's endeavor to establish his own identity in opposition to *God's* humanity-constitutive relationship to man. If God's involvement and desire to establish a meaningful relationship with his wayward creature can indeed be discerned through whatever structure there remains in creation, that would mean that man must have some knowledge of God. Now, if that were the case, it would be hardly explicable why humans should then persist in their stubborn pursuit of self-definition and godhood. Not only that, the radical nature of the gospel would itself be seriously undermined if it lay within the natural powers of the sinner to turn back to God and acknowledge his preservation of creation's order as *loving* involvement.

Rather than deny the possibility of natural revelation altogether—an option favored by Karl Barth—this problem can find a solution in the context of our discussion of sin. We have already mentioned shortsightedness as one characteristic of sin. To be shortsighted, however, is not yet to be blind. The apostle himself says that "since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). The solution to the dilemma is to be found in the misinterpretation of God's being that lies at the root of sin. It is this misinterpretation that prevents sinners from seeing, even though they can see (Mt 13:13). *Having misconstrued God's nature in terms of power, control and secret knowledge, Adam and Eve were no longer able to trust him, seeing in his self-giving only an attempt to keep them in submission.* Deceived by the ser-

pent's manipulative use of language, they began to doubt the divine self-giving. How could they not doubt, if God had seemingly withheld an essential part of his being, if he seemed to have deceived them?

Consequently, the ambiguity of creation's law structure comes only secondarily from man's self-centered use of them. In the first place, it results from man's misconception of creation's order as God's means of exerting tyrannical control. Humans accept the divine law only insofar as it promotes their welfare. Beyond that, they react with suspicion and rebellion, or, what is significant, they may try to use God to advance their status. If the latter is the case, they will attempt in their self-centeredness to propitiate God; that is, to obligate him by their own devious works to be favorably inclined towards them. In this act they not only defy God's nature by misinterpreting it—they actually trample his being underfoot, thinking God himself could be used in the human pursuit of divinity.

Finally, the first use of the law is a vestige of the original relational structure of creation in that the latter is now hostile and inimical. Without its steward, it has fallen prey to the devil and become subject to death. From the hands of man, it suffers constant abuse, being treated as a necessary springboard to godhood. But because God remains involved in it, it has not suffered total disintegration. Outwardly there is a semblance of order, even though it is only a glimmer of the original relationality built on God's love for man and man's for God. For the sinner, this order can be nothing but a burden. Humans not only find themselves submerged in it, but they see their dependence on it in terms of unpleasantly stifling confinement. Because they are part of it, forever trying to extricate themselves from its bounds, and yet are dependent on it for their very life and well-being, creation's structure itself forms a powerful indictment of man. If he is honest with himself, he will realize that his own "godhood" is incapable of establishing and preserving a completely new order for the ages. Thus, in his own struggle against creation, man sees himself indisputably accused of being a negligent steward, a puny god without a definite identity, a usurper and a failure.

Note that in this accusatory function, derived from the sinner's relationship to creation, we can discern the foundation of the second use of the law. Once reinforced, the accusation will lead either to continued self-deception, or, if man recognizes his weakness, it will cause him to try and assure his status in relation to God by means of works and propitiatory measures. In building his own security man is able to and will go much further than the abuse of creation; he will not shy away from using God himself to uphold his own prideful and self-centered individualism. Misuse aside, the goal of the accusation is, of course, that man despair of himself as demigod and God-maker, and acknowledge that all he is and has comes from God, who in spite of human sin, in love continues to relate to man, upholding the latter's life and humanity. Man must recognize, to quote Gustaf Wingren, "that our relationship to God is given in and with life itself. It can never, properly speaking, be created or established from man's side, as though there had been a time after a man's birth when this relationship was not yet established. Man cannot live without living from God."[27]

In this way, the second use of the law, though central as far as salvation is concerned, is in fact only a necessary outcome; that is, a corollary of the first. It has its origin and rationale in the vestigial character of the *usus politicus*. It derives its force from God's unilateral preservation of creation's order, both from the latter's ambiguity as well as its inimical and hostile character. The second use is driven solely by the reality of sin, because it is against sin—against man's failed self-extraction from his God-given position of honor—that it is directed. It can, therefore, never be the goal; nor can it represent all that there is to the law. It begins in aberration and aims at combating the aberration. The real goal, however, is the restoration of creation's structures based on mutual love. This goal is brought to fruition in the third use.

The third use is none other than the first use without the latter's plaguing vagueness and hostile undercurrents, without its alien character. It is a return to creation in its primeval beauty, with order being maintained not merely externally, but internally through the bond of love and trust between a self-giving God and a reciprocating and socially and vocationally self-giving man. This radical change has been made possible by the reality of redemption. God's continued self-giving reached its apex and most perfect manifestation in his offering of himself to man in the most intimate of ways—by becoming man and sharing in the humanity of his children (Heb 2:14).

The third use is none other than the first use without the latter's plaguing vagueness and hostile undercurrents.

The incarnation is fundamentally consistent with God's preservation of the whole creation and thus with his very being. It is an extension of his loving presence. What is of significance is that God the Son was "made like his brothers in every way . . . yet was without sin" (Heb 2:17; 4:15). He became a man perfect in his humanity, with the fullness of its God-given relational potential, only to take upon himself our isolation and enslavement. He thus conquered sin by trustingly offering himself both to God and fellow men, even to the point of death. In the midst of life's ambivalence, he exposed with utmost clarity the deceptive nature of sin, based as it is on a fundamental denial of God's nature as love. Thus in Christ, the despairing sinner again perceives the astounding faithfulness and the life-bestowing love of God—not merely for himself but for all of creation. In Christ the sinner becomes a human being, by being restored and recreated in his capacity to reciprocate the divine love and to reflect it in loving relationships with fellow men and in his stewardship of God's gifts. Thus the seemingly individual character of the divine-human relationship is firmly and inseparably embedded in the renewal of all creation. The third use of the law, through its creation-wide scope, shows that "human nature, being a human, consists solely in being justified by faith."[28]

As we have shown, the third use must be seen in the context of the universal first use if it is to say something meaningful about

human nature, if it is to be something more than arbitrary legalism that comes after the gospel and is then ineptly justified by an appeal to the mysteries of God's will. It is the present author's hope that he has succeeded in demonstrating that the law, as a meaningful reflection of creation's structure, even though it is misinterpreted by the sinner, remains at bottom an expression of God's love, the same love that has freely brought creation into being and shared it with the creature. In this context, some of the questions raised earlier—why God actually wills that believers do good works, why he should reward them with temporal blessings, and why the works of the law should be an indication of salvation—naturally find their answers. *To be human means to have God lovingly relate to one and to reflect this love by relating to fellow humans through the gifts one has received from God.* On account of the cross, all creation is now in "labor pains," as love is being restored into the fabric of our being. The law, instead of being an externally controlling tyrant, again becomes the essence of our humanity on account of the cross (Jer 31:33–34). Through the cross, one now sees God's faithfulness to and love for his creature evident amidst the ambiguities of creation. This is the gospel.

CONCLUSION

This article began with the identification of a number of problems posed by the treatment of the third use of the law in Lutheran theology. In one way or another, they are all related to an individualization and privatization of the law, whereby its work becomes restricted to atomized divine-human relationships. This individualization is an unwanted outcome of the otherwise rightful elevation of the second, accusatory, use to salvific pre-eminence. Without the terrors of conscience that the second use engenders, man would never abandon his attempts at self-salvation. The second use shows to man the dubious character of his works. In this context, however, it is difficult to understand why the believer must continue to live by the hateful law and do good works. It will not suffice to appeal here to the seemingly arbitrary will of God. Such arbitrariness flies in the face of divine revelation as a disclosure of God's very being. Consequently, deeper theological motivation has been sought for: why God actually wills that believers do good works; why he should reward them with temporal blessings; and why the works of the law should be an indication of salvation.

Taking our cue from the Scriptures, where redemption is portrayed in creational terms, we have suggested that these questions—which cannot find satisfactory answers if the *tertius usus legis* is seen as a derivative of the second—can be explained once the third use is given creation-wide scope. This has directed us quite naturally to the neglected first, political, use of the law, the goal of which is to preserve social structures. Despite its apparent salvific irrelevance, we have discovered that this external use is a vital remnant of the once-internal order of the pre-fall creation.

> ***The law, instead of being an externally controlling tyrant, again becomes the essence of our humanity on account of the cross.***

To understand this close affinity between the first and third uses, and thus also the meaning of redemption, we have given serious consideration to the anthropology of creation and the fall. Only by inquiring into the nature of God the Creator, as it is reflected in the creature he fashioned in his own image, can one understand the constitution of humanity. Without this the law is made arbitrary at best, and meaningless at worst. But if creation and the fall are taken into account, it becomes possible to appreciate the law as God's continuing willingness to deal with his rebellious creature, as an expression of his love, which—though disastrously misconstrued—has not been annihilated by human sin. Against this background, both the first and the third uses of the law can be interpreted in terms of God's creation-wide presence whose goal is to restore wholeness in the world. Their close relationship underscores the pivotal character of Christ's atoning sacrifice, without the lingering impression that the validity of the third use of the Law will be undermined by arbitrary legalism soon to follow.

The Christian, both externally and internally, is at peace with God. Since Christ, in order to atone for our sin, became "sin for us" (2 Cor 5:21), sin is no longer a defining factor in the life of the Christian. Of course, it is still present in the life of believers on this side of the grave. The curtain separating humanity from the holy has been destroyed. Restored wholeness is now the characteristic of the divine-human relationship. It is this wholeness, whereby God faithfully and self-givingly relates to man and whereby man reciprocates God's love, and in love offers himself to other humans through the gifts he receives from his Creator, that constitutes our humanity. LOGIA

NOTES

1. All citations from the Lutheran Confessions come from *The Book of Concord*, ed. Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959).

2. All Scripture citations are from *The Holy Bible. New International Version* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984).

3. Ap II, 12: "philosophical or civic righteousness, which we agree is subject to reason and somewhat in our power."

4. None of the Lutheran Confessions prior to the *Formula of Concord* mentions a third use of the law. The designation first appears in the 1535 edition of Melanchthon's *Loci Theologici*. This is not to say that the Confessions consider the issue of good works performed by the unregenerate to be insignificant. On the contrary, while emphasizing the sole importance of faith in justification, to the explicit exclusion of the law, the Apology adds, concerning believers, that "the keeping of the law should begin in us and increase more and more. But we mean to include both elements, namely, the inward spiritual impulses and the outward good works" (Ap IV, 136). It then states that in this spirit the Lutherans actually "teach . . . not only how the law can be kept, but also that God is pleased when we keep it" (Ap IV, 140). In the same vein, one need look no further than Luther's exposition of the Decalogue in his catechisms to find out how important a function he ascribed to the teaching of the law in Christian life. This is hardly belittled by his stress on the sin- and wrath-revealing, inimical, aspect of the law in the

Antinomian disputations of the 1530s. Thus formal differences aside, it is reasonable to assume that both Melanchthon and Luther taught the third use of the law, even though Luther never used the term and in the Lutheran Symbols it appears only in the *Formula of Concord*.

5. A similar point has been made by Friedrich Mildenberger, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions*, trans. Erwin L. Lueker (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 170.

6. That this is a real fear is especially evident in Lutheran preaching, with its debilitating indecision concerning whether, and if so, how to preach sanctification.

7. William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene II.

8. Note in this connection Luther's first thesis from his *Disputation Concerning Man* (1536): "Philosophy or human wisdom defines man as an animal having reason, sensation, and body." *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan & Helmut T. Lehmann, 55 vols. (St. Louis & Philadelphia: CPH & Fortress Press, 1955 ff), 34:137. Hereafter cited as *AE*.

9. Pastoral constitution *Gaudium et spes* [§ 12] captures the dilemma perceptively: "But what is man? He has put forward, and continues to put forward, many views about himself, views that are divergent and even contradictory. Often he either sets himself up as the absolute measure of all things, or debases himself to the point of despair." *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Postconcliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery, O.P., revised ed. (Boston: St. Paul Books and Media, 1992), 913.

10. Eberhard Jüngel, *The Freedom of a Christian: Luther's Significance for Contemporary Theology*, trans. Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), 44–45.

11. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 114 [§ 405].

12. What is now the position of Protestantism can be traced back to the Early Church. For example, see Athanasius, *De Incarnatione*, 7.4.

13. For example see Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. 1 (St. Louis: CPH, 1950), 518 ff.

14. The debate came to a head with the publication in 1934 of Emil Brunner's treatise, *Natur und Gnade*, followed by Barth's fierce rejoinder, *Nein!*. Both appear in English in a volume titled *Natural Theology* (London: Geoffrey Bles: The Centenary Press, 1946).

15. The formal *imago*, according to Brunner, is "nothing less than the entire human, rational nature, the immortal soul, the capacity for culture, the conscience, responsibility, the relation with God, which—though not redemptive—exists even in sin, language, the whole cultural life." Emil Brunner, "Nature and Grace," *Natural Theology*, 41.

16. "… the *imago* is just sufficient to enable man to know God but not to know his How, to urge him towards religion, without, however, making a true religion possible for him." Brunner, "Nature and Grace," *Natural Theology*, 42.

17. "Is the revelation of God some kind of 'matter' to which man stands in some original relation because as man he *has* or even *is* the 'form' which enables him to take responsibility and make decision in relation to various kinds of 'matter'? Surely all his rationality, responsibility and ability to make decisions might yet go hand in hand with complete impotency as regards *this* 'matter'! And this impotency might be the tribulation and affliction of those who, as far as human reason can see, possess neither reason, responsibility nor ability to make decisions: new-born children and idiots. Are they not children of Adam? Has Christ not died for them?" Karl Barth, "No!" *Natural Theology*, 88–89.

18. AE 1:68 [*Lectures on Genesis*, 1535]. The age of Lutheran Orthodoxy notoriously interpreted the *imago* as the perfection of intellect. The overview offered by Schmid is quite revealing. See Heinrich Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, 3rd edition (1875; reprint, Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961), 217–231.

19. *Gaudium et spes* [§ 24], 925.

20. Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 12.

21. AE 25:291, 313, 345 [*Lectures on Romans*, 1515–16].

22. Eberhad Jüngel observes that Cain, the first murderer, is the one who becomes the founder of the city. *Justification: The Heart of the Christian Faith* trans. Jeffrey F. Cayzer (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 11.

23. That on account of human sin, language is only a shadow of what it once was can be inferred from Jesus' statement, "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him" (Mk 11:23). I am grateful to Charles St-Onge for drawing my attention to this verse in this context.

24. AE 37:365 [*Confession Concerning Christ's Supper*, 1528].

25. Gustaf Wingren, *Creation and Law*, trans. Ross MacKenzie (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), 96.

26. Jüngel, *Justification*, 113.

27. Wingren, *Creation and Law*, 20.

28. Oswald Bayer, "The Doctrine of Justification and Ontology," *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische, Theologische and Religionsphilosophie*, 43 #1 (2001): 46.

The Distinction of Grades of Sin in the Book of Concord and the Early Lutheran Fathers

James D. Heiser

Throughout much of Christendom, the concept of sin seems to be under attack. The most obvious symptom of the struggle going on within the church is the transformation of the pastor from a father confessor into an amateur psychologist, which changes his focus from absolving sins to curing anxieties. The weakening of the whole practice of confession and absolution within the parish is another sign of a diminished emphasis on sin. The confessional service—once a standard practice before a celebration of the Lord's Supper—has vanished from the life of the church. Sometimes even the general confession and absolution is removed from the Divine Service, or it is so arbitrarily modified by a pastor that it undermines the traditional general confession's emphasis on original sin's pervasive corrupting influence on the soul.

The situation has deteriorated to the point that some might even wonder why this article should be printed, or why they should read it. Shouldn't the church simply concentrate on proclaiming the gospel? We read in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession:

> The world is full of blasphemies against God, and of wicked opinions; and the devil keeps entangled in these bands those who are wise and righteous in the sight of the world. In other persons, grosser vices manifest themselves. But since Christ was given to us to remove both these sins and these punishments, and to destroy the kingdom of the devil, sin and death, it will not be possible to recognize the benefits of Christ unless we understand our evils (Ap II, 49–50).[1]

And Martin Chemnitz declared in his *Loci Theologici:* "the benefits of Christ cannot be understood if we do not know what sin is."[2] If we are to believe the gospel, we must have knowledge of the law, and by the law comes the knowledge of sin. As St. Paul wrote to the Romans: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law" (Romans 7:7). Pastoral care requires a knowledge and exposition of the scriptural teaching concerning sin.

We begin by asking the central question, "What is sin?"—that is, how do we define the term *sin*? In addition, on the basis of Holy Scripture, the church has wisely made distinctions between different grades of sin. As Leonard Hutter, one of our sixteenth-century fathers, once wrote: "There are various distinctions made between sins. The principal divisions are into (1) original and actual; (2) into mortal and venial."[3] Because knowledge of these grades is helpful for the Christian, we will proceed from a definition of sin to examine the primary categories of sin: the distinction between original sin and actual sin. Next, we will look at the different categories of actual sin: the distinction between venial sin and mortal sin. Lastly, we will touch briefly on the topic of the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Our concern is, of course, to present the biblical teaching. The labors of the church to make a faithful confession of the teachings of Holy Scripture, as well as the Lutheran pastor's ordination oath to conform all of his teaching to the faithful exposition of Holy Scripture contained in the Book of Concord, lead the writer to center his treatment of the topic in various articles of the Lutheran Confessions. Because of their faithfulness to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, he will also utilize three writings from the sixteenth century Lutheran fathers: the 1543 *Loci Communes* of Philip Melanchthon, the *Loci Theologici* of Martin Chemnitz, and the *Compend of Lutheran Theology* of Leonard Hutter.[4]

WHAT IS SIN?

If we are going to speak about sin, it behooves us to ask, "What is sin, anyway?" How should we define it? Holy Scripture tells us, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). Again St. John wrote in his first epistle: "All unrighteousness is sin" (4:17). We read in Romans 14:23: "for whatever is not from faith is sin." St. James declared, "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin" (4:17). Therefore we see that sin is everything which is not the fruit of faith, for as Hebrews 11:6 tells us, "without faith it is impossible to please him," that is, God; without faith every thought, word, and deed is motivated by something other than fear, love, and trust in God. Sin is the violation of the law of God; it is unrighteousness and the failure to do good.

Larson's *Concordance to the Book of Concord* lists 694 occurrences of the word *sin* and 752 occurrences of the word *sins* in the Tappert translation of the Book of Concord. Many of these references occur in the context of differentiating original sin from actual sin (a distinction we will get to shortly), but one rarely encounters any dogmatic definition of sin per se. In Article IV of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Melanchthon cited Romans 14:23, "Whatsoever is not from faith is sin." In this context, Melanchthon made the point that *every* thought, word, or

James D. Heiser is pastor of Salem Lutheran Church, Malone, Texas, and publisher of Repristination Press.

deed of an unbeliever is sinful: "If the carnal mind is enmity against God, the flesh sins, even when we do external civil works. If it cannot be subject to the Law of God, it certainly sins even when, according to human judgment, it possesses deeds that are excellent and worthy of praise" (Ap IV, 33). In the Formula of Concord's treatment of the third use of the law we read: "But sin is everything that is contrary to God's Law" (FC SD VI,13).

In his *Loci,* Melanchthon defined sin as follows: "Sin is a defect or an inclination or an action in conflict with the law of God, offending God, condemned by God, and making us worthy of eternal wrath and eternal punishments, unless there be forgiveness."[5] Melanchthon explained that by including "defect or inclination" in this definition, original sin is included, and that by speaking of "action" all actual sins are also incorporated in this definition. Chemnitz included Melanchthon's entire locus on sin within his own *Loci,* and Hutter approved of Melanchthon's definition.[6] Indeed, one is hard pressed to imagine a better definition than that which Melanchthon offers, and so we will let it stand as our own: *Sin is a defect or an inclination or an action in conflict with the law of God, offending God, condemned by God, and making us worthy of eternal wrath and eternal punishments, unless there be forgiveness.*

THE FUNDAMENTAL DISTINCTION: ORIGINAL SIN AND ACTUAL SIN

In his *Loci* Chemnitz observed that all men have some knowledge of sin, "For no race is so savage and barbaric that it does not have some understanding of vices or sins and speaks of them."[7] Indeed, Romans 2:15 says that the Gentiles "show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them."

Nevertheless, the world's understanding of sin and its corruption is woefully inadequate. As Melanchthon explained in his *Loci,*

> But the Church points out the wrath of God and teaches that sin is a far greater evil than human reason thinks. Nor does the Church reprove only external actions which are in conflict with the law of God or reason, as philosophy does; but it reproves the root and the fruit, the inner darkness of the mind, the doubts concerning the will of God, the turning away of the human will from God and the stubbornness of the heart against the law of God. It also reproves ignoring and despising the Son of God. These are grievous and atrocious evils, the enormity of which cannot be told.[8]

In short, the church teaches, based on Holy Scripture, that the outward actions (which even unbelieving men recognize as sinful) spring from an inner corruption—a "defect or inclination," as was said above in the definition of sin. As our Lord declares in Matthew 15:18, "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man." This corruption of the heart is called original sin. Man's natural powers detect that certain actions of man are sinful; Holy Scripture reveals original sin to be the source of all actual sins. "This hereditary sin is so deep a corruption of nature, that no reason can understand it, but it must be learned and believed from the revelation of Scriptures, Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12; Ex. 33:3; Gen. 3:7" (SA III I, 3).

Although one will not find the terms "original sin" and "actual sin" in Holy Scripture, a proper understanding of the distinction between original sin and actual sin is thoroughly biblical and vital to grasping the depth of man's corruption and his need for a Savior. As we teach in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession:

> But the recognition of Original Sin is necessary. For the magnitude of the grace of Christ cannot be understood, unless our diseases be recognized. The entire righteousness of man is mere hypocrisy before God, unless we acknowledge that our heart is naturally destitute of love, fear and confidence in God" (Ap II, 33).

The failure of the Roman Church to teach correctly concerning original sin is intrinsically connected to its failure to teach correctly concerning the grace of God; as we confess in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession: "It will not be possible to recognize the benefits of Christ, unless we understand our evils" (Ap II, 50).

Sin is a defect or an inclination or an action in conflict with the law of God, offending God, condemned by God, and making us worthy of eternal wrath and eternal punishments, unless there be forgiveness.

Because of its centrality to the whole of Christian doctrine, the article on original sin is given prominent placement in the Augsburg Confession (Article II), the Apology (Article II), the Smalcald Articles (Section III, Article I), and the Formula of Concord (Article I). In the Augsburg Confession, the article on original sin necessarily precedes the articles on the Son of God (Article III) and Justification (IV); the sending of the Son of God to atone for the sins of the world is God's gracious response to man's sin. In the Augsburg Confession, original sin is described as follows:

> Since the Fall of Adam, all men begotten according to nature are born with sin, that is, (1) without the fear of God, (2) without trust in God, and (3) with concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through baptism and the Holy Ghost" (1–2).

Man is thus born without fear and trust in God—he is born in a state of violation of the first commandment, and he is born with concupiscence, which is the desire to sin. The Formula of Concord explains:

> Original Sin (in human nature) is not only such an entire absence of all good in spiritual, divine things, but that it is at the same time also, instead of the lost image of God in man,

> a deep, wicked, horrible, fathomless, inscrutable and unspeakable corruption of the entire nature and all its powers, especially of the highest, principal powers of the soul in understanding, heart, and will; that now, since the fall, man receives by inheritance *an inborn wicked disposition, an inward impurity of heart, wicked lusts and propensities;* that we all have by nature inherited from Adam such a heart, feeling and thoughts, as according to their highest powers and the light of reason, are naturally inclined and disposed directly contrary to God and His chief commands, yea, they are at enmity with God, especially as to what concerns divine and spiritual things (SD I, 11–12).

Both the Lutheran Confessions and the writings of the fathers point us to Romans 5:12 as a clear passage of Scripture teaching the doctrine of original sin: "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned." Martin Luther wrote in the Smalcald Articles, "Here we must confess, as Paul says in Rom. 5:12, that sin originated from one man Adam, by whose disobedience all men were made sinners, and subject to death and the devil. This is called original or capital sin" (III, I, 1). Or as Melanchthon wrote in his *Loci*:

> If only actual transgressions are sins, then each would be guilty only of his own deed. Now since it clearly says that we are guilty because of the transgression of Adam, it testifies that there is some other sin in nature besides actual transgressions. And lest this sin be understood as only an imputation of guilt, the import of the words ought to be noted. "All have sinned," [Rom. 5:12ff.] that is, the evil which is sin is passed on to all.[9]

Thus the sin of Adam spreads to all of fallen mankind, and it is, in and of itself, enough to bring the sinner into condemnation. Hutter wrote regarding original sin: "Original sin is a natural, contagious disease and imperfection, with which all men are born, not only causing us to be destitute of the fear of God, and of confidence in Him, and likewise through wicked desires to be entirely depraved, but also making us subjects of eternal condemnation, unless we are born again."[10] The Formula of Concord condemns Matthias Flaccius's teaching that man's substance or essence is sin; however, it does teach that original sin is "so deep a corruption of human nature, that nothing healthy or uncorrupt in man's body or soul, in inner or outward powers, remains, but, as the Church sings, 'Through Adam's fall is all corrupt, nature and essence human'" (FC Ep I, 8).

While original sin pertains to the corruption of the sinner, the term "actual sin" refers to the sinful thoughts, words, and deeds through which original sin is expressed in the life of a sinner. Chemnitz and Hutter approved of Melanchthon's definition of actual sin:

> Actual sin is every action, whether internal or external, which conflicts with the law of God; as *in the mind*, doubts concerning God; *in the will* and heart, the flames of wicked desires; *and in the members*, all motions and actions contrary to the Divine Law.[11]

Writing in the Smalcald Articles, Luther identified such actual sin as the "fruit" of original sin (analogous to the way good works are the fruit of faith):

> The fruits of this sin [original sin] are afterwards the evil deeds which are forbidden in the Ten Commandments, such as unbelief, false faith, idolatry, to be without fear of God, arrogance, blindness, and, to speak briefly, not to know or regard God; secondly, to lie, to swear by [to abuse] God's name, not to pray, not to call upon God, not to regard God's Word, to be disobedient to parents, to murder, to be unchaste, to steal, to deceive, etc. (SA III I, 2).

This understanding of actual sin as the fruit of original sin is consistent with the biblical witness. As St. James observed: "When desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death" (1:15). Our Lord declared in Matthew 15: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (19).

"It will not be possible to recognize the benefits of Christ, unless we understand our evils."

There is a very close relationship between the corruption caused by original sin and the fruit of that corruption that is manifested in actual sin. Chemnitz observed that "in adults original and actual sin are so closely connected that it is not easy for a person to show the precise or mathematical point of comparison (so to speak) at which the two should be distinguished." Toward clarifying the respective roles of original sin and actual sin, Chemnitz set forth the flow from original sin into actual sin in five steps.

> And the difference can be even more clearly understood from the distinction between the degrees of sin which we have received from antiquity: (1) an inherent tinder, the inclination or depravity which includes our lack of righteousness; (2) suggestions or urgings on the part of our thoughts and emotions, that is, when our original corruption gets into motion under the impulse of some urging; (3) pleasure; (4) consent; (5) the work itself.
>
> Of these degrees or steps, the first two apply to original sin and the other three to actual.[12]

It is important that Christians are correctly instructed concerning the relationship between the sin that is in them from Adam and the sins which they commit on a daily basis. Again, it is as we teach in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession: "It will not be possible to recognize the benefits of Christ, unless we understand our evils" (Ap II, 50). If Christians view their own sinfulness only in terms of discreet, individual acts, rather than

understanding themselves to be thoroughly corrupted by sin, there is a danger they will minimize sin to the point of considering it to be merely individual acts to be avoided. Where there is a biblical understanding of original sin, the Christian begins to understand the utter hopelessness of the sinner's plight, apart from Jesus Christ. Confessing himself to be *by nature* sinful and unclean *and* to have sinned against God by thought, word, and deed opens the eyes of faith to the poignancy of St. Paul's words, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom 7:24).

In the case of venial sin, one is dealing with actual sins where the sinner is not deliberately acting against conscience.

The great strength of the traditional general confession is that it reflects a biblical understanding of the nature of the relationship between original and actual sin. Some pastors have sought to make confession more "relevant" by replacing the general confession with a list of specific sins that varies from week to week. There is certainly a place for a person to confess his individual, actual sins—privately, to his pastor—and such private confession has a proper role to play in the church. It is for this reason that Augsburg Confession Article XI says, "Private Absolution ought to be retained in the churches," and the Apology of the Augsburg Confession says, "It would be wicked to remove private absolution from the Church" (Ap XI, 100). But when the general confession is replaced by a list of specific sins, we risk depriving God's people of something they need: first, to confess that their sinfulness exceeds their ability to enumerate; and, second, specifically to confess actual sins that particularly trouble them. The fifth chief part of the Small Catechism takes for granted that private confession and absolution will be occurring in the church, and that is the place for specificity: the Christian confesses the sin that troubles him, and the pastor absolves him, assuring him that the Lord has forgiven *that* sin, too. It is as the Small Catechism teaches: "In the presence of God we should acknowledge ourselves guilty of all manner of sins, even of those which we do not ourselves perceive; as we do in the Lord's Prayer. But in the presence of the pastor we should confess those sins alone of which we have knowledge and which we feel in our hearts." A biblical understanding of original and actual sin leads us both to confess ourselves to be thoroughly sinful, and also to have sinned through specific thoughts, words, and deeds.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN VENIAL SIN AND MORTAL SIN

Modern Lutherans are not as familiar as their forefathers were with the distinction between venial and mortal sins. In fact, the distinction is never mentioned in the 1991 edition of *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* published by Concordia Publishing House. The failure to teach this vital distinction would have greatly disappointed the Lutheran fathers, who strongly emphasized it over against the "once saved, always saved" theology proclaimed by some of the false teachers of their age.[13] Chemnitz observed in his *Loci*: "For example, in the teaching of the Anabaptists there are some who clamor that this distinction between mortal and venial sin is a device of the scholastics. But Scripture does have certain very clear illustrations of this distinction, so that it cannot be denied."[14]

The point at issue in the distinction between venial and mortal sins is that there are some sins which are so grievous that they can cause a person to lose his salvation. Melanchthon observed that among the unbelievers, *all* sins are mortal:

> It is not necessary for the unregenerate to inquire into the distinction between mortal and venial sins, because "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," (Rom. 14:23). . . . But for the regenerate it is necessary to ask the question who has venial sins and why the fall from these are called mortal sins."[15]

In other words, for the unbelieving, there is no forgiveness of sins, and so all sins lead to damnation. But for the believers, it is necessary to know what sins will cause a Christian to fall from grace.

We read in Ezekiel 18:

> But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die" (Ez 18:24).

Thus the Lutheran Confessions teach, based on Holy Scripture, that the distinction between venial and mortal sins is found in the cooperation of the will in the commission of the sin. As Luther observed in the Smalcald Articles:

> it is necessary to know and teach that if saints who still have and feel original sin, and also daily repent, and strive with it, fall in some way into manifest sins, as David into adultery, murder and blasphemy, faith and the Holy Ghost are then absent from them. For the Holy Ghost does not permit sin to have dominion, to gain the upper hand so as to be completed, but represses and restrains it so that it must not do as it wishes. But if it do what it wishes, the Holy Ghost and faith are not there present (SA III III, 43–44).

This teaching is also emphasized in the article in the Formula of Concord concerning the righteousness of faith:

> We believe, teach and confess that although the contrition that precedes and the good works that follow, do not belong to the article of justification before God, yet such a faith should not be imagined as can coexist with a wicked intention to sin and to act against conscience (FC Ep III, 11).

The church chastised the Romanist teachers for claiming that faith and willful sin could coexist: "The adversaries feign that faith is only a knowledge of history, and, therefore teach that it can

coexist with mortal sin" (Ap IV, 48). In other words, the Romanists reduced faith to simply assenting to the factual validity of Holy Scripture, rather than understanding that the faith that saves is a trust that takes hold of the promises of God. The church responds to the Romanists:

> But since we speak of such faith as is not idle thought, but of that which liberates from death and produces a new life in hearts, and is the work of the Holy Ghost; this does not coexist with mortal sin, but, as long as it is present, produces good fruits (Ap IV, 64).

Again, "Nor indeed is this faith an idle knowledge, neither can it coexist with mortal sin, but it is a work of the Holy Ghost, whereby we are freed from death, and terrified minds are encouraged and quickened" (Ap IV, 115).

In light of the above, Hutter's definition of mortal sin (again, borrowed from Philip Melanchthon) seems quite adequate:

> In those who have not been born again, every sin is mortal, whether it be original or actual, internal or external. But in those who have been born again, a mortal sin is either a fundamental error, or an internal action, contrary to the law of God, committed against conscience, and depriving its subject of the grace of God, faith and the Holy Ghost.[16]

In the case of venial sin, one is dealing with actual sins where the sinner is not deliberately acting against conscience. "At this point if you fight against sin so that you do not give way against your conscience, you shall retain grace and the Holy Spirit."[17] In this context, Melanchthon directs his readers to St. Paul's words in Romans 7: "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." In such a person, sin is not being willfully tolerated; rather, its unwelcome presence torments the Christian. As Chemnitz explained,

> Therefore there is sin dwelling in us which tries to keep us in captivity, and those who hold hands with it and are overcome by it are led to damnation. But if they fight against it and are in Christ Jesus, even though sin is still in their members, yet for them there is no condemnation.[18]

In contrast to mortal sin, Hutter defined venial sin as follows:

> A venial sin, therefore, is a fall or action of the regenerate, which conflicts with the law of God, but does not cause the loss of grace, the Holy Ghost, and faith; for those who have been born again, in their spirit strive that they may not be led astray contrary to conscience, and they grieve over their corruption, and believe that for the sake of their Mediator, God regards them with favor, and gratuitously forgives them all their sins, through and on account of Christ.[19]

Such is the nature of venial sin, that Luther observed we "should acknowledge ourselves guilty of all manner of sins, even of those we do not ourselves perceive, as we do in the Lord's Prayer."

The distinction between venial sins (which we often commit without even being aware of it) and mortal sins (which are sins against conscience) is well summarized by David:

> Who can understand his errors?
> Cleanse me from secret faults.
> Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins;
> let them not have dominion over me.
> Then I shall be blameless,
> and I shall be innocent of great transgression" (Ps 19:12–13).

We pray that God would cleanse us from the secret faults that we may not even understand (venial sin), but we also pray to keep from presumptuous (mortal) sins.

Comparing different portions of St. John's first epistle, Chemnitz draws a useful example of the distinction between mortal and venial sins:

> 1 John 1:8, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us"; and yet he says in 3:6, "Whoever sins has not known God." These statements seem to contradict each other, but they are easily reconciled. In ch. 1 he is speaking of those who have been washed in the blood of Christ, but still have sin in them. But in ch. 3 he is speaking of premeditated sins which thus are a different kind of sin. Again the same John says in the same epistle, 3:8, "He who commits sin is of the devil," and in v. 9, "Whoever is born of God does not sin." Thus John is demonstrating that there is a difference between having sin and committing sin. The latter is more serious than the former, although sometimes they are treated as one. For sin still clings in all of us, and no one can say that he is absolutely pure of all sin. Yet the godly through the grace of the Spirit resist sin. But he who carries out his calling and brings evil lusts into his work, in a sense is training himself in the art of sinning.[20]

The most important thing for us to remember as Christians is that the door remains open for all who repent and believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior. David's adultery and murder offer a striking example of mortal sin, but his restoration shows us that even those who fall away in mortal sin can be restored. As we are promised, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn 1:9). The teaching of the distinction between mortal and venial sins is fundamentally necessary for pastoral care: first, so that Christians may understand the nature of sin and the danger that it poses to their faith, that they would turn to the means of grace for strengthening against temptation; second, so pastors may properly rebuke hardened sinners who believe they are "good Christians" despite their willful sin, and comfort repentant sinners, assuring them of God's grace. As Chemnitz observed:

> It is beneficial that we always have before us this warning, for unless we support the Spirit in His struggle against the flesh, it will be easy for us to fall and lose our salvation. But by this admonition or the bridles of the Holy Spirit we can

> be kept under control so that we are not drawn into mortal sin. . . . But if a man is "overtaken in some fault," (Gal. 6:1), through the wickedness of Satan and the weakness of his own flesh, he must seek the remedy in this doctrine and rise again through repentance.[21]

THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST

Our examination of the fundamental distinction of grades of sin would not be complete without a few words regarding the sin against the Holy Ghost. Concerning this sin, our Lord says:

> Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come (Mt 12:31–32).

Many pious souls have been concerned regarding the nature of the unforgivable sin. However, there is no extensive examination of this in the Lutheran Confessions.

The Sin against the Holy Ghost, therefore, is an intentional denial of evangelical truth.

In their private writings, however, there is much agreement among the Lutheran fathers concerning this sin. Hutter defined it as

> a voluntary apostasy or denial of either a portion or the whole of Gospel truth, made by one who has acknowledged his faith in it, and who, with deliberate purpose, contrary to the testimony of his own heart and conscience, hostilely attacks and despises the ministry of the Holy Ghost, or the means of grace.[22]

Chemnitz agreed, writing in his *Enchiridion*:

> For those who, after they once have been enlightened and made partakers of the Holy Spirit, knowingly and in obstinate wickedness again deny the acknowledged truth and completely fall away from Christ, and so persevere therein that, as it were, they crucify Christ anew, regard [Him] as a joke, and tread [Him] underfoot, and insult the Spirit of grace—for those, I say, there remains no remission of sins, but the prospect of the judgment of God and of eternal fire. For they do not return to repentance, and without Christ there remains no offering for sins.[23]

Johann Gerhard (1582–1637) is also worth citing with regard to this sin:

> The Sin against the Holy Ghost, therefore, is an intentional denial of evangelical truth, which has been acknowledged and approved by conscience, connected with a bold attack upon it, and voluntary blasphemy of it. For we must observe that this kind of sin was proved against the Pharisees by Christ; for, although they were constrained by the force of the truth uttered by Him, and were convicted in their consciences by its illumination, yet they raged against Him by their wicked impiety, to such a degree that they blushed not to ascribe His doctrines and miracles to Satan.[24]

Hutter made the point that this sin is unforgivable "not, indeed, because of the impossibility of its forgiveness as such, that the greatness of its guilt exceeds and surpasses the mercy of God and merit of Christ." The sin is unforgivable to the sinner, Hutter explained, because

> (1) He voluntarily forsakes Christ, without whom there is no sacrifice for sin; (2) He persistently neglects, despises, and, as it were, treads under his feet, the instruments or means of grace, without which no one can obtain forgiveness of sins; (3) and lastly. This sin is connected with final hardening of the heart, so that with confirmed purpose, the sinner at length knowingly, willingly and recklessly proceeds to attack and blaspheme that truth which he had at one time acknowledged.[25]

CONCLUSION

We have seen that Sin is a defect or an inclination or an action in conflict with the law of God, offending God, condemned by God, and making us worthy of eternal wrath and eternal punishments, unless there be forgiveness. For us to understand the depth of our wickedness correctly, it is necessary that we recognize that original sin is the fountain from which actual sins bubble up in in us. Our wickedness is far greater than the sum total of our actual sins; the heart of man is desperately wicked on account of Adam's fall. A correct understanding of original sin reveals to us the scope of the miracle God accomplishes in us in holy baptism, forgiving our sin, and granting us grace to begin turning away from actual sin. The influence of concupiscence will be with us throughout this life, however, so that we will continue to be afflicted by venial sin. Yet the Christian can by the grace of God avoid mortal sin. All sin needs to be repented of, and there is a particularly pressing need in the case of a lapse into mortal sin that we repent and believe again the promises of the gospel.

> My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world (1 John 2:1–2).

Soli Deo gloria! LOGIA

NOTES

1. All confessional quotations are from the H. E. Jacobs edition of the Book of Concord.

2 .Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici,* trans. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989), 265.

3. Leonard Hutter, *Compend of Lutheran Theology* (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Bookstore, 1868), 61.

4. Melanchthon and Chemnitz were, of course, authors of substantial portions of the Lutheran Confessions. Leonard Hutter was a professor at the University of Wittenberg in the period following the completion of the Book of Concord.

5. Philip Melanchthon, *Loci Communes*, trans. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991), 48.

6. Hutter, 60.

7. Chemnitz, *Loci,* 265.

8. Melanchthon, 47.

9. Ibid., 49.

10. Hutter, 61.

11. Chemnitz, *Loci,* 312–313; Hutter, 69.

12. Chemnitz *Loci,* 314.

13. The fathers of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod also emphasized this important distinction. C. F. W. Walther's famous lectures on *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel* emphasize this distinction. As Walther observed in the thirty-first lecture: "We have already seen that a distinction must be made between mortal and venial sins. A person failing to make this distinction does not rightly divide Law and Gospel" (325).

14. Chemnitz, *Loci*, 671.

15. Melanchthon, 126.

16 Hutter, 69.

17. Melanchthon, 127.

18 Chemnitz, *Loci,* 672.

19. Hutter, 70.

20. Chemnitz, *Loci,* 672.

21. Ibid., 681.

22. Hutter, 70–71.

23. Martin Chemnitz, *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments: an Enchiridion,* trans. Luther Poellot (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), 108.

24. John Gerhard in Heinrich Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church,* trans. Charles A. Hay and Henry E. Jacobs (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1899), 256.

25. Hutter, 71.

Inklings

But you don't . . . You can't actually believe that salvation is only in Jesus . . . Do you , Pastor?

Gustaf Wingren's Confession of the Doctrine of Creation for an Understanding of Vocation and Sanctification

Eric R. Andrae

"IN THE BEGINNING . . ."

That is where this investigation into Gustaf Wingren's doctrine of creation, called by Douglas Jay "his Creation Faith,"[1] rightly commences. Wingren writes, "my interests from the very beginning of my theological studies were concerned with the doctrine of creation and the first article."[2] It is appropriate to look at any aspect of Wingren's theology chronologically, grounded as it is on the order of God's acts in the history of mankind. According to Wingren, "The tripartite Creed . . . arranges these wonderful works of God in the order which God chooses when he *does* them."[3] As such, I will examine Wingren's thought on creation as it unfolds in some of his major writings, selected from different periods.

This essay examines the development and consistency in Wingren's thought. The selection of "major" material is, granted, subjective. It is also difficult, because, as Wingren admits, his "recurring theme [is] the first article of faith"[4] from the Apostles' Creed: the doctrine of creation. As such, his "Theology of Creation-Faith"[5] is the foundation for *all* that he has written. Nonetheless, I have decided to work mainly with those articles and books which deal more or less directly with the doctrine of creation since the task at hand is Gustaf Wingren's doctrine of creation, not Gustaf Wingren's writings reviewed. The task to which we address ourselves in this investigation of Wingren's doctrine of creation is historical in that its only aim is understanding Gustaf Wingren's thought on one special point, within the confines of a theological journal essay.[6] Within this area of "major" writings, some will receive considerably more attention than others (e.g., *The Living Word*, *Luther on Vocation*) for various reasons—length of work, "creation" content, Wingren's own assessment of his writings, theological impact, my assessment, etc.—which will be made apparent later. It is tempting to concentrate mostly on Wingren's *The Living Word*, *Theology in Conflict*, *Creation and Law*, and *Gospel and the Church*, since they are, as their author says, a "series of four related books."[7] However, doing this would exclude the influential *Vocation*, "one of the outstanding works of present-day Swedish theology [and] perhaps the best introduction into the theology of the Reformer,"[8] as well as *The Flight from Creation*, the author's extremely helpful review of his first article work and its implications. I was greatly aided in my choices by Henry Vander Goot's bibliography.[9]

CREATION: *LUTHER ON VOCATION*

A brief overview of Wingren's very early work may be helpful. Wingren was born in 1910 in Tryserum, Sweden; taught at Lund (associate professor 1942), Aabo, and Basel; and succeeded Anders Nygren as chair of systematic theology at Lund 1951–1977,

> one of only two professorships of systematic theology available at state universities in the entire country. Wingren thus attained to one of the most important posts in Swedish Lutheran state-church culture and life.

He matriculated at the University of Lund in 1929. In 1936, at the tender age of twenty-six, he was first published: "Marcions kristendomstolkning" ("Marcion's Understanding of Christianity"[10]) in *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift* (*STK*). Here Wingren established early his interest in and defense of the Old Testament,[11] specifically, creation. In 1940, sections of his licentiate's thesis, subtitled "Studies in the area of creation," were published, yet again in *STK*: "Skapelsen, Lagen och Inkarnationen Enligt Ireneus" ("Creation, Law and Incarnation According to Irenaeus") and "Frälsningens Gud Såsom Skapare och Domare" ("Salvation's God as Creator and Judge").[12]

Being surrounded at Lund by a number of Luther scholars, Wingren was encouraged to concentrate on the Reformer for his doctoral dissertation. Wingren comments: "But it was still the idea of creation that I wanted to deal with. It was the given assumption for all my work. The point on which I fastened finally was Luther's doctrine of vocation, that is, of everyday life and occupations as the place for the Christian to serve his neighbor. Underlying the whole of Luther's argument is the conviction that God is the Creator who is still creating life and who, in doing so, uses intercourse between man and woman, the act of birth, suckling one's young, seedtime and harvest, the everyday round."[13]

As such, *Luthers Lära Om Kallelsen* was published in 1942 (*Luther's Doctrine of the Calling*, published in 1947 as *Luther on Vocation)*. The "idea of creation" permeates what may be Wingren's most important and outstanding work. I shall address and summarize some specific areas of *Vocation* in which this idea is present. I will lean heavily on Wingren's *Concept*. Written twenty-six years after *Vocation*, the article is an excellent summary, by Wingren himself, of his and Luther's view on vocation. It clearly

Eric R. Andrae is pastor of First Trinity Lutheran Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

shows how Wingren relates vocation, and much else, to the doctrine of creation. It is very helpful and insightful.

First, however, we need to relate four fundamental points which undergird Wingren's theology throughout *Vocation*. These four points are: belief in the Creator-God whose creative work is not finished; the struggle between God and Devil is an ongoing one, even at the present; eschatalogical outlook: we are not yet at the end but wait for the resurrection from the dead; Christ is in us now through the means of grace, effecting death and resurrection which is everlasting life.[14]

Wingren fights against the "theology [which] was aimed at showing the gulf, the discontinuity between Christian faith and human life in general."

Wingren limits his study by saying: "Here we are inquiring only into Luther's conception of earthly work, not vocation in any other sense."[15] I would posit that Luther's conception is also Wingren's conception. Through my reading of Wingren's books and articles it has become apparent to me that Wingren leans heavily on Luther. Wingren's theology, and specifically his doctrine of creation, is greatly shaped and influenced by the Reformer. Wingren maintains that "Luther is the biblical interpreter for the whole church. Luther is doctor *ecclesiae universalis*."[16] He says: "*Everything* that brings me into relation with other people, everything that makes my actions events in other people's lives is contained in 'vocation.'"[17] In the first section, "Earth and Heaven," he explores and astutely explains Luther's theory of the two realms: the heavenly kingdom (gospel: forgiveness of sin) and the earthly kingdom (Law: "God's providence, protection, and direction in material matters").[18] Both are of God, created by him.[19] It is in the earthly kingdom that God as Creator gives stations to all.[20]

Wingren fights against the "theology [which] was aimed at showing the gulf, the discontinuity between Christian faith and human life in general."[21] As Gerhard Forde points out, for Wingren "Creation comprises the fact that we are given the gift of life and in this gift of life we are related to God. Creation is not merely an act of God in the past about which man may or may not know. It is an immediate[22] relationship given in the present, an ongoing activity of God. To live means to be related to God, to be dependent on him."[23] These thoughts form the foundation of *Vocation*, because "Luther puts worldly labor before the life of the cloister and celibacy, [and] belief in creation plays an important part in [his] argument."[24] "The belief in God as creating at the present time"[25] is key to understanding Wingren's theology and *Vocation*. God is Creat*or* and creat*ing*.[26]

Thus God creates through man. God serves neighbor through man (*larvae Dei*)[27] and thus preserves creation against the destroyer, the devil.[28] God created us to live a life of love: the Christian serves all of God's creation, even

> "the worst rogues and rascals on earth." [Luther]. This is a pattern for Christian love, which must be willing to be misused, and to be a "lost love" Just as God scatters other gifts, so he also scatters this creation of his, for Christian love itself is the creation of God's Spirit.

Even the office through which God does this is created by him: "[Luther:] 'God gives you office that you may serve'." This God does *ex nihilo*: for without him, man is helpless and dead. "It is just in man's need, in times and occasions which look hopeless, that God out of such helplessness, out of 'nothing,' creates something new." Even so, man suffers under vocation's lowly cross. God's creation "out of nothing" is exemplified best by the Cross: "he who was despised by the world showed himself a true Creator, one who makes his costliest work out of that which is nothing."[29]

So, the Creator is not merely concerned with the beginning of the world. He is the creator of "me and all that exists" and he "provides me daily and abundantly with all the necessities of life" (SC II:2). These are concrete acts of God as Creator. Man is completely dependent on the active hand of God for life; if he draws it away, we die. *All* creatures (created beings), and thus even vocation, fall under the law in God's kingdom of the left.

> The world is independent in relation to the church and to the preaching of the gospel, but it is not independent in relation to *God*. On the contrary: in this very world God acts anew as the Creator.[30]

As such, God does not pull away, but gives occupations which continue the work of creation and sustain life: in fields, barns, mills, factories, board rooms.

Also, through the sexual act, we are actually pro-creators with God. We even have dominion over creation.

> Luther asks how man can have dominion . . . , as the biblical account of creation says he does. His answer is that we can make use of things in the now. We can only wait for the future; but right where the future becomes the present, we can act . . . in the interest of service to . . . neighbor.

Yet, only God controls time. He sets the hour for proper action. "God has his purpose for every hour, and his direction is constant, for we can never free ourselves from our neighbor and our vocation."[31]

Just as we cannot understand creation aright if we limit it to the past, so it is with the fall into sin. The devil, the destroyer, is at work now, too. Thus, man is a battlefield upon which the devil and God wage war. The Creator even uses evil for his purposes: for example, the self-seeking businessman is greedy, but thus produces good products for customers. God uses means to accomplish his purposes.

> When Luther talks about "equity"[32] or about "heroic men"[33] . . . as the means by which God, creating afresh,

> "breaks through the law," then this statement is a testimony to his dual view of the natural and the Christian. For of the Christian's love, too, he says: it "rises above all laws," "it breaks through the law." And in both cases the breakthrough, the new creation is the result of a *struggle* going on. A static system without any changes is quickly occupied by demonic powers.[34] God must constantly do *new* things in order to maintain his created world.[35]
>
> Such eruptions and fresh beginnings are characteristic of Luther's belief on creation, for the fact that God creates implies for Luther something that goes on ceaselessly, "to create is always to do something new" (*creare est semper novum facere*).[36]

God's love takes creative form. God creates: in the face of conflict, he creates life.

Central to all theology is Christ's death and resurrection. Through his baptism, the Christian lives daily in death and resurrection. This resurrection is "the new creation." Sin, even the cross of Christian suffering also borne in and through vocation, is death. Eternal life comes forth from daily sorrow and repentance (SC IV). The gospel is regenerative. However, it is "not necessary for the preservation of earthly life."[37] "God the Creator acts through both the talent given in natural birth and the love of the new man given by new birth in the Word."[38]

Eternal life is not separate from earthly life. In his earthly life, the Christian is constantly surrounded by God's creation. "Round about him are his fellow-men, whom, according to God's commandment, he shall serve. The worldly acts which provide my fellow-man with his livelihood are acts of Christian love and at the same time they mould me in Christ's image, through death and resurrection to eternal life."[39] Wingren sees this as a converging point in Luther's theology. Certainly it is connected to the two realms, law and gospel, death and resurrection, even baptism. "The Christian is crucified by the law in his vocation, under the earthly government; and he arises through the gospel, in the church under the spiritual government." But "Baptism is . . . completely only fulfilled in death." Then man's position as battlefield between God and the devil is over. "Then man's struggle is at an end."[40]

CREATION: *THE LIVING WORD*

Wingren's creation-faith remained the foundation for works subsequent to *Vocation*. Continuing work on his licentiate's thesis resulted in the publication of *Människan och inkarnationen*[41] Its focus is creation and law. He wishes to establish a

> mediating position between the complete rejection of so-called "natural theology" manifested in the writings of Karl Barth and the now defunct 'philosophy of religion' approach which sees Christianity merely as the climax of all anthropocentric religions.[42]

Wingren examines closely the doctrine of recapitulation, within the framework of Irenaeus's anthropology over and against the Gnostics. The Old and the New Testaments serve as the unified basis for the doctrine of man, in which creation and incarnation restore man to the place he occupied in the Creator's intention: recapitulatio.[43]

Predikan [*The Sermon*][44] appeared in 1949. The book is not one dealing with homiletical methods, but rather it is a systematic/dogmatic work in that it "represents Wingren's entire theological program"[45] as the backbone of preaching. Its subject matter was in large part a response to the "negation of the belief in creation"[46] that he saw in Karl Barth.[47]

> It must be possible to adhere to the belief in creation, to the continuity between the human and the Christian, to the view of salvation as a restoration of the natural.[48]

Wingren speaks of the import of this comprehensive book for understanding his work of later years: *The Living Word* was "organically necessary . . . [and] clearly *all* that I have written over the past quarter of a century is based solidly on this book."[49] It is a window to most of what he has since written dealing with God as Creator.

It must be possible to adhere to the belief in creation, to the continuity between the human and the Christian, to the view of salvation as a restoration of the natural.

The Living Word from its very beginning, from its first page of text, points to the Old Testament and establishes that preaching is tied to creation: "Man reaches the spring out of which he can draw human life only when the Word of the Creator comes to him."[50] While this particular Word is expounded throughout, creation is directly and specifically brought to the fore in two chapters at the center of the book in which Wingren not surprisingly leans heavily on Luther and even more so on Scripture.[51]

In "Conquered Man" and in "Creation and Redemption" Wingren emphasizes God's continual creative activity. "Confronted with life we are confronted with something which God is in the process of making, and since God creates by his Word, that means that God speaks to us from our actual human life." He is making "man to be man through succession of acts—a series of mighty words. [It] is not, then, a supernatural addition to human life, but [man's] own free growth towards true life."[52] Without God, without the work of the Creator, there is no life for anyone at any time.[53] But he is doing new things: "In [Christ] men are created anew . . .; they are raised up through him from death and live again, are born anew." This, God's recreating activity, is the direct answer to, the defense against, the devil's destructive activity. "Creation and sin are the two most important factors which regulate human life." In creation, every earthly event is related to God: "man can breathe and live, free and unrestrained

as a child, and in this state of true humanity he can fulfill God's will in the ordinary and earthly life of every day."[54]

God is engaged in conflict and creation; the result will be a new creation through resurrection. But how does God create anew? Answering some critics, Wingren is trinitarian. "God creates anew by giving his Spirit, creates life and renews the face of the earth."[55] It is the Creator of the world who raises Jesus from the dead and so accomplishes his plan."[56] This plan will reach its ultimate point in the resurrection of the dead, which is made possible only by Jesus' resurrection. The Creator of life thus uses even death for his purpose!

Of eschatalogical dimension also is the image of God in which man was created. This image, having been corrupted by sin, is being restored in man "growing together with Christ, which takes place in the Church, the body of Christ" and will only fully be "attained in the resurrection of the dead." For "To become like Christ is to become man as the Creator intended he should be." The resurrection of the dead is the ultimate act of creation, for in it "we are changed into his image." This is the last creation and it alone is a perfect state. It is "Christ, God's image, [who] conquers sin and death and afterwards fashions humanity into likeness with himself, in his body, by means of preaching of the Word"[57] and baptism.[58] Thus we are re-created in *imago Christi,* for which we were originally and purely created! "Life at creation is the same life that Christ redeems."[59]

The church cannot be described unless its positive relation to the external world outside the church can also be described.

The Word that creates is the same from "'Let it be!' till the mighty Word of the resurrection." Wingren tellingly posits that creation, as the continual event and act of God, runs

> from creation in the beginning, through Christ's assumption of humanity to the eternal fulfillment—and everywhere we have seen "growth," creative activity, interwoven with the conflict against the Devil: man will be fully created and loosed from the hold of the destroyer on the last day.

This is wonderful gospel, the Creator's act of grace. However,

> God's own creative will becomes law where man in his fallen condition sets himself up against the Creator. Forgiveness is the casting out of sin and guilt from the conscience, and along with them the law is cast out as well.

To set oneself up against the Creator is unnatural, because "Christ does not come to Satan's own world when he comes in the Incarnation, but he comes to *his* own, to the men of the Creator who have been led astray." This is re-creation which is active now and restores: "Through the creative Word which comes to us in preaching we are redeemed—that is, we become men."[60]

CREATION: *THE FLIGHT FROM CREATION*

Teologiens metodfråga (1954),[61] *Skapelsen och lagen* (*Creation and Law*) (1958),[62] and *Evangeliet och Kyrkan* (1960, *Gospel and Church*)[63] have already been briefly discussed above.[64] Thus we arrive at *The Flight from Creation*;[65] it is certainly not Wingren's flight. Rather, he continues to promote the doctrine of creation as the basic foundation for all theological endeavors. No, the flight has been taken by the church.[66] Wingren attacks this throughout.

In the first chapter, "Creation: A Crucial Article of Faith," Wingren reviews and explains in a brief manner his life's work on his life's work: the doctrine of creation. He touches on ecclesiology and his main tertiary sources:

> Man is born into this free sovereign state but he loses it when he rebels against the Creator. It is Christ who restores man and gives him back his health, a work of salvation which is now going on in the church. The church cannot be described unless its positive relation to the external world outside the church can also be described. There is a distinct and very fundamental connection between Irenaeus' idea of restoration and Luther's idea of vocation.

He takes Kierkegaard and Barth, among others, to task for fostering a negative attitude toward creation.

> The first article of faith is omitted and we [the church] start at the second—precisely as Barth did.
>
> At the bottom of this aversion to the idea of creation lies, I suspect, Soren Kierkegaard and his hatred of everything that smacks of everyday life, his hatred of all natural forms of life.

Furthermore, the concept of the law has lost its meaning as a result. Wingren provides an example:

> there is a modern variant of the Roman Catholic theory of 'natural law' which is used, as a rule in an attempt to conserve and defend existing economic and social conditions. No wonder quite a number of people in our time have become allergic to the term "law."[67]

In the second essay, "Creation and Ethics,"[68] Wingren gives a brief overview of some nineteenth century European theologians: Emil Brunner, Rudolf Bultmann, etc. The author contends that *Ordnungstheologie*[69] misrepresented and misunderstood creation.

> The distortion of the belief in creation that *Ordnungstheologie* brought about in the 1930s is apparently considered even in the 1960s as a true fruit of the first article of faith. It would be reasonable to start interpreting the first article of faith in different ways so that change and renewal were contained in it.[70]

In this area, Wingren points positively to the work of K. E. Logstrup[71] of Denmark who deals with "the idea of creation, and . . . has concentrated on general human and social problems." His work is held up in opposition to *Ordnungen*. In this chapter Wingren also distinguishes between the two realms and speaks of the impact of this distinction on social change for all, not just Christians: "the gospel argument, by means of the idea of creation, is brought *out* and the common sense arguments of suitability are brought *in*." In other words, our works in the created world are to benefit Christians and non-Christians alike; here we cannot base arguments on Christology. Finally, he attacks perversions of the doctrine of creation, specifically Nazi Aryanism, not as reasons to ignore this article of faith, but as impetus to "really *analyze* the meaning of belief in creation."[72]

The third lecture, "Creation and Theology" is a discussion of creation and "Theology between Dogmatics and Analysis." First, some definitions must be stated. Theology is defined as

> the scholarly work which, on the basis of historical sources, aims to state what is characteristic of the Christian faith and the Christian ethos as compared with other kinds of religion and philosophy in our times; to state what is "Christian" in a descriptive way using scientific reasoning, i.e. using arguments which can be tested by everyone.

Dogmatics, meanwhile, is defined as "the normative process by which the truth of the Christian confession of faith is upheld while that faith is described scientifically." Analysis is simply the "negative scholarly attitude toward any total view of Christianity." Wingren does not share this view.

He does, however, support natural law:

> The Christian faith, since it is a belief in a God who is God of the whole world, assumes an elemental ethos of a universal kind; it assumes rules for man's co-existence with his fellows which are quite simply here and functioning as long as life continues.

Furthermore, within this chapter Wingren touches briefly on the problems with Billing's exodus theology and again recommends the work of Logstrup as a positive corrective. Billing, though having the forgiveness of sins as his keystone, missed the point:

> "Forgiveness is ethically re-creative even by the very fact that it wipes out and breaks down." Regarding God's forgiveness, Wingren says, "that one 'does not remember' is one of the most powerful re-creative ethical forces in existence . . . [bringing us] to the pure 'original state' again, Adam's state before the fall."[73] Forgiveness of sin is a must, for original sin, in all its depth and force, is destruction.[74] Wingren argues that Kierkegaard's analytical and existential philosophy supports "anthropological nihilism . . . [because] Christ is really [viewed as] an impediment to the natural manifestations of life."[75] This is not the Old Testament view of life, not that which is presented in Jesus' preaching.

The last chapter, "Return to Creation," is a very brief exhortation to all, Christians and non-Christians, to cooperate in solving common earthly problems. Wingren sees this as possible only if the church returns to creation, because social programs and worldly manifestos cannot "be justified theologically by the gospel, by the specific words about Christ which the church alone—not the world—acknowledges."[76] These programs can only be justified because they care for all men as those created by the Creator-God in his image.

CREATION: SUMMARY OF WINGREN'S CREATION-FAITH

It is impossible to *summarize* Wingren's creation-faith. To do so would require a work of considerably larger size than the present, touching on, in no particular order here, vocation, the two realms, conflict of God versus the devil, the first article, continual creation, cooperation of Christians and non-Christians, death and resurrection, the atonement, resurrection of the dead, eschatology, Word and Sacrament, ecclesiology, law and gospel, justification and sanctification, incarnation, the image of God, the unity of Scripture. All of these are woven together masterfully by Wingren in his confession of the doctrine of creation.[77] It is a daunting, yet simple, task that he sets before himself and us: to see all theology through God's creative act(s).

It is a daunting, yet simple, task that he sets before himself and us: to see all theology through God's creative act(s).

Wingren does a better job of summarizing all this than I ever could: "'Why is it so important to talk about creation?' First, creation means that God acts directly *in the world,* and that means for all men. Second, creation, which is in fact not a past but a present work of God, means that God can work where men are strong and vital—not only in weakness.[78] Third . . . the most important point . . . the doctrine that man is made whole in Christ *presupposes* that man is created by God and that forgiveness, redemption and liberation are here not being given to a stranger."[79]

"Vad är det? Svar:

Jag tror, att Gud har skapat mig och alla varelser, givit mig kropp och själ, ögon, öron och alla lemmar, förnuft och alla sinnen, och att han ännu håller det vid makt,därtill försörjer mig rikligen och dagligen med kläder och skor, mat och dryck, hus och hem, hustru och barn, åker, boskap, allt slags egendom, med allt vad jag behöver för att leva, samt beskärmar och bevarar mig från skada, farlighet och allt ont, och allt detta av sin blotta nåd och faderliga godhet utan någon min förtjanst eller värdighet, för vilket allt jag är skyldig att tacka och lova, lyda och tjana honom. Det är helt och hållet sant" (SC II,2). LOGIA

NOTES

1. Douglas Jay in *Creation and Gospel* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1979), Preface by Douglas Jay, Introduction by Henry Vander Goot, v.

2. "Den springande punkten," *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift,* Vol 15, No. 3, 101–107, 1974, 101, my translation ["punkten"]. In this study the following terms will often be used interchangeably: doctrine of creation, creation, creation-faith, first article, first article of faith, first article of the Creed, and the like.

3. "The Doctrine of Creation: Not an Appendix but the first Article," *Word and World: Theology for Christian Ministry, Vol 4, No. 4,* 356 ["Creation."] Note the present tense.

4. *The Flight from Creation* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1971), 10

5. Jay, vi.

6. See Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation* (Evansville: Ballast Press, 1994), xv.

7. Gustaf Wingren, *Creation and Law* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1961), v.

8. Sasse, 92.

9. Henry Vander Goot, "The Writings of Gustaf Wingren," *Creation and Gospel (*New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1979), 173–189.

10. My translation. Wingren later comments on this article: Marcion contended that "the God who reveals himself in Jesus Christ has nothing to do with the creation of the world—the physical, the material. It is an evil god, Demiurge, who is the source of our bodies. The same evil God is responsible for the holy book of the Jews, 'the Old Testament,' a disgusting book, filled with cruelties. As Irenaeus pursues his battle against Gnosticism, he is also, at the same time, saying 'Yes' to creation and the Old Testament" ("Creation," 356).

11. Here Wingren was to a great extent inspired and influenced by Einar Billing: 1871–1939; 1900–1908 associate professor, 1908 assistant professor, and 1909–1920 full professor at the University of Uppsala; 1920 Bishop of Västerås, as his father, Gottfrid Billing, was in the late 1800's. One of Billing's students at Uppsala was Gustaf Aulen. In 1913 Aulen began teaching at Lund; Anders Nygren was one of his students. Wingren studied under Nygren. Wingren called Billing "the most original of all Swedish systematic theologians of the twentieth century and the outstanding figure in Swedish church life even today" (*Flight*, 28). "Billing's theology from 1907 on became primarily a theology of the Old Testament" (*An Exodus Theology, Einar Billing and the Development of Modern Swedish Theology*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969. *An Exodus Theology*, 1–2), but one which peculiarly and basically ignored the doctrine of creation (Ibid., 154–160).

12. Translations of Swedish titles are mine.

13. *Flight*, 16–17.

14. Gustaf Wingren, "The Concept of Vocation—Its Basis and Its Problems" (*Lutheran World,* Vol. 15, No. 2, 1968), 87.

15. *Vocation*, 2.

16. Gustaf Wingren, *An Exodus Theology,* 124. Wingren considers this to be, perhaps, the most characteristic principle of his theological work.

17. "Concept," 94.

18. Ibid., 71.

19. *Vocation,* 1–77, 71, 24.

20. See *Vocation*, 1–3 for further explanation of terms related to "vocation."

21. *Flight*, 15. God has given us gifts of creation to use freely for our benefit. "[Luther:] 'Even though we are certain of God's providence and care for us, we must know that the things and means which God has placed in our hands are to be used, that we do not tempt God. . . .' He who turns to God in prayer for help. . . , without doing all he can with the help of the outward gifts God has given, is putting God to the test and cannot expect his prayer to be heard. When work does not avail, when one's strength no longer suffices, the time for prayer has come" (*Vocation*, 135). There is a paradox, though, for "not to turn to God in prayer for help in vocation, when all outward available possibilities are exhausted, is to blaspheme God and treat his promises as lies. It is desperation, unbelief" (Ibid., 136). The Swedish word *förtvivlan* has here been translated as "unbelief"; a better translation would be "hopelessness" or "despair."

22. Perhaps a poor choice of words. God does, after all, work mediately through, as Wingren said above (4), "intercourse between man and woman . . . , suckling one's young." (*Flight*, 17).

23. Gerhard O.Forde, "Creation and Law." Review in *dialog*, Vol. 1, 1962, 78.

24. *Flight*, 8.

25. "Concept," 87.

26. The first words of Wingren's *Creation and Gospel* are:"Creare est semper novum facere. Creation is continuously to make new. Martin Luther" (p. iii).

27. "Faith trusts that the mandate of a man's vocation leads to something good; behind all stations and offices stands the Creator, who is none other than the God of the gospel" (*Vocation*, 211).

28. Section II of *Vocation* is "God and the Devil," 78–161. Section III is "Man," 162–251.

29. *Vocation,* 171, 128–129, 160, 129.

30. "Concept," 95.

31. *Vocation,* 218, 219.

32. Terms related to "equity": moderation, fairness. "[Regarding]. . . ,fairness. . . , [Luther] has neither regard nor respect for a moralistic exactness bound to the letter, requiring fulfillment of the law in every jot and tittle. This moral preciseness is not concerned with realities, for it is concerned, not with one's neighbor, but only with a counterfeit irreproachableness which is counterfeit because there is no life without sin, and it ought not to be set up as the standard. The goal of action must be this: In the midst of a sinful world in which we inescapably participate, we must live to help our fellow-men and further their well-being. This is impossible by any other course than by taking our place between God and our neighbor and doing 'whatever comes to hand.' In our actual relation with God, one action is called for in one hour, another when the external setting has changed." Thus, doing all things in love towards neighbor and in faith towards God, we are free to write new decalogues. (Ibid., 95). Some have held that by "equity" Luther was referring to natural law. Others have maintained that equity is Christian morality. "It is impossible to draw a sharp line of distinction. Equity is something God demands . . . , but God demands it of Christians and non-Christians alike, for on earth there is no decisive difference between Christians and non-Christians. Where works and external behavior are concerned it is not merely difficult to make a sharp demarcation between Christians and non-Christians; it is erroneous" (Ibid., 151).

33. Ibid., 156–161.

34. "The devil impels his victim to misuse the external good, to the abusus of his office, of strength, of wealth, and of all of God's creation" (*Vocation*, 170).

35. "Concept," 89.

36. *Vocation*, 159.

37. "Concept," 89, 94.

38. *Vocation*, 153.

39. "Concept," 90.

40. *Vocation,* 30, 31, 251. Wingren asserts that "All the Lutheran concepts which we noted in our discussion of God's new creation are intimately connected with the idea of 'the time.' A summary reference to this is in order" (*Vocation*, 230). This helpful summary is contained in *Vocation,* 230–234.

41. 1947. *Man and the Incarnation*, Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1949. The book is properly subtitled "A Study in the Biblical Theology of Irenaeus."

42. Arnold E. Carlson, "Man and the Incarnation." Review in *The Lutheran Quarterly* (Vol. 13, No. 3, 1961), 283. For example, see

Wingren's fellow Swede, Söderblom, especially 23 ff.

43. The doctrine of creation also brackets the work. The first lines of the book: "Our best starting-point for a full understanding of the concept of God in Irenaeus is the sovereignty of God—the absolute power of the Creator" ("Man and the Incarnation," 1). The last lines of the book: "Creation and redemption are not completely different, and in the fulfillment of the act of Creation redemption is realized and life is present. . . . Christ means that God is man. By His becoming man the bond between God and man has been made unbreakable, and man has free access to the source from which his life flows. For God alone is the source of human life" (Ibid., 213).

44. My literal translation: *Preaching* or *The Sermon*. It was published in the United States as *The Living Word* in 1960 and, Wingren admits, "written in a mood of some arrogance and sometimes in anger" (*Flight*, 21).

45. Vander Goot in *Creation and Gospel*, xxvii.

46. *Flight*, 20.

47. As alluded to above, Wingren's four books *The Living Word*, *Theology in Conflict*, *Creation and Law*, and *Gospel and Church* constitute a series not directly on creation, but rather on Wingren's "understanding of law-gospel dialectic in opposition to such men as Barth, [Rudolf] Bultmann, [Oscar] Cullmann and his own teacher, Nygren" (Forde, 78). In my opinion, *Creation and Gospel* completes the series. As such, while these books are important works in Wingren's corpus and, as with nearly all his writings, touch on creation, an in-depth investigation of all of them is beyond the scope of the topic of this essay.

48. Ibid., 20.

49. "Punkten," 101, my translation.

50. *Word*, 13.

51. "It is my intention to repeat these basic theses as long as I can, for they have not yet achieved their purpose" (*Flight*, 24). As will be seen from hereon, Wingren's themes of creation remain basically the same. This is a sign of consistency of thought. However, it will mean repetition of Wingren and less of my own (what would be repetitive) explanation/summarizing.

52. *Flight*, 72–84, 85–95, 72, 78.

53. "All life is of God's creation: all life—since it is life—is contact with God" (*Word*, 81). But Wingren quotes Luther in order to make an important distinction: "'Yes, the natural life is part of the eternal life, a beginning of it, but it ends in death, because it does not know nor honour him from whom it comes. . . . those who believe and know him in whom they live die no more, but the natural life is continued in the eternal'" (*Word*, 86, footnote 3).

54. Ibid., 73, 93.

55. For example, see Arnold T. Ehrhardt, "Christianity and Law," *Scottish Journal of Theology,* Vol 15, 308–309.

56. Ibid., 74.

57. Ibid., 75, 76.

58. For more on Wingren's very physical sacramental theology, see "Justification By Faith In Protestant Thought" and *Word*, 150–163.

59. *Word*, 89.

60. Ibid., 80, 83, 88, 94. "Salvation is a deliverance to naturalness, to essentially worldly duties, already given to everyone in the creation but lost by rebellion against God" (Ibid., 21). "What is given in faith signifies the deliverance of man from his unnatural condition, his restoration to the estate in which he was created. For Luther, unbelief is *demonic*. It is not 'human' to doubt and 'paradoxical' to believe; on the contrary, where doubt arises, it is diabolical powers that strive for mastery in human life" (Ibid., 93). Also, as has been specifically mentioned and will be mentioned again, Wingren also ties creation to the sacraments. As Luther, Wingren is sacramental and, again, as such very comfortable with the physical of theology: "redemption includes the *whole* man" (*Word*, 150) and so there is a "strong bond between the sacraments and *the body*" (Ibid., 157). "Man who is created in the image of God, and who in the resurrection of the body shall become what he was destined by God to be . . . is sealed by baptism with death and resurrection—that is to say, with Christ's image . . . , with that image which is three things in one: the intention of creation, the future goal of the last day, and the fate that Jesus experienced in the ordinary, outward world of history" (Ibid., 154).

61. My literal translation: *The Question [Issue] of Theological Method*. Published in the United States as *Theology in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958.

62. Gustaf Wingren, *Creation and Law* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1961).

63. Gustaf Wingren, *Gospel and Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964).

64. See notes 6 and 32.

65. *Flight*, developed from a series of presentations at the Contemporary Theology Institute in Montreal in the late 1960's and early 1970's, has been used much throughout this paper. As such, this section will only seek to highlight material from the book which I have not yet touched upon directly. Some material will invariably be repeated. The book is short, but is an excellent review and summary of Wingren's work on the doctrine of creation.

66. *Flight,* 10, 80.

67. Ibid., 13–30, 18, 24–25.

68. Ibid., 33– 53.

69. "'Theology of orders [of creation]'" (Erwin L. Lueker, "The Flight from Creation," Review in *Concordia Theological Monthly, Vol. 43, No. 6, 1972,* 410).

70. *Flight,* 41. Wingren deals specifically with this in "Från ordningsteologi till revolutionsteologi" ("From Ordnungstheologie to Revolution-theology" [My translation]).

71. Not much of Logstrup's work is available in English. *The Ethical Demand* was published in 1971, which is a translation of the 1956 *Den etiske fording*. Logstrup also has sharp disagreements with Kierkegaard and wrote *Opgor med Kierkegaard* (*Argument against Kierkegaard*) in 1968.

72. *Flight,* 42, 49, 50.

73. Ibid., 57, 59, 67, 91, notes 4, 70, 71.

74. Logstrup is criticized here for his silence on the destruction of human life, the conflict between God and the devil.

75. Ibid., 63–64.

76. Ibid., 80. For a lively example, see 45–48.

77. Wingren's creation theology is of such magnitude and scope, that all of these subjects deserve more attention than that which they have received in this study. For summaries of Wingren's doctrine of creation, the reader is especially referred to: "Concept" (1968), specifically 92–95; "God's World and the Individual" (1975), specifically 53–57; and "Creation" (1984). Please also see the extensive bibliography. Only by reading Wingren's many writings through the years can one get a full appreciation of the depth and richness of his insight on the doctrine of creation.

78. Wingren affirmatively refers us to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Widerstand und Ergebung*, E. Behtge, ed., 6th edition, Munich, 1955, 232–236.

79. "God's World and the Individual" in *The Gospel as History, edited by Vilmos Vajta, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975,* 55).

Reviews

"It is not many books that make men learned . . . but it is a good book frequently read."
Martin Luther

Review Essay

Augustine and the Catechumenate. By William Harmless. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1995.

That I May Be His Own: An Overview of Luther's Catechisms. By Charles Arand. St. Louis: CPH, 2000.

Reading and learning of the ancient catechumenate can be a startling experience for a twenty-first century Lutheran. Much of the practice, exegesis, and premises of the fathers in bringing people to baptism is strange to our ears. Yet the very strangeness and exotic character of the patristic period is valuable to a Lutheran catechist or pastor who often operates with a set of inherited assumptions and categories that are rarely challenged. To step briefly into the world of the fourth or fifth century is to see the church, with the same Scriptures and sacraments, going about the task of instruction and initiation in radically different ways.

William Harmless in his book *Augustine and the Catechumenate* presents a fascinating glimpse into the catechumenate of the ancient church, especially that of Augustine. He ably leads the reader on a journey into novel territory. This journey should force one to view his own Lutheran catechetical material and methods with fresh eyes. Critically, this allows one to recognize accepted ideas and practices that are not essential or can even be inimical to sound Lutheran catechesis, and one may be able to adapt appropriate ancient models in their place. Nevertheless, exposure to the ancient catechumenate should also crystallize the distinctive elements of Lutheran catechesis that cannot and should not be discarded.

The Ancient Pattern of Catechesis

The early church did not hold to an entirely uniform system of catechesis and initiation. There were significant divergences due to time and geography. Harmless devotes his primary attention to Augustine and his practice in North Africa in the latter part of the fourth and early part of the fifth century. Nevertheless, he cannot ignore other models, and spends two chapters sketching the contours of earlier patterns and patterns of other locations. He identifies as noteworthy the earlier third-century figures of Hippolytus and Tertullian, the fourth-century eastern fathers Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Theodore of Mopsuetia, and the western bishop Ambrose. He then uses the remainder of his book to lay out in detail Augustine's method in Hippo. The survey of these practices makes clear that while considerable differences existed between the locations and persons mentioned, there emerges a coherent and recognizable pattern of third- and fourth-century catechetical practice. Our brief sketch of the pattern will rely on Augustine's version and will note significant diversions by others.

The evidence for Augustine's own practice must begin with the document *De catechizandibus rudibus,* a letter Augustine wrote encouraging a certain Deogratias in his catechetical task. Harmless points out that this short work is not a manual on catechesis in general, but contains advice specific to the first catechetical address to inquirers (108–109). The specific aim was the initial "sermon" preached to inquirers before they formally enrolled as catechumens. Immediately we are confronted with the first step in the catechumenate: the enrolling of the prospects into a formal class called catechumens. This had roots at least in the third century, where Hippolytus and Tertullian testify to a rigorous examination of lifestyle and morals before admittance into this class. For the post-Constantinian church, admission to this status had become much less painstaking on account of the great number of those seeking admittance to the church. The public acceptance and growth of the church had made this first step much less meticulous than previously, and the church compensated by making a sharper distinction between mere catechumens and those actually enrolled for baptism.

This next stage was termed that of "hearers" because the period was marked by the hearing of sermons and by participation in the liturgy of the word, but not in the eucharist. Of course, it was a universal custom of the early church to restrict the eucharist to those baptized: Harmless notes that Augustine was able to use the ignorance of the catechumens concerning the sacrament to good effect (170–171, 189–190). As the following survey of practice will indicate, the lifting of this restriction involved not mere baptism only, but in connection with it rigorous examination, instruction, and adherence by public confession to what was taught.

Augustine himself is an intriguing example of a hearer. He enrolled as a catechumen in Milan but delayed his approach to baptism. The remarkable thing about this period in the catechetical process was the lack of any special activity or learning for the catechumens. One might suspect from appearances that the church was ignoring them. But in fact it was the liturgy itself and the hearing of sermons that carried the weight of catechesis. The participation in the common life of word and prayer was a process

of formation, growth, and catechesis. Augustine's own experience as a catechumen testifies to the power of the sermon to move and form one as a catechumen, and he himself testifies to the effect of this period on his move to baptism (85–88).

Augustine's practice as bishop also gives evidence to the importance of this initial state of the catechumenate. His sermons addressed to the entire assembly were catechetical in the largest sense of the word. Not addressed strictly to the catechumens, they were nonetheless catechetical in that they aimed to lay out the heart of the Christian life and were sacramentally focused and liturgically based. Augustine thought of his preaching as table service, where he wanted to feed the word to hungry listeners: "From that which I feast on, that I feed you. I am a table servant, not the master of the house" (160). It is significant in itself that the early church catechized through preaching and liturgy. The liturgy, for Augustine and the fathers generally, was catechetical, but not in a pedantic manner. It was rather the life and breath of the church, the unconscious, assumed manner of churchly life.

> Augustine's classroom was his basilica; here the rhythms of education moved to the rhythms of the liturgy itself. Every gesture, every sign, every word mattered. . . . All these, Augustine insisted, held some import for how one believed, felt and acted (235).

The second phase of the catechumenate occurred in Lent when those called *competentes* or petitioners, those who had requested to be baptized, were specifically catechized and prepared for baptism. Here the general approach of the catechumen phase gave way to special instruction and attention to the candidates themselves. Augustine compared this time to being in the womb and, as there is labor and struggle in childbirth, so in coming to baptism the church along with the candidate goes through a period of exercise and work. This birth imagery tied the birth of baptism to its preparatory period and allowed Augustine to cast the Lenten disciplines as formation of the new man, as a human baby is formed in the womb (256–257, 268–270). Augustine also compared this phase to boot camp: "Lent was thus a sacred fitness program or boot camp. It trained one for a wrestling match with Satan or for a battle against the forces of darkness" (253)

The candidate was subjected to a series of penitential disciplines, scrutinies, exorcisms, and catechesis. Also there were all-night vigils, fastings, almsgiving, no bathing, no sexual relations. All of it indicated an inner change and repentant break with the old sinful way of life. This training of the flesh was a sign of repentance from an old way of life. The heart and body were viewed as a unity: to chasten the body was to repent in the heart (255). Catechesis itself focused on the texts of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer given to the candidates, who memorized and publicly "returned" them by recitation in the assembly. All of this special instruction was in addition to regular preaching and exhortation.

The final phase of catechesis began with the great Vigil of Saturday night and Easter morning and baptism within that celebration. The post-Easter catechesis began with a short sermon Sunday morning and a series of special gatherings and sermons through the Easter octave, wherein Augustine would explicate the sacraments of Baptism and Lord's Supper just experienced for the first time by the *competentes*. (Cyril of Jerusalem and Ambrose, like Augustine, held mystagogical catechesis only after instruction. Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuetia explained the rites of baptism before the candidates were baptized [69–71.]). Augustine did this in the context of the symbols of the liturgy and customs the baptized were experiencing, such as the sign of the cross, the white robes they wore all week, and the liturgy of the Eucharist they were participating in for the first time.

Then And Now: Lessons for Lutherans

The comparison of Lutheran practice with the ancient model will rely on the analysis of Charles Arand in *That I May Be His Own: An Overview of Luther's Catechisms*. The following page references are to this book.

When a Lutheran surveys the ancient pattern of catechesis, one basic difference between current Lutheran practice and the ancient church presents itself: the early church had a fixed process with traditional stages and practices but few fixed texts (the Creed and the Lord's Prayer), while the Lutheran church has a fixed text, the Small Catechism, and almost no fixed process. Indeed, one can say that in the early church the church year and liturgy were themselves the "text" for catechesis, including the biblical texts read and proclaimed. This church year and liturgical structure furnished the map that guided catechesis. For Lutherans the map is the Small Catechism, which provides the content and structure to catechesis.

All Lutherans will agree that the book of catechesis is the Small Catechism. But how to teach catechumens varies widely with time, place, and conviction. It is helpful therefore to look at the pattern of ancient catechesis with an eye to the process and how that process might speak to Lutheran catechetical methods.

The strengths in the ancient approach applicable to Lutheran catechesis begin with the assumption that catechesis occurs in the context of the liturgy. All catechesis occurred within the setting of worship, whether in the Divine Service or a special session of the catechumens. Here we are dealing the issue of context, the setting in which instruction takes place.

Lutherans have a text, the catechism. The question is, Where and how ought instruction in the catechism take place? The answer of the early church—the liturgy—is a helpful one for several reasons. First, the Small Catechism lends itself in its order and structure to such a context. In fact, Arand notes that the early Reformers made strong use of the liturgy in disseminating the catechism through Matins, Vespers, the Sunday mass, and weekday sermons (76–78).

Luther constructed his catechism with a blueprint of sin and confession, word and prayer, gospel and sacraments, the very building blocks of the Divine Service and other prayer services. To set catechesis within this context anchors the catechism within the ongoing life of the church to which catechumens are being introduced.

A unique aspect of Lutheran liturgical catechesis is the catechetical hymn. Arand notes that such songs were "one of the more effective means by which to teach the Catechism" (79). One contributing factor to the oft-noted syndrome that confirmation in the church leads to graduation from the church is divorce of catechesis from the liturgy. If catechesis is completely a classroom affair, then the connection between living in the church and par-

ticipation in the church's life will not be readily apparent. Here the early church teaches us well.

A second lesson from the early church was the use of the sermon as the delivery method of catechesis. As in the use of the liturgy, the unconscious practice of the ancient church connected form with content. If the sermon was the normal way that the church was instructed and fed on God's word, then the sermon was naturally the vehicle for catechesis. Early Lutheranism largely operated in this manner too (55–78). The sermon as catechesis reflects the oral character of instruction assumed in both the early church and early Lutheranism. Using the sermon as the vehicle for catechesis means that sermons in general must be catechetical in aim and focus. The long period of the catechumenate in which hearers simply came to the liturgy of the word and were catechized by the regular Sunday sermon is very instructive for Lutheran practice. It implies a catechetical view of the entire Christian life: all Christians are catechumens, and sermons must over and over again address Christians in the rudiments of the gospel. Indeed, Luther and the reformers set up a program of quarterly catechetical sermon series where the catechism was preached in one quarter of the year.

When we speak of sermons as catechetical technique, we are also pointing to the particular catechesis reserved for catechumens. The sermon addressed in a liturgical assembly is a valuable model. Lutheranism with its fixed text is tempted to carry that text into places and methods foreign to its self-understanding. Other frameworks (the classroom, academic structures, relational models) that are used, carry a message that is strange to the catechism itself. The catechism wishes to place the catechumen into the life of the church, where God speaks forgiveness to sinners and from where Christians are sent out to serve neighbor in their vocations. Arand writes that "the structure of the first three parts is held in view, and together they instill into the Christian a Law/Gospel, Trinitarian view of life in this world" (141). The sermon fits directly into that understanding as the regular way in which God's word is spoken, proclaimed, and given to the baptized. Catechesis that is sermonic in character includes not only information, but also inculcates a way of being and remaining a Christian, a way of hearing and appropriating God's word.

A third strength in the ancients' use of the sermon in catechesis is the interplay between liturgy and sermon. Augustine's preaching was filled with references to and explanations of liturgical practice. In this he, as all the fathers, assumed that the liturgy had meaning, that the symbols and actions of the liturgy were filled with content and actually did something to and for the participants. These liturgical actions Augustine correlated with the scriptural images and stories of his sermons so that the sermon was part of and flowed out of the liturgy and involved the hearers at the level of their experience as well as knowledge.

This liturgical preaching is helpful for Lutheran catechetical practice, where the temptation is to treat the catechism as a textbook. The default model for much catechesis is academic. The Small Catechism becomes the textbook in a classroom, where the catechumens are students and the catechist is a teacher. To place catechesis within the sermon and the sermon within the liturgy puts the catechism directly within the sacramental life of the congregation and thus pulls the catechumen into that same life. Catechesis is seen then by both catechist and catechumen as an ongoing part of liturgical life, and not as merely a class or course that one finishes.

As much strength and good as there is to be gained from the ancient catechumenate, there are also weaknesses when looked at from a Lutheran perspective. The first is the most substantial and might be summarized as a bias towards adult baptism. The first component of this concern is theological and not practical in nature. While the practice of infant baptism no doubt existed and was practiced with conviction in the early church, the catechetical model focused on adult conversion. In the early centuries, adult baptism was the norm for the church in a pagan society, and so the catechesis that developed was geared in that direction. What grew out of this was a long season of preparation for baptism, an emphasis on the sanctity and enormity of baptism, and the change in lifestyle and morals when a person is converted through baptism. The Lenten disciplines emphasized training and grooming one's body, mind, and spirit for baptism.

When Lutherans consider this part of the ancient pattern, such an emphasis on the training to "attain to" holy baptism strikes discordant notes within the symphony of God's gracious actions in and through baptism. Arand rightly notes that the catechism 's way of life is "the art of living by faith" in God's gracious actions for us (150). The gift-character of baptism is most strikingly apparent in the baptism of an infant. Baptism is wholly and fully the gift of a gracious God to a fallen, dead humanity, and the heavy exercises of the early church could easily obscure this quality of the Sacrament. For Lutherans the baptism of an adult or child is God's work, not ours. We can in no way attain to anything in baptism, but rather receive the gift. Now, a rigorous preparation is not ipso facto out of order. But such preparation must be of those seeking in baptism God's free and gracious gift of Christ's life and death.

The other difficulties with the ancient pattern's preoccupation with adult conversion are more practical in nature. Any appropriation of the pattern in today's church must deal with the fact that the majority of baptisms are infant baptisms and instruction is delayed to an older age. It is true that in today's increasingly pagan culture adult baptisms are more and more common. Yet the average pastor or catechist is engaged in much more post-baptismal catechesis than pre-baptismal, and so large-scale adaptations must be made to the model. The use of the fathers' method must become more general in the case of post-baptismal instruction and by necessity less focused on the Easter vigil moment itself. Rather, it should concentrate more on baptismal recollection and remembrance: yearly (in the church year), weekly (through Confession and Absolution and the Divine Service), and daily (through renouncing Satan and sin).

One practical way that the pattern could be adapted would be to use the Lenten period as a time of more intense study and prayer with the catechumens or confirmation class and to focus attention on the Easter Vigil as a time of baptismal remembrance in the midst of preparation for confirmation and reception of the Lord's Supper. One difficulty in present practice as opposed to ancient is that the ancient model focused primarily on baptism and eucharistic participation as the goal or outcome of catechesis. Present-day practice of catechesis is left with the Lord's Supper (and confirmation) as the goal. The inclusion of the Easter Vigil as a baptismal remembrance might help to restore baptism as part of the very substance of cate-

chetical training. Another method of overcoming this difficulty is to help pastors to view catechesis as an ongoing, lifelong task and not a process culminating in confirmation.

Another difficulty or adaptation that must be held in mind is the fixed nature of Lutheran curriculum. The Lutheran Church has a fixed text, the Small Catechism. This Small Catechism has an order and a dynamic that are theologically significant. Luther's catechetical outline and pattern of Christian life is part of the catechesis itself. Arand devotes an entire chapter to this question of the structure of the catechism and concludes that the order of the parts is theologically significant: "Clearly, Luther's explanation of his arrangement of the Catechism's texts reflects his theology on the importance of the distinction between Law and Gospel" (132). This pattern of life (law-gospel and prayer-vocation) must itself shape the catechetical method. The ancient method was keyed to the pattern of the church year, centered on baptism at the Easter Vigil. The parts of catechesis found their place around this center.

Catechesis in the Lutheran Church must first accord itself with the text of the catechism and the law-gospel dynamic found there, and second should accord itself to the church year. That is, catechesis starts with the Ten Commandments because the scriptural Lutheran understanding of sin demands that we begin our life with God in confession and repentance and that God answers our sin in the gospel (as confessed in the Creed). This is not to say that the liturgical year and the liturgical pattern of the church are not valuable. There are many suggestive points of contact between the pattern of the ancient church keyed to the Easter Vigil and the Small Catechism. One possible point of contact between the liturgical year and the catechism is the Ten Commandments and the Office of the Keys and Confession dovetailing with the renunciation of Satan and the entire season of Lent. There are more ties that can be made. But always Lutheran catechesis is oriented to the catechism, yet in such a way that it draws catechumens into the life outlined by the catechism. The liturgy is necessarily part of this life, but catechism must always remain the primary tool of catechetics.

A third potential area of danger also promises benefits. The ancient baptismal model made rich sermonic and catechetical use of symbols, rites, and procedures that were used to teach on the Christian life. The fathers' use and claims for these symbols and non-biblical rites were often extravagant and beyond the pale of Lutheran theology. Therefore the Lutheran appropriation of such rites and symbols must be provisional. The sacraments are dominical rites and stand on God's promise and command, and as such outshine any human ornament and decoration placed around them. Heavy use of symbolical actions such as anointing, candles, robes, and others has the danger of obscuring the actions of God in the sacraments. This does not mean the Lutheran baptismal or eucharistic rites must be shorn of all "extras." The methods of the fathers suggest to us that such expressive and meaningful rites be used in an evangelical context to extol and uphold the great gospel character of the sacraments themselves.

Conclusion

Lutherans have a historical awareness that is properly two-footed. One foot steps firmly in the sixteenth century and is grounded in the Confessions and the mindset of Luther and the orthodox Lutheran dogmaticians. Yet these very witnesses point us to the second foot, which lands on the turf of the early church, the traditions and liturgies that form a constant in the ongoing life of the church. We lose our balance when one foot is not utilized; we develop a limp in our present-day practice through neglect of our roots. Reading *Augustine and the Catechumenate* in tandem with a book such as *That I May Be His Own* helps us to regain our equilibrium and face our present task of catechesis with vigor and strength, drawing on the full range of tools available to us.

Paul Gregory Alms
Redeemer Lutheran Church
Catawba, North Carolina

Interpreting the Old Testament: A Guide for Exegesis. Edited by Craig C. Broyles. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001. Paper. 272 pages.

Craig C. Broyles and seven other evangelical scholars present in this book a series of nine essays written to give readers both a concise summary of various aspects of Old Testament exegesis, as well as to point them toward more exhaustive resources. As Broyles states in the Preface,

> This is not a book on the contents (the "what") of the Old Testament. Nor is it a book preoccupied with methodology. Rather, it offers observations on the Bible, points us back to resources to enhance study, and raises questions that help unlock the Bible's richness and depth (8).

The chapters are divided into the following subject areas: Interpreting the Old Testament: Principles and Steps; Language and Text of the Old Testament; Reading the Old Testament as Literature; Old Testament History and Sociology; Traditions, Intertextuality, and Canon; The History of Religion, Biblical Theology, and Exegesis; Ancient Near Eastern Studies; Compositional History: Source, Form, and Redaction; and Theology and the Old Testament. Each of them assumes only rudimentary knowledge of the subject by the reader; thus the text is accessible to the college or beginning seminary student. A distinct advantage of the book is the incorporation of more recent hermeneutical methods in its chapter on the Old Testament as literature (3). Because of the vast literature spawned by these subjects, most of the chapters read more like expanded entries in a biblical dictionary than comprehensive essays. This is not necessarily a negative evaluation, just a caveat to the potential reader that he should plan, in many instances, on getting only a thumbnail sketch of the various aspects of a given topic. For example, in the area of ancient Near Eastern studies (chapter 7), the author is constrained to provide what amounts to an annotated bibliography.

The final chapter, "Theology and the Old Testament" by Jonathan Wilson, is an attempt to bridge the gap between biblical studies and theology. In particular, Wilson is rightly disturbed by what he terms the "relay method" of biblical interpretation, whereby the biblical scholars (read "the academy") run the first leg of the race as they determine what the text meant, then pass on the baton to the theologians (read "the church"), who determine what the

text means in the life of God's people today. In place of this bifurcation of the "what-it-meant" crowd from the "what-it-means" crowd, Wilson proposes a closer integration of the two, with each of the groups constantly "meddling" in one another's work (256).

As a first step toward that goal, Wilson urges the rejection of the "what-it-meant" and "what-it-means" paradigm for a "this is that" approach. By "this is that" he means that to interpret the Old Testament rightly one must enter that world by the appropriation of its texts; one must be so transformed by this biblical world that it becomes the hermeneutic of reality. One must take the "this" of the present world and sink it into the "that" of the biblical world, so that the same God is seen to work the same way today as he always has.

One might put Wilson's proposal another way: the Scriptures we call the Old Testament are the living voice of the church's Messiah. The fundamental creed of the church is that Jesus is Yahweh. Thus, where Yahweh speaks or acts in the OT, he speaks and acts according to his own identity, which is to say, he does so christologically. He who is the same yesterday, today, and forever renders true the "this is that" hermeneutic. Because "this" Christ is "that" Yahweh, the Old Testament is never old, but always new; indeed, always eschatological, for it points beyond itself to the consummation of all things in Yahweh enfleshed and enthroned as the New Adam and New David. The church that fails to recognize the Old Testament as her Scriptures (and her Scriptures alone) not only impoverishes herself; she denies her God.

As to whether Wilson's proposal of a "this is that" approach will heal the now-ancient wound between the academy and the church remains to be seen. This reviewer, for one, is doubtful. But the basic hermeneutical shift that Wilson proposes remains an ideal toward which we do well to strive.

Chad L. Bird
Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, Indiana

The Shape of Sola Scriptura. By Keith A. Mathison. Moscow, Idaho: Canon Press, 2001. 364 pages.

Some years ago, the present reviewer, whose upbringing had been in evangelical denominations, undertook seriously to consider the claims of Eastern Orthodoxy as well as those of the Lutheran Church. Orthodoxy's claims to catholicity and apostolicity contrasted dramatically with the contending varieties of American evangelical Protestantism and with the readiness of many in those same churches to shrug off differences of interpretation as unimportant, provided one had a saving relationship with Christ.

Of great value to the reviewer in his recognition of the Lutheran Church as catholic and evangelical was the following passage, especially the italicized portion, from pages 208–2099 of volume one of Chemnitz's *Examination of the Council of Trent:*

> This also is certain, that no one should rely on his own wisdom in the interpretation of the Scripture, not even in the clear passages, for it is clearly written in 2 Peter 1:20: "The Scripture is not a matter of private interpretation." And whoever twists the Holy Scripture so that it is understood according to his preconceived opinions does this to his own destruction (2 Peter 3:16). The best reader of the Scripture, according to Hilary, is one who does not bring the understanding of what is said to the Scripture but who carries it away from the Scripture. We also gratefully and reverently use the labors of the fathers who by their commentaries have profitably clarified many passages of the Scripture. *And we confess that we are greatly confirmed by the testimonies of the ancient church in the true and sound understanding of the Scripture. Nor do we approve of it if someone invents for himself a meaning which conflicts with all antiquity, and for which there are clearly no testimonies of the church.*

Mathison should have cited this great passage in *The Shape of Sola Scriptura,* where he argues that just as we are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is not alone, but rather produces good works and spiritual fruit, so the Reformation doctrine of *Sola Scriptura* means that "our final authority is Scripture alone, but not a Scripture that is alone." Scripture, the infallible and inerrant word of God, is "the supreme normative standard [but] Scripture does not exist in a vacuum. It was and is given to the Church within the doctrinal context of the apostolic gospel" (259), which is expressed in the *regula fidei,* the rule of faith. This rule of faith may be seen in the writings of Irenaeus and other fathers, and is expressed in the creeds, and, moreover, was a means whereby the Holy Spirit guided the church in the listing of certain books as the canon of the New Testament. "In the final analysis, Scripture, the Church, and tradition (understood as the rule of faith) cannot be separated, but their unique attributes and functions can and must be distinguished" (232–233). This doctrine, using a term from the writings of Heiko Oberman, Mathison calls Tradition I. He argues that it was the stance of the early fathers and the ancient church, and was the doctrine of Luther and Calvin. The church recognizes the authority of the canonical Scriptures, but does not confer authority on the canon (265). "The Church [and not the Bible somehow by itself] is the instrument through which God makes the truth of His Word known." Hence, outside the church—the *visible* church—there is no salvation (268).

Over against Tradition I are, on the one hand, Tradition II (the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox doctrine that unwritten traditions are a source of supplementary revelation parallel to Scripture) and Tradition III (the Roman Catholic doctrine that the present magisterium and the papacy are, in fact, the source of revelation)—and, on the other hand, Tradition 0, the prevalent American Protestant view, which disdains creeds and recognizes no authority in the church for what is to be believed, requiring instead the (chimera of) the individual approaching the Bible with a completely open mind, thus supposedly enabling the Holy Spirit to illuminate him. Mathison does a good job especially of critiquing the Roman Catholic views and "Tradition 0." (His material specifically addressed to Orthodox claims is good, but relatively less developed.)

Commendable is the author's extensive use of Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and evangelical polemical-apologetic materials, and his firm but not hectoring critique of them. He is obviously much

more conversant with Reformed than Lutheran sources, but Lutheran pastors should be able to supplement his deficiencies on their own if they use Mathison's book for their personal study or for an adult class. Mathison states that his purpose was, first, to provide an accurate historical survey showing the development of departures from the church's original adherence to Tradition 1, and to show that the Reformation was a recovery of Tradition 1; and, second, to "outline a consistent doctrine of the authority of Scripture," which he does by examining what Scripture states about itself and about the church, and by showing how the "Traditions" other than Tradition 1 violate Biblical doctrine and are unworkable.

It seems to this reviewer that Mathison has succeeded in realizing his intention for the book. There is a fair amount of redundancy, which would be a good thing if a pastor wanted to duplicate and distribute copies of a chapter for use in a discussion group. The book comes with an endorsement from Charles P. Arand, Chairman of the Department of Systematic Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

Dale Nelson
Mayville State University, North Dakota.

The Westminster Handbook to Reformed Theology. Edited by Donald K. McKim. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001. 243 pages.

The concept of this handbook is exciting in that we have a resource in dictionary form to give us an overview of the theology of the Calvinistic heritage from articles on Accommodation to Worship. Looking through the contributors immediately gave me a clue that this book offers a wide range of Reformed beliefs from various denominations and practices. True to the Reformed struggle, there are articles on the numerous geographical confessions and creeds that allow the reader to see the diversity within these groups. One comment about the article on the "Brief Statement of Faith" from 1991 helps set the background of a number of these contributors. This "creed" contains statements about gender-inclusive language, nuclear holocaust, ecological assault, and woman's ordination. Jack Stotts says: "Only as the Brief Statement lives its way into the church's life through these and other methods will it play an identity-forming and identity-reforming role in the church and thus be truly a Reformed creed" (17–18).

After seeing such statements I began to read with a more critical eye and saw politically correct references to "humankind." I also noticed that, out of the 172 or so articles, Peter Toon wrote six of them, and all are devoted to important theological doctrines (Ascension, Christology, Hyper-Calvinsim, Ministry, Priesthood of Believers, Regeneration). In contrast, from what I would consider the conservative (truly Reformed) wing of the faith in the tradition of Westminster Seminary are only token articles. Stotts's statement reflects a notable number of contributors who seem to think that it is important for the church to be "confessing its faith anew upon occasion of moment" (17). This is consistent with his article on the church (33) where, in speaking of the phrase *Ecclesia reformata semper reformada*, he says,

> One should note that the subject of the reform of the church is not the church. The church is the object of reform—it is "always being reformed." The agent of legitimate reform is the Holy Spirit. It is the dynamic element of the Spirit's work that emboldens the church to be open to and to seek new forms of discipline, including new confessions of faith (37).

This seems to be true to form. While claiming to be "catholic" in faith but "anti-Catholic" in fact, the Reformed rejected Luther's attempt at reform of the Catholic Church. They also rejected Luther's effort to curb abuse and heresy through the catholic symbols in the Book of Concord. The Reformed then developed numerous regional "confessions." As Jack Rogers notes in his article on creeds and confessions, "Reformed communities produced at least fifty confessional documents of some substance within their first fifty years of existence" (51). Of Lutherans, however, he notes: "The Lutherans will interpret the Augsburg Confession (1530) but refuse to change or supplement it" (50). Point proven. Welcome to my neighborhood, Mr. Rogers! This is one reason among others why I changed to Lutheranism. To me, I was coming back to what I call the "Ongoing Catholic Church." Luther's creedal battle and statement was for the reform of the Catholic Church, not a regional squabble. It is unfortunate that we are called Lutherans. I suggest we call ourselves the "Truly Catholic Church" or the "Ongoing Catholic Church."

Not a few articles reference Barth, of course. Concerning Christology Toon says, "the best modern presentation is undoubtedly that of Karl Barth, whose great commitment to the Bible as the witness to God's revelation ensures a more biblical presentation than the classic statements of the fifth and sixth centuries" (33). Ouch! In his article on creation, Robert Palma writes of Barth, "Beginning with Calvin and the HC [Heidelberg Catechism] and culminating in Barth, God the Creator is believed to be our Father because of Christ the Son who is also the Creator" (48). Richard Muller's article on justification ends with Karl Barth as the final word. Barth is obviously the pinnacle of Reformed thought in this volume. Interestingly enough, I was taught at Westminster Seminary that Barth was not the final word. Go figure!

Other articles were also disappointing but not surprising to me. Lukas Vischer writes in his article on Ecumenism, "In a certain sense, the ecumenical movement is the fulfillment of the deepest intention of the Reformation" (65). I personally do not think the Reformers intended to produce an ecumenical movement at the expense of solid biblical doctrine like our current environment today. If that were the case, we would all still be under the papacy. This present movement is drifting right back under that papal umbrella of Rome, as witnessed by the numerous denominations flirting, dancing, and teasing one another in the courtyard of the Vatican.

Concerning social ethics Charles West laments the loss of power to enforce economic ethics and then remarks, "The twentieth century witnessed a recovery from this failure, in the form of an ecumenical economic ethic to which the Reformed tradition has made substantial contribution" (71). West is speaking about the social gospel movement. Another predicable inclusion is an article on Feminist Theologies by Letty Russell, who explains, "The process is

also critical, since it seeks to test the authority and the tradition of the church and reinterpret biblical tradition in the light of the experience of women and all people struggling to be free." For Ms. Russell and, I suppose, all feminists, this method of theology begins with "the experience of those struggling against oppression" as opposed to the "Reformed tradition that begins with God's revelation" (83). Can you hear Calvin rolling over in his grave yet?

Overall, despite my criticisms, the book contains a number of good articles that do explain the Reformed view of essential points of doctrine. Hence the book is well worth having at your fingertips as a reference. There are a few things I would have liked to have seen in this "Handbook" that should have gotten some space. What happened to the Reconstructionist Movement? There is no mention of Cornelius Van Til that I could find, even under Apologetics. Van Til took Barth to task and put his theology to bed. But, seeing there is a heavy emphasis on the Neo-Orthodox branch of the Reformed faith, I am not surprised. It would have been nice to have someone explain the Reformed concept of the "means of grace" in depth. Lutherans too use these words but have a different perspective. That is a critical juncture for us that should have been explored.

Westminster John Knox Press has done the academic world a service in producing this volume. I lament that it is obviously slanted toward the left of center in a number of articles. We Lutherans have no room to gripe, however. If this publisher were to come to the Lutherans and ask for the same type of handbook, they would naturally gravitate toward the ELCA and get more of the same in our handbook with a dash of writers from the conservative LCMS seminaries just to make it "fair." This is a must to have on your shelves as a good reference to see how we are all drifting away from our Reformation roots and jelling into an ecumenical conglomerate of politically correct, socially conscious, "continually reforming" group of compromising theologians. I look forward to other such volumes.

LeRoy Leach
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Church and Ministry Today: Three Confessional Lutheran Essays. Edited by John Maxfield. The Luther Academy: St. Louis, Missouri. 2001. 215 pages.

Thank you to the Luther Academy for making available in one volume three significant essays for the Lutheran Church. The essays are significant because the authors deal substantively with issues facing the Lutheran Church today: the Church Growth Movement (Marquart), gender and the public ministry (Weinrich), and the doctrine of the call into the ministry of the word (Preus).

Church Growth as Mission Paradigm: A Confessional Lutheran Assessment, by Professor Kurt Marquart, is a clear exposure of the theological structure of the Church Growth Movement. This reviewer had read and reread this monograph when it was first published in 1991. It has lost none of its force a decade later. Sadly, despite the evidence amassed against the Church Growth Movement by Marquart in his Lutheran theological assessment, it remains a remarkably resilient force within the Lutheran Church. While faithful pastors and people within the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are fighting an open war against this movement, they are not alone. This movement, like the charismatic movement, is not limited to one or two Lutheran church bodies. It is ubiquitous. Its effects can be found from conservative Lutheran synods to liberal ones.

Why is this movement so resilient? Because no one wants to be viewed as being against mission work. Professor Marquart certainly is not against it. He offers wonderful suggestions for such work within a congregation (see page 153 and following). But the Church Growth Movement takes the pious desire for reaching the lost through the preaching of the gospel and turns it into what amounts to an "anything-goes" outreach program. Therefore, to be critical of the Church Growth Movement means that one is critical of reaching lost souls.

Thankfully, Marquart is immune from that criticism, and rightly points out the theological flaws of the movement. It is not a style that can be filled with the proper Lutheran substance; rather, it comes with a substance all its own, a substance at odds with the gospel.

> Robert Koester is quite right in arguing that Church Growth is a fruit of Reformed theology, and of its Arminian branch—by far the larger today—at that. Instead of relying on the means of grace, the CGM bedazzles susceptible clergy and church (and especially bureaucrats!) with flowcharts, "diagnostic" numbers-crunching, and scientific-sounding jargon. Mixed with the familiar mission-exhortations of popular Protestantism, this salvation-technology entices the pietist/pragmatist mindset with its promise of a down-to-earth, "do-able" science of religious engineering, which, if only we get it right, will produce growth (66).

Marquart's essay remains required reading for those who desire to learn about the Church Growth Movement's impact within Lutheranism. It provides a detailed Lutheran critique, and at the same time emphasizes the real treasures of the Lutheran Church for the preaching of the gospel to lost souls.

Dr. Weinrich's ""It is Not Given to Women to Teach:' A Lex in Search of a Ratio" is the last of the three essays in this book. He states the problem thus:

> [W]e are faced with an entirely new and wholly frontal assault upon the common and traditional practice of the church not to ordain women to the public office of the Word and Sacrament.
>
> . . . the simple appeal to Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy are not sufficient anymore adequately to ground our present practice. . . . I firmly believe they do apply. However, in the contemporary context, the appeal to these three Pauline passages is countered by a host of arguments which intend to void those passages of present authority (178–179).

He proposes to provide a rationale for understanding why Paul "*had* to answer the way he did" (emphasis original): "We seek after

the organic, that is, the theological foundations which lie at the bottom of the Pauline prohibitions and which therefore give shape, form, and content to the Pauline prohibitions" (182).

As is the case with Marquart's study, so also Weinrich's is timely. In a day when women in the public ministry are taken for granted in WELS, ELCA, LCMS, and some in the ELS, to say nothing of worldwide Lutheranism, this study forces the reader to go beyond the prohibitions and consider the "why" of the incarnation of the Son of God in *male* form.

> It is not to be overlooked, let alone denigrated, that when the Scriptures speak of God or of those who represent Him to the people of God, it does so [*sic*] predominately through masculine imagery. And similarly, it is not to be overlooked that when the Scriptures speak of the people of God and their relation to God, it does so [*sic*] predominately by means of feminine imagery. And here, with our specific purpose in mind, we reiterate the fact that those figures, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, who serve as fundamental representatives or types of the redemptive purposes of God in Christ are male figures (194).

The sloppy (or, to borrow from Professor Marquart, "squishy") language of public ministry in the Lutheran Church over the past decades is taking its toll. The variety of public ministries in which both men and women serve in both liberal and conservative Lutheranism is mind-boggling. It shows no signs of decreasing. But how to make the distinctions clear and precise? How can there be a female ELCA pastor in the public ministry and right next door a WELS (or LCMS) female teacher also in "public ministry," and there not be confusion in the minds of many? What are the distinctions?

Dr. Weinrich does not provide all the answers. He does provide an important step in the thinking process through which the Lutheran Church must go if she desires to remain faithful to the word of God.

The late Dr. Robert Preus's monograph "The Doctrine of the Call in the Confessions and Lutheran Orthodoxy" begins this collection of three essays. Dr. Preus had earlier demonstrated his expertise in this period of church history in his volumes on post-Reformation Lutheranism in the age of Orthodoxy. Now he brings this to bear particularly on the subject of the call into the public ministry of the word: Augsburg Confession Article XIV.

This quotation provides a starting point for understanding the distinctions Dr. Preus provides in this essay:

> Of course, the universal priesthood and every individual priest has the ministry of Word and Sacrament, and the whole church has the right to call public ministers of the Word. But the office and station of each individual is not the office of the ministry in the sense in which it is used in AC XIV and throughout the history of the Lutheran Church (40).

This is not an essay that denigrates the multitude of Christian service that occurs in congregations and synod. Rather, it is an essay that seeks to return the Lutheran Church to the foundation of Scriptures that the Lutheran Confessions exhibit in regard specifically to the office of the public ministry. Scripture and the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church teach that there is a divine "call" into this ministry, and that there is a divinely mandated office. (A useful study would be to compare the way in which passages like Romans 10, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4 are used today in comparison to what the Lutheran confessions and later Lutheran dogmaticians used these passages to support.)

> The author, the *causa efficiens,* of the call is God. He is the only subject of the action. It is His call, His office to which He calls, His saving Word to which the minister is called to preach, His Word of salvation for Christ's sake (5).
>
> There is in the Confessions a precise correlation between the means of grace which create and sustain the church, the marks of the church which denote the church, and the office of the ministry which serves the church. In every case, we are speaking of the preaching of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments. This is the office (*officium, Amt, functio, usus, opus*; AC XXVIII.85, 87; SA III.X.2), this and nothing else (15).

Preus provides a summary of the terms and titles used for the public ministry (10–14). He makes the important point that regardless of the title or term, the Lutheran confessions do not recognize a divinely instituted ranking.

> But any distinction between bishop, elder, and pastor is only by human right, and when bishops become tyrannical or enemies of the Gospel, the church—the term is used in the singular and plural—has the right to call, elect, and ordain ministers, and the ordination by another pastor is valid "by divine right" (11).
>
> The Confessions do not recognize ranks (*status*) by divine right among ministers, as was taught and practiced in the Roman church. . . . All pastors and bishops are equal according to divine right (SA II.iv.9; Tr. 61, 62). What authority they possess, then, is by human right (18).

"Conservative" Lutherans who claim that women are in the one office of the public ministry (for example, Christian day school teachers), need to address this issue of ranking within the ministry. Is there not a ranking within the ministry when some in the ministry are by definition not to have authority over others in the ministry? After all, the prohibition is divine, not human.

> The call should *always* result in ordination, and never, ever should one be ordained without a call. Although the Confessions are silent on the matter, Luther and all the dogmaticians without exception say that women can and shall not be ministers of the Word and therefore should not be called into such an office (32).

The footnote at this point refers to Calov:

> Calov, in *Systema Locorum Theologicorum* (VIII: 309), maintains that the sacred ministry, being a "status ordained by

> God" of "called men," called to proclaim the Word of God and will of God and administer the sacraments to the glory of God and the salvation of human beings, is simply not open to women (1 Cor 14:34; 1 Tm 2:12) (32, note 59).

Preus addresses the issues of retirement and removal from the ministry. (This is not the place for a history of Preus' own "retirement" from the office of president of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, but certainly his own experience could not help but motivate him to examine this issue carefully!) "Like God's call to be saints and priests, the call to this special office is for life: 'as long as you live,' Luther says" (34).

> Concerning this matter [of removal from office], Gerhard warns, "We should never allow the rashness of the people or the arbitrary will of those in power to remove a minister from his position and throw him into exile without the recognition of a legitimate cause and the examination of the same. Such acknowledgment of cause pertains to the whole church" (36).

The Doctrine of the Call in the Lutheran Confessions and Lutheran Orthodoxy provides the church today with much to ponder and apply. The words of Preus, this great teacher of the twentieth-century Lutheran Church, deserve to be read and studied as we face the continued pressures from feminism, church growthism, ecumenism, and the like, to conform the office of the public ministry to the dreams and opinions of men and women.

> O keep us in Thy Word, we pray;
> The guile and rage of Satan stay!
> O may Thy mercy never cease!
> Give concord, patience, courage, peace.
> (*Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*, #511: 4)

Thomas L. Rank
Scarville Synod Lutheran Church
Center Lutheran Church
Scarville, Iowa

Briefly Noted

The Old Religion in a New World: The History of North American Christianity. By Mark A. Noll. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

Noll, a noted historian of American Evangelicalism, provides an account of how churches with European roots were transplanted in North America and transformed in the process. Six major periods are treated: (1) Colonization, 1492–1730; (2) The churches become American, 1730–1830; (3) The high tide of Protestantism, 1830–1865; (4) A new Christian pluralism, 1865–1906; (5) Divisions, renewal, fragmentation, acculturation, 1906–1960; (6) The recent past, 1960–2000. In addition, Noll deals with the history of Christianity in Mexico and Canada, the place of theology in North America, and grassroots Christian spirituality. Lutheran readers will find Noll's assessment of the struggle between confessionalism and American Lutheranism provocative:

> Very different interpretations of the transition from Schmucker to Krauth and Walther are possible. When one considers the contributions Lutherans might have made to American religion more generally, this reversal was unfortunate. Because it took place, Lutherans lost influence among the public at large, promoted a parochial spirit, strengthened their dependency on the memory of Europe, and rejected the lessons of an active, hundred-year tradition of negotiating a livable compromise between Old World traditions and New World realities (244).

Documents From the History of Lutheranism, 1517–1750. Edited by Eric Lund. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002.

This anthology contains excerpts from representative documents from the Luther's career, the period after Luther's death leading up to the Formula of Concord, Lutheran orthodoxy, and pietism. Among the many helpful features of this volume are the inclusion of selections of church orders and devotional literature as well as theological texts. The book concludes with a bibliography of English works on the period. This volume promises to be a very useful handbook for students, pastors, and laity interested in Lutheran theology and history.

Remembering Jesus: Christian Community, Scripture, and the Moral Life. By Allen Verhey. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

Vehrey, a professor of religion at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, and well-known ethicist, sees the task of Christian ethics as the discipline of moral discourse and discernment as the church "remembers" Jesus as he is revealed in the Scriptures. From this foundation of the evangelical narrative of Jesus, Vehrey treats a wide range of medical, sexual, economic, and political issues.

Truth or Consequences: The Promises and Perils of Postmodernism. By Millard J. Erickson. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2001.

Baptist systematician Millard Erickson offers a readable introduction to and evaluation of postmodernism. Pointing out precursors to postmodernism in the nineteenth century, Erickson charts the transition to postmodernism in the twentieth century. Descriptions of the thinking of four leading representatives of postmodernism (Derrida, Foucault, Rorty, and Fish) are included. Erickson offers a concise and accurate description of postmodern thought, as well as a careful evaluation that aims to assist Christians in the apologetic task.

JTP

Logia Forum

Short Studies and Commentary

The Strict Lutherans

In his 1857 work Lutheranism in America, *W. J. Mann describes as "strict" those who were known as the Old Lutherans. While he notes that he does not approve of everything in which Walther and Grabau espouse, he speaks somewhat admiringly of them as we see in the following:*

In doctrinal views, these brethren stand on the Confession of that faith which is contained in the *Symbolical Books* of the Lutheran Church, as far as they are comprehended as a whole, the several parts of which are explanatory and supplementary to each other. They regard the dogmatical system of Christianity, as contained in these books, as being the *true interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures.* They do not esteem these writings because they emanated from Luther or from some of the other Fathers of the Lutheran Church or because they had once obtained authority in the Lutheran Church or are of importance in connection with its history, but because they cherish the conviction that a better and more correct comprehension of the principal doctrines of the sacred Scriptures has never been produced, nor can be.

They regard a Confession of Faith of absolute necessity to the Church for the Bible is equally in the hands of the Catholic, the Baptist, the Unitarian, and the Quaker. But they read it, each one with his own eyes. Each finds his own peculiar tenets in it. A Church destitute of a fixed interpretation of the sacred Scriptures which she regards as the true one and adopts as her own would be nothing but a confused mass of dogmatical and religious views of mere individuals.

. . . It is a well-known fact that during the last century, in Germany, the decline of the authority of the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church, and the rise of rationalistic tendency were simultaneous. At present, we find that in the same country, respect for the Symbolical Books is returning—and with it faith and piety.

Symbols are nothing else than what the original meaning of this word of Greek derivation signifies, namely, a compilation of the principal doctrines of the Creed; they either pronounce the true orthodox Faith, like, as for instance, the Apostles' Creed, or they give a clear explanation of it, in accordance with the sacred Scriptures, refuting and rejecting the views of heretics, whenever they teach doctrines at variance with the Word of God. This is done with peculiar skill especially by the larger among the writings of the Symbolical Books.

It is easy to perceive what an anomaly it would be to call any modern religious society the *Lutheran Church*, except it, at the same time, regards that as the Confession of its Faith, which was regarded as such by the Lutheran Church from the beginning. The Lutheran Church certainly holds many doctrines in common with other denominations. But this by no means constitutes her the *Lutheran* Church; just as little as, on the other hand, a Unitarian can be called a Lutheran, because his ancestors may at one time have been Lutherans.

The Lord's Prayer

Martin Luther has given us several different ways to take the Lord's Prayer to heart, including the Large and Small Catechisms as well as his booklet for Master Peter the Barber on A Simple Way to Pray. *Here is one more example of how Luther sought to bring an understanding of the Lord's Prayer to the people as he used it in the Divine Service (as found in his German Mass translated in the American edition of his works, vol. 53, p. 78.)*

After the sermon shall follow a public paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer and admonition for those who want to partake of the sacrament, in this or a better fashion:

Friends in Christ: Since we are here assembled in the name of the Lord to receive his Holy Testament, I admonish you first of all to lift up your hearts to God to pray with me the Lord's

Prayer, as Christ our Lord has taught us and graciously promised to hear us.

That God, our Father in heaven, may look with mercy on us, his needy children on earth, and grant us grace so that his holy name be hallowed by us and all the world through the pure and true teaching of his Word and the fervent love of our lives; that he would graciously turn from us all false doctrine and evil living whereby his precious name is being blasphemed and profaned.

That his kingdom may come to us and expand; that all transgressors and they who are blinded and bound in the devil's kingdom be brought to know Jesus Christ his Son by faith, and that the number of Christians may be increased.

That we may be strengthened by his Spirit to do and to suffer his will, both in life and in death, in good and in evil things, and always to break, slay, and sacrifice our own wills.

That he would also give us our daily bread, preserve us from greed and selfish cares, and help us to trust that he will provide for all our needs.

That he would forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors so that our hearts may rest and rejoice in a good conscience before him, and that no sin may ever fright or alarm us.

That he would not lead us into temptation but help us by his Spirit to subdue the flesh, to despise the world and its ways, and to overcome the devil with all his wiles.

And lastly, that he would deliver us from all evil, both of body and soul, now and forever.

All those who earnestly desire these things will say from their very hearts: Amen, trusting without any doubt that it is Yea and answered in heaven as Christ has promised: Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you shall receive it, and you will [Mark 11:24]. Amen.

Secondly, I admonish you in Christ that you discern the Testament of Christ in true faith and, above all, take to heart the words wherein Christ imparts to us his body and his blood for the remission of our sins. That you remember and give thanks for his boundless love which he proved to us when he redeemed us from God's wrath, sin, death, and hell by his own blood. And that in this faith you externally receive the bread and wine, i.e., his body and his blood, as the pledge and guarantee of this. In his name therefore, and according to the command that he gave, let us use and receive the Testament.

Whether such paraphrase and admonition should be read in the pulpit immediately after the sermon or at the altar, I would leave to everyone's judgment. It seems that the ancients did so in the pulpit, so that it is still the custom to read general prayers or to repeat the Lord's Prayer in the pulpit. But the admonition itself has since become a public confession. In this way, however, the Lord's Prayer together with a short exposition would be current among the people, and the Lord would be remembered, even as he commanded at the Supper.

I would, however, like to ask that this paraphrase or admonition follow a prescribed wording or be formulated in a definite manner for the sake of the common people. We cannot have one do it one way today, and another, another way tomorrow, and let everybody parade his talents and confuse the people so that they can neither learn nor retain anything. What chiefly matters is the teaching and guiding of the people. That is why here we must limit our freedom and keep to one form of paraphrase or admonition, particularly in a given church or congregation—if for the sake of freedom it does not wish to use another.

The Comforter

A sermon preached by Hermann Sasse on Exaudi, May 29, 1938, based on John 15:26–16:4 and found in Zeugniss Erlanger Predigten und Vorträge vor Gemeinden 1933–1944 (*Erlangen, Martin Luther—verlag; 1979*) *87–92. Translated by Bror Erickson.*

"The Comforter." That is how Luther, with great care, translated the strange name *paraklete*, advocate, for the Holy Ghost which our gospel has received: "But when the Comforter has come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth." Luther explained this name once in a Pentecost Sunday sermon in this way: "The word 'comforter', in the Greek *paraklete* (which is almost as one in Latin says advocate, or patron) is what one such man is called, who is there by as the legal advisor of the accused or defendant. Who receives him, to defend him, to get his things in order, to serve and help him; admonish and strengthen him where it is necessary. That should, spoke Christ, be the office of the Holy Spirit. After I go from you, you will not have comfort or assistance in the world. But the whole world will be against you, and the Devil will harass you, and speak to you with his poisonous, blasphemous and annoying tongue, and accuse you and cry out before the whole world as a tempter and an insurrectionist. Yes, the Holy Ghost should also be a Comforter, so Luther continues, "when your own consciences and hearts are tormented and frightened inside you with the horror of God's wrath, with sadness, with hard thoughts about your own weakness that would like to and must drive you to despair."

In doing this the reformer speaks about the deepest comfort that the Holy Ghost gives a despairing heart in an hour of deepest disheartenment and bereavement; with him he will escort the church through the hardest days of the fight. He will reveal to us a piece of his heart, a deep experience of his life. Where the word "Comforter" stands in our Bible, there it stands as a powerful, living, witness of him, what the reformer of the church and with him the church had once experienced in the days of the Reformation. Then the Reformation was not well known as a shining triumph, but as a chain of very hard fights inside the church. For many at that time, it looked like the breakdown of the church. At that time the church hardly saw anything else. In such times Luther had learned to confess: "I believe in the Holy Ghost"—and he had experienced what kind of a comfort this faith could be.

Luther is also well known, not always as being the hero of the German nation, not as he who stands on the Luther monument, but for many years as being the most hated man in Germany, and he must have had the same experience himself, as it was said, that "the devil harasses you and speaks to you

with his poisonous, blasphemous and annoying tongue, and accuses you, and cries out before all the world as a tempter and insurrectionist." And he had experienced his whole life how weak and powerless a human heart is when God's strength and power does not maintain it. The question is always repeated about him, if he can answer for his teaching.

> How often has my heart fidgeted, punished me and reproached me with its strongest and only question: are you alone wise? Should all the others wander and have wandered for so long a time? As when you wander and tempted so many people into wandering, who will all become eternally damned.

There in such hours he had experienced, that it is literally true, that Christ did not leave him alone in the world. "But when the Comforter has come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father."

From such experiences, like the church has had throughout all the centuries, our understanding of this gospel must come. And when we think about these experiences, then we can do no other than God asks, because he gives us these experiences also, that he may let us live in this rich comfort also, who comes to faith in the Holy Ghost, the great comfort of the Church, for them this gospel for the Sunday of Exaudi is spoken.

Where is this Comfort? What is this comforting message of the gospel? It is the comforting promise, that the witness of Christ will not go silent in the world, that it will be repeated much more, man to woman, contrary to all the weakness of man, contrary to all the opposition of the world. And is it not true? We may place this comfort in our time, where the anxiousness about the future of our church is often hard on our souls. All these worries of men trespass against the godly promise: that the witness of Christ will not go silent!

> But when the Comforter has come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of me. And you will also bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

The witness of Christ—that is the message of the Church. This witness to give again was the instruction of the apostles. They, who were with Jesus from the beginning, they who ate and drank with Him, who witnessed his changes, whose ears and eyes witnessed his words and actions, the holy witness of his resurrection, they would carry his message on. And when they are at one time no more, then became each a witness, who have received the word of truth from their hands. So the proclamation of Christ would go throughout history, from generation to generation.

Next to the oral sermon stands the written word. The witness of the apostles was written down, and the apostolic and prophetic word of the Old and New Testaments became next to the oral sermon, it remains the source and norm, the witness of Christ to carry to all people and races, and to test through all the centuries. So the church of Christ would be the church of the apostolic message, apostolic church, erected from the ground of the apostles and prophets, a witness for all times, a witness for all people—it became an elevated monotony, all the men say—all the same, the same message, all the same witness from them, what happened in the time of Pontius Pilate.

We pause now—and place a question before us. Is that really the message? Is this message not enormously poor? Is it not something wholly monotonous; should it not become obsolete? The modern man elevates this protest against it—man cannot, however, always say the same thing. One cannot, Sunday after Sunday, year after year, century after century witness to something that once happened in the gray past.

What use is a revelation to us that once happened in the past? Must we go back? One sees, precisely as one notices, that this objection is already very old. In the second century in Asia Minor a powerful movement brought it out. A prophet stood up, a prophet began to speak. The end is coming. God's Spirit speaks now. The Comforter, the *paraklete* is appearing. The classic era brought forward two world religions. Mani—"I am the Paraklete." Mohammed—"I am the Paraklete." In The Middle Ages—suddenly sounded the prophets, "the time of the spirit comes."

In the time of the reformation, new truths do not stand by the apostles like Luther! Lessing proclaimed the time of the Johanine brotherly love—wait for the new revelation. Who has then closed the Cannon (the collection of Holy writings)? "Every holy writing is only a Mausoleum of Religion," the young Schleiermacher said. Where is the Holy Ghost, the real Spirit of God—there, where one only repeats the old story again? Or there, where there is new proclamation? That was Luther's fight, the fight already in the early church: "He will witness of me." That is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father. "Any Spirit who confesses that Jesus Christ came in the flesh, He is from God . . ." (1 John 4:2).

Therefore he explains it, that the witness of the church from Christ is not only the witness of men. It is the witness of the Holy Ghost. The word of the Church is not only man's word. Therefore is not inferior to the law of man's word. Therefore it does great wonders. Therefore it is not obsolete. Therefore it is not boring. Therefore it is for all of mankind. Therefore it is not inferior from the past. This word does not die because it is God's Word. Therefore the Holy Ghost calls men by it, over all prayers and understanding. It is always the same word, the same witness. The Anglican Church celebrated on this past Thursday a glorious commemoration. That hour on the evening of May twenty-fourth, 1738 when John Wesley suddenly understood, because of Luther's foreword to Romans, what forgiveness of sins is: ". . . I became certain that He had taken my sins away and reconciled me from the law of sin and of death." His spirit gives witness to our spirit, that we are God's children.

Because it is God's word—the witness of the godly Spirit—therefore it kicks open the opposition. Never before in the history of men's religion has one religion been so fought against, never has a message pushed such an enraged opposition as the Christian Witness, in fact, in the name of religion. Not that, what his worldly opposition of the Church does—here it is the Jews. Luther experienced it inside the church—he was kicked

out. Today it happens in the name of "belief in God." So it must be, God's Word will be recognized straight through as God's word.

This witness goes on. It cannot die. And God's Word was already powerful in the Old Testament; trees and plants were ripped out and destroyed by it. (Jer 18:9)—How much more will it do for the church? Do you mean that it is indifferent when one builds a modern megalopolis—and there is no church in it? When one builds a settlement with no room for the Divine Service? No, the world lives on, because God gives you His word. God's word will not delay, it remains the power. The witness remains—and also through martyrs—and wins over the new of the world.

"But when the Comforter comes." He came. A million altars sound the prayer "*Veni Creatior Spiritus*," "Come, Creator Spirit!" Jesus Christ promised: This prayer would be heard. *Veni Sancti Spiritus*. Amen.

Hindenburg Is Our God?

The Lutheran Witness, *April 16, 1918, p. 158, reported the following event in light of persecutions which came upon Lutherans who were still speaking (and singing) in German:*

In a southern Illinois town a pastor's beard was painted yellow because he supposedly had led his congregation in a song which elevated German's General von Hindenburg to the status of a god. Actually, the congregation had sung *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*, not *Ein Hindenburg ist unser Gott.*

Word&Deed

Word&Deed *is a theological journal for the laity written from a confessional Lutheran perspective. The goal of this publication is to help lay people of our church apply God's Word to some of the difficult issues facing our church and our lives. The Rev. Thomas Korcok serves as the chairman of the editorial board. If you'd like to request a subscription, please write to Word&Deed, Lutheran Church—Canada, 3074 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R3K 0Y2. The following is a brief snippet from an article entitled "Confessions and tradition in the Roman, Reformed and Lutheran Churches," written by the Rev. Gerhard Maag, pastor of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, Harrow, ON, and is found in the Fall 2001 issue, page 15.*

Lutherans are not interested in tradition for tradition's sake. We are neither opposed to, nor essentially tied to, maintaining old opinions and practices. Rather, in the freedom of the Gospel we keep what is ancient and churchly because it also confesses the same truth. We reject whatever militates against the one true confession of the Christian faith, no matter how ancient or seemingly relevant. This confessional principle is unique, even as the holy Christian Church is unique. It leaves us proclaiming to a world confused, uncertain, and afraid: "Thus says the Lord."

Uprooted from Prussia

The history of Lutheranism in America would be quite different if not for the Prussian Union initiated in the early Nineteenth Century. The effects of civil religion took their toll not only on the churches, but also on the schools of the area. What follows is a historical survey of what led up to the migration of thousands to western New York as found in Eugene W. Camann's Uprooted from Prussia—Transplanted in America, *commemorating the 150th anniversary of the 1843 Prussian Lutheran migration to the town of Wheatfield, New York. The 140-page book can be ordered by writing Mr. Camann at 6697 Luther St., Niagara Falls, NY, 14304 or calling him at (716) 731–4553.*

In connection with the social and economic reform measures that the Prussian King was putting into effect, he was also preparing to announce a kingdom-wide church reorganization. It was intended to help unify and strengthen Prussia after her collapse in 1806, which had been followed by a period of foreign domination and the resulting wars of liberation. Lutheranism had existed as the official Protestant denomination in Brandenburg since 1539, but from the time that the Calvinistic Reformed faith was introduced there in 1613, both religions had existed side by side. However, the Age of Enlightenment and its attendant Rationalism, which had held sway in Prussia for the past century, did not recognize denominational differences. Neither was the prevalent Pietism limited to any specific church organization. These attitudes had also infected many members in the Lutheran and Reformed churches, so there appeared to be very little difference between the two denominations.

Therefore, in 1817 on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the Reformation, Kaiser Friedrich Wilhelm III considered it appropriate to declare a merger of the two church bodies. They were combined into one official Prussian State Church which was to be known as The Evangelical Union Church. The King had professed the Reformed faith but his late Queen had been Lutheran, as were most of his subjects. But he seemed genuinely convinced that combining the two churches should be truly beneficial for all concerned. He expected the merger to strengthen and revitalize Protestant religious life in Prussia as well as helping to unify his kingdom. This is apparently why he became so adamant in striving to make his Prussian Church Union succeed. (See Map A, which indicates how vast was the Prussian Kingdom territory which was subject to this merger decree.) [Ed. note: no map is included here.]

Most Protestant churches throughout Prussia initially responded to the King's merger proclamation. In 1817 they held a joint celebration of the Lord's Supper as officially directed. But they did so only that one time, after which each church again reverted to its own traditional practice. When the King was informed of this, he was very displeased. He personally prepared a joint church Agenda which he issued in 1822. This

uniform worship manual was officially called "Liturgy for the Evangelical Church in the Royal Prussian States." However, neither the Lutherans nor the Reformed groups were willing to adopt it. The King, becoming frustrated, made some minor modifications in it and then demanded that his revised Agenda be adopted in all churches. Until that time, compliance with the merger decree had been considered optional. But now, the pastors who refused to adopt the Agenda were threatened with stiff fines as punishment for their non-compliance.

The Lutherans who adhered to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and continued worshipping according to their traditional order of service, now faced a period of unrelenting persecution. In 1830, Pastor Scheibel of Breslau, Silesia was suspended from the ministry for refusing to adopt the new Agenda, and for continuing to conduct worship services in the Lutheran manner. Hundreds of fellow-Lutherans rallied to his cause and formed the Lutheran Free Church. They were commonly known as "Old Lutherans" because they held to the traditional Lutheran doctrines and practices. When this group appealed to the King for permission to continue worshiping as Lutherans, he accused them of being objecting "Separatists." From then on the persecution became very real. In 1831 the King decreed that pastors who still refused to use the new Liturgy would be guilty of "flagrant disobedience to the crown." They would be treated as common criminals and would be subject to harsh punishment. The imperial police were now directed to search out and arrest those who refused to comply. In time, more than forty pastors in the Province of Silesia alone were imprisoned for their non-compliance.

Up to the time of these punitive measures, local congregation members had heard very little about the Prussian Church Union, especially those in country villages. Only in the towns where the provincial and regional church offices were located had its introduction become well known. But now a specially appointed Royal Commission brusquely closed one Lutheran church after the other and converted them to Union Church use. By 1834 only one Lutheran Church still remained in Silesia that had not been forced to adopt the Union Agenda. That church in Hoenigern near Breslau had received a directive from the Royal Commission for its Elders and Church Fathers to meet at the church on September 11, 1834. The Commission expected perhaps ten or twelve representatives for this meeting. However, when they arrived they were confronted with about two-thousand people at the church. The whole congregation had turned out all because of an error in the wording of the directive. The Commission, however, mistook this large turnout for a hostile uprising against them. They felt even more certain of this when the members refused to surrender the church key, and the women crowded in front of the door so the Commissioners couldn't get at it. Seeing their purpose temporarily foiled, the Commissioners reluctantly left, but threatened to return with military support.

Five days later, on September 16, Pastor Kellner of that church was arrested and imprisoned for seven years, longer than anyone else similarly charged. Then two days before Christmas four-hundred military infantrymen and three-hundred cavalrymen plus two cannons were brought in. Two-hundred Lutherans attempted to guard their church against sudden seizure during the night. At five o'clock the next morning, December 24, the soldiers circled the church. Three times the command was given for the defenders to clear the entrance way and surrender the key. When they didn't comply, the guns were loaded. Then the two-hundred Lutherans were struck with the butt end of the guns and hit with the flat of the sword blades, and the church door was forced open. The soldiers stayed in the village for six more days during which the church Elders and many others of the two-hundred defenders were arrested.

In Loco Parentis

Any debate concerning the office of the ministry is sure to arouse at least lively discussion and raise numerous related issues, to say nothing of raising blood pressure. Especially in our time, in the aftermath of the Church Growth Movement and Oscar Feucht's *Everyone a Minister,* any assertion that places limitations on what is involved in "ministry" will likely be adamantly contested. One of these "hot-button" issues is whether a Lutheran schoolteacher may be properly considered as an occupant of the office of the public ministry.

Do teachers at a parochial school receive their authority to teach children from God through His church in the form of a divine Call? Or do they receive that divine authority through the fathers and mothers of those children to teach them in the stead of parents (*in loco parentis*)? The debate is as current as it is historic, which testifies to the fact that what is at stake is no mere theological abstraction. Both sides of the question have highly regarded the task of educating the young and wish to accord all honor due to this vocation. Perhaps the two questions could be rephrased into one as follows: What is gained in making a distinction between the vocation of pastors and that of parochial teachers?

Peter Bender states that a great confusion within our circles could be resolved by answering that question. He writes, "When every church worker is thought of as a minister of the Word, soon the proper work of the ministry is lost in the shuffle and replaced with something else . . . . Lutheran day-school teachers should enjoy the freedom and high privilege they have been given to serve in the stead and by the command of parents."

Jayson S. Galler, also a proponent of teachers *in loco parentis*, suggests that the preaching office must be kept distinct from the auxiliary offices (organists, non-ordained teachers, etc.) to stem the tide of "an unstoppable onslaught of 'ministries.'" It is hoped that a fresh look at this theological question will be beneficial to the work of the church in her education of the young, rather than merely a cause for dissension and ill will among its members. The purpose of this essay, then, is to look back in history to an earlier form of the debate and to glean from it anything helpful for us to consider today.

The question of whether a teacher's office was a branch of the pastoral ministry has appeared within Missouri Synod circles from its very beginning. The first man to contribute the *in loco*

parentis perspective to the LCMS discussion was J. C. W. Lindemann, the first director (1864–1879) of the Teacher's College in Addison, Illinois, the forerunner of Concordia University, River Forest. Early on, Synodical President C. F. W. Walther began to take his ideas to task, flatly denying in a letter dated in June of 1864 what he viewed as Lindemann's core argument: "I cannot convince myself at all that the schoolmasters who teach God's Word in your schools do not bear an ecclesiastical office and are not assistants of the pastor, but rather should stand by the side of the house-father-office (*Hausvateramt*) only as private people" [Fuerbringer, *Walthers Briefe*, vol. 1 (St. Louis: CPH, 1915), 203. Trans. Kevin Walker].

According to Walter Wolbrecht, Lindemann had submitted a number of articles to be published in *Der Lutheraner*. In his short treatises, Lindemann, who was then a pastor in Cleveland, asserted that the pastor and teacher were both servants of the church, but did not share the same office of the ministry [Wolbrecht, *100 Years of Christian Education*, ed. Arthur C. Repp, 98].

While no official Synod documents up to that time had specifically stated a precise doctrinal position on this matter, Walther wrote in his letter that the majority of Synod believed and taught that a teacher occupies an auxiliary office of the public ministry (*Predigtamt*). He gave the following sources in his defense: Thesis VIII in the second part of his book, *Church and Ministry*, *The Proper Form of a Christian Congregation*, and Luther*'s Confession Concerning Christ's Supper*, [*AE* 37:364] in which the Reformer discusses the true "holy orders" as opposed to the false, monastic orders. According to Luther, the activities surrounding the ministry of the Word and those people who serve the occupants of the pastoral office are included within the "first estate," namely, the Holy Ministry. For this reason, Walther considered himself justified in citing Luther in favor of parochial schoolteachers as ministers of the Word, even though Luther never mentions that particular auxiliary office by name in the treatise mentioned above.

The Synodical President's own writings consistently applied his view of the ministry as a collection of sacred tasks that are first given to all Christians as spiritual priests, who in turn transfer their authority to certain men to exercise the office in their stead. Walther therefore encouraged Lindemann to reconsider his position, keeping in mind Walther's citations as well as the majority opinion of Synod, and resubmit his articles to *Der Lutheraner*. For the time being, Lindemann acquiesced.

The controversy resurfaced two years later, in September 1866, where the now-Director Lindemann had evidently not retracted his stance, as Walther's tone clearly indicates:

> My dear brother! What are you thinking! You even provoke me to suspend you from office because you cannot see what place a Christian teacher should have in the Church! Or rather, [I should suspend you] because in this respect you probably differ with the great majority of our Synod's members. This is not a point that can justify such measures. Naturally, it is assured that you do not seek to cause division and tumult in the Church on account of this. The one thing that strikes me is that you lay so great a weight on this point. I am otherwise convinced that an oral discussion will soon make you one with us [Fuerbringer, *Walthers Briefe*, II, 55. With thanks to Kevin Walker.]

Lindemann's motivation for sticking to his convictions can only be conjectured, but a related issue on which he was particularly outspoken may provide a clue. He was one of the first within the Missouri Synod to advocate the inclusion of women in the church as teachers, some 65 years before the colleges at River Forest and Seward became co-ed [Alfred Freitag, *College With a Cause* (St. Louis: CPH, 1964), 55].

In the 1872 issue of the *Evangelisch-Lutherische Schulblatt* Lindemann makes his argument and unconventionally looks to the Papist Roman Catholics for an example! "It is not to be denied that we could learn something from them . . . A larger number of smaller schools, which might be conducted by women, in the larger cities could bring over to us many children who now fall to the public or the papal schools!" [*Schulblatt* VII, 77–78. Trans. Meyer, *Moving Frontiers* (St. Louis: CPH, 1964), 374].

Since the office of teacher was almost unanimously understood as a function of the church's pastoral ministry, having female teachers would understandably prove to be a major obstacle in confessional Missouri circles. Lindemann's perspective that the teacher acts in the stead of parents rather than as a public minister of the Word would have liberated his conscience concerning this issue and made him free to solve the Synod's teacher-shortage problem. In his plan, women would only be teaching children in younger grades and for the time being only where the need was greatest, i.e. in larger cities where children would not otherwise have the benefit of a Lutheran education. [*Schulblatt* VII, 77–78. Trans. Meyer, *Moving Frontiers* (St. Louis: CPH, 1964), 374].

As for the debate between Lindemann and Walther, it is not clear how exactly the situation was resolved, but it is true that the Teachers' Seminary director was not expelled from office. In fact, Walther later expresses his full confidence in him—even to the point of forbidding him from leaving his post at Addison. As it turns out, he had little more than a decade of service left to render to the Synod and to Walther, its president. Lindemann died suddenly of a heart attack in January 1879 at the age of fifty-two.

In J. C. W. Lindemann, we have seen an outspoken proponent of the idea that teachers receive their authority from God through parents, which would mean they would not be classified theologically as holders of the office of the public ministry. However, we should keep in mind that he was no enemy of Lutheran education in the Missouri Synod. Director Lindemann instead believed that the training and teaching of the young was a godly, even churchly, vocation. He wrote many articles for the *Lutheraner* and the *Evangelisch-Lutherische Schulblatt* (*Evangelical Lutheran School Journal*—the forerunner of *Lutheran Education*), which he himself edited, in which he called upon pastors as well as parents to guide the young men in their midst toward considering service in the church, whether as a teacher or pastor [*Schulblatt* VII, 77–78. Trans. Meyer, *Moving Frontiers* (St. Louis, CPH, 1964), 374]. He fought for better pay for Lutheran schoolteachers and

demanded that the office of teacher not be filled by whatever is "left over" at the German seminaries, as was often done in his day. He also was an outspoken advocate for the teaching of English in Lutheran schools, although this was not done until a few generations later [*Freitag, 53*].

In many ways, Lindemann made significant contributions to the cause of Lutheran parochial schools. His defense of the *in loco parentis* theory was not designed to deny anything to Lutheran schoolteachers. Rather, it was the fruit of his lifelong efforts to build up their vocation as a truly godly one while at the same time avoiding unnecessary confusion in defining the office of the public ministry. Since we find ourselves today in such a doctrinal confusion, perhaps we may look to former leaders like him to help us clarify the debate.

Mark B. Stirdivant
Fort Wayne, IN

Guilt Works

Charles Merrill Smith has written a number of tongue-in-cheek books having to do with parish life. One of my favorites is How to Become a Bishop Without Being Religious (*New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1965*). *The following is from pages 53–56. Try your best to keep in mind that this is satire!*

Strange as it seems, the greatest thing that ever came down the pike so far as the hard-pressed parish pastor is concerned, is the psychology of Sigmund Freud. Freud taught us about guilt and put his message across in a way that preachers had never been able to manage. He made guilt fashionable. Guilt is "in."

Freud was an agnostic, of course, but then God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform, and for purposes of money raising (and let us put it in capital letters so that it will be emblazoned on your memory) NOTHING IS HALF SO EFFECTIVE AS THE EXPLOITATION OF YOUR PARISHIONERS GUILT FEELINGS!!! Perhaps it never occurred to you that the clean, sweet-smelling, well-behaved members of your congregation are really sinners. But depend on the absolute accuracy of the Doctrine of Original Sin. They are.

The Pallid Sins of Nice People

It is true that not many of them are spectacular sinners. Their transgressions tend to be petty, unimaginative, and thoroughly middle-class. But they are sinners all the same, and while they pretend that they are not, they know it.

Very few of your good people pursue sin in the form of wine, women and song. This is because such pursuit is inconvenient, time-consuming and expensive. Most of all, it reduces one's effectiveness as a money maker. And the average middle-class white Protestant much prefers building his bank account and collecting status symbols to indulging himself in the so-called pleasures of the flesh. (Do not neglect to imply, though, that you know this kind of hanky panky goes on. Even in the most proper congregation you will snag an errant soul now and then who wonders ruefully how you got onto him.)

Now this is a fact which you need to keep in mind at all times, and especially when planning the annual budget drive or building-fund campaign or any other type of financial appeal. Scorching your people for the rough, rowdy, boisterous, bold, bawdy sins will bring very little cash into the till. This kind of talk just makes them feel smug and superior. Hardly anyone you will minister to ever even thought of sinning with abandon. Nice people don't do these things, and happily for us, the church has progressed to the place where it serves nice people almost exclusively. We have come a long way from the early days of the church when Christianity did not appeal very much to the nice people of the time and members had to be recruited from the rough, unlettered. and profane classes. How much easier it would have been for our dear Lord had he been able to deal with the merchant and banking levels of society instead of with fishermen and petty tax collectors and the like. But, as noted, above, denouncing the sins which nice people do not commit only makes them feel spiritually superior. And the man who is encouraged to feel spiritually superior generally ends up by revising downward the amount he had planned to give to the church.

However, nice people are quite vulnerable at the point of their prosperity. The average man really has a rather low opinion of himself, even when he covers it with bluster and bragging. He is astounded to find himself living in a forty-thousand-dollar home, driving two automobiles and belonging to the country club. He wants you to believe that all this is tangible evidence of his wit, energy and general superiority. But in his heart he knows, though he may never acknowledge it even to himself, that it is mostly luck. Also, he lives uneasily with the information that he has managed to squeeze out of society far more than his contribution to society is worth. And since his security, the structure of his personality, and everything he holds precious in life is squarely dependent on these lovely results of what he pretends is his personal superiority but what he believes to be his good fortune, he is haunted by one horrible, nightmarish fear—that somehow these things will disappear as easily as they came. This is why so many of your people support Robert Welch or Billy James Hargis. They are wildly enthusiastic about anyone who promises to ward off those who want to take it away. In short, your average man is prosperous and he feels guilty about it. The astute pastor, then, will learn how to remind his people (there are a thousand ways of how greatly the Lord has blessed them and that these blessings are far beyond anything they deserve).

This has the advantage of being good, sound, demonstrable biblical teaching plus being a solid, practical approach to prying out of them the money you need to carry on the Lord's work. Couple this with the subtle but frequent suggestion that "the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away" and that he might do just that, and you have created the ideal atmosphere for maximum results from a church finance campaign. There is, however, one exception to this rule. This appeal won't work with people of inherited wealth. They are accustomed to having money and assume it is the will of God that they should have it. However, be comforted by two thoughts: (1) You won't have many such people in your flock and (2) nothing else works with them either.

Consensus

The Consensus document is an attempt to address the many issues facing The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod today by asking the question, "What does it mean to be a Christian in the twenty-first century?" If you would like more information about the work of Consensus, or would like to make comments or suggestions for improvement on the Consensus document, please go to www.consensuslutheran.org, *email* info@consensuslutheran.org, *or write to: Consensus, 2026 22nd Ave., Kenosha, WI 53140.*

Prologue

"He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter replied, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" (Mt 16:15–16 ESV)

God has clearly revealed Himself in the Scriptures so that all may come to know Him as He is—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Our Lord proclaims His Word within and through His Church that she may confess the Gospel of Jesus Christ faithfully and boldly before the world. In every age, dangers from within and without have led the Church to implore her Lord for guidance and strength. At the Council of Jerusalem, the Council of Nicea, the Diet of Worms, and certain other points in history, the Church confronted threats to her very identity and unity. Yet through each crisis, our Lord has led His Church to find her identity and unity once again in Himself and His unchanging Gospel.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod faces such a crisis of identity and unity. Divisions on several critical issues must be overcome for her to speak with one voice. We seek consensus by confessing our beliefs and inviting others to join our confession. To that end, we offer the following statement as a summary of what it means to be a Lutheran in the twenty-first century.

We believe that the Holy Scriptures are the inerrant word of God and the only source and norm of doctrine and life for the church. We also believe that the Confessions of the Lutheran Church are a correct exposition of the Word of God. We are confident that the theology expressed in *Consensus* is faithful to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. *Consensus* introduces no new thoughts but reflects what Lutherans have always believed. We believe also that there is nothing in *Consensus* which differs from the expressed, historic teachings of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

These issues are critical for consensus among Lutherans:

The Gospel

1. The Gospel is the good news that God has accomplished everything necessary for the salvation of the world through the life and death of Jesus Christ in the place of sinners (the atonement) and His resurrection from the dead.
   a. We believe that through the Gospel God's grace extends to all people. We reject any limitations of the Gospel which suggest that Jesus has not died for all or that Jesus does not desire all to know Him.
   b. We believe that through the Gospel God's grace offers and gives all that is necessary for salvation. We reject any limitations of the Gospel which suggest that the atoning work of Christ is not sufficient in itself to save or that the good news of Christ does not work salvation, but that some human efforts, works, commitment, choice, prayer, desire, willingness, openness, feelings, experiences, etc. must be added.
   c. We believe that salvation is found only in our Lord Jesus Christ. We reject the godless idea that our heavenly Father has or may have provided other saviors or other avenues of salvation.
   d. We believe that God favorably hears only the prayers of those who believe in Jesus Christ as their savior. We reject the godless idea that the true God favorably hears the prayers of those who do not know Jesus.
2. The Gospel, in its proper and narrow sense, is always a pronouncement and bestowal of the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ's atonement.
   a. We believe that the Gospel is the means by which God offers, gives and bestows the forgiveness of Christ. We reject the idea that the Gospel is merely information or facts upon which the sinner must then act.
   b. We believe that the Gospel is God's free gift to all and the all-sufficient means to bring those who sin against God's law to saving faith. We reject the idea that God absolves apart from the Gospel of Christ.
3. The Gospel is the forgiving Word of Christ and the saving Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
   a. We believe that both Word and Sacraments provide all of the gifts of Christ's Grace. We reject as unchristian the idea that sinners cannot rely on their Baptism or the Lord's Supper for consolation and assurance of salvation.
   b. We believe that the Sacraments are Gospel. We reject the idea that the Sacraments are merely testimonies to the Gospel, supplemental to the Gospel, or additions to the Gospel.
   c. We believe that everything that comforts or offers the favor and grace of God to those who sin against God's Law is the Gospel which is a good and joyful message that God does not wish to punish sins, but, for Christ's sake, forgives them. We reject the idea that such comfort, favor and grace can be assured anyone outside of Christ's atoning work offered and delivered in the Word and Sacraments.
4. The Holy Spirit employs only the Gospel (the forgiving Word of Christ and the saving Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper) to give the forgiveness of sins and create faith.
   a. We believe that faith in Jesus Christ is the gift of the Holy Spirit, created, increased, sustained and strengthened by means of the Gospel. We reject the idea that the works or commitment of the believer can create, increase, sustain or strengthen faith.
   b. We believe that all who have the gift of faith in Christ receive forgiveness. We reject the idea that the Holy Spirit creates faith without giving forgiveness or absolving the sinner.
   c. We believe that no one by his own reason or strength can believe in Jesus Christ or come to Him. We reject the idea

that human desire, will, or decision can bring an unbeliever to Christ or that any unbeliever is truly seeking the one true God.

d. We believe that the Word and Sacraments are the only and all-sufficient means by which God gives His blessings of grace and eternal life. We reject the idea that God creates or increases faith through any "second blessing" or through miracles, signs or any special gifts other than the Word and Sacraments.

e. We believe that the power of the Gospel is from God alone. We reject the idea that the power of the Gospel depends on the speaker, the hearer, or the mission attitude of the congregation in which it is spoken.

5. The biblical teaching (doctrine) of justification by grace is the central article of the Christian faith—the Gospel doctrine against which all doctrine and practice should be judged; namely, that God imputes (credits and declares) the righteousness and holiness of Jesus Christ to sinners, just as He imputed against Christ the sin of the entire world. This doctrine of justification is the article of faith upon which the church stands or falls.

   a. We believe that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to all people, announced only through the Gospel, and received only through faith. We reject any expressions that God has not justified the entire world through the atonement of Christ.

   b. We believe that all doctrine of the church is understood as it relates to the doctrine of justification. We also believe that the doctrine of justification is both drawn from the scriptures and provides special light in understanding the entire Scriptures. We reject any and all expressions that suggest that any other article of Christian doctrine is central to our understanding of the Holy Scriptures.

   c. We believe that the central article of the Christian faith is the doctrine of justification by grace through faith for Christ's sake. We reject any expressions that suggest that any other doctrine should replace it.

Mission and Ministry

6. The mission and ministry of the church is the proclamation, teaching and declaration of the Gospel—God's gracious acts for us in Christ—through Word and Sacrament.

   a. We believe that the mission and ministry of the church is to forgive sins through Word and Sacrament. We reject as harmful to the Gospel any definition of mission or ministry that states or implies that the mission of the church can be accomplished without this forgiveness.

   b. We believe that mission work is a clear and full proclamation of the Gospel. We reject the idea that mission work can be done merely by "being present." Likewise we reject the idea of a "ministry of presence" as though others are blessed by their mere proximity to Christians.

7. God has established the office of the ministry to forgive sins and create faith in Jesus Christ by proclaiming the Gospel and administering the Sacraments.

   a. We believe that the Gospel is powerful and effective because the Holy Spirit always works through it. We reject as unchristian the idea that the power of the Gospel depends upon anything more than the gospel itself.

   b. We believe that God calls pastors to do the work of the ministry through the call of the church and ratifies His call through the ordination of the church. We reject the idea that the ministry is an indifferent or free matter that the church may or may not use.

   c. We believe that the Divine call of the pastor is to proclaim, preach and teach Christ, forgive sins and administer His Sacraments. We reject the idea that the authority of the ministry has to do with anything other than proclaiming and teaching the Word and administering the Sacraments.

   d. We believe that the holy ministry or pastoral office is an office distinct from the priesthood of all believers. We reject the idea that every Christian is a minister of the Gospel.

8. Since the ministry of the Word is conferred upon pastors by God through the church, only the minister of the Gospel (the Pastor) may publicly carry out the duties of the office of the ministry.

   a. We believe that only those called as pastors may engage in tasks specifically assigned by God to the pastor, such as preaching, baptizing, and consecrating the sacrament. We reject the idea that any lay person, except under extreme circumstances, may carry out the duties of the pastoral office.

   b. We believe that the functions of the pastoral office are distinct from the priesthood of all believers. When those who are not pastors behave as pastors and perform distinctly pastoral functions they are not, thereby, in the office of the ministry. We reject the idea that the pastoral office is only one form of the office of the ministry. We reject the idea that one becomes a minister by merely performing the functions of the ministry.

9. While the mission and ministry of the church is a necessary reflection of the atonement and the church's faith in the Gospel, this work of the church does not replace the doctrine of justification as the central article of the Christian faith.

   a. We believe that the Great Commission is the teaching and application of the doctrine of justification by grace to a lost and dying world through Word and Sacrament ministry. We reject the idea that we have properly carried out the Great Commission when we have failed to teach the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone.

   b. We believe that God gives His blessings out of His grace and goodness apart from our actions or attitudes. We reject the idea that God blesses churches in proportion to their vision, techniques and strategies. We also reject the idea that we can, by use of such techniques, cause God to bless us in any way other than He has promised.

   c. We believe that true Christian mission and ministry is grounded in the acceptance and confession of the doctrine of justification by grace as taught in the Bible and confessed by the Lutheran Confessions. We reject as false and unfaithful any mission and ministry that is not based upon a truthful proclamation of the doctrine of justification. We also reject as harmful to the mission of

the church any ministry with or acceptance of those church bodies and organizations that do not confess the Lutheran and Biblical doctrine of justification by grace alone.

The Royal Priesthood

10. All Christians serve God according to their various vocations.
    a. We believe that God places each person in a context of relationships expressed in various roles, called vocations, such as father, mother, teacher, student, pastor, hearer, employer, employee, et cetera. God uses these vocations to create and preserve human life and to bestow His blessings. In our vocations we serve the needs of our neighbors and are served by them in return. We believe that every person has important and valuable vocations that are God-given. We reject the idea that some vocations (e.g. pastor or teacher) are more important to God or give a higher standing before God.
    b. We believe that the biblical image of the royal priesthood stresses that all Christians are to bring sacrifices acceptable to God through their Lord Jesus Christ in their vocation.
    c. We believe that both the Christian Church and individual Christians in their vocations show kindness, mercy and charity to all. We reject the idea that such acts of mercy are the unique and saving mission or ministry of the Church. We further reject the idea that these works are meritorious before God.
11. All Christians have the joyful opportunity and responsibility to speak the Gospel of Christ to others.
    a. We believe that God calls upon all Christians to show forth the glories of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, which includes speaking of Christ with friends, neighbors, relatives, and inquirers.
    b. We believe that the power of the Word is from God and not dependent upon the one who speaks it. We reject the idea that the Word of God forgives sins only when spoken by pastors.
    c. We believe that Christ is our all-sufficient High Priest, and that all Christians are members of the royal priesthood. We reject the idea that only pastors are priests.
    d. We believe that the pastoral office is established by God and distinct from the royal priesthood. We reject the idea that all priests are pastors.

The Church and Her Fellowship

12. The Church is all those and only those whom God by the Gospel and Sacraments has brought to faith in Jesus Christ.
    a. We believe that the unity of the Christian Church consists in the common faith in Christ as Savior. We reject the idea that there is any spiritual unity apart from faith in Christ or that we can rightfully say or imply that others who reject Christ are our spiritual brothers and sisters.
    b. We believe that the Christian Church is God's creation alone. We reject the idea that the unity of the church is established, maintained or guaranteed by any human efforts, church programs, human rites, rituals or decisions regardless of how praiseworthy these might be.
13. Fellowship between Christians is based solely upon a common confession of the doctrine of the Gospel in all its various articles.
    a. We believe that the only basis and standard for determining and judging doctrine is Holy Scriptures. The Book of Concord is a reliable standard of judging doctrine because it is faithful to the Bible. We reject the unchristian practice of pitting the Bible against the Lutheran Confessions as if belief in one does not involve confession of the other. We also reject as unlutheran the claim to rely upon the Book of Concord only insofar as or when it is consistent with the Bible.
    b. We believe that true fellowship is God's creation and finds its external expression where the Gospel is preached according to a pure understanding and where the sacraments are rightly administered. We reject the idea that fellowship can exist between churches that do not agree on the doctrine of the Gospel in all its articles.
14. Any Godly expression of Christian fellowship is based upon agreement in all Christian doctrine.
    a. We believe that the Sacrament of Holy Communion is the Sacrament of unity and the most intimate expression of Christian fellowship. Common participation in the Sacrament is a public confession of complete agreement on all Christian doctrine. We reject the idea that church fellowship is based on common endeavors, love, concerns, zeal or any human emotion or action rather than a common confession of the Gospel in all its articles.
    b. We believe that closed communion (communion with only those who are members of churches which confess all the Christian doctrine as taught in the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions) is a God-pleasing practice which protects the weak and faithless from judgment. We reject as dishonest, uncaring and sinful the practice of open communion where people commune together who do not confess the same doctrine of the Gospel.
    c. We believe that when Christians are united in a common confession of the doctrine of the Gospel in all its articles they have a joyful responsibility to reflect this unity of doctrine through declared altar fellowship with each other.
    d. We believe that responsible pastors determine that those who commune at their altars, except in very rare circumstances, are members of churches or synods that are in declared fellowship with theirs. We reject as sinful the practice of those pastors who regularly give communion to people who are not members in good standing of congregations or synods in such declared fellowship.
    e. We believe that pastors give a clear witness to the Gospel by participating in those worship, prayer, or sacramental services only where the Gospel is purely taught. We reject the practice of pastors participating in services with pastors or clerics of churches or religious groups in which the Gospel is not taught and confessed purely.

Male and Female

15. Because God made mankind male and female, human identity in this life is inseparable from one's sex. God blesses both

men and women with gifts, skills and talents for use in the family, the world and the church.

a. We believe that pious and godly men and women accept the role and vocation that God has given them. We reject any expressions which suggest that sex distinctions are irrelevant, superficial or of no concern to the church.
b. We believe that every man and woman ought to thank God for their sex and all of its functions. We reject as perverse and unchristian the godless idea that men or women may have sexual relations with members of their own sex or marry members of their own sex.
c. We believe that God has prescribed sexual activity for a husband and his wife. We reject as unchristian the practice of engaging in sexual activity outside the bond of holy matrimony and we reject and condemn the practice of males and females "living together" without holy matrimony.

16. God alone determines the qualifications for the pastoral ministry. Among the many qualifications for this office is the requirement that the pastor be a man.
    a. We believe that God has created distinctive roles for men and women. In the Holy Scriptures, God clearly states that the office of pastor with its distinctive functions is reserved for men. We reject as sinful the idea that the church may decide on its own to make women pastors or to give to women the distinctive functions of men or of pastors.
    b. We believe that God has created the office of pastor and He alone determines the qualifications of those who hold it. We reject the recent innovative and unscriptural idea that God calls women into the pastoral ministry. We also reject the practice of referring to any woman as pastor, reverend, chaplain, or any other title ascribed to a holder of the office of the holy ministry.
    c. We believe that we have fellowship only with those churches that rightly proclaim and practice the Gospel in all its articles. We reject that fellowship exists with churches or congregations which promote the unscriptural ordination of women or hold that women may serve as pastors or carry out the distinctive roles of pastors.

The Divine Service

17. The worship service is primarily God serving His people the forgiveness of sins through Word and Sacrament. The service is, therefore, properly and accurately called the Divine Service.
    a. We believe that initiative and motivation in offering the Divine Service is found with God and not man. It is His desire to impart His salvation to all people. We reject the idea that the purpose of the service is primarily to motivate people, to enable "seekers" to find God, to facilitate spiritual experience, to offer God's people a chance to praise Him or to serve as a "staging area" in which to motivate Christians to do the work of the church.
    b. We believe that the highest expression of Christian worship occurs where and when Christ bestows His forgiveness through both Word and Sacrament. We reject the idea that the Sunday Service without both Word and Sacrament is preferable to or as complete as the Divine Service of Word and Sacrament.
18. While uniformity of worship forms is not necessary between congregations, it is highly desirable.
    a. We believe that the unity of doctrine in the church should be expressed through a unity in worship forms and practice. We believe that no local congregation or pastor has or should exercise the unilateral or autonomous right to determine the structure of the Divine Service without regard for the whole church.
    b. We believe Christian congregations should be encouraged to use all usual liturgical customs that have been handed down to us by previous generations and that properly proclaim the Gospel. We reject as threatening to the unity of the church the practice of individual pastors and congregations regularly changing or permanently discarding liturgical forms or orders of service in ways that have not gained acceptance in the church at large.
    c. We believe that faithful proclamation of the Gospel requires that only doctrinally sound materials be used in worship. We reject as sinful the practice of individual pastors and congregations employing prayers, readings, songs, hymns, or any forms that are not doctrinally sound.

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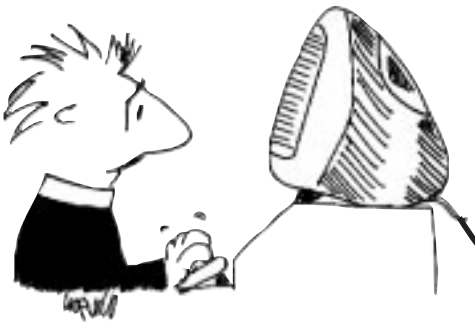

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