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Luther's "September" New Testament of 1522

Cameron A. MacKenzie

Ever since 2017, Luther and the Reformation have been producing milestone anniversaries,[1] and 2022 is no exception, the five hundredth anniversary of Luther's German Bible that began with the publication of his New Testament in September 1522. People take it for granted today that anybody who wants a Bible can have one. While in some parts of the world that still is not the case, it is true in many other places including the United States. We have ready access to the word of God. But for that to happen, there had to be a printing press and a commitment to using it for Bibles. Gutenberg supplied the first, Martin Luther and his Wittenberg associates the second. Following Luther's example, reformers of all types soon were producing vernacular Bibles in England, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark, and elsewhere.[2] God's word in the language of the people quickly became characteristic of "protestant" reform everywhere. The fact that we live in a world awash with printed Scriptures is the result of what Luther began in September 1522.

Luther initiated his project to produce a German Bible in December 1521 when he was still in safekeeping at the Wartburg. By late February, he had sent the first part of the New Testament (Matthew through John) to Philip Melanchthon via George Spalatin and had then brought the rest of it with him upon his return to Wittenberg in early March.[3] Remarkably, he had completed the task in less than three months.[4]

This was not the first time that he had tackled the task of translating Scripture into German. Previous efforts included *The Seven Penitential Psalms* (1517),[5] *A*

[1] 2017—Posting the *Ninety-five Theses*; 2018—Heidelberg Disputation; 2019—Leipzig Debate; 2020—Luther burns the papal bull, *Exsurge domine*; and 2021—Diet of Worms.

[2] "Producing and Disseminating the Bible in Translation," in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 3, *From 1450 to 1750*, ed. Euan Cameron (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 159–383.

[3] Otto Albrecht, "Luthers Übersetzung des Neuen Testaments. Historisch-theologische Einleitung" in Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Deutsche Bibel*, 12 vols. in 15 (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1906–), 6:xliii–xliv, hereafter abbreviated WA DB.

[4] Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther*, 3 vols. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985–1993), 2:46–47.

[5] Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe [Schriften]*, 73 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–2009), 1:154–220 (hereafter WA); for a translation of the 1525 edition, see vol. 14, pp. 139–205, in *Luther's Works, American Edition*, vols. 1–30, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–76); vols. 31–55, ed. Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia/

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Short Form of the 10 Commandments, Creed, and Lord's Prayer (1520),[6] *The Magnificat* (1521),[7] and the epistle and gospel lessons for the church year from Advent to Epiphany. He did this last bit of translating for another major project, sermon notes and helps for the Sundays and festivals of the church year that we call his *Church Postil*.[8] Luther had undertaken this task at the Wartburg, where the agents of Frederick the Wise had taken him for safekeeping after his condemnation at the Diet of Worms. Although Luther hated it, there he remained from May 1521 until early March 1522 and worked on several projects, including the first phase of the postils that he was finishing up about the end of the year.

Not insignificantly, at the very end of this first set of postils, Luther had expressed a desire for all Christians to rely upon the Scriptures alone, "Would to God that my exposition and that of all doctors might perish and each Christian himself make the Scriptures and God's pure word his norm."[9] But without a Bible in the vernacular, how could this ever happen? So Luther would soon be at work in supplying his fellow Germans with a Bible of their own.

The German Bible was not an accident of timing, as if Luther, having run out of other things to do at the Wartburg, had decided to fill in the weeks before his return to Wittenberg by trying his hand at translating the New Testament. While Luther did have less to do at the Wartburg—no preaching, no lecturing—putting the Bible into German was not simply fortuitous, but a theological necessity.[10] One need only recall his words at Worms, "I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God."[11] By that time, Luther had clearly embraced the *sola scriptura* principle, that the Bible and only the Bible was the source and norm for Christian doctrine.

Nor was this a brand new idea at Worms. Even as an Augustinian friar, Luther had been encouraged to embrace the Scriptures as the center of Christian piety. After all, the Erfurt Augustinians gave him a Bible upon his entering their commu-

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Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–86); vols. 56–82, ed. Christopher Boyd Brown and Benjamin T. G. Mayes (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009–), hereafter AE; WA 18:467–530.

[6] WA 7:194–229.

[7] WA 7:538–604 (AE 21:297–358).

[8] The Weimar edition has published Luther's work that he did on the postils at the Wartburg in two parts: Advent (WA 10/1.2:1–208) and Christmas, including Epiphany (WA 10/1.1:1–728), from which the gospel postils have been translated in AE 52. A complete set of postils in English is available in AE 75–79. They are based on the versions published by Luther and Caspar Cruciger in the 1540s. For the history of Luther's postils, see Benjamin T. G. Mayes, "Introduction to the Luther-Cruciger *Church Postil* (1540–1544)," AE 75:xiii–xxxi.

[9] AE 52:286 (WA 10/1.1:728). Brecht (2:46) says that Luther wrote this in November 1521.

[10] See Albrecht, "Historisch-theologische Einleitung," WA 6:xxix–xxxv.

[11] AE 32:112 (WA 7:838).

nity.[12] Subsequently, they made him a theologian and moved him to Wittenberg, where he began a career of lecturing on the Scriptures. Then, in the wake of the *Ninety-five Theses*, when his opponents were continually citing other authorities against him, Luther more and more resorted to the Scriptures alone until, as a result of the Leipzig Debate in the summer of 1519, he was defending the proposition, "A simple layman armed with Scripture is to be believed above a pope or a council without it."[13]

By 1520, Luther was using the scriptural principle to justify his reformation proposals. So, for example, in his overhaul of the sacramental system in his monumental *Babylonian Captivity of the Church* that year, he insisted "that every article of faith of which we boast is certain, pure, and based on clear passages of Scripture," and then he tested each of Rome's ostensible sacraments by the Scriptures, dismissing four entirely and radically reforming the remaining three.[14] Furthermore, in his *Address to the Christian Nobility* the same year, he had argued that laymen, too, have the right to interpret the Scriptures—in fact, not only the right but also the obligation: "It is the duty of every Christian to espouse the cause of the faith, to understand and defend it, and to denounce every error."[15]

Finally, upon his return to Wittenberg in March 1522, Luther began his well-known *Invocavit Sermons* with the stark reminder that each person dies by himself and therefore "must himself know and be armed with the chief things which concern a Christian." So he went on to advise that "we should all be well versed in the Bible and ready to confront the devil with many passages."[16]

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[12] According to Scott Hendrix, *Martin Luther: Visionary Reformer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 35, the Augustinians gave him a Bible for daily reading as a novice, but he had to return it at the end of the year; nevertheless, Heinz Schilling, *Martin Luther: Rebel in an Age of Upheaval* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 64, maintains that Luther's familiarity with the Bible came from his years as an Augustinian monk. See also Brecht 1:85.

[13] WA 2:649.1–2. This particular proposition was not originally formulated by Luther. Mark D. Thompson, *A Sure Ground on Which to Stand: The Relation of Authority and Interpretive Method in Luther's Approach to Scripture* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 261, ascribes it to Nicolò de' Tudeschi (d. 1445), commonly known as Panormitanus. However, Luther defended the proposition against John Eck in the aftermath of the Leipzig Debate in Luther's *Defense against the Malicious Judgment of Eck* (1519) in WA 2:625–654. See Brecht 1:327–330. It also appears twice in a letter from Luther and Karlstadt to Frederick the Wise on August 18, 1519; Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Briefwechsel*, 18 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1930–), 1:468, 472, hereafter abbreviated WA Br. For the significance of the Leipzig Debate in the development of Luther's doctrine of Scripture, see Thompson, 251, 254, and 261, and Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 118–126.

[14] AE 36:107 (WA 6:560).

[15] AE 44:136 (WA 6:412).

[16] AE 51:70–71 (WA 10/3:1–2). See Hans Volz, "Afterword," in Martin Luther and Lucas Cranach, *Das Newe Testament Deůtzsch*, facsimile ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 3–4.

But again, how could this be done without a Bible in the language of the people? And yet, such Bibles already existed. Contrary to what many people think, there were German Bibles before Martin Luther, at least eighteen printed editions, not to mention many other parts and selections from the Scriptures that had been translated into German.[17] The first printed Bible in German was that of Johann Mentelin, published in 1466, just a little more than a decade after Gutenberg had printed the first Latin Bible.[18] Around 1475, Günther Zainer offered a somewhat better German text; and a few years after that, publishers began printing editions with copious illustrations, especially in the Old Testament. In fact, as late as 1518, still another edition of the medieval German Bible was published in Augsburg.[19] So why was Luther not content with these?

According to Hans Volz, Luther's predecessors were wanting in at least two respects. They had translated from the Vulgate (not the Hebrew and Greek), and they had failed to translate idiomatically. The result was German versions that preserved the inaccuracies of the late medieval Latin and employed a version of German that was often quite difficult to understand.[20]

By the time he embarked on translating the Bible, Luther was already committed to using the vernacular both to edify and to educate his fellow Germans. In a letter to a friend, written from the Wartburg just weeks before he began his New Testament translation, Luther listed many of his literary efforts before concluding, "All this is in German. I am born for my Germans, whom I want to serve."[21] So in works like his *Seven Penitential Psalms* and his *Magnificat*, Luther used the German language like a pastor who wanted to instruct and comfort his people; but in works like his *Address to the Christian Nobility* or his *Defense and Explanation of All the Articles* (1521), he wrote like a polemicist in order to expose the hypocrisy, deceits, and here-

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[17] There is a nice little introduction to the topic in John L. Flood, "Martin Luther's Bible Translation in Its German and European Context," in Richard Griffiths, ed., *The Bible in the Renaissance: Essays on Biblical Commentary and Translation in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Aldershot, Hants, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 1988), 45–47. For a more detailed description, see Walter Eichenberger and Henning Wendland, *Deutsche Bibeln vor Luther: Die Buchkunst der achtzehn deutschen Bibeln zwischen 1466 und 1522* (Berlin: Evangelische Haupt-Bibelgesellschaft zu Berlin, 1980).

[18] "Printing Press," A&E Television Networks, October 10, 2019, https://www.history.com/topics/inventions/printing-press, accessed October 27, 2020. Online Britannica, s.v. "Gutenberg Bible," says "some 40" copies survive; https://academic-eb-com.coproxy.palni.edu/levels/collegiate/article/Gutenberg-Bible/38593, accessed October 27, 2020.

[19] Hans Volz, "German," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day*, ed. S. L. Greenslade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 94–109, here at 94, 104.

[20] Volz, "German," 94.

[21] Luther to Nicholas Gerbel, November 1, 1521; AE 48:320 (WA Br 2:396–398).

sies of his foes. But whatever the genre, Luther intended his readers to understand what he was saying, as he later put it when defending his biblical translations:

> We do not have to inquire of the literal Latin, how we are to speak German . . . . Rather we must inquire about this of the mother in the home, the children on the street, the common man in the market place. We must be guided by their language, the way they speak, and do our translating accordingly. That way they will understand it and recognize that we are speaking German to them.[22]

But that was much easier said than done since, when Luther began writing in German, there was no single German language that everyone in the German-speaking world employed. Today, languages like English or German are unifying forces that bring together millions of people living all over the world by using the same vocabulary and syntax to communicate. Although there are significant regional variations, especially in pronunciation but also in terminology, each of the principal European languages is still basically the same wherever people use it. People who speak English in India may sound different from those who use it in Texas, but it is the same language, and if they listen carefully, they can communicate quite well. And if they write it, there is hardly any difficulty at all.

But this has not always been the case. Only after a long period of time and facilitated by the use of the printing press did modern European languages come to exist in standard forms, common to all who use them. Through most of the Middle Ages, regional dialects were so strong that it is probably better to think of families of English or of German languages rather than of simply one common tongue. Luther once remarked, for example, that people who lived just thirty miles apart could not understand each other on account of using different dialects.[23] Significantly, however, the development from regional languages into standard forms coincided with the Protestant Reformation, and Luther's contribution to the creation of a standard German tongue was of critical importance.

By the time of the Reformation, some language consolidation had taken place. Regional German dialects were in the process of development over large tracts of territory. The requirements of government and trade, especially the book business, were leading German readers in the direction of a common tongue. But Luther was an important catalyst in this process on account of his adopting for his work one of

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[22] AE 35:189 (WA 30/2:637).

[23] "Germania tot habet dialectos, ut in triginta miliaribus homines se mutuo non intelligent." Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Tischreden*, 6 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1912–21), 5:511.25–26, no. 6146, hereafter abbreviated WA TR. See Werner Besch, *Die Rolle Luthers in der deutschen Sprachgeschichte* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1999), 7–8.

these regional common dialects with which to spread his message across the German-speaking world.[24]

The particular dialect that Luther chose is not so important as the fact that he chose one. Nevertheless, his choice was a good one—the official language of his own prince, Frederick the Wise, one of seven electors in the empire, and of the emperor himself, Maximilian I.[25] Luther's own geographical situation in the middle of German-speaking lands was providential as well, since the dialect employed there could more easily function as a bridge to other regions.[26] A Luther in the extreme north or south of the German-speaking lands would have had a much tougher time developing a dialect that could be understood everywhere in the German linguistic world; and, in fact, both the Dutch and the Swiss remained outside the area of consolidation anyway. Nonetheless, with those exceptions, Luther had at hand a German dialect well-suited for becoming a common German tongue. And that is what he used for his September Testament.

As far as Luther's commitment to translating exclusively from the Greek and Hebrew is concerned, it may be a little difficult to assess at this point, since his earlier efforts were from the Latin. Nevertheless, by 1521, he had for some years been working with the Greek and Hebrew. In fact, in a letter to Spalatin, written shortly after arriving at the Wartburg, Luther reported that he was "reading the Bible in Greek and Hebrew,"[27] and just a few years later, he wrote, "God caused his scriptures to be set down in these two languages alone—the Old Testament in Hebrew, the New in Greek. Now if God did not despise them but chose them above all others for his word, then we too ought to honor them above all others."[28]

Providentially, Luther lived at a time when the biblical languages were coming back into vogue. Beginning with Petrarch in the fourteenth century, humanists had been working at recovering Greek,[29] and by Luther's day those efforts were paying

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[24] Frank L. Borchardt, "German Language," in Hans J. Hillerbrand, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, 4 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), s.v., hereafter *OER*.

[25] In a "table talk" from 1532, Luther commented, "The language which I use the Germans have in common . . . . My language is that of the Saxon chancellery, which all the princes and kings of Germany imitate . . . . Therefore this is the most commonly used language of Germany. In this way Emperor Maximilian and Elector Frederick have limited . . . the empire to a definite . . . tongue." WA TR 2:639.28–640.3, no. 2758b, translated in Ewald M. Plass, ed., *What Luther Says: A Practical In-Home Anthology for the Active Christian* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 727 (no. 2265). WA TR 1:524, no. 1040 includes a German version of the same statement. See Besch, *Die Rolle Luthers,* 12–14.

[26] Ingetraut Ludolphy, "Nachwort," in Martin Luther, *Das Newe Testament Deuůzsch*, facsimile ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 2, and Besch, *Die Rolle Luthers,* 11.

[27] Luther to Spalatin, May 14, 1521, AE 48:225 (WA Br 2:337–338).

[28] Luther, *To the Councilmen of Germany* (1524), AE 45:359 (WA 15:37).

[29] Petrarch obtained a copy of Homer's *Iliad* and found a tutor but was unable to take much advantage of either, ultimately prompting his famous remark, "Homerus tuus apud me mutus, imo

off handsomely. Luther himself had begun his study of Greek with his friend and fellow monk (also a humanist) Johannes Lang when still in Erfurt.[30] Shortly after he arrived in Wittenberg, Greek was being taught there,[31] and in his early lectures on the epistles of Paul (1515–1518), Luther referred frequently to the Greek.[32] But the arrival of Philip Melanchthon in 1518 to fill a new professorship in Greek brought into Luther's orbit someone who really knew the language and would be of invaluable assistance in preparing a German translation of the New Testament.[33]

In fact, some of the leading humanists of the day were themselves advocates of translating the Bible into the vernacular. In 1523, the French humanist Lefèvre d'Étaples published his own translation of the New Testament from the Latin into French. By 1530, he had completed the rest of the Bible.[34] Thomas More, though a fierce opponent of Luther, defended the "legitimacy and desirability" of an English Bible while at the same time dismissing the attempts of William Tyndale to do just that.[35] Erasmus, in his "Paraclesis" that accompanied his Greek-Latin New Testament in 1516, had expressed his commitment to the vernacular in this well-known passage:

> I would desire that all women should read the gospel and Paul's epistles, and I would to God they were translated into the tongues of all men, so that they might not only be read, and known, of the Scots and Irishmen, but also of the Turks and Saracens . . . . I would to God, the plowman would sing a text of the scripture at his plowbeam, and that the weaver at his loom, with this would drive away the tediousness of time. I would the wayfaring man with this pastime, would express the weariness of his journey. And to be short I would that all the communication of the Christian should be of the scripture, for in a manner such are we ourselves, as our daily tales are.[36]

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vero ego apud ilium surdus." See Paul Botley, *Learning Greek in Western Europe, 1396–1529: Grammars, Lexica, and Classroom Texts* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2010), 81, 203 n. 150.

[30] Schilling, *Martin Luther,* 68.

[31] Brecht 1:120.

[32] There are fifty-eight references to the Greek text in the glosses of Luther's Romans lectures according to the index in the American Edition (AE 25:534).

[33] Heinz Scheible, "Melanchthon, Philipp," *OER*, s.v.

[34] Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *Lefèvre: Pioneer of Ecclesiastical Renewal in France* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 156–162.

[35] Eamon Duffy, "'The comen knowen multitude of crysten men': *A Dialogue concerning Heresies* and the defence of Christendom," in George M. Logan, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas More* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 207.

[36] Desiderius Erasmus, *An Exhortation to the Diligent Study of Scripture* (Antwerp: n.p., 1529), edited from the original text by Frank Luttmer, https://history.hanover.edu/courses/excerpts/346erasmus.html, accessed December 23, 2021. For the original Latin, see Hajo Holborn, ed., *Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus: Ausgewählte Werke* (Munich: Beck, 1935), 142.

Luther's humanist friend Johannes Lang was already translating the Gospel of Matthew when Luther himself began the task,[37] and it was none other than Melanchthon who urged Luther to take up this project when Luther left the Wartburg for a brief visit to Wittenberg at the beginning of December 1521.[38] Still disguised as Junker Jörg, Luther's principal aim was to see for himself what was going on there since letters had reached him about disputes and controversies regarding reforms that were being planned and implemented. While there, he later wrote to Lang, his friends requested him to translate. In a "table talk," he mentioned Melanchthon specifically, because the latter was upset with the current German versions on account of different people rendering the Gospels and on account of the obscurity of the Pauline epistles.[39]

Within a week or so, Luther was back at the Wartburg and was soon at work translating.[40] In his letter to Lang, he expressed the hope that "this book alone, in all languages, would live in the hands, eyes, ears, and hearts of all people."[41] But he quickly learned how challenging it was to turn his hope into a reality for the German people. In his letter to Amsdorf on January 13, he admitted that he had "shouldered a burden beyond my power [*supra vires*]. Now I realize what it means to translate."[42] He also recognized that when it came to the Old Testament, he would have to work with his Wittenberg colleagues, so he even broached the idea of returning to Wittenberg secretly and lodging with someone there so as to keep the project moving forward. With their help, he believed, the result would be a German Bible worth reading, "for I hope we will give a better translation to our Germany than the Latins have [i.e., the Vulgate]."[43]

Undoubtedly, Luther had a copy of the Vulgate at hand (probably the 1509 edition printed by Froben at Basel)[44] and, even if he did not, he was so familiar with

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[37] Luther to John Lang, December 18, 1521; AE 48:356 (WA Br 2:413).

[38] Ludolphy, "Nachwort," 2, says Luther returned to Wittenberg December 4–9, 1521. See also Brecht 2:29–30.

[39] Luther to John Lang, December 18, 1521; AE 48:356 (WA Br 2:413). For Melanchthon, see Schilling, *Martin Luther,* 226, who cites WA TR 1:487, the supplementary material for no. 961; and Hans Volz, "Einleitung," in Martin Luther, *Die Gantze Heilige Schrifft Deudsch: Wittenberg 1545, Letzte zu Luthers Lebzeiten erschienene Ausgabe*, ed. Hans Volz (Munich: Rogner and Bernhard, 1972), 49* n. 52, who cites WA 48:448 for the Melanchthon reference.

[40] "I am working on a *Postil* and the translation of the Bible into German." Luther to Wenceslas Link, December 18, 1521; AE 48:359 (WA Br 2:415).

[41] Luther to John Lang, December 18, 1521; AE 48:356 (WA Br 2:413).

[42] Luther to Nicholas von Amsdorf, January 13, 1522; AE 48:363 (WA Br 2:423).

[43] Luther to Nicholas von Amsdorf, January 13, 1522; AE 48:363 (WA Br 2:423).

[44] *Biblia cum pleno apparatu summariorum concordantiarum et quadruplici repertorii sive indicii numerique foliorum distinctione Basilee nuper impressa* (Baseleae: Johannes Petri, 1509), online edition: https://www.ustc.ac.uk/editions/616604. See Otto Albrecht, "Anmerkungen und Erläuterungen zum Neuen Testament 1522–1546," WA DB 6:537.

it that it undoubtedly influenced his translation. Some have argued that Luther also employed one of the earlier German versions, but, according to Martin Brecht, there is "no proof" that he did, although he certainly was familiar with the language of German piety that is evident in his translation.[45] In addition, the editors of the Weimar edition of Luther's Bible suggest that Luther had access to Nicholas of Lyra's commentary on the whole Bible, also containing the *Glossa Ordinaria* that often accompanied the medieval Vulgate, and even Jerome Aleander's Greek-Latin lexicon.[46]

But what Luther actually translated was the Greek text of Erasmus. During the course of his lifetime, Erasmus produced five versions. The first edition was 1516; the second 1519, which was the one that Luther used.[47] What made Erasmus's work so accessible and influential was his inclusion of a Latin translation in columns parallel to the Greek original and the addition of thousands of notes in hundreds of pages that explained the Greek and justified Erasmus's Latin.[48] The extent to which Luther relied upon Erasmus's notes and translation, let alone the Vulgate and an older German version, is a matter of debate, but clearly Luther used what he had in order to get a translation that satisfied him.[49]

But "satisfied" is much too strong a term, since once the September Testament appeared, Luther and his Wittenberg colleagues not only set about translating the Old Testament but also returned periodically to the New in an effort to get it "just

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[45] Brecht 2:47. Brecht cites Heinrich Bornkamm, "Die Vorlagen zu Luthers Übersetzung des Neuen Testaments," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 72 (1947): 26–27, who rejected the thesis that Luther used the so-called Zainer edition of the German Bible—a thesis advanced by Albert Freitag in WA DB 6:595–637.

[46] WA DB 6:xxxvii–xl and WA 10/1.2:lxii–lxvii. For Aleander's lexicon, see Botley, *Learning Greek in Western Europe,* 67–68, 157–158. For Nicholas of Lyra's commentary, see Frans van Liere, *An Introduction to the Medieval Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 49, 173–174.

[47] *Novum Testamentum omne, multo quàm antehac diligentius ab Erasmo Roterodamo recognitum, emendatum ac translatum . . . uná cum annotationibus recognitis, ac magna accessione locupletatis* (Basileae: in Aedibvs Ioannis Frobenii, 1519), online edition: https://archive.org/details/novumtestamentum00eras/. Bornkamm, "Die Vorlagen zu Luthers Übersetzung," 24, maintains that even though we do not know precisely *when* Luther obtained his copy of Erasmus's second edition, he undoubtedly had one. See also Albrecht, "Historisch-theologische Einleitung," WA 6:lxxii–lxxiii; and Volz, "Einleitung," 52*. It also seems clear that Luther had a Greek-only edition of Erasmus's second published text that Nicholas Gerbel had published in 1521, because Luther in a letter to Gerbel refers to a gift from Gerbel that the editors of *Luther's Works* identify as the Greek New Testament. See Luther to Nicholas Gerbel, November 1, 1521, AE 48:321 n. 34 (WA Br 2:397).

[48] Albert Rabil Jr., *Erasmus and the New Testament: The Mind of the Christian Humanist* (San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press, 1972), 91–95, 115–155.

[49] Citing previous studies by Hermann Dibbelt and Heinz Bluhm as well as Bornkamm, Kenji Toki and Ikuko Yukawa, "On the Process of the Translation into the Septemberbibel: Galatians as a Test Case," *Hitotsubashi Journal of Arts and Sciences* 44 (2003): 11–22, argue that Erasmus's influence on Luther's rendering of the Greek was very significant.

right." Between 1522 and 1546, there were twenty-two editions of the New Testament published in Wittenberg as well as thirteen editions of the entire Bible.[50] Although Hans Volz has identified the revisions of 1530 and 1541 as the most significant, virtually every edition during Luther's life reveals the reformer's ongoing efforts to improve his version of the German New Testament.[51]

But the September Testament was the beginning, and Luther brought the second half of his manuscript back to Wittenberg when he returned on March 6. He then initiated what became his standard operating procedure, which was not to publish until he had consulted his colleagues in order to get the words just right.[52] In this case, that meant Melanchthon especially on account of his expertise in the Greek language, but also others like George Spalatin. Among the translation problems with which Luther was still dealing were the names and colors of the jewels in Revelation and the right word for "eunuch" in Acts 8:27.[53]

Luther also had to prepare all the accompanying matter—the prefaces, marginal notes, and parallel passages—and, by no means least of all, arrange for printing and publication. As far as the last was concerned, Luther relied on his friends and supporters, Wittenberg businessmen, Christian Döring (who had been publishing Luther's works since 1518),[54] and Lucas Cranach (artist and entrepreneur, and Döring's publishing partner from 1521 to 1528). It was also Cranach who took responsibility for the woodcuts that illustrated the September Testament, ten initial letters and twenty-one images for the book of Revelation.[55]

By this time, there were two printers in Wittenberg: Johann Rhau-Grunenberg and Melchior Lotter the Younger. The former was not up to the job, however much he had been and remained loyal to Luther and his cause,[56] so Luther and his publishers assigned it to Lotter.[57] Luther himself had worked out an arrangement with

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[50] Heimo Reinitzer, *Biblia Deutsch: Luthers Bibelübersetzung und ihre Tradition*, Ausstellungskataloge der Herzog August Bibliothek, Nr. 40 (Wolfenbüttel: Herzog August Bibliothek, 1983), 116–123; and Volz, "Einleitung," 138*–142*.

[51] Volz, "Einleitung," 83*–113*, 138*–142*. See also WA DB 6:lxiii–lxx.

[52] Volz, "Einleitung," 54*. See also WA TR 1:486 and WA 48:449.

[53] Volz, "Einleitung," 54*–55*. Luther ended up using "verschnitener" (WA DB 6:527). See Luther to Spalatin, May 15, 1522 (WA Br 2:527) and Luther to Spalatin, March 30, 1522 (WA Br 2:490).

[54] *Deutsche Nationalbibliothek*, s.v. "Döring, Christian," https://d-nb.info/gnd/1037552709, accessed December 26, 2021. See also Andrew Pettegree, *Brand Luther: 1517, Printing, and the Making of the Reformation* (New York: Penguin Press, 2015), 157, who identifies Döring as the man who lent Luther and his companions horses and a carriage for their trip to Worms.

[55] Volz, "Einleitung," 54*, 57*. For Cranach's role in the Wittenberg book business, see Pettegree, *Brand*, 153–162.

[56] Pettegree, *Brand*, 42.

[57] For the printing connection between Döring, Cranach, and Lotter, see Steven Ozment, *The Serpent and the Lamb: Cranach, Luther, and the Making of the Reformation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 106–113.

Lotter Senior, a well-established printer in Leipzig with whom Luther had lodged during the Leipzig Debate, to establish another print shop in Wittenberg to be managed by his son. By December 1519, it was up and running, and in 1520 it printed such works as Luther's *Sermon on Good Works*,[58] his *Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation,*[59] and his *Babylonian Captivity of the Church.*[60]

But the New Testament was a very different kind of undertaking. Andrew Pettegree identifies three features that made it especially challenging. First of all, its size: the final product was 222 leaves (444 pages). By way of comparison, the *Babylonian Captivity* was only forty-four leaves and the *Address* only forty-eight. Second, each of the latter two works was in the quarto format, but the New Testament was a folio. According to Ann Thompson, "Folios are books made out of large sheets of paper folded in half to create two leaves or four pages. Quartos are books made out of the same large sheets of paper as folios, but now folded in half twice to make four leaves or eight pages."[61] That means the pages of a folio are twice as big as those of quarto size, and Luther's September Testament was practically the first folio ever printed in Wittenberg. The height of each page was thirty-one centimeters (a little more than a foot). Finally, there were Cranach's full-page illustrations for the book of Revelation that had to be fitted into the text.[62]

So it was a big job for the printer, and the publishers wanted three thousand copies.[63] It was also labor-intensive. There were no power-driven machines. Everything had to be done by hand. The printing process that Gutenberg had developed about sixty-five years before began with the type, individual letters made out of a metal alloy, that a compositor had to arrange into words, sentences, and paragraphs for each page that he was going to print. These were placed upon a flat wooden plate. Ink was applied to the type. A sheet of paper was attached to a second wooden plate and plate and paper placed upon the type. Then by means of a long handle, a worker turned a heavy wooden screw that pushed the plate with paper down upon the plate with type and ink in order to facilitate the transfer of ink to paper. Thereupon, the handle was pulled back and the sheet removed. After the ink was dry, the paper could be turned over and the process applied again to the reverse side of the sheet.

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[58] WA 6:197.

[59] WA 6:397–398.

[60] WA 6:488.

[61] Ann Thompson, "Quarto and Folio," in *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 71–84.

[62] Pettegree, *Brand*, 187.

[63] We are not absolutely sure of this, but Ludolphy, "Nachwort," 4, says that that would have been typical.

Both sides being finished, a sheet was ready for collation with the rest (also done by hand) and completion of the book.[64]

Although Lotter had printed the first fascicle (out of five[65]) by May 10, the whole project needed to be finished by September so that they could ship the books to Frankfurt for the Michaelmas Fair (from September 29 to October 6), by that time the best place for publishers and printers from all over Europe to sell or trade their books.[66] If they missed that, they would have to wait until spring for the Lenten Fair. Perhaps Luther could have done so, but six months was a long time to wait for those who had invested so much of their time and capital. There were six printing presses in Wittenberg. At length, three of them were devoted to the project, and they met their deadline. Printing was complete by September 21.[67]

The book was not cheap. The sources indicate a price ranging from half a gulden to one and a half guldens, depending on whether the book was unbound, bound, or decorated. Half a gulden was the price of an unbound, undecorated copy. That same amount of money could buy about 330 pounds of wheat, 430 eggs, or two butchered sheep. It could also purchase fifty liters of Freistädter beer or twenty-nine liters of hard cider (*Most*). Half a gulden represented two weeks wages for a baker or four months' wages for a serving maid at the city hospital in Vienna.[68] So the September Testament was *not* cheap, and yet it sold so quickly that the publishers came out with a second edition just a few months later, the December Testament,[69] not to

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[64] *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Printing," https://academic.eb.com/levels/collegiate/article/printing/109435, accessed December 28, 2021.

[65] WA DB 6:lxviii.

[66] Pettegree, *Brand*, 186. For the Frankfurt Fair, see Fleur Praal, "The Frankfurt Book Fair: 16th century to 2016," in *Leiden Arts in Society Blog*, Universiteit Leiden, https://www.leidenartsinsocietyblog.nl/articles/the-frankfurt-book-fair-16th-century-to-2016, accessed December 28, 2021. Also Mathilde Rovelstad, "The Frankfurt Book Fair," *Journal of Library History, Philosophy, and Comparative Librarianship* 8, no. 3–4 (July–Oct., 1973): 113–123. Hans Volz and Henning Wendland, *Martin Luthers Deutsche Bibel: Entstehung und Geschichte der Lutherbibel* (Hamburg: Wittig, 1978), 111, say that Luther's publishers were aiming for the Leipzig Fair. Second to the Frankfurt Fair in the sixteenth century, it surpassed the latter in the seventeenth century. See Petra Schönhöfer, "The Book Fair—A Piece of German History," trans. Sarah Smithson-Compton, https://www.goethe.de/ins/gb/en/kul/mag/21514597.html, accessed March 17, 2022.

[67] WA DB 6:xlv–xlvii.

[68] Mark Edwards, *Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 123, and Walter Krieg, *Materialien zu einer Entwicklungsgeschichte der Bücher-Preise und des Autoren-Honorars vom 15. zum 16. Jahrhundert* (Wien: Herbert Stubenrauch Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953), 19–22. Volz, *Martin Luthers Deutsche Bibel*, 18, has different (and smaller) equivalences.

[69] It looks quite similar, but in about a hundred places Luther tried to repair or improve his text. The pope's tiara was also clipped in the three illustrations in Revelation where it had originally appeared. See Volz, "Einleitung," 61*–62*. The December Testament is available online at: http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB0001D8A600000000.

mention unauthorized competitors' editions, one already in December 1522 and fourteen more in 1523.[70]

The title page is striking—a simple title, "The New Testament," but elegantly framed; the place of publication, "Wittemberg"; and absolutely nothing else, not even Luther's name.[71] That would soon change, but this first edition reflects what Luther had written to Amsdorf just after he had begun translating, "I have here shouldered a burden beyond my power. Now I realize what it means to translate, and why no one has previously undertaken it who would disclose his name." Luther went on to say that he would have to work with others when he tackled the Old Testament, as in point of fact, he did.[72] He also consulted with others for the New Testament. But Luther's name sold books.[73] Although the December Testament was very similar in appearance to the first version and did not contain Luther's name, his name did appear on the first part of the Old Testament published in 1523,[74] and soon became a regular part of the "Luther" Bible, even to this very day.[75]

Well before Luther, Bibles in manuscript and print circulated with forewords, prefaces, and notes. Typically, the Vulgate versions included Jerome's prefaces to various books, and the pre-Luther German versions might include translations or paraphrases of Jerome.[76] But Erasmus composed his own,[77] and so did Luther—forewords, prefaces, and notes. As one might expect, Luther used this additional

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[70] This is my count from Reinitzer, *Biblia Deutsch,* 116–117.

[71] The *Universal Short Title Catalogue: An Open Access Bibliography of Early Modern Print Culture* lists five online editions of the September Testament (https://ustc.ac.uk/editions/627911). The book is available at http://dx.doi.org/10.25673/opendata2-8770.

[72] Luther to Nicholas von Amsdorf, January 13, 1522, AE 48:363 (WA Br 2:423).

[73] In the years 1518–1525, Luther published 219 different works in the German language. Admittedly most of these were pamphlets; but the next most published Protestant author was Luther's onetime Wittenberg colleague, Andreas Karlstadt, with only forty-seven titles. In fact, Luther's titles are more than the next seven authors combined. Moreover, Luther's 219 titles went through a total of 1,465 printings in this same period, which was almost twice as many as the next seventeen Protestant authors put together during this period. See Edwards, *Printing*, 26.

[74] Online reproduction of title page available at: https://pitts.emory.edu/dia/image_details.cfm?ID=3506.

[75] For example, *Die Bibel nach Martin Luthers Übersetzung: Lutherbibel revidiert 2017 mit Apokryphen* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2017).

[76] Stefan Strohm, "Voraussetzungen," *Ursprung der Biblia Deutsch von Martin Luther: Ausstellung in der Württembergischen Landesbibliothek Stuttgart 21. September bis 19. November 1983* (Stuttgart: Württembergische Landesbibliothek, 1983), 19, describes the material in the fourteen High-German editions as partly from Jerome and partly under Jerome's name but originating elsewhere. See also Maurice E. Schild, *Abendländische Bibelvorreden bis zur Lutherbibel* ([Gütersloh]: Mohn, 1970).

[77] Erasmus included a dedication to the pope and three forewords: *Paraclesis* (an encouragement to read the Bible), *Methodus* (how to read the Bible), and *Apologia* (a defense of his undertaking). He also replaced Jerome's prefaces by his own, "prostheses" for the Greek and "argumenta" for the Latin. See Erasmus von Rotterdam, *Novum Instrumentum*, facsimile ed. (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Fromman-Holzboog, 1986). See also Schild, *Bibelvorreden*, 138–165.

material to highlight his evangelical reading of the Scriptures over against the false views of his opponents, principally the papacy and its defenders. The September Testament also included illustrations—initial letters[78] for each of the books and twenty-one woodcuts for the book of Revelation.[79] German Bibles before Luther had also restricted their New Testament illustrations to the last book.[80]

The illustrations were the responsibility of Cranach, of course, and it is possible that Luther did not have much input, seeing especially that he was at this point in his life not very enthusiastic about the last book of the Bible. "I can in no way detect that the Holy Spirit produced it,"[81] he wrote in its preface. The illustrations, however, represent very powerfully some of the great visions of the book and do so, according to Philipp Schmidt, from a distinct point of view that is not only theological but also sociological.[82]

On the one hand, some of the pictures are clearly antipapal. In three of them, for example, an apocalyptic villain is wearing the three-tiered papal tiara;[83] and in a fourth, for those in the know, the fall of Babylon (Rev 14:8) is really the fall of Rome. After the Gutenberg Bible, perhaps the best known of the incunabula is the *Nuremberg Chronicle* (1493), a world history filled with illustrations of all of Europe's great cities, including and especially Rome.[84] If one compares it to Cranach's illustration, it is obvious that the *Chronicle*'s Rome was the model for his Babylon.[85]

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[78] There were ten of them. Volz, "Einleitung," 57* n. 88, describes them briefly. Copies of them are available in Albert Schramm, *Die Illustrationen der Lutherbibel* (Leipzig: Karl W. Hiersemann, 1923), table 2.

[79] The next several paragraphs of this article discuss the illustrations in the September Testament. Therefore, I have included online references in the footnotes for readers who want to see the pictures mentioned in the text as well as read about them. Reproductions of the twenty-one illustrations from Revelation can be found in WA DB 7:483–523. They are also available online at the *Pitts Theological Library Digital Image Archive* [PTLDIA] (https://pitts.emory.edu/dia/book_lists.cfm?ID=415).

[80] Eichenberger and Wendland, *Deutsche Bibeln vor Luther*, 9–10, mention also some initial and introductory images.

[81] AE 35:398 (WA DB 7:404).

[82] Philipp Schmidt, *Die Illustrationen der Lutherbibel 1522–1700* (Basel: Reinhardt, 1962). But see also Peter Martin, *Martin Luther und die Bilder zur Apokalypse: Die Ikonographie der Illustrationen zur Offenbarung des Johannes in der Lutherbibel 1522 bis 1546* (Hamburg: Friedrich Wittig Verlag, 1983), 95–98, for a brief discussion of Schmidt's thesis and reactions to it. Martin, 197, also develops his own thesis that the 1522 illustrations do indeed represent Luther's understanding of Revelation at this time.

[83] WA DB 7:503, 513, 515. Online at the PTLDIA: https://pitts.emory.edu/dia/image_details.cfm?ID=383; https://pitts.emory.edu/dia/image_details.cfm?ID=505; and https://pitts.emory.edu/dia/image_details.cfm?ID=2431.

[84] For a description and digital copy of Rome in the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, see https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/PR-INC-00000-A-00007-00002-00888/1.

[85] Schmidt, *Die Illustrationen*, 93–94, 95, 96, and 97. For Cranach's "Fall of Rome," see WA DB 7:509 and https://pitts.emory.edu/dia/image_details.cfm?ID=3165. Cranach also used the

On the other hand, the illustrations also present an anti-elitist political thrust. This becomes evident by comparing Cranach's work to Albrecht Dürer's set of fifteen illustrations for the Apocalypse,[86] first published almost twenty-five years before the September Testament, that certainly were the inspiration for many of Cranach's renderings. Just compare Cranach's representation of "someone like a son of man" (Rev 1:12–16) to Dürer's[87] or each artist's image of the "four horsemen of the Apocalypse" (Rev 6:1–8).[88] Obviously, Cranach was using Dürer's work as a model.

But just as obviously, Cranach has deviated from his source in many respects and not the least of them, as Schmidt has argued, is his depiction of either the victims or the agents of satanic forces. For example, notice how Dürer represents those whom the horsemen are trampling. One of them is a bishop, but that is not the case with Cranach. His victims are just ordinary people while the three horsemen besides death are a king, a noble, and a knight.[89] Similarly, the lion riders of Revelation 9:17 are all nobles and the victims all commoners. In fact, Schmidt maintains that the man in front was modeled after Duke George the Bearded.[90] Meanwhile, those who worship the beast from the sea (Rev 13:4, 8) are dressed like the elite and one wears a crown (identified by Schmidt as Emperor Maximilian). Likewise, the worshipers of the papal whore of Babylon. To Cranach, at least, the last book of the Bible was being fulfilled in his own times.[91]

Whether Luther agreed with the artist is certainly debatable given his disdain for Revelation at this time, as indicated not only in his preface but already in the

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Chronicle's Rome to depict a second reference to the fall of Babylon in Revelation 18:2. See WA DB 7:517 and https://pitts.emory.edu/dia/image_details.cfm?ID=7707.

[86] According to the Morgan Library and Museum, Dürer first published these illustrations in 1498. A second edition came out in 1511, *Apocalipsis cum figuris* (Nuremberg: Dürer, 1511). https://www.themorgan.org/exhibitions/online/imperial-splendor/apocalypse-pictures, accessed March 19, 2022. An online edition of the second edition is available at https://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00074181-1, page 1.

[87] Cranach: WA DB 7:483 and https://pitts.emory.edu/dia/image_details.cfm?ID=1981. For Dürer: https://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00074181-1, page 5.

[88] Cranach: WA DB 7:487 and https://pitts.emory.edu/dia/image_details.cfm?ID=5818. For Dürer: https://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00074181-1, page 9; or from The Met's collection: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/336215.

[89] Schmidt, *Die Illustrationen,* 94–95.

[90] Schmidt, *Die Illustrationen,* 14, 95. For the "lion riders," see WA DB 7:499 and https://pitts.emory.edu/dia/image_details.cfm?ID=2402. For Cranach's Duke George, see https://lucascranach.org/DE_BStGS_WAF168. Duke George was one of Luther's most prominent opponents among the temporal authorities of the Holy Roman Empire. See Karlheinz Blaschke, "George, Duke of Saxony," OER, s.v.

[91] Schmidt, *Die Illustrationen,* 94–98. For worshipers of the beast, see WA DB 7:507 and https://pitts.emory.edu/dia/image_details.cfm?ID=6137. For worshipers of the whore of Babylon, see WA DB 7:515 and https://pitts.emory.edu/dia/image_details.cfm?ID=383. For Emperor Maximilian, see Dürer's woodcut at https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.58111.html. For Maximilian himself, see Paula Sutter Fichtner, "Maximilian I," OER, s.v.

Testament's table of contents.[92] Basically, Luther followed Erasmus's ordering of the books rather than his Latin Vulgate by placing Acts after John instead of after the Pauline epistles.[93] There was, of course, one major deviation from Erasmus's ordering, viz., his placing Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation into a numberless—and "saintless"[94]—group of their own at the end of the Testament. Regarding the canonicity of each of these, Luther had severe doubts—doubts that he explained in his prefaces to these books.[95]

To begin with, Luther knew that the canonicity of each had been questioned in antiquity. This he could have learned from Erasmus,[96] indeed, from Jerome himself.[97] But it was their contents that for Luther confirmed the doubts of some from centuries earlier.

For Revelation, it was chiefly a matter of clarity. Although by 1530, Luther had changed his mind about Revelation, in 1522 he insisted that "the apostolic office [is] to speak clearly of Christ and his deeds, without images and visions" and that "Christ is neither taught nor known in it."[98] For Hebrews, it was a question of authorship and the "hard knot" that in three passages the epistle "denies and forbids to sinners any repentance after baptism."[99] Jude, Luther maintained, was mostly an extract or copy of 2 Peter, and it cited "sayings and events . . . found nowhere else in the Scriptures."[100]

Most famously, of course, Luther also questioned the epistle of James primarily on account of its disagreement with "St. Paul and all the rest of Scripture in ascribing justification to works." While admitting that James could be glossed in such a way

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[92] For the table of contents, see https://pitts.emory.edu/dia/image_details.cfm?ID=6587.

[93] See Erasmus, *Novum Testamentum* 1519, p. 109. For Vulgate, see *Biblia* 1509, New Testament, fol. 329 v.

[94] Unlike all the authors of the first twenty-three books who are designated, "Sanct," James, Jude, and John—authors of the last three books—do not have the epithet, and Hebrews has no author at all.

[95] For a fine discussion of Luther's views expressed in his prefaces, see Jason D. Lane, "Luther as Bible Teacher: The Biblical Prefaces and His View of the Canon," in *Defending Luther's Reformation: Its Ongoing Significance in the Face of Contemporary Challenges*, ed. John A. Maxfield (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), 155–181. Edwards, *Printing*, 111–117, also presents a nice summary of the theological themes in the prefaces.

[96] See F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 242. For Erasmus himself, see his "Annotationes," *Novum Testamentum 1516*, 600–601 (Hebrews), 601 (James), and 625 (Revelation).

[97] See Bruce, *Canon*, 225–229, and Thomas O'Loughlin, "Jerome's De uiris illustribus and Latin Perceptions of the New Testament's Canon" in *The Mystery of Christ in the Fathers of the Church: Essays in Honour of D. Vincent Twomey SVD, ed.* J. E. Rutherford and D. Woods, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), 55–65.

[98] AE 35:398–399 (WA DB 7:404).

[99] Luther cites Hebrews 6:4–6 and 10:26–27 as well as the example of Esau in 12:17. AE 35:394–395 (WA DB 7:344).

[100] AE 35:397–398 (WA DB 7:386).

as to bring him into harmony with the rest and while acknowledging that the author had a point about the necessity of good works, Luther still argued that the book of James (like Revelation) failed the test of apostolicity. "The office of a true apostle," Luther insisted, "[is] to preach of the Passion and resurrection and office of Christ and to lay the foundation of faith in him." If a book does not do that, it is not apostolic even if an apostle wrote it.[101]

With respect to all four of these books at the end of the Testament, Luther was opinionated but not dogmatic. He says explicitly regarding Revelation, "I leave everyone free to hold his own opinions. I would not have anyone bound to my opinion or judgment." He also would not "prevent anyone from including or extolling James"; he "valued" Jude; and he called Hebrews "a marvelously fine" epistle.[102] Nonetheless, with the exception of Revelation, his prefaces for the others remained basically the same as did the table of contents and were still there in the final Wittenberg edition of the Bible printed during his lifetime.[103]

While Luther did not hesitate to rate some books of the New Testament as inferior to the rest, he was also not shy about singling out others as superior. In fact, he did this right at the beginning of his translation in a one-page explanation of "which are the true and noblest books of the New Testament," viz., John's Gospel; the Pauline epistles, especially Romans; and 1 Peter, because in them "you do find depicted in masterly fashion how faith in Christ overcomes sin, death, and hell, and gives life, righteousness, and salvation." For Luther, that message was the gospel that all needed to hear and believe.[104]

Not surprisingly, then, Luther highlighted that same message in the prefaces that he composed for other parts of the New Testament in addition to the four books at the end of his translation. In fact, the first thing to confront the reader following the title page is a "Foreword" to the New Testament. Although Luther began by saying that he would like to have published the biblical text without any extras, that was not possible since there were so many bad interpretations out there that nobody knew what was "gospel or law, New Testament or Old." So Luther prepared a few pages to guide the ordinary reader not to look for "laws and commandments where he ought to be seeking the gospel and promises of God." The saving work of our

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[101] AE 35:395–397 (WA DB 7:384–386). But see Jason D. Lane, *Luther's Epistle of Straw: The Voice of St. James in Reformation Preaching* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2018) for a much broader consideration of how early Lutherans treated James, including Luther in sermons on texts from James.

[102] AE 35:398, 397, 395 (WA DB 7:404, 386, 344).

[103] *Die Gantze Heilige Schrifft Deudsch: Wittenberg 1545, Letzte zu Luthers Lebzeiten erschienene Ausgabe* (Munich: Rogner and Bernhard, 1972), 1966. The order of the books in the New Testament table of contents remains the same in the 2017 edition of *Die Bibel nach Martin Luthers Übersetzung: Lutherbibel revidiert 2017 mit Apokryphen* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2017).

[104] AE 35:361–362 (WA DB 6:10).

Lord Christ is, of course, what Luther meant by "gospel." It is not a book but a message, just one message, expressed either at length or quite briefly, that "by his death and resurrection he [Christ] has overcome sin, death, and hell for those who believe in him." For Luther, then, this gospel is the "new testament," i.e., last will and testament, by which Christ bequeathed salvation to believers. As a result, the New Testament gets its name from its contents, "the gospel and the promises of God, together with the history of those who believe and of those who do not believe them." In contrast to this, Luther wrote, the "Old Testament is a book in which are written God's laws and commandments" along with the story of those who either kept them or did not. Luther insisted, however, that God had promised the gospel through the prophets of old and then went on to quote specific passages from the Old Testament, beginning with Genesis 3:15.[105]

So the gospel is the main message of the Bible, and Christ is the center of the gospel. Luther warned the reader, therefore, not to turn Christ into another Moses, a lawgiver who "drives, compels, threatens, strikes, and rebukes terribly." A believer does not become righteous by observing any law. "He is alive and righteous and saved by faith." Even so, Luther admonished, a true believer demonstrates his faith by good works, "Truly, if faith is there, he cannot hold back; he proves himself, breaks out into good works . . . . Everything that he lives and does is directed to his neighbor's profit, in order to help him . . . . That is what Christ meant when at last he gave no other commandment than love." So faith and love, Christ and salvation, law and especially gospel—these define Luther's approach to reading the New Testament in a God-pleasing and edifying way.[106]

In his September Testament, Luther did not provide a specific preface for any of the four gospels or for the book of Acts. Presumably, he thought his "Foreword" would suffice for the first five books, but when he got to the Pauline epistles, he provided a preface for each, including a lengthy one for Romans (eleven pages in the September Testament as compared to just four for the foreword)—the book that Luther described as "really the chief part of the New Testament and . . . truly the purest gospel." Once again, however, he bemoaned the fact that "it has been badly obscured by glosses and all kinds of idle talk." So Luther offered a preface to help the reader to a better understanding of this key scriptural text.[107]

He began by offering explanations of significant Pauline terminology: law, sin, grace, faith, righteousness, flesh, and spirit. Luther's comments are insightful, at times, even provocative. An example of the first is his distinction between doing the works of the law and fulfilling the law. When someone does the right thing, either

[105] Also Genesis 22:18; 2 Samuel 7:12–14; Micah 5:2; and Hosea 13:14.
[106] AE 35:357–361 (WA DB 6:2–10).
[107] AE 35:365–366 (WA DB 7:2).

afraid of punishment or desiring a reward, because the law says that he must, he shows that deep down in his heart, he dislikes, resents, and even hates the law for without it, he would much prefer to be doing the opposite. This shows the futility of trying to be saved by works of the law.[108]

Perhaps provocative is Luther's statement that "unbelief alone commits sin." But again, what Luther was emphasizing is that it is the heart that matters. If faith makes the heart right, then good works follow. But when there is no faith, the heart remains wrong, and evil works follow. So "before good or bad works take place," wrote Luther, " . . . there must first be in the heart faith or unbelief. Unbelief is the root, the sap, and the chief power of all sin."[109]

So what then is faith? Luther answered, it "is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that the believer would stake his life on it a thousand times." And where does it come from? "Faith . . . is a divine work in us which changes us and makes us to be born anew of God." And what is the result? "It is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. It is impossible for it not to be doing good works incessantly. It does not ask whether good works are to be done, but before the question is asked it has already done them, and is constantly doing them." Faith then "is called 'the righteousness of God' because God gives it, and counts it as righteousness for the sake of Christ our Mediator, and makes a man to fulfil his obligation to everybody . . . . [T]hrough faith a man becomes free from sin and comes to take pleasure in God's commandments."[110]

In the second part of his preface to Romans,[111] Luther summarized each chapter and showed how the epistle moved logically from one topic to the next—from sin to justification to good works to the ongoing struggle with sin to the comfort of predestination to Christian living, obedience to temporal authorities, and consideration for the weak. Clearly, Paul covers a lot of ground, and so, so did Luther in summarizing what he called "the daily bread of the soul."[112]

The prefaces for the other Pauline epistles, as well as those for each of Peter's epistles and one for all three of John's, are much shorter than the one for Romans. Nonetheless, there are Lutheran themes like "law and gospel" in several of them.[113] In each of these prefaces, Luther identified a theme and then described briefly how the apostle developed it through the chapters of the book. Sometimes, he offered a

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[108] AE 35:366–368 (WA DB 7:2–6).
[109] AE 35:369 (WA DB 7:6–8).
[110] AE 35:370–371 (WA DB 7:8–10).
[111] AE 35:372–380 (WA DB 7:12–26).
[112] AE 35:365 (WA DB 7:2).
[113] Edwards, *Printing*, 116, found law and gospel in the prefaces for 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Timothy, Titus, 2 Peter, the three epistles of John, and even Revelation.

word or two regarding the circumstances that prompted the writing (e.g., 1 Corinthians[114] and Galatians[115]), but more often he just summarized the contents. So, for example, Luther did not refer to Paul's imprisonment in connection with Philippians or with 2 Timothy[116] or to his direction to Titus to appoint clergy for Crete.[117] He did not even say that Onesimus was a runaway slave in the preface to Philemon, although he does mention his master.[118]

The prefaces are not especially polemical in terms of naming names and factions. Luther did not directly mention the papacy or the monks, and he failed to identify "the man of sin [*der mensch der sunden*]" or "the child of perdition *[das kind der verderbung*]" in 2 Thessalonians 2 with the pope.[119] But Luther did apply the New Testament to his own times in these prefaces. So in that same preface to 2 Thessalonians, he referred Paul's rebuke of idleness to the clergy of Luther's day.[120] Likewise, in the preface to 2 Timothy, he maintained that Paul's prophecies regarding the end-time teachers were "all too amply fulfilled in our clergy."[121] In his preface to Romans, Luther referred to "wranglers and sophists" who taught that one should prepare himself for grace by works.[122] In introducing 1 Corinthians, he said, "For it was as in our day. . . . There are many mad saints (we call them factious spirits, fanatics and heretics) who have become wise and learned all too quickly and, because of their great knowledge and wisdom, cannot live in harmony with anybody."[123]

Perhaps the most striking reference to the situation of the church in Luther's own times comes in his preface to the Johannine epistles when he wrote:

> The spirit of Antichrist . . . is today for the first time really in full sway. For although people do not now publicly deny with their lips that Christ has come in the flesh, they do deny it with their hearts, by their teaching and life. For he who would be righteous and saved by his own works and deeds is as much as

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[114] "St. Paul . . . had taught his Corinthians Christian faith and freedom from the law. But then the mad saints came along, and the immature know-it-alls. They broke up the unity of doctrine and caused division among the believers." AE 35:380–381 (WA DB 7:82).

[115] "The Galatians had been brought up by St. Paul to the true Christian faith, from the law to the gospel. After his departure, however, false apostles came along." AE 35:384 (WA DB 7:172).

[116] AE 35:385, 389 (WA DB 7:210, 272).

[117] AE 35:389 (WA DB 7:284).

[118] AE 35:390 (WA DB 7:292).

[119] For the preface, see AE 35:387–388 (WA DB 7:250). Luther's marginal note at 2 Thessalonians 2:4, WA DB 7:254, does explain that "sitting in the temple" refers to the "government of Antichrist [*widderchrists*]" in Christendom who substitutes his commands for God's, but Luther does not mention the papacy.

[120] AE 35:388 (WA DB 7:250).

[121] AE 35:389 (WA DB 7:272).

[122] AE 35:367–368 (WA DB 7:6).

[123] AE 35:380–381 (WA DB 7:82).

> denying Christ, since Christ has come in the flesh for the very purpose of making us righteous and saving us without our works, by his blood alone.[124]

Clearly, this statement equates opposition to Luther's fundamental teaching with the "spirit" of antichrist, but it still falls short of calling pope or anyone else *the* Antichrist.

Besides the foreword and the prefaces, Luther also employed marginal notes in order to help his readers get the most out of their time with the text. According to Mark Edwards, the September Testament contains 298 such notes. That does not seem like a lot, given that there were 401 pages of biblical text, but they were unequally distributed with some books like Matthew, Romans, and 1 Corinthians receiving many (88, 50, and 45 respectively) and most other books, either few or none at all (two books with two, five books with one, and seven with none).[125] Perhaps the easiest explanation for this is that Luther just ran out of time.

Luther used the notes to identify people, places, and terms *and* to direct readers to an evangelical understanding of the text. According to Edwards, more than 80 percent of the notes were theological and of these half dealt with themes prominent in Luther's theology at this time—Christian liberty, law and gospel, faith and works, and promise.[126] For a sampling of Luther's notes, consider those on Matthew 5–7, the Sermon on the Mount.[127]

There are nineteen notes in this section altogether.[128] A couple of them simply explain unfamiliar terms. For example, Luther described "Racha" as a scraping of the throat that showed anger[129] and identified the "tax collectors [die zollner]" as godless agents of the Romans.[130] But Luther used many more notes to express strictly theological concerns, in particular, to bring out the spiritual side of Jesus' words. For instance, "peace makers" follow the example of Christ, who has made peace for us with God;[131] the righteousness of the Pharisees consists of outer works and appearances, but Christ demands a righteousness of the heart;[132] and "plucking out the

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[124] AE 35:393 (WA DB 7:326).

[125] Edwards, *Printing*, 117.

[126] Edwards, *Printing*, 117–118.

[127] WA DB 6:26–38.

[128] Luther identified each note by putting a word or phrase from the text in parentheses. Thus, the first note comments on *besitzen* (Matt 5:4) and the last on *thut* (Matt 7:24). Just one, on *richten* (Matt 7:1), lacks the parentheses. Perhaps it is a printer's error.

[129] WA DB 6:28, "Racha ist das rauch scharren ym halss, und begreyffet alle zornige zeychen."

[130] WA DB 6:30, "(zollner) heyssen latinisch Publicani und sind gewesen die der Romer rendte unnd zol bestanden haten, unnd waren gemeyniglich got loße heyden, da hyn von den Romern gesatzt."

[131] WA DB 6:26, "Die fridfertigen sind mehr den fridsamen, nemlich, die den frid machen furdern und erhalten unter andern, wie Christus uns bey got hatt frid gemacht."

[132] WA DB 6:28, "Der phariseer fromkeyt steht alleyn in ausserlichen wercken und scheyn Christus aber foddert des herzen fromkeyt."

lustful eye" takes place when the lust of the eyes is killed and done away with in the heart.[133] Luther identified the "holy thing" that one should not give to dogs as "God's Word,"[134] the dogs as those who persecute the word,[135] and the swine as those who drown themselves in fleshly desire and do not follow the word.[136]

In a couple of places, Luther restricted the application of a passage. The prohibition of swearing, Luther wrote, did not apply when love for one's neighbor or the honor of God required it (Matt 5:34).[137] Similarly, the prohibition against resisting evil (Matt 5:39), Luther noted, was meant to forbid personal vengeance but not action by the government when appealed to by oneself or through one's neighbor out of love.[138]

A question that always arises in connection with the Sermon the Mount is: how do people ever do all that Christ commands? Luther answered this in a final note on our Lord's final admonition both to hear and do what Christ has said. Luther noted that such doing requires faith. All works that look good but are done without faith are sin. But where faith is present, works that are truly good must follow. When Christ says, "Do," he means, "Do it from a pure heart." But faith alone purifies the heart; and that kind of righteousness stands firm against all the power of hell, for it is built through faith upon the rock that is Christ.[139] And with that note, Luther has brought our Lord's sermon into the framework of what Luther always taught about the Christian life: faith and good works in that order.

The reformer did not very often explicitly criticize the papacy or the monks in his notes. But there was one such note in the Sermon on the Mount. On Matthew 5:19, Luther wrote, "The papistic crowd does this [that is, "loosen" one of the least of these commandments] by saying that these commands of Christ are not

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[133] WA DB 6:30, "Geystlich auß reyssen, ist hie gepotten, das ist, wenn der augen lust getodtet wirt ym herzen unnd abethun."

[134] WA DB 6:36, "das heyligthum ist gottes wortt da durch alle ding geheyligett werden."

[135] WA DB 6:36, "hund sind die das wort verfolgenn."

[136] WA DB 6:36, "sew seind, die ersoffen ynn fleyschlichem lust, das wort nicht achten."

[137] WA DB 6:30, "Alles schweren und eyden ist hie verpotten, das der mensch von yhm selber thutt, wens aber die lieb, nodt, nutz des nehisten, odder gottis ehre foddert, ist wolthun, gleych wie auch der zorn verpotten ist. Unnd doch loblich wenn er aus liebe und zu gottes ehren, erfoddert wirt."

[138] WA DB 6:30, "niemant soll sich selb rechen noch rach suchen auch fur gericht, auch nitt rach begeren. Aber die ubirkeytt des schwerds, sol solchs thun, vonn yhr selbs odder durch den nehisten aus lieb ermanet unnd ersucht."

[139] WA DB 6:38, "(thut) Hie foddert Christus auch den glawben, denn wo nit glaub ist, thut man die gepot nitt, Ro. 3. Unnd alle gutte werck nach dem scheyn, on glawbenn geschehenn seyn sund Dagegen auch wo glawb ist, mussen recht gutte werck folgen, das heysset Christus (thun) von reynnem herzen thun. Der glawb aber reynigt das herz. Act. 15. Und solche fromkeytt, steht vest wider alle wind, das ist alle macht der hellen, denn sie ist auff den felß Christum, durch den glawbenn gebawet. Gutte werck on glawben, seyn der torichtenn iunckfrawen lampen on ole."

commands of Christ but counsels."[140] But there are not too many other notes like that. Edwards asserts that only five marginal notes attack popes, monks, or nuns directly: three in 1 Corinthians, one in 2 Corinthians, and one in Matthew.[141]

My examination of these books revealed only four. I found two in Matthew and two in 1 Corinthians but none in 2 Corinthians. Besides Matthew 5:19, Luther leveled another criticism against the papacy in a note on "the abomination of desolation" in Matthew 24:15. Luther explained the phrase as a reference to something that "has a beautiful outward appearance of holiness before the world by which true holiness is ruined, as is the pope's regime and was the idolatry of the Jews and heathen in earlier times."[142] In a note on 1 Corinthians 3:4, Luther wrote, "Here Paul condemns the papacy and all sects."[143] In a note on 1 Corinthians 7:35, he observed that "Paul does not want to forbid marriage to anyone as now happens through law and vows with priests, monks, and nuns."[144] Perhaps Edwards also had in mind a note from 2 Corinthians 5:11, in which Luther referred to tyrannical treatment of the people with "banning" and "other outrageous commands,"[145] but I found no clear mention of either popes or regular clergy in Luther's notes on 2 Corinthians.

But the paucity of such comments did not keep Luther's opponents from criticizing his September Testament. Duke George forbade its sale in his part of Saxony[146] and his court theologian, Jerome Emser, Luther's "Leipzig goat,"[147] came out with a lengthy criticism already in 1523 and another one in 1524,[148] and then a few years

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[140] WA DB 6:28, "Also thut der Papisten hauff, sagen, dise gepott Christi seyen nicht gepott sondern redte."

[141] Edwards, *Printing*, 203 n. 26.

[142] WA DB 6:106, "Diser grewel fur got mus eyn schon auserlich ansehen der heylickeyt fur der wellt haben damitt die recht heylickeyt verwustet wirt, wie des Bapsts regiment unnd vor zeytten der iuden und heyden abgotterey waren."

[143] WA DB 7:94, "Hie hat Paulus das Bapstum und alle secten verdampt."

[144] WA DB 7:106, "Paulus wil niemant die ehe verpieten, wie yzt durch gesetz unnd gelubd geschicht, bey pfaffen, monchen, und nonnen."

[145] WA DB 7:150, "(faren schon) Das ist, wyr tyrannisiern noch treyben die leutt nicht, mit bannen und ander freuelen regimenten, denn wyr furchten Got."

[146] Volz, "Einleitung," 59*, and Brecht 2:53. For the text, see Hermann Gelhaus, *Der Streit um Luthers Bibelverdeutschung im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1989–1990), 2:9–10.

[147] For Emser's biography, see Agostino Borromeo, "Emser, Hieronymus," *OER*, s.v.

[148] *Auss was gründ und ursach Luthers dolmatschung uber das nawe testament dem gemeinen man billich vorbotten worden sey* (Leipzig: Wolffgang Stöckel, [1523]), http://gateway-bayern.de/VD16+E+1089. Extensive excerpts are available in Gelhaus, *Streit,* 2:17–51. Emser wrote another critique of Luther's Bible, his *Annotationes Hieronymi Emser uber Luthers naw Testament gebessert und emendirt* (Dresden: [Emserpresse], 1524), http://gateway-bayern.de/VD16+E+1090. According to Gelhaus, *Streit*, 1:27–56, 144–158, Emser objected to Luther's translation on three grounds: (1) it was not authorized by the church; (2) Luther had abandoned the Vulgate; and (3) he had translated inaccurately for the sake of his false doctrine.

after that, produced his own rendition of the New Testament, ironically, based almost entirely on Luther's translation![149] They recognized then what is obvious today, that by means of notes, prefaces, and illustrations, the September Testament was advancing Luther's cause among the German-speaking population of Europe, especially among those who could read;[150] but, of course, from Luther's perspective, the "extra" material was all secondary to the biblical text itself that Luther—and Lutherans—believed was the real source of what he was preaching and teaching.

By the time that Luther's September Testament came off the press, he and his colleagues were already hard at work on the Old Testament, and, as we have already noted, getting the best possible Bible in the German language remained Luther's objective for the rest of his life. But the September Testament of 1522 was the first step—and a giant step it was.

The German Bible was the most important of Luther's publications, but there were many more; together, they demonstrate Luther's readiness to employ the new technology of his day. The printing press was revolutionizing society, but Luther recognized it chiefly as a vehicle for making the word of God available to all. We, too, are living at a time when new technologies are transforming the world, but they cannot change human beings. We are still sinners in need of a Savior. Perhaps Luther's example can inspire us to use the resources of our times to do what he did in his: get the gospel out to all.[151]

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[149] *Das naw testament nach lawt der Christlichen kirchen bewerten text, corrigirt und widerumb zu recht gebracht* (Dreszden: Wolffgang Stöckel, 1527). Gelhaus, *Streit,* 2:52–54, includes Emser's conclusion. Emser's New Testament appeared in the same year as his death. Based largely on Luther's first German New Testament, Emser's version has been examined by Kenneth A. Strand, *Reformation Bibles in the Crossfire: The Story of Jerome Emser, His Anti-Lutheran Critique and His Catholic Bible Version* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ann Arbor Publishers, 1961), 61–73, and Heinz Bluhm, *Luther Translator of Paul: Studies in Romans and Galatians* (New York: Lang, 1984), 133–153, 507–536.

[150] But nonetheless, non-readers were also influenced since "reading" in early modern Europe often meant "reading aloud" and in a social context. See Jean-François Gilmont, "Printing," *OER*, s.v.

[151] Editor's note: To date, there has been no English translation of Luther's German Bible. While such a translation would not be as authoritative as a Bible translated directly from the Hebrew and Greek (such as the Douay-Rheims translation of the Latin Vulgate), an English translation of Luther's translation would help English readers see how Luther understood the text, would put in our language the most significant resource for Lutheran exegesis in the first several centuries after the Reformation, and would make available the marginal notes, cross-references, and illustrations that Reformation-era readers enjoyed and used.

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Reinhold Pieper's Strictly Textual Preaching: Proclaiming Law and Gospel in Accordance with Scripture

Isaac R. W. Johnson

A movement gained momentum in the Missouri Synod some sixty years ago with Richard Caemmerer that ultimately moved the truth of the atonement from one of the chief biblical truths in preaching (if not *the* chief truth) to the only viable message for every sermon.[1] In other words, the cross is not merely to be *a* point in the sermon; the cross must be *the* point—every time. As Donald Deffner wrote in 1991, "The forgiveness of sins is not just 'another doctrine in the Bible' in addition to covenant relationship, Kingdom of God, community, etc. It is *the* message. And it must be 'rightly proclaimed.'"[2] In the Missouri Synod, we often refer to this as law-and-gospel preaching: first you convict sinners (law), then you absolve them with the message of the cross (gospel).

Criticism of the law-gospel dynamic as it often manifests in sermons has taken shape in recent years. Some may be familiar with Adam Koontz's two articles.[3] Others broached this topic in previous years as well, albeit in different ways, including Benjamin Mayes and David Schmitt.[4] The discussion in these articles includes, in part, topics such as law-gospel, Richard Caemmerer, the fivefold use, and the classical Lutheran homiletics of Lutheran fathers such as Luther, Johann Gerhard, Walther, and, most recently, Reinhold Pieper (hereafter simply "Pieper"), the older brother of Francis. It is useful to observe the practices of our fathers in law-gospel dynamics and preaching, since they were dedicated to the same principles as we are while being removed from some of our current tendencies and biases. This study will include a consideration of Pieper's homiletical theology as it pertains to the discussion.

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[1] Richard R. Caemmerer, *Preaching for the Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959).

[2] Donald L. Deffner, *Compassionate Preaching: A Prīmer/Primer in Homiletics*, rev. ed. (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1991), 22.

[3] Adam C. Koontz, "Speak as the Oracles of God: Reinhold Pieper's Classical Lutheran Homiletic," *CTQ* 85, no. 1 (January 2021): 23–36; and Adam C. Koontz, "From Reinhold Pieper to Caemmerer: How Our Preaching Changed," *CTQ* 85, nos. 3–4 (July–October 2021): 193–213.

[4] Benjamin T. G. Mayes, "The Useful Applications of Scripture in Lutheran Orthodoxy: An Aid to Contemporary Preaching and Exegesis," *CTQ* 83, nos. 1–2 (January–April 2019): 111–135. David Schmitt, "Richard Caemmerer's Goal, Malady, Means: A Retrospective Glance," *CTQ* 74, nos. 1–2 (January–April 2010): 23–38.

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One question, as raised by some of these recent writers, could be phrased as follows: Is it enough to preach exactly what the sermon text is saying with the express goal of, for example, teaching a divine truth or training in righteousness (as Koontz put it, "If it is in the text, one discusses it. If it is not, one does not"[5]), or must the goal of every sermon be to convict sinners and absolve them with the message of the cross through the given text? The way a pastor answers this question will profoundly impact the liturgical catechesis of his congregation. It has, at least in my experience and in recent decades, almost always been answered in favor of centralizing the atonement in the theme of the sermon. But the authors mentioned above, from both of our seminaries, have raised critical voices. They are not critical of the cross, but they advocate complementary homiletical techniques in the sermon, not limited to but including the fivefold use of 2 Timothy 3:16 and Romans 15:4.

I argue in this essay that, although we must preach repentance unto forgiveness, not all repentance-forgiveness preaching is scriptural (*schriftgemäß*). In reaching this conclusion we will (I) summarize some of the recent criticism of the law-gospel dynamic as it pertains to preaching, (II) survey the role of Scripture in Pieper's homiletical theology, and (III) draw clear boundaries for scriptural preaching as described in his *Evangelical Lutheran Homiletics.*[6] We will end by (IV) examining the impact of Pieper's teachings on preaching law and gospel today.

I. State of the Question
Law-and-Gospel Preaching: What Is the Real Issue?

Two criticisms of the law-gospel dynamic in Lutheran preaching have emerged that are closely related and yet, in my estimation, must be distinguished. The first concern is that the law-gospel dynamic functions as a "procrustean bed"[7] or a "stencil,"[8] forcing the sermon outline for every text into something like the following: (I) How does this text show our sin? (II) How does this text show our Savior? This interplay is caricatured in many ways, such as (I) You should feel bad, but (II) Jesus died for you, so you can feel good. Or perhaps, (I) You have to do all these things, but (II) Don't worry about it, because Jesus did it all for you. These caricatures fail to address a legitimate concern. Indeed, the problem is not so much with the outline of law-then-gospel itself. If the scriptural text says it this way, then that

[5] Koontz, "From Reinhold Pieper to Caemmerer," 210.

[6] Reinhold Pieper, *Evangelisch-Lutherische Homiletik: Nach der Erläuterung über die* Praecepta Homiletica *von Dr. J. J. Rambach* (Milwaukee: Germania, 1895). Concordia Publishing House reprinted the text without any change in 1905.

[7] Mayes, "Useful Applications," 115.

[8] Richard Lischer, *A Theology of Preaching: The Dynamics of the Gospel* (Durham, NC: Labyrinth Press, 1992), 43.

is a good outline. The concern is, apparently, when *every* sermon outline takes this form, regardless of the expression of the text.

What I find interesting is that, with regard to the scholarship, everyone seems to complain about wooden law-then-gospel preaching, while no one actually espouses it. I have found no Lutheran scholar demanding that every sermon begin with the law and end with the gospel. On the contrary, I have seen the tendency to use law-gospel as a stencil criticized on every side, even among those who might have been considered proponents of such preaching. Consider Donald Deffner, who demands that repentance unto the forgiveness of sins must always be preached. He states as much in a note to the reader in *Compassionate Preaching*: "In other words, it is still our task to preach Law and Gospel *every* Sunday, no matter what the text is, and to do so *dialogically*."[9] He is a dogged proponent of the law-gospel dynamic. Nonetheless, he states in chapter 2, "Preaching repentance to the forgiveness of sins is never laminated to the sermon. That is, the Gospel should never be 'glued on' to the end of the message. It should sprout from the text and be an implicit part of the sermon as a whole."[10] The expression of law-gospel preaching is supposed to be unique every Sunday as it organically flows from the text. In other words, good law-gospel preaching is supposed to be textual preaching.

Caemmerer has likewise been criticized since his days teaching at the seminary in St. Louis because of his homiletics teaching on goal, malady, means. He has, however, personally rebuffed the notion that each sermon outline should be (I) goal, (II) malady, (III) means (which corresponds with the law-then-gospel format): "Years of teaching helped to develop the triad of 'goal, malady, means' which seminarians distort into sermon outlines."[11] David Schmitt writes concerning the misunderstanding of Caemmerer, "[Y]ear after year Caemmerer watched as seminarians distorted it (goal, malady, means)."[12]

Who, then, are the critics writing against with regard to this first complaint? Perhaps "wooden law-gospel sermons" in the Missouri Synod can be criticized not so much because that is what has been taught but more because that is how it is often preached. If this were truly the heart of the problem, however, we would have a simple answer: "Work harder, lazy preachers!" It is far easier to look for a little law in a text and then transition into a recitation of AC IV than it is to figure out how *this* text shows my sin and Savior. As big of an issue as laziness is, the problem of

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[9] Deffner, *Compassionate Preaching*, 5–6.

[10] Deffner, *Compassionate Preaching*, 26.

[11] Richard R. Caemmerer, "Stance and Distance," in *The Lively Function of the Gospel*, ed. Robert W. Bertram (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966), 4.

[12] Schmitt, "A Retrospective Glance," 23.

wooden law-gospel preaching would perhaps not garner as much attention if it were not for the second criticism of recent scholarship.

The second complaint is more serious than the first, although it is related: law-gospel preachers always aim at the *atonement*, or in other words, the goal of every sermon is preaching repentance to the forgiveness of sins "no matter what the text is."[13] I refer to this as the repentance-forgiveness approach. This approach does not claim that the atonement is the only thing the Bible says. Rather, the atonement is *the ultimate* thing the Bible says; in other words, whatever the text is saying, it is ultimately communicating the atonement. Therefore, it must always be the clearly communicated heart of every sermon, with every point leading to and flowing out of it. After all, Paul boldly states, "We preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor 1:23) and, shortly thereafter, "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2). Why, then, preach anything but the cross?

To be sure, no one that I have read has suggested that we stop preaching the cross. This is decidedly *not* the point, just as preaching repentance unto forgiveness is not meant to be law-then-gospel on each and every occasion. The problem seems to be when every text has a sort of primary and secondary meaning. The primary meaning is the atonement, and the secondary meaning is whatever the text is literally saying. The pastor is tempted to pass over the literal meaning of the text in order to preach repentance and forgiveness. This is the issue: the divine truths, as presented uniquely in that text, are reduced to unimportance, even to the point of being swallowed up by the need to preach forgiveness.

The issue, then, is not that we preach Christ crucified, repentance unto forgiveness, or the atonement. The concern, as I have come to understand it, is that Christ also called us to teach them to observe "everything whatsoever [πάντα ὅσα]" he has commanded (Matt 28:20). That is to say, the atonement is *a* biblical truth, even the most important biblical truth on which the church stands or falls. The atonement is not, however, the *only* biblical truth, and all biblical truths must be preached in their fullness to the congregation (Acts 20:26–27). Schmitt described this issue with the following words:

> Each time these passages from the Scriptures are encountered, the hearers hear only one part of the story: sin and forgiveness. They see sin and grace at work in the text and, by analogy, hear about sin and grace at work in their lives, yet all the while miss the larger story unfolding in the Scriptures, the eternal fellowship of the triune God and this God's mission in creating, redeeming, and recreating the world to live in fellowship with God.[14]

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[13] Deffner, *Compassionate Preaching*, 6.
[14] Schmitt, "A Retrospective Glance," 36.

Are there methods complementary to the repentance-forgiveness approach that are faithful to Scripture and yet not always aimed at convicting and absolving the sinner in real time? In 2019 Mayes directed his readers (especially through Johann Gerhard and Walther) to remember Scripture's own instruction for application in 2 Timothy 3:16 and Romans 15:4—namely, the fivefold use of Scripture. Mayes noted that this is historically how Lutherans have preached and that it "has been lost and needs to be restored."[15] Likewise Koontz wrote in 2021 on the classical Lutheran homiletic of Pieper, "A textual sermon uses Scripture according to its own internally expressed *fivefold* use (2 Tim 3:16; Rom 15:4). . . . What we have lost, and what Pieper demonstrates and recommends, can be recovered. . . . It can be found and recovered, dusted off, and put to use."[16] We shall commence with some dusting now, not necessarily in the effort to repristinate, but to see what our fathers have to contribute to the current conversation. The fivefold use as such, however, will be only briefly considered.[17] Instead we shall examine Pieper's homiletical theology, especially the role of Holy Scripture in preaching, and learn what it has to teach us about the boundaries of preaching.

II. Pieper's Homiletical Theology: The Primacy of the Text

Pieper's textbook on preaching, *Evangelisch-Lutherische Homiletik* (*Evangelical Lutheran Homiletics*), expounds in depth on centuries of Lutheran teaching on preaching. He includes, in large portions, J. J. Rambach's treatise on homiletics, *Erläuterung über die Praecepta Homiletica* (*Commentary on Homiletical Teachings*), which was published in 1736.[18] He also includes lengthy quotations from many other Lutheran fathers, including Luther, Gerhard, and Walther. Pieper, while contribut-ing much in his *Homiletics*, is careful to build upon centuries of Lutheran homileti-cal teachings. In the introduction to his textbook, Pieper defines preaching with the following words: "Spiritual eloquence is nothing else than the practical competency for speaking in a proper way about divine things derived from Holy Scripture. This competency for speaking is bestowed by God and acquired through certain means in order to lead the listeners to the knowledge and adoption of the

[15] Mayes, "Useful Applications," 117.

[16] Koontz, "Speak as the Oracles of God," 35.

[17] For an explanation of the five uses, see Mayes, "Useful Applications," 123–130.

[18] This treatise served as the homiletics textbook for Walther and other predecessors of Pieper. Johann Jacob Rambach, *Erläuterung über die praecepta homiletica: von dem seligen auctore zu unterschiedenen mahlen in collegiis vorgetragen, nun aber aus dessen manuscriptis herausgegeben*, ed. Johann Philipp Fresenius (Giessen: Johann Philip Krieger, 1736).

truth and to salvation."[19] Pieper later bases this definition on the clear witnesses of Holy Scripture from 2 Corinthians 3:5–6; 2 Timothy 3:17; and Hebrews 5:12.[20]

The empowering, legitimizing component that enables the preacher to reach these goals of illumination and blessedness is God working specifically *through Holy Scripture*. As he states later, "The norm of holy eloquence is Holy Scripture, that inexhaustible fount of heavenly truths."[21] To that point, Pieper commented that the "essential difference" between preaching and a public speech is that the worldly speech takes its topic from life and a Christian sermon takes its topic from Holy Scripture.[22] Any preacher who has a topic outside the text of Holy Scripture is not really preaching at all. He is merely giving a speech.

There is a tendency in Lutheran preaching to take the view that the Bible is the only viable *starting* point, but that every sermon must move to consider another "text"—that is, the context of the listeners. The Bible is 50 percent of the sermon material, while the listeners are the other 50 percent. One gets this impression from Deffner, who wrote, "True, a sermon which starts in the world and never gets into the Bible is not a Biblical sermon. But the sermon which starts in the Bible and stays in the Bible is not biblical, either!"[23] To be sure, Deffner's point was that the preacher must apply the text to the listener's life, combating what was, in his opinion, academic lecturing that was "lethal—supernaturally dull."[24] While Pieper avidly avoids dry preaching and would certainly agree with the necessity of applying the text to the hearers present,[25] a reader would, nevertheless, find no such statement in his *Homiletics*. Regarding the function of the text for the sermon, he writes:

> A passage of the *divine* Word shall serve as the basis of the *divine* sermon (1 Thessalonians 2:13) but not merely as a building rests on its foundation. Rather, as much as possible is to be taken from the text as material for the construction of the sermon . . . since Holy Scripture is complete, containing everything that is necessary for faith and life, there are appropriate texts for every topic in which the preacher is to instruct his listeners.[26]

While admittedly leaving a small caveat in the words "as much as possible," Pieper's view is that the Bible is sufficient for preaching to the hearers. He does not start with the Bible and move away from it. The text forms the foundation *and* as much of the

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[19] Pieper, *Homiletik*, x. All translations are the author's own.
[20] Pieper, *Homiletik*, xv.
[21] Pieper, *Homiletik*, xviii.
[22] Pieper, *Homiletik*, xv.
[23] Deffner, *Compassionate Preaching*, 30.
[24] Deffner, *Compassionate Preaching*, 30.
[25] "Through the explanation, the listeners have come to understand the truths of the text; it cannot be doubted that these truths must now be applied." Pieper, *Homiletik*, 275.
[26] Pieper, *Homiletik*, 22.

building material for the sermon as possible. This is not to say that the listeners are ignored in any way, but that the text itself provides the material for addressing their lives. The preacher, according to Pieper, shall start in the Bible and stay there as he addresses his hearers, and each application shall be grounded in the biblical text; anything else is a human invention.[27] Pieper consistently applies this principle of Scripture throughout his *Homiletics*.

A summary of the benefits of the scriptural text for the sermon is found in chapter II, on the selection of the text:

> On the other hand, the advantages which the text itself offers the preacher are not meager; the text gives him, namely, *the material* for the sermon, *leads him deeper into the Scriptures* and yet *restricts him.* Regarding the first point, the word of Hüffel is entirely correct: "If one is in a dilemma for finding material, all he needs to do is open the Bible. Now he will have the dilemma of deciding what to choose first from the abundance which is there." This is so true about the Bible because there are no two texts which are completely the same. They may indeed teach the same doctrine, even the same point of the same doctrine, but they will nevertheless have differences. The perspective, the context, some addition, often a single word, will give a unique imprint to every text through which it differentiates itself from others which may be very similar. As there are not two people among the millions who are exactly alike, so it is with the texts of Holy Scripture. Thus the preacher has, to some extent, new material with every new text, if he is only willing to put in the effort to recognize what is unique to his text. He can never "run out of sermons." The one who finds himself in that situation often has his own sloth to blame.
>
> The careful study of the text also leads the preacher *deeper into Holy Scripture*. A text may be short, but it will contain a divine truth. If a text is sharply envisaged according to its context, compared with parallel texts, etc., the preacher will not merely taste from the bubbling water of life, he will dive into it. The more he reads, sinks into and lives in Scripture, the more he will preach in accordance with Scripture.
>
> The text likewise *restricts* the preacher, forcing him to remain on topic. He needs only to interpret the text, for also the parallel texts and whatever is retrieved from elsewhere may serve only this purpose. In other words, he is to explain, prove and establish the unity of the truths given in the text clearly in the theme. The text draws boundaries for the preacher in which he is to move and preach his sermon, so that he does not go on to a myriad of points or get

[27] Pieper, *Homiletik*, 24.

> "stuck in a rut" [*"ins Waschen" kommen*] as Luther says. Thus results the necessary requirement: *no textless sermons, only text-sermons.*[28]

The biblical text is the soul that animates the sermon. It provides an inexhaustible source of material, leading the preacher deeper and deeper into the divine truths of God. Here Pieper expresses a great *flexibility* in his homiletical theology. The text also has the essential function of *restriction*, preventing the pastor from voicing his own human ideas mixed in with or even supplanting the divine truths expressed in the text. This view of Scripture reflects the oft-quoted words of Gregory the Great: "Scripture is like a river . . . broad and deep, shallow enough for a lamb to go wading and deep enough for an elephant to swim."[29] Accordingly we will now consider the restrictive and flexible qualities of textual preaching according to Pieper.

III. Pieper's Homiletical Theology: The Boundaries of the Text

The Restriction of the Text

Caemmerer warned that being overly restricted to the text would "fence in the essential vitality of the message."[30] Although this is true in one important respect, as we will see later, the flexibility and depth of all passages of Scripture enable the restrictive nature of the text to *provide* vitality to preaching. In chapters IV and V, Pieper covers the theme and arrangement of the sermon. During his discussion, he explains that the content of the theme must be "strictly textual" or "strictly in accordance with the text" (*streng textgemäß*), a concept which he applies throughout the textbook.[31] This term encapsulates the role of Scripture in Pieper's homiletical theology. Pieper provides a thorough definition under point 3 of chapter IV:

> The first indispensable requirement which must be placed upon a theme is that it must be strictly textual. No preacher gets a pass from penetrating into the true sense of the text and understanding it from all sides, and that rightly. He is to explain the text according to the actual intention of the writer. The preacher relies on the text and is legitimized by it before the congregation. A false legitimation is as bad as having none at all; indeed, it is much worse.
>
> Thus no foreign sense is to be shoved into the text. Instead the words of the text are to be taken in the sense in which they must be held according to their context. Otherwise the preacher makes himself guilty of a *pious deception*

[28] Pieper, *Homiletik*, 23–24.

[29] Gregory the Great, "Epistola ad Leandrum" 4, in *S. Gregorii Magni Moralia in Job*, ed. Marc Adriaen, *Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina* 143 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1979), 6.

[30] Caemmerer, *Preaching for the Church*, 90.

[31] Pieper, *Homiletik*, 86.

> *which is nonetheless deception* and, moreover, cannot be excused due to the multifaceted contents of Holy Scripture [emphasis mine]. If the listeners notice that the sense which the preacher is featuring in the text is not actually there, giving another sense to the text on different occasions, he will lose them, and they will lose their trust in him. Without the listeners' trust, the sermon cannot reach its goal.
>
> The theme is only textual if it is constructed from the rightly understood text and has taken into itself not only the doctrines given in the text but also the special characteristics of the same. *The theme can only be called strictly textual if it is only applicable to the present text and not to a second or third text* [emphasis mine]. If the same *doctrine* is contained in several texts, the present text will nonetheless differentiate itself from parallel passages through the setting or some word, a phrase or a circumstance. . . . In any case, those themes are not textual which are suitable for several different texts which, although they do indeed have the same content in the main idea, nonetheless diverge from one another in their specific characteristics. . . .
>
> Hüffel rightly says, "We condemn every sermon which denies the substance of the rightly understood word of Scripture, and we at least cannot refer to it as scriptural [*schriftgemäß*]. The same applies to those sermons which contain in their major divisions something completely different from that which is contained in the passage of Scripture itself, taking up entirely meaningless tangents and leaving the main idea untouched."[32]

A sermon is strictly textual which not only conveys the message of the particular text but also does so according to the unique characteristics of that text. Being restricted to a text does not "fence in" the vitality of the message. In Pieper's opinion, the exact opposite is true: the restriction of the text *provides* the vitality of the message. In fact, if the theme is so nondescript or generic that it can be applied to many different texts, he refuses, along with Hüffel, to call it scriptural. Indeed, a sermon that floats out in the ether of doctrine or application without being grounded in the unique characteristics of the text loses the vitality of biblical preaching because the true power of preaching flows from the specific, inspired, and written word of God.

Throughout his textbook, Pieper provides plentiful biblical examples to illustrate his points, and he does so here as well. Consider Philippians 4:4 ("Rejoice in the Lord always") and Isaiah 61:10 ("I will greatly rejoice in the LORD . . . for he has clothed me"). If the preacher were to pick the theme "the joy of believers in the Lord," it would not be strictly textual either for the first text or the second text, in Pieper's opinion. The reason why this theme would not be strictly textual is that it

[32] Pieper, *Homiletik*, 86.

is too broad. A strictly textual theme for Philippians 4:4 could be "the *constant* joy of believers in the Lord," whereas Isaiah 61:10 could have the theme "the *reason* for the joy which believers have in the Lord." Both texts contribute related yet unique divine truths to the reality of the joy of the Lord. The restriction of the text *provides* vitality to the proclamation.

These excerpts clearly show that Pieper would not approve of a *formulaic* law-gospel or even sin-forgiveness way of preaching, due to the implicit neglect of the text to be interpreted. As far as I have seen, however, no one is advocating formulaic sermons. Instead, Pieper contributes to the conversation by requiring the sermon to be scriptural: *The sermon that preaches law-gospel or repentance and forgiveness in a way that fails to communicate the content and unique characteristics of the text is not a scriptural sermon (*schriftgemäß*)*. To preach repentance unto forgiveness is indeed necessary (Luke 24:44–47). Teaching that certain doctrines are primary with others being secondary is also permissible. Preaching repentance unto forgiveness to the *neglect* of a given text, however, is a human invention. How could preaching repentance unto forgiveness ever be a human invention? In this case, it is the notion that the divine truth communicated uniquely in the text is superfluous, tangential, inapplicable, dull, etc. compared with the divine truth of repentance unto forgiveness. The Holy Spirit shall lead us into *all* truth (John 16:13).

Some who have grown discontented with repetitive law-gospel preaching have sought refuge in the fivefold use. Although there is much to be gained by applying Scripture according to its own dictates, the fivefold use can quickly become a stencil for wooden, repetitive, predictable, and non-scriptural preaching. In other words, the fivefold use can also offend against the restrictive nature of strictly textual preaching.

To be sure, Pieper cites Walther and requires the application of the fivefold use: "these five uses (*usus*) of God's Word, given by the Holy Spirit himself, shall serve as the foundation for every sermon on the Word of God."[33] Immediately after this, however, Pieper quotes Rambach, who complained that there were preachers who considered it a "mortal sin" if they did not use each of the five uses at least briefly in every sermon. According to such preachers, a sermon had to have (I) a little doctrine, (II) a little refutation of heretics, (III) a little discipline, (IV) a little training in righteousness, and (V) a little comfort. These preachers were making a false inference. They thought that, since Paul commanded the five uses in 2 Timothy 3 and Romans 15, they were required to lead all the texts of Scripture through each of the five uses,

[33] Pieper, *Homiletik*, 289.

> even if they have to drag in the refuting use by the hair and raise old and decomposing heretics from the dead. The listeners get so used to this that they pay no more attention; they know that their pastor always plays on one lyre, and it has five strings. After a while they are no longer affected by his teaching, refutation, discipline, admonition and comfort—especially if this all occurs in a sleepy manner with no emotion or life in it.[34]

This sounds familiar, does it not? Are these not the same complaints leveled at wooden law-gospel preaching that makes the forgiveness won on the cross so utterly predictable that the listeners check out? We have a guitar with two strings: repentance and forgiveness. Indeed, these two problems are perhaps more closely related than we realize. Is not formulaic law-gospel preaching simply a non-scriptural application of the fivefold use, always moving from teaching/admonishing/rebuking to comfort in every text? If we do not carefully observe what is going on here, we preachers are doomed to repeat history, merely discarding one stencil for another.

The issue with formulaic preaching comes back to the principles of textual preaching that Pieper sets out in *Homiletics.* Pieper cites Osiander: "Everything that is presented to the listeners must rest upon a text of Scripture as upon the strongest basis or an unshakable foundation. Indeed, all of those teachings, refutations, chastisements, admonitions and comforts should be derived from the text itself after the correct interpretation of the text has taken place."[35] The correct approach to employing the fivefold use, then, is for the preacher to interpret the text correctly and then to determine which use or uses flow from the text itself. It may be that the preacher decides not to employ one of the uses.[36] If, however, he forces upon the text a foreign meaning by trying, for example, to use a text for comfort that by its nature admonishes, or vice versa, he has failed to preach a textual or scriptural sermon.

The problem, then, is not necessarily that preachers try to preach repentance to forgiveness or that they employ the fivefold use, but that they tend to slip from the diverse abundance of divine truths as portrayed uniquely in each text into a routine of their own invention. That is to say, all preachers must fight the tendency to supplant the challenging, divine word with their own simplistic, human word, diligently avoiding what Pieper earlier referred to as a "pious deception." Pieper's teaching on the *restricting* nature of the text protects against such abuse.

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[34] Pieper, *Homiletik*, 290.
[35] Pieper, *Homiletik*, 25.
[36] Pieper, *Homiletik*, 290.

The Flexibility of the Text

When considering the restricting function of the biblical text in Pieper's homiletical theology, one could quickly come to such a conclusion as this: "If it is in the text, one discusses it. If it is not, one does not."[37] How is one to understand such a rule? In its narrowest sense, this maxim could be taken to mean that only that which is *expressly* in the text is to be discussed. Under such constraints, preaching on forgiveness, and especially the doctrines of atonement and justification, would be restricted to the relatively few lectionary texts that elaborate on them, and the people would hear about them in the sermon quite rarely. Although Pieper would indeed agree that the sermon must be restricted to the text, he also elaborates on how one is to understand the text in its *context*. In chapter VI, "On the Interpretation of the Arranged Text," Pieper elaborates on context and thereby incorporates quite a bit of flexibility in strictly textual preaching.

Pieper has a high view of the context in the interpretation of the text. The benefit of context is that it casts a "bright light" upon the entire text as well as upon individual words and phrases. For this reason, Pieper states, the context "may not be ignored." Here we can see some agreement with Caemmerer's notion quoted above that the context of the entire Bible also contributes to the vitality of proclamation. Indeed, the consequences of ignoring the context are severe. In comment two of point ten he states, "Without the consideration of the context, it is not only that the actual sense of the text, intended by the Holy Spirit, goes unrealized, but a completely foreign sense is forced into it. This is to say that, without the context, false exegesis is practiced."[38] Although the preacher is to be restricted by his text down to the unique character of that text, those same characteristics will be misunderstood without the context. What, then, is the context of the sermon text in Pieper's homiletical theology?

Pieper defines the context in three categories: "narrow," "broader," and "broadest." The narrow context includes the verses immediately preceding and following the text. In his textbook, Pieper puts the most emphasis on the narrow context. The broader context includes the chapters preceding and following the text. Context in the broadest sense, and of particular interest in this study, includes "partly the writing, or the book, from which the text is taken . . . and partly the entire system of Holy Scripture, that is, all that which is found in the preceding and following biblical writings and belongs to the full explanation of the topic handled in the given text. In short, context in the broadest sense includes the entire parallelism of Holy Scrip-

[37] Koontz, "From Reinhold Pieper to Caemmerer," 210.
[38] Pieper, *Homiletik*, 252–253.

ture."[39] According to Pieper, Scripture interprets Scripture. Without the consideration of the whole of Scripture when researching a text, the true sense will most often or even invariably go misunderstood, replaced with falsehood. This is no groundbreaking doctrine in Lutheran theology but is nonetheless essential in order to understand the next move that Pieper makes in his homiletical theology.

In order for a theme to be strictly textual, Pieper teaches that themes can be directly (*unmittelbar*) in the text with express words. This comes as no surprise. He also teaches, however, that themes can be mediated by the text indirectly (*mittelbar*): "In order to be strictly textual, however, the theme does not need to lie *directly* [*unmittelbar*] in the text. Instead, it can possess this quality if it is derived *indirectly* [*mittelbar*] from the text through a correct inference [*richtige Schlußfolge*]."[40] This is to say that all sermon themes must be in the text, but writing sermons based on inferences, or material deduced from the text, is allowed. Pieper calls upon the example of Christ and the apostles for the right to make such inferences indirectly through the text.[41] Consider, for example, the words of Christ in Matthew 22:31–32. Here our Lord disputes with the Sadducees concerning the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead. In order to prove the truth of this teaching, he cites Exodus 3:6: "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." The truth of the resurrection is not directly in the text. However, the dead must be raised since God is the God of the living and not the dead. Even though the words "resurrection" and "dead" are not in the text at all, it is permitted to preach a sermon on the resurrection from the dead based on this text because of the validity of making accurate inferences (*richtige Schlußfolge*) from the text for the purposes of preaching.

As a second justification for making such inferences, Pieper also calls upon the aforementioned parallelism, or complete harmony of the Scriptures. Since all the truths of Holy Scripture are interconnected as "the links in a chain," it follows that "one can accurately perceive a single truth in a text and then derive many other truths which connect to it."[42] Pieper provides an illustration of deriving truths from a text by quoting Genesis 3:15: "The seed of the woman shall crush underfoot the head of the serpent." He is able to derive three truths (*porismata*) from this text: (I) Christ is a holy person (for no one bound by sin could destroy the devil's kingdom), (II) he is true God (for only God is strong enough to conquer Satan), and (III) there is a resurrection from the dead (for when the power of death is taken away from the

[39] Pieper, *Homiletik*, 252–253.
[40] Pieper, *Homiletik*, 88.
[41] Pieper, *Homiletik*, 278.
[42] Pieper, *Homiletik*, 278.

devil, it has no more power over humanity).[43] All of these teachings would provide valid material in the sermon due to being accurate inferences from the text. It should be noted here that inferences that have only a convoluted or no connection to the text are seen as poor or even false inferences. In sum, Pieper would indeed agree with the notion that we can preach only what is in the text. As can be seen in this example, however, Pieper's allowance for accurate inferences incorporates a tremendous amount of flexibility in strictly textual preaching.

Law and Gospel as Scriptural Context

It could be argued that, since the proper distinction between law and gospel is not applied systematically in his textbook,[44] Pieper does not consider it of primary importance for preaching. When discussing context in the *broadest* sense, however, both law-gospel and repentance unto forgiveness play an important role in the sermon. The following is a brief survey of the role of law and gospel in Pieper's homiletical theology.

Under point six in his chapter on application, Pieper talks about the necessity of preaching the whole body of doctrine, or the entire parallelism of Holy Scripture to the congregation, as noted above in other passages. In this section, Pieper refers to context in the broadest sense as the "whole counsel of God": "With regard to doctrine, it is of particular importance to note that the preacher has the holy duty to preach the entire council of God for salvation. He is to unpack especially the chief doctrines of Holy Scripture thoroughly and understandably."[45] Pieper derives this "holy duty" from Acts 20, where, before the Ephesian elders, Paul declares himself innocent of the blood of all, saying, "[F]or I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God" (v. 27). Pieper elaborates on the contents of that doctrine with the following words:

> Paul had not withheld from his listeners any of the individual teachings, causes or means which the entire counsel of God encompasses. He neither left out, added, or falsified anything. Instead he preached the counsel of God in its whole purity and in its full breadth, so that they had no lack with regard to any teaching. He testifies in particular that "repentance to God and faith toward the Lord Jesus" is the sum (*Summa*) of Christian teaching, or the divine counsel.[46]

[43] Pieper, *Homiletik*, 279.
[44] Koontz, "From Reinhold Pieper to Caemmerer," 210.
[45] Pieper, *Homiletik*, 292.
[46] Pieper, *Homiletik*, 293.

The whole counsel of God includes *all* of the doctrines, causes, and means that God has revealed to us. When considered in light of Pieper's understanding of the interplay between text and context, the unique divine truths of all holy texts require the "bright light" of the parallelism of Holy Scripture, which, according to Acts 20, can be summed up in repentance and faith.

While discussing that body of doctrine that the preacher is obligated to proclaim in its entirety, Pieper explicitly mentions the proper distinction of law and gospel in a quotation of Gerhard:

> 1. The doctrines shall not be awkward or far-fetched, but shall flow out of the text. . . . 2. Law and gospel shall be practiced in the sermons. . . .

[with an emphasis on preaching "law sermons"!]

> 3. The mixing of law and gospel shall be avoided with utmost diligence. According to Luther's witness, the main part of theological understanding consists of one's ability to distinguish between law and gospel precisely.[47]

All the doctrines of Holy Scripture must be proclaimed (I) in a textual way, and (II) with the precise and proper distinction of law and gospel—always. To be sure, law-gospel preaching does not manifest as a sermon outline in Pieper, and he at no time uses it as an exclusive hermeneutic for preaching as we sometimes do today (as when we ask, "Is this text law or gospel?"). It cannot be sustained, however, that law and gospel are non-essential to his homiletical theology. On the contrary, they are part of that necessary bright light, arising from the analogy of faith, that must always be considered in order to understand any given text. Without the proper distinction between law and gospel, there is no strictly textual preaching.

Moreover, Pieper elaborates on the necessity of preaching the comfort of the gospel in sermons. He does this through quotations of both Luther and Walther. Luther's complaint was that many were preaching *about* the faith but not *how* one comes to faith, thus neglecting the piece of Christian doctrine without which no one can understand what faith is:

> For Christ says in Luke 3:8 and Luke 24:27 that *repentance and forgiveness* of sins shall be preached in his name. But many now talk only about forgiveness of sins and say nothing or little about *repentance*, even though there is no forgiveness of sins without repentance. Likewise the forgiveness of sins is preached without repentance, so that the people think that they have already attained the forgiveness of sins and become self assured, lacking the fear of God. *What could be a greater error and sin, greater than all the errors that have come to pass in this world. . . .* We have thus taught and admonished the pastors

[47] Pieper, *Homiletik*, 294–295.

> that they are responsible *to preach the whole gospel* and not one piece without the other.[48]

Here Luther states clearly that both repentance and forgiveness *must* be preached. Moreover, one is not to be preached without the other. Pieper himself added the emphasis in this quotation, indicating that he considers it a great sin, perhaps even the greatest sin, to preach forgiveness without repentance and vice versa.

Pieper also quotes Walther at length to a similar effect, who states the following in consideration of the comforting use as derived from Romans 15:4: "Whereas the use of God's word for teaching is the *foundation*, the use of God's word for *comfort and hope* must be the constant *goal* of all sermons. . . . The sermons which are empty of all comfort for one bearing the cross and afflicted are not true evangelical sermons. . . . The gospel is nothing else than a joyful message, a great comfort-sermon in all its parts."[49] In Walther's words we can observe the twofold purpose of preaching that Pieper set out at the beginning of the textbook. Holy eloquence is given by God, through Holy Scripture, to lead the listeners (I) to the knowledge and adoption of the truth and (II) to salvation.[50] Teaching is the foundation, and comfort (for the true bearer of the cross) is the goal. In fact, it could be argued from this quotation that Pieper believed that the comforting use is necessary in every sermon, provided it is done in accordance with the character of the text.

Properly dividing law and gospel and preaching repentance unto forgiveness are not merely mentioned in Pieper's textbook. The former is an essential distinction in the mind of the preacher and the latter is styled, in part, as the necessary goal of every sermon. It is important to note, however, that these quotations are not mentioned in the chapter on the arrangement of the sermon but in the chapter on application. This is to say that Pieper, along with every other Lutheran homiletician I have read, does not demand a stringent law-then-gospel flow to every sermon. He argues much more for an interpretation-application format that, by means of the fivefold use, should always properly divide law and gospel and have the goal of giving comfort and hope to the true believers.

IV. Conclusion

The homiletical theology that emerges from Reinhold Pieper's textbook offers no "cookie cutter" solutions to sermon preparation and delivery. What Pieper has to offer the current discussion on law-gospel preaching is that *any* stencil imposed upon the text smacks of human invention and undermines the authority of the

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[48] Pieper, *Homiletik*, 334.
[49] Pieper, *Homiletik*, 314–315.
[50] Pieper, *Homiletik*, x.

divine truths presented uniquely in each text and the parallelism of Scripture. This excludes any form of law-then-gospel preaching or even repentance-forgiveness preaching that opposes or neglects the character of the text. However, the same applies to the fivefold use. As we have seen, the useful applications have also been misused by preachers to force a biblical text to say something it is not communicating. Indeed, we should be wary of simply thinking that the fivefold use is the solution to dry law-gospel preaching. If the preacher is determined to preach in a formulaic way, he will do it with one stencil or the other.

The solution to all formulaic and dry preaching is, according to Pieper's homiletical theology, preaching that is *strictly textual* (*streng textgemäß*). He insists that a preacher is not to begin his research on the text with a pre-written sermon in mind. Instead he must be restricted to the message of each text down to its unique character. This unique message can be properly understood only in light of scriptural context in the narrow, broad, and broadest senses. This broadest context includes the proper distinction between law and gospel and the overarching imperative from Christ that we are to proclaim repentance unto forgiveness, based on his atoning death and glorious resurrection. Indeed, we must preach law and gospel, but we must do so in accordance with Scripture.

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The Adiaphorist Controversy and FC X's Teaching on the Church and Temporal Authority

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The COVID-19 pandemic raised questions about when and under what circumstances the civil government can regulate the church's worship practices and right to assemble. As they grapple with such questions, Lutherans ought to consider the witness of the Lutheran symbols. In that spirit, if someone were to ask a reasonably informed Lutheran pastor where Lutherans should look in their confessional writings to find the church's teaching on her relationship to temporal authority, he would likely be able to point to a variety of relevant confessional passages. The more catechetically minded pastor, for example, may well begin his response by pointing to the two catechisms' explanations of the Fourth Commandment,[1] where Luther prescribes obedience to governing authorities and describes the Christian's relationships to both the "fathers of the nation" and "spiritual fathers."[2] He would almost certainly mention the sixteenth article of the Augsburg Confession[3] and Apology,[4] where Melanchthon articulates the proper Evangelical teaching on the temporal realm over against both Anabaptist and monastic misunderstandings. Perhaps he could even buttress Melanchthon's argument against the Anabaptists with Andreae's condemnation of the teaching of Peter Riedemann[5] and other sectarians in the twelfth article of the Solid Declaration.[6] Of course, all of these passages relate to the Lutheran church's teaching on the church and temporal authority, and this hypothetical pastor would be both likely and absolutely right to reference them in connection with it.

He would be less likely, however, to mention the tenth article of the Formula of Concord as part of the confessional witness on ecclesiastical relations with temporal government. This is hardly surprising, as many prominent commentaries on the

[1] Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church,* trans. Charles Arand et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 352, 400–410; Irene Dingel, ed., *Die Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche: Vollständige Neuedition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 864,7–12, 968,10–992,23.

[2] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord,* 408; Dingel, *Bekenntnisschriften*, 986,22–24.

[3] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 48–51; Dingel, *Bekenntnisschriften*, 110,8–113,2.

[4] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 231–233; Dingel, *Bekenntnisschriften*, 543,1–549,5.

[5] Robert Kolb, "The Formula of Concord and Contemporary Anabaptists, Spiritualists, and Anti-trinitarians," *Lutheran Quarterly* 15 (2001): 453–482.

[6] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 657–658; Dingel, *Bekenntnisschriften*, 1600,1–1602,16.

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Book of Concord barely mention a connection between the "Ecclesiastical Practices"[7] that this article addresses and the way in which the church relates to the governing authorities.[8] Moreover, even those commentators who do note the ecclesiastical-temporal dimension of FC X—or at least the conflict and discussions that gave rise to it—have largely been reluctant to attribute to the article itself a coherent doctrine of the church's relation to temporal authority.[9] Consequently, FC X and the Adiaphorist Controversy are infrequently mentioned in the theological discussion of the church's relation to temporal authority—and this despite the fact that many historical treatments of the conflict place the question of the church and governing authorities precisely at the center of the Adiaphorist Controversy.[10]

This situation is as unfortunate as it is understandable because a close examination of the Adiaphorist Controversy reveals that the formulators left the church a helpful and carefully thought-out contribution to her teaching on the church and temporal authority in their article on ecclesiastical practices. Moreover, it is a matter of no small importance that clergy who subscribe to the Formula of Concord and promise to conduct their pastoral ministry in accordance with its teaching[11] understand precisely what the Formula contributes to the discussion so that, when necessary, they can apply its teaching to their own congregations' relationship with the governing authorities. In short, it is both theologically and practically valuable for Lutherans to be aware of the full doctrinal contribution of FC X.

In order to assist pastors and other interested Lutherans as they navigate the increasingly fraught relationship between their churches and their temporal leaders, this paper aims both to demonstrate that FC X offers a coherent and meaningful

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[7] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 515, 635; Dingel, *Bekenntnisschriften*, 1280,16, 1548,5.

[8] E.g., Edmund Schlink, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions*, trans. Paul F. Koehneke and Herbert J. A. Bouman (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), 267–268; Kurt Marquart, "Article X. Confession and Ceremonies," in *A Contemporary Look at the Formula of Concord*, ed. Robert D. Preus and Wilbert H. Rosin (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), 260–270; Gunther Wenz, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, 2 vols. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996), 2:734–749.

[9] Charles P. Arand, Robert Kolb, and James A. Nestingen, *The Lutheran Confessions: History and Theology of The Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 183, for example, claims that the formulators did not write particularly clearly on the relationship between the church and the governing authorities because they disagreed with one another on the topic.

[10] Oliver K. Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002), 156; Irene Dingel, "Historische Einleitung," in *Der Adiaphoristische Streit (1548–1560)*, ed. Irene Dingel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 4,24–5,3. Even Robert Bertram's posthumously published book, hardly a historical treatment of FC X, indicates the connection between the issue of adiaphora and the way in which Christians must interact with "superior secular authority." Robert W. Bertram, *A Time for Confessing*, ed. Michael Hoy, Lutheran Quarterly Books (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 132.

[11] E.g., *Lutheran Service Book: Agenda* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 166.

contribution to the doctrine of the church and temporal authority and to outline the contours of that doctrinal position in light of the Adiaphorist Controversy. To accomplish these goals, it will begin with a brief historical introduction to that controversy and how it shaped the Formula of Concord. Next, it will examine writings from authors on both sides of the Adiaphorist Controversy in order to establish precisely where both sides shared a broad consensus on matters of the church and temporal authority and where they disagreed. Finally, it will present FC X's teaching on the church and temporal authority, both the unspoken assumptions that underlie it and its explicit solution to the controversy that preceded it. In the end, a clearer understanding of what FC X contributes to the confessional witness on the church's relationship with temporal authorities will enable clergy and laity alike to consider the ways in which the institutions of God's right-hand realm can interact more faithfully with the institutions of his left-hand realm.[12]

Historical Introduction to the Adiaphorist Controversy and the Formula of Concord

Although the Wittenberg Reformation began not with the modification of churchly practices but rather with a pastoral and doctrinal dispute that blossomed into a preaching movement, as early as the 1520s, Luther and his fellow reformers had begun reworking the rites and ceremonies of the medieval church to bring them into line with the doctrinal insights of the burgeoning Evangelical movement. In 1523, for example, Luther published a revised and translated version of the church's historic baptismal rite that aimed to centralize the word and ordinance of Christ instead of additional humanly instituted ceremonies.[13] Likewise, the contents—and sometimes the language—of the mass were altered to account for Luther's Evangelical theology,[14] and the number of masses celebrated in the churches was reduced substantially.[15] Various other ceremonies were abolished that the reformers viewed as superstitious violations of the Second Commandment, among which were

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[12] Joel Biermann, *Wholly Citizens: God's Two Realms and Christian Engagement with the World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 111.

[13] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 371–375; Dingel, *Bekenntnisschriften*, 905,10–910,14.

[14] Martin Luther, *An Order of Mass and Communion for the Church at Wittenberg* (1523), vol. 53, pp. 15–40, in *Luther's Works, American Edition*, vols. 1–30, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–76); vols. 31–55, ed. Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–86); vols. 56–82, ed. Christopher Boyd Brown and Benjamin T. G. Mayes (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009–), hereafter AE; Luther, *The German Mass and Order of Service* (1526), AE 53:51–90.

[15] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 68–69; Dingel, *Bekenntnisschriften*, 142,6–16, 143,9–18.

consecration with oil and the exorcism of water and salt.[16] Even the vestments that the clergy wore while they led the services of the church were altered or abolished in some places.[17] Crucially, in Saxony and other areas, these practical changes were carried out under the direction and with the explicit support of evangelically minded governing authorities.[18]

Of course, these changes in the church's liturgical life did not occur without controversy. Indeed, these perceived innovations were a source of serious consternation among the theologians and estates who were still subject to the papal obedience.[19] While Melanchthon responded at length to their displeasure in the Augsburg Confession,[20] the question of ceremonies remained a bone of contention between the Evangelicals and the Romanists long after the conclusion of the Diet of Augsburg.[21]

It was hardly surprising, then, that after many formerly Evangelical estates fell under the control of Romanist authorities in the wake of the Schmalkaldic War of 1546–1547,[22] their new temporal rulers were often intent on restoring the ceremonies that had been changed during the Reformation. Indeed, chief among these restoration-minded rulers was Emperor Charles V himself, who placed an incredibly high value on a unified Western church united under papal obedience.[23] Charles wasted no time in his attempts to institutionalize his desire for unity, promulgating in 1548 the Augsburg Interim, in which he gave some practical concessions to the Protestant side—among them the marriage of clergy and lay communion in both kinds—yet required the Evangelical estates to conform to Roman doctrine and practice in all other respects.[24]

This imperial mandate met significant resistance from Evangelical governments and theologians, including such prominent figures as Philip Melanchthon

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[16] Luther David Peterson, "The Philippist Theologians and the Interims of 1548: Soteriological, Ecclesiastical, and Liturgical Compromises and Controversies within German Lutheranism" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 1974), 131.

[17] Arthur Carl Piepkorn, *The Survival of the Historic Vestments in the Lutheran Church after 1555* (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary School for Graduate Studies, 1956).

[18] James M. Kittelson, *Luther the Reformer: The Story of the Man and His Career* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986), 245.

[19] Robert Kolb and James A. Nestingen, eds., *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 61–63, 65–66.

[20] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 179–183; Dingel, *Bekenntnisschriften*, 413,12–423,9.

[21] Kolb and Nestingen, *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord*, 111, 127–128.

[22] Arand, Kolb, and Nestingen, *The Lutheran Confessions*, 172–173.

[23] Wenz, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, 1:351–358.

[24] Kolb and Nestingen, *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord*, 144–182.

and his fellow faculty members at the University of Wittenberg,[25] Martin Bucer,[26] and the council of the imperial city of Magdeburg.[27] Yet the dissent of these preeminent Protestants was not sufficient to dissuade the emperor from his intended ecclesiastical program, and his Spanish troops quickly began enforcing the provisions of the Interim in many Evangelical areas of South Germany that the war had returned to imperial control.[28] Those who resisted often met with stiff consequences. Many clergy who refused to comply with the Augsburg Interim were removed from their offices and exiled by the temporal authorities.[29] One of the most famous examples was the aforementioned Martin Bucer, who was expelled from Strasbourg on May 1, 1549, because he refused to adopt the Interim in the city and insisted on reserving his right to preach against the emperor and other governing authorities from the pulpit.[30] In short, the political situation was dire for the many Evangelical rulers, preachers, and theologians who were seemingly caught between the Scylla of capitulation to the Roman pontiff and the Charybdis of abandoning the Christians whom they had been called to serve, whether voluntarily or under duress.

One of these Evangelical rulers who struggled to find a way forward in the wake of the Augsburg Interim was Moritz, who by that time had been named Elector of Saxony. Although he had been Charles's ally in the Schmalkaldic War, the emperor's subsequent proclamation put him in an exceedingly difficult situation. He did not want to displease the emperor, but he also knew that a full introduction of the Augsburg Interim would be impossible in heavily Evangelical Saxony, so he sought to find a policy that would placate his superior without angering his populace.[31] His aim was to find a middle ground between the Evangelical church life that had characterized Saxony in the previous few decades and the emperor's demands in the Interim. For this task he assembled a group of theologians from Wittenberg—chief among them Philip Melanchthon—who worked together with his advisors to craft a proposal for church life that later came to be known as the Leipzig Proposal.[32] In keeping with Moritz's twin concerns for the emperor and the people, the proposal

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[25] Hastings Eells, *Martin Bucer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), 396–397.

[26] Martin Bucer, *Ein Summarischer vergriff der Christlichen lehre und Religion/ die man zu Strasburg hat nun in die xxviij. jar gelehret* (Strasbourg: Theodosius Rihel, 1548), http://www.controversia-et-confessio.de/id/cc99d07b-44ed-41db-9a6e-fdb5862a7d5c.

[27] *DER Von Magdeburgk Ausschreyben* (Magdeburg: Hans Walther, 1548), http://www.controversia-et-confessio.de/id/fb3d8c80-b71d-4f3f-89d5-260e0b637512.

[28] Arand, Kolb, and Nestingen, *The Lutheran Confessions*, 176.

[29] Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform*, 106–111.

[30] Eells, *Martin Bucer*, 398–399.

[31] Robert Kolb, *Luther's Heirs Define His Legacy: Studies on Lutheran Confessionalization* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1996), IV 457; Timothy J. Wengert, "Adiaphora," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1:5.

[32] Arand, Kolb, and Nestingen, *The Lutheran Confessions*, 177–179.

begins with a call for obedience to the emperor and then proceeds to outline a compromise position on ecclesiastical practices that would reintroduce many of the objects and ceremonies associated with papal obedience, such as mass vestments, confirmation, and the distinction of foods, without surrendering on issues of doctrine that many Evangelicals saw as the core of the faith.[33]

Among Evangelical preachers and theologians, Moritz's Leipzig Proposal aroused a mixed reaction. A substantial number led by the theological faculty at Wittenberg—later often called the "Philippists" due to their affinity for Melanchthon—generally supported the proposal, arguing that it was permissible to compromise with the emperor on questions of adiaphora to save Evangelical pulpits for Evangelical preachers by preventing their forced expulsion and replacement with Romanist clergy.[34] After all, even though the Leipzig Proposal had institutionalized compromise with the papacy, none of the practices that Melanchthon had rejected in response to the Augsburg Interim were included in it,[35] so the Philippists believed that they could abide it with a clean conscience.[36] Another contingent of theologians and preachers, often called the "Gnesio-Lutherans"—chief among them Matthias Flacius Illyricus, Nicolaus Gallus, and Nicolaus von Amsdorf in Magdeburg[37]—opposed the Leipzig Proposal, arguing that the church was not permitted to consider compromise with the enemies of the gospel, even if the compromises were in matters of adiaphora. The passionate disagreement between the theologians of these two loosely defined groups gave rise to many written exchanges in the following years.

Yet as vehement as the debate over the Leipzig Proposal was, its immediate cause was relatively short lived, as the Augsburg Interim and the Leipzig Proposal both ceased to be official government policy within a few years of their promulgation. Specifically, the Augsburg Interim was a dead letter once the Peace of Passau in 1552 and the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 gave the Evangelical estates the legal right to regulate their own ecclesiastical practices without imperial interference. Consequently, the Leipzig Proposal and its attempt to placate the emperor were no longer needed. However, while the occasion for the dispute may have disappeared—at least in law—the Adiaphorist Controversy, as it was called, lived on in the memories of those who were involved in it long after the events of 1555.[38] In light of the events

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[33] Peterson, "The Philippist Theologians and the Interims of 1548," 174.

[34] Peterson, "The Philippist Theologians and the Interims of 1548," 122.

[35] Peterson, "The Philippist Theologians and the Interims of 1548," 123.

[36] And seemingly without contradicting their confession as it was found in the Augustana and the Apology, Charles P. Arand, "The Apology as a Backdrop for the Interim of 1548," in *Politik und Bekenntnis: Die Reaktionen auf das Interim von 1548*, ed. Irene Dingel and Günther Wartenberg (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2006), 211–227.

[37] Kolb, *Luther's Heirs Define His Legacy*, III 137.

[38] Robert Kolb, "Controversia perpetua: Die Fortsetzung des adiaphoristischen Streits nach dem Augsburger Religionsfrieden," in *Politik und Bekenntnis: Die Reaktionen auf das Interim von*

surrounding the Leipzig Proposal, each side of the debate felt betrayed by the other and continued to view its opponents with suspicion long after the governing authorities had moved away from their previous policy.[39] This was especially true for the Gnesio-Lutheran followers of Flacius and Amsdorf, who continued to allude to the Adiaphorist Controversy[40] as they attacked their opponents in the later Majoristic Controversy—which was, in turn, later addressed in the Formula of Concord's article on good works[41]—many of whom had taken the Philippist side on the question of adiaphora.[42] Indeed, the damage that the Adiaphorist Controversy did to the general perception of Melanchthon's reliability contributed to many of the later debates over original sin, the freedom of the will, justification, and law and gospel that had to be resolved in the Formula of Concord.[43]

The Adiaphorist Controversy had long-lasting effects within the Evangelical theological discussion and even impacted other controversies that the formulators saw fit to address in the Formula of Concord. It is hardly surprising, then, that the formulators devoted an article (FC X) to resolving this long-standing controversy for the sake of Lutheran unity.[44] Given the governmental dimension of the Adiaphorist Controversy, FC X devotes significant time to the question of how the church and the governing authorities ought to relate to each other, especially in matters of ecclesiastical practices. Of course, the way in which the formulators describe this relationship reflects the contours of the controversy that they are attempting to address. As a result, understanding these contours, both the points of consensus and the points of disagreement, will help readers of the Formula better to understand the framework for church-government relationships that is laid out in this confessional document.

1548, ed. Irene Dingel and Günther Wartenberg (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2006), 191–209.

[39] Arand, Kolb, and Nestingen, *The Lutheran Confessions*, 182.

[40] For a classic example, see both the title and content of Matthias Flacius Illyricus, "*Wider den Evangelisten des heiligen Chorrocks D. Geitz Major* ([Magdeburg] 1552)," in *Der Majoristische Streit (1552–1570)*, ed. Irene Dingel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 74–95.

[41] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 497–500, 574–581; Dingel, *Bekenntnisschriften*, 1240,27–1246,12, 1414,25–1430,20.

[42] Irene Dingel, "Historische Einleitung," in *Der Majoristische Streit (1552–1570)*, ed. Irene Dingel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 6,25–15,5; Irene Dingel, "The Culture of Conflict in the Controversies Leading to the Formula of Concord (1548–1580)," in *Lutheran Ecclesiastical Culture: 1550–1675*, ed. Robert Kolb (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 39–43; Peterson, "The Philippist Theologians and the Interims of 1548," 313.

[43] Timothy J. Wengert, "Adiaphora," 6.

[44] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 515–516, 635–640; Dingel, *Bekenntnisschriften*, 1280,16–1284,32, 1548,5–1560,4.

Areas of Consensus in the Adiaphorist Controversy

As strongly as the Philippists and the Gnesio-Lutherans may have disagreed on how the Christian church should interact with temporal authority, most of the crucial questions of the church's relationship with governing authorities were actually matters of general consensus among members of both parties. To begin on the most basic level, both sides of the Adiaphorist Controversy agreed that the governing authorities are instituted by God and that Christians consequently owe them obedience. A couple of examples should suffice on this point. While the Gnesio-Lutheran side was in this instance requiring disobedience to an imperial mandate, the most prominent Gnesio-Lutheran theologian, Matthias Flacius, writes in his exegesis of Revelation 14 that Christians must obey the temporal authorities to whom God has given the sword and the authority to judge and punish evil.[45] Similarly, Johannes Pfeffinger, one of the most prolific Philippists in the Adiaphorist Controversy, writes in his report on the dispute that it is necessary to obey the governing authorities in all external matters that are not contrary to conscience and God's word.[46] Indeed, on this issue there is really no evidence of disagreement on either side.

Moreover, neither side denies the governing authorities the power to institute practices in the churches within their territory. In the same report from 1550, the Philippist Pfeffinger enthusiastically writes that with respect to those things that can be changed in the church, which is to say adiaphora, the governing authorities are able to change them, and the church is obligated to obey what they command.[47] Likewise, in his polemical response to Pfeffinger's report, the Gnesio-Lutheran Nicolaus Gallus admits from the Gnesio-Lutheran side that temporal rulers do have the authority to promote and implement proper practices in the churches that fall under their jurisdiction.[48]

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[45] "Keyser / König / unnd alle Oberkeit sol man fürchten / Das mann wider jr regiment nicht handele / denn sie haben das schwert / das sie solchs straffen sollen / Man sol inen Ehre geben / Denn Gott hat sie geehret / Und das Richterampt befohlen." Matthias Flacius, *Eine Weissagung / vnd ein schöner Herrlicher trost / für alle hochbetrübte frome Christiche hertzen / zu diser jtzigen trübseligen zeit / Aus dem XIIII. Cap. Der offenbarung Johannis* (Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1548), n.p., http://www.controversia-et-confessio.de/id/e72202d1-b46e-49d1-8343-00f36e821d2b.

[46] Johannes Pfeffinger, "Gründlicher und wahrhaftiger Bericht (1550)," in *Der Adiaphoristische Streit (1548–1560)*, ed. Irene Dingel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 680,22–23, 716,4–6.

[47] Pfeffinger, "Gründlicher und wahrhaftiger Bericht," 715,7–716,11; Kolb, "Controversia perpetua," 206.

[48] Nicolaus Gallus, "Gegenbericht auf D. Pfeffingers Glossen (1550)," in *Der Adiaphoristische Streit (1548–1560)*, ed. Irene Dingel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 745,25–26. On this and the following point of unity, Olson's account of the dispute in the Adiaphorist Controversy is somewhat incomplete. While he correctly identifies the Adiaphorist Controversy as "primarily . . . a quarrel about the relationship between church and state," he describes Flacius and the Flacian

Further, both the Philippists and the Gnesio-Lutherans tended to agree on the reason why governing authorities should institute ecclesiastical practices in their territories: the good of the church, and especially its unity. Pfeffinger, for example, writes in his treatise on traditions and adiaphora that no one should oppose a Christian ruler who introduces adiaphora in order to unify ceremonies, which would be to the church's benefit.[49] Similarly, in a letter to Moritz on July 6, 1548, the Philippists Philip Melanchthon, Caspar Cruciger, Georg Major, Johannes Pfeffinger, Georg von Anhalt, Johann Forster, and Daniel Greiser write to Elector Moritz that they would be willing to introduce any ceremonies that the governing authorities required that would "contribute to unity and good purpose" in the church.[50] For their part, the Gnesio-Lutheran preachers of Hamburg seem to agree with their Philippist counterparts in a letter to the Wittenberg faculty in 1549, where they write that the church could in good conscience obey the governing authorities if they were to institute ecclesiastical practices in the interest of the church's unity and edification.[51] Consequently, whatever the disagreement between the two parties of the Adiaphorist Controversy may have been, it does not appear to have been whether temporal authorities can institute ecclesiastical practices. On this issue they are largely in agreement.[52]

Yet another area of near unanimity in the Adiaphorist Controversy is the apostolic injunction that Christians must obey God rather than the governing authorities if the two should come into conflict. Indeed, the *clausula Petri*[53] was a favorite passage of the Gnesio-Lutheran party during the Adiaphorist Controversy. Flacius, for example, cites Acts 5:29 in a letter that he wrote to the mayor, city council, and residents of Lübeck in December 1549, holding up Peter and the apostles as an example of steadfastness in the face of governmental persecution, an example that he desires his readers to emulate in the face of Romanist oppression.[54]

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side in terms of "the separation of church and state" and a "struggle for a church free from state domination" in Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform*, 156, 159. This portrayal seems not to account adequately for a general acceptance of ceremonies introduced by secular rulers on the Gnesio-Lutheran side.

[49] Peterson, "The Philippist Theologians and the Interims of 1548," 472.

[50] Peterson, "The Philippist Theologians and the Interims of 1548," 131.

[51] Johannes Aepin et al., "Brief der Prediger zu Hamburg (1549)," in *Der Adiaphoristische Streit (1548–1560)*, ed. Irene Dingel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 77,26–31.

[52] This agreement's roots in Luther and Melanchthon can be seen in James M. Estes, *Peace, Order and the Glory of God: Secular Authority in the Church in the Thought of Luther and Melanchthon, 1518–1559* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 205–212. Moreover, on p. 211, Estes explicitly describes formulator Nikolaus Selnecker as a preacher whose understanding of the church's relationship to temporal authorities had been shaped by Luther and Melanchthon.

[53] Acts 5:29.

[54] Matthias Flacius, "Von Wahren und Falschen Mitteldingen (1550)," in *Der Adiaphoristische Streit (1548–1560)*, ed. Irene Dingel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 195,31–197,9.

The passage from Acts also plays an important role in the Gnesio-Lutheran Magdeburg Confession, which argues that the city of Magdeburg is justified in resisting the emperor's religious edicts because it must obey God rather than men.[55] However, the Gnesio-Lutherans were not the only ones to invoke the *clausula Petri* in their writings. Even before the Augsburg Interim had been written, the prominent Philippist Georg Major wrote that it is necessary to obey God rather than men—even if the man is the Holy Roman Emperor—when that man commands something contrary to the will of God.[56] Similarly, after the promulgation of the Leipzig Proposal and the ensuing controversy, Pfeffinger referred to this biblical text multiple times as he defended himself and the Wittenberg faculty from the charge that they had been willing to give way to the governing authorities in all things. Rather, he claims, "the apostolic rule is taught and kept among us in every way: 'it is necessary to be obedient to God more than to men.'"[57] Thus the Christian's responsi-bility to obey God instead of men, even divinely instituted governing authorities, who command something contrary to God's will was not a subject of debate in the Adiaphorist Controversy.[58]

This responsibility to resist rulers who make commands that contradict God's will does not only apply to the individual Christian, however. Rather, both sides of the Adiaphorist Controversy agreed that the institutional church as a whole has both the ability and the obligation to resist the governing authorities when they require something that is contrary to God's word. From the Gnesio-Lutheran side, Flacius counsels the city of Lübeck that by virtue of their office, preachers must resist rulers who want to persecute the divine truth or use it for their own purposes.[59] The Philippist Pfeffinger likewise allows the church to resist governing authorities when it comes to central issues of the faith. For him, this means that if the government imposes external things upon the church, it is incumbent upon the church to decide whether resistance is justified or not. That resistance is not only justified but necessary if those governmental prescriptions impinge upon central matters of the Christian faith.[60]

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[55] "Magdeburger Bekenntnis (1550)," in *Der Adiaphoristische Streit (1548–1560)*, ed. Irene Dingel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 562,14–569,6.

[56] Peterson, "The Philippist Theologians and the Interims of 1548," 461.

[57] "*. . . ist alle wege die Apostolische Regel von vns gelehret vnd gehalten worden: 'Man sol Gott mehr gehorsam sein denn den Menschen.'*" Pfeffinger, "Gründlicher und wahrhaftiger Bericht," 718,4–6.

[58] On this point, both parties stood firmly in the tradition of Luther himself, whose polemical writings encouraged resistance against Romanist authorities. Mark U. Edwards Jr., *Luther's Last Battles: Politics and Polemics, 1531–46* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 20–37.

[59] Matthias Flacius, "Von wahren und falschen Mitteldingen (1550)," 192,18–195,18.

[60] Pfeffinger, "Gründlicher und wahrhaftiger Bericht," 652,35–42.

On the basis of the primary sources from the Adiaphorist Controversy, it is possible to identify many areas on which both sides seemed to be in broad agreement. Both sides agreed that the governing authorities are instituted by God with the result that Christians should obey them. Gnesio-Lutherans and Philippists alike wrote that it was not inappropriate for the temporal authorities to institute ecclesiastical practices in the churches under their jurisdiction. All of the disputants agreed that if rulers command something contrary to God's will, the *clausula Petri* remains in force, and the resulting resistance was not seen as merely an activity in which individual Christians engage but rather as a collective obligation of the whole church. While the participants in the Adiaphorist Controversy disagreed fiercely on some aspects of the relationship between church and temporal authority, none of these aspects of that relationship were areas of serious disagreement. Accounting for this general agreement among these mid-sixteenth-century theologians is critical for understanding the thinking that lies behind FC X, but equally crucial is a clear understanding of where the Philippists and Gnesio-Lutherans came to differ on questions of the church and temporal authority.

Areas of Disagreement in the Adiaphorist Controversy

When it comes to the relationship between the church and temporal authority in the Adiaphorist Controversy, the disagreement between Philippists and Gnesio-Lutherans largely came down to one question: may the church obey temporal authorities who do not share her confession of faith when they demand that she observe certain ecclesiastical practices?

It would be an understatement to say that the Philippists tended to answer that question in the affirmative. Indeed, the prevailing answer on the Philippist side was not just that the church may follow the practical prescriptions of heterodox rulers but rather that she ought to do so. Ever the quintessential Philippist, Pfeffinger wrote in 1550 that the governing authorities can require ecclesiastical acts that do not harm the conscience whether they share the church's faith or not. Moreover, he writes that if he were subject to a "papistic authority"[61] who allowed Evangelical clergy to preach the word freely and administer the sacraments according to Christ's institution but wanted them to exhibit greater uniformity with the Romanist churches in festivals, hymns, or vestments, it would be better for the Evangelicals to accept those governmental demands at a cost to their Christian freedom than to reject them with the result that their parishioners are robbed of the free preaching

[61] "Papistischen Obrigkeit." Pfeffinger, "Gründlicher und wahrhaftiger Bericht (1550)," 721,36.

of Christ.[62] On this issue Pfeffinger was not an outlier. To take another example, the student body of the University of Wittenberg crafted a document in 1560 in response to a challenge that Gallus issued to their faculty on the question of adiaphora. In this document they claimed that since Elector Moritz had assured the Wittenberg faculty that sound doctrine would remain unmolested in Saxony, the faculty were not able to refuse his demand that various ecclesiastical practices be brought into line with the Roman obedience. They were, after all, required to render unto Caesar what was Caesar's.[63] Here one can easily hear the echoes of the beginning of Moritz's Leipzig Proposal, which called first and foremost for obedience to the emperor.[64] In sum, when the Philippists faced the question of whether they could obey heterodox rulers' demands for ecclesiastical practices—assuming those practices were not directly antithetical to God's word—their answer was overwhelmingly in the affirmative.

On the Gnesio-Lutheran side, however, the answer was a clear no. The church simply may not obey governing authorities who do not share her faith when they require ecclesiastical practices of any sort. This can be seen in Gallus's response to Pfeffinger's writings on the subject, where he writes that the government does have the responsibility to promote sound doctrine and practice, but when it compromises with those who persecute the truth, it overreaches its authority. When such a government in league with unbelievers requires the church to observe certain practices, it has done away with Christian freedom, and the church both may and must resist it.[65] Similarly, in his letter to the city of Lübeck, Flacius stops short of advocating for open rebellion against heterodox rulers, but he does write that the church and her preachers must resist rulers who want to persecute the divine truth or use it for their own purposes.[66] On the whole, then, the Gnesio-Lutheran disputants in the Adiaphorist Controversy rejected any possibility of the church obeying the practical prescriptions of temporal authorities who stood outside her fellowship.

Despite the several important church-government issues on which both the Philippist and Gnesio-Lutheran sides tended to agree, this question is where agreement on the church's relationship to the governing authorities broke down. The Philippists not only allowed but required precisely that which the Gnesio-Lutherans forbade outright: ecclesial compromise with heterodox rulers in matters of practice.

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[62] Pfeffinger, "Gründlicher und wahrhaftiger Bericht (1550)," 721,36–722,12.

[63] Matthew 22:21; "Summa und kurzer Auszug aus den Actis synodicis (1560)," in *Der Adiaphoristische Streit (1548–1560)*, ed. Irene Dingel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 860,2–14.

[64] Peterson, "The Philippist Theologians and the Interims of 1548," 174.

[65] Gallus, "Gegenbericht auf D. Pfeffingers Glossen," 745,25–746,8.

[66] Matthias Flacius, "Von wahren und falschen Mitteldingen (1550)," 192,18–195,18.

In short, the two sides were at an impasse on this point, and any resolution that the formulators wished to offer to this church-government dimension of the Adiaphorist Controversy would have to account for this question somehow.

The Formula's Solution

With the areas of consensus and the crucial area of disagreement in the Adiaphorist Controversy firmly in view, it is possible to consider the Formula's contribution to the discussion of church and temporal authorities. First, it is worth noting that the Formula of Concord does not give much attention to those aspects of the church-government relationship where the two main parties of the Adiaphorist Controversy were already broadly in agreement. Thus, the formulators have no need to assert that the governing authorities are instituted by God and Christians must obey them, that believing governing authorities may institute practices in churches, that Christians must obey God rather than men should those two come into conflict, and that the church as a whole can and must resist governing authorities when they command something that is explicitly contrary to God's word. On these questions there was no dispute, and besides, these issues had largely already been addressed in the Augsburg Confession, to which the formulators were bound.[67] Thus, it would be fair to say that the Formula assumes these points of agreement without needing to state them explicitly.

Rather, the concern that needed to be resolved relating to temporal government was the question at issue in the Adiaphorist Controversy: may the Christian church obey the practical prescriptions of temporal authorities who do not share the church's faith? The formulators knew this, so they framed the issue in precisely this way. As they begin the article with a description of the Philippist party, the formulators write that these theologians had been willing to allow compromise in ceremonies "under the pressure and demands of the opponents," whom the formulators further describe as the enemies of the church who had not come to doctrinal agreement with them.[68] On the other side, the formulators describe the Gnesio-Lutherans as refusing to compromise with rulers who want to change doctrine or ceremonies "through violence and coercion or through craft and deceit."[69] From both of these descriptions, one can see that for the formulators, there is no difference

[67] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 48–51; Dingel, *Bekenntnisschriften*, 110,8–113,2.

[68] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 635–636; Dingel, *Bekenntnisschriften*, 1548,11–18. Timothy Wengert is correct to highlight the fact that the formulators specifically have in mind a situation where "we [are] dealing with enemies of the gospel who are using real (not imagined) force" in FC X. See Timothy J. Wengert, *A Formula for Parish Practice: Using the Formula of Concord in Congregations*, Lutheran Quarterly Books (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 173.

[69] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 636; Dingel, *Bekenntnisschriften*, 1548,19–25.

between heterodox rulers who promulgate practices within the church of God and rulers who force ceremonies on the church through "violence and coercion," presumably because rulers who are not united with the church's faith have no means except force to impose practices. Rulers who share the church's faith and are part of her fellowship, however, will have no need to resort to force but will rather institute practices for the good of the church of which they are members and in Christian cooperation with the clergy and the whole body of believers.[70] At any rate, the formulators make clear the issue that they intend to address: the religious commands of authorities who do not hold to the true faith.

In the end, the Formula of Concord lands on the Gnesio-Lutheran side of the argument. When authorities who are not united with them in faith institute ceremonies that they require the church to observe, Christians may not obey them. This is because, as the formulators begin their argument, the authority to change adiaphora lies nowhere other than with "the community of God," which is to say the church.[71] Consequently, those who are not a part of the community of God—regardless of the temporal authority that God may have given them—may not institute practices in the church, which is why the Formula disallows compromise with those who use "violence or chicanery" in order to do so.[72] This means quite simply that the church cannot submit to or even compromise with temporal authorities who insist on external things "where Christian agreement in doctrine has not already been achieved."[73]

At this point, the Formula contains extended citations of the Smalcald Articles, which take this general principle and apply it to the specific situation of the Leipzig Proposal. In the first of these passages, Luther pointedly denies that the Romanist bishops are the church.[74] This polemical assertion is, in fact, crucial to the Formula's argument concerning the church and temporal authority because if the Romanist bishops were the church, they might well have legitimate authority to command ceremonies, as in Pfeffinger's aforementioned hypothetical situation. Yet these are not the church but rather heterodox political lords who have tried to usurp the authority of the "community of God" to govern its own ceremonies. Thus, on Luther's confessional authority, the formulators are able to reject the Romanists' authority to institute ecclesiastical ceremonies in Evangelical churches without rejecting the assumption that was common to both Philippists and Gnesio-

[70] This is similar to Gnesio-Lutheran Joachim Westphal's understanding as it is described in Hans Christoph von Hase, *Die Gestalt der Kirche Luthers: Der casus confessionis im Kampf des Matthias Flacius gegen das Interim von 1548* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1940), 95.

[71] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 637; Dingel, *Bekenntnisschriften*, 1550,24–33.

[72] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 637; Dingel, *Bekenntnisschriften*, 1552,1–24.

[73] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 638; Dingel, *Bekenntnisschriften*, 1554,12–22.

[74] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 639; Dingel, *Bekenntnisschriften*, 1554,30–1556,12.

Lutherans that believing authorities may indeed institute adiaphora in the church. The next citation from the Smalcald Articles reiterates this point even more strongly, identifying the pope with the antichrist.[75] According to the Formula's logic, then, since the pope is the ultimate heterodox temporal authority, the church may not compromise in matters of ecclesiastical practices with him or with any secular authority who obeys him, as was the case with Elector Moritz's Leipzig Proposal.

Conclusion

While it assumes the areas where theologians of the Augsburg Confession had enjoyed widespread consensus on issues of the church and temporal authority, the Formula of Concord adds to that consensus a thorough account of the relationship between heterodox rulers and the church's communal practices, precisely the area where the sixteenth-century debates over adiaphora showed that resolution was needed. From this it is clear that the Formula's article on ecclesiastical practices offers a coherent and meaningful contribution to the doctrine of the church and temporal authority in light of the preceding Adiaphorist Controversy. In short, it teaches that the authority to determine adiaphora belongs exclusively to the church, which means that while governing authorities who belong to the fellowship of the church may certainly institute ecclesiastical practices for her good as her members, temporal authorities who are not in agreement with the church's doctrine may not prescribe her ceremonies, and any attempts by them to do so must meet with principled ecclesial resistance.

Of course, it is worthwhile for confessional Lutheran clergy of every age to understand the contribution that every article of their confessional writings makes to their articulation of the *corpus doctrinae*. Yet in the wake of the year 2020, when heterodox magistrates in the United States and the world over used force, threats, and coercion to regulate the church's ceremonies, from restricting her gatherings[76] to regulating her means of distributing the Sacrament of the Altar,[77] the confessional witness of FC X is as timely and practical as ever. Hopefully a closer read of this article in its sixteenth-century context will offer twenty-first-century Lutherans some desperately needed clarity concerning how they might navigate their congre-

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[75] Kolb and Wengert, *The Book of Concord*, 639; Dingel, *Bekenntnisschriften*, 1556,13–18.

[76] E.g., State of Minnesota Executive Department, *Emergency Executive Order 20-20: Directing Minnesotans to Stay at Home,* Tim Walz, 2020, https://mn.gov/governor/assets/3a.%20EO%2020-20%20FINAL%20SIGNED%20Filed_tcm1055-425020.pdf.

[77] E.g., Mark Hayward, "After Outbreak among NH Worshipers, AG Warns Defiant Greek Orthodox Church to Stop Sharing Chalice," *New Hampshire Union Leader*, October 3, 2020, https://www.unionleader.com/news/health/coronavirus/after-outbreak-among-nh-worshipers-ag-warns-defiant-greek-orthodox-church-to-stop-sharing-chalice/article_d37e3747-df15-56f0-8f13-dc9fe0703395.html.

gational and broader ecclesial relationships to the governing authorities—both those who share their faith and those who do not—in light of their confessional commitments. It is admittedly likely that the Formula's teaching will not resolve all of these difficult situations in the church's interaction with governmental authorities; in fact, it will almost certainly lead faithful Christians to ask new questions about how their churches should interact with temporal rulers. Yet, as they face these new questions and difficult situations, the witness of FC X will be crucial in the current age of church-state relations, if only Lutherans will believe, teach, confess, and live according to it. For their sake, and for the sake of broader ecumene, may the Lord grant it.

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Taking Care of the Body of Jesus: Towards a Biblical Theology of Suffering

Arthur A. Just Jr.

On coming into the world, Christ says, "A sacrifice and an offering you did not desire, but a body you have prepared for me. With burnt offerings and a sin offering you were not pleased. Then I said, 'See I have come—in the scroll of the book it is written of me—to do your will, O God'" (Heb 10:5–7).[1] "A body you have prepared for me"—a body prepared in the womb of the Virgin Mary at the incarnation of the Son of God, the human body of Jesus, a suffering body to be sacrificed for the expiation of sins, a body prepared to do the will of the Father, a body that is the source of our holiness. "By that will we are made holy through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb 10:10). With his body, Jesus, prepared to do the Father's will, suffered on the cross, so that through his body he could do what all the sacrifices on the altars of the tabernacle and temple could not do—make us holy by completely removing sin.

Within a world where suffering and pain have no meaning, only the passion narrative of Christ's suffering and our participation in his sufferings give meaning to suffering. In his book *The Palliative Society,* Byung-Chul Han narrates how our world "does not permit pain to be enlivened into a *passion,* to be given a language."[2] He goes on to say, "The human being has lost a narrative protection, and thus also the ability to alleviate pain symbolically. Without this protection, we are at the mercy of a naked body deprived of meaning and language."[3]

Yet Byung-Chul Han, though a secular philosopher, believes that the passion narrative of Christ's suffering gives pain a narrative and therefore gives meaning to suffering. For support, he appeals to the Spanish mystic Teresa of Ávila. "For her," he writes, "pain is highly articulate. It is with pain that narration begins. The Christian narrative gives pain a language. It transforms her body into a stage."[4] The suffering body of Teresa of Ávila tells the story of Jesus' suffering from the passion narratives of the Gospels.

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are the author's translation.
[2] Byung-Chul Han, *The Palliative Society: Pain Today* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2021), 3.
[3] Han, *The Palliative Society*, 20.
[4] Han, *The Palliative Society*, 20–21.

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Han critiques the church for not embracing its own narrative of suffering during the recent COVID-19 pandemic. He accuses the church of succumbing to the palliative society by becoming a "society of survival." He writes:

> Because of the pandemic, the society of survival has prohibited church services, even at Easter. Priests, too, practice "social distancing" and wear protective masks. They sacrifice faith entirely for survival. . . . Virology deprives theology of its power. Everyone is listening to the virologists, who have acquired absolute authority in interpreting the situation. The narrative of the resurrection has completely given way to the ideology of health and survival. Faced with the virus, faith degenerates into farce.[5]

Perhaps what the pandemic has taught us is that as Christians we bear witness to the Christ who is in us through our suffering bodies, which tell the story of Christ's suffering.[6] In Baptism, our suffering, broken, sinful bodies are joined to Christ's suffering, dying, and risen body, and in this communion with his flesh, we share in his suffering, death, and resurrection. Therefore, as Paul says in Romans 6, *our suffering, baptized bodies now tell the story of Jesus' suffering.* During the recent pandemic, when members of our congregations experienced tremendous suffering, were they able to understand that their virus-ridden bodies tell the story of Christ's suffering? And by taking care of Christ's body, the church, have we who serve the church affirmed the great mystery of Christ's communion with the church *in suffering*?

This paper will narrate how our bodies tell the story of Christ's suffering by first showing how the body of Jesus, prepared for sacrifice to do God's will, was cared for by women and his disciples, mistreated by his enemies, killed on a cross, raised from the dead with all its wounds, and then ascended to the right hand of the Father. The passion and resurrection narratives of the Gospels tell the story of Jesus as the suffering, righteous one who is vindicated by the Father in his resurrection. Then I will address how this body of Jesus is also the source of a biblical theology of suffering through the apostle Paul in his homily to the Galatians, where he explicitly shows how his persecuted body tells the story of Christ's suffering as it is cared for by his pagan converts in Galatia. The Gospels and Paul provide a foundation for how the story of Christ's suffering continues today through his body, the church. Taking care of the suffering body of Jesus brings people into communion with his body, the church. This is the foundation that leads toward a biblical theology of suffering and the heart of pastoral and diaconal care.

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[5] Han, *The Palliative Society*, 14–15.

[6] Cf. Christopher West, *Our Bodies Tell God's Story* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2020), 4–5.

Taking Care of the Resurrected Body of Jesus

When Cleopas, the Emmaus disciple, asks Jesus, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem that has no idea of what is happening?" (Luke 24:18), he knew not the full extent of his question. Cleopas is thinking that Jesus is a pilgrim to the Passover who somehow missed the news of Jesus' crucifixion. But the word he uses for Jesus, "stranger," could also be translated as "resident alien," which, in fact, is true. As the Son of the Most High (Luke 1:32) without a human father, Jesus truly is a sojourner on earth, not a native son at home on earth or even in Jerusalem. Ironically, Cleopas's question of him is, in some ways, a confession of his true identity as the incarnate Son of the Father who came from a far country to secure for himself a kingdom (cf. Luke 19:12), to bring Israel out from bondage, and to lead her to her true and permanent home. As Son of God and Son of Man, Jesus is both a stranger in the hostile, fallen world and the Redeemer of the world (cf. Luke 24:21).

Crucial for Luke's Gospel is the manner in which Jesus receives sinners in the world and the way in which sinners receive him and take care of his body. But with this stranger walking alongside them, from whom their eyes were hidden, the Emmaus disciples "were challenged to show hospitality to a God turned stranger (Luke 24:16)."[7] Taking care of the resurrected body of Jesus now became the ultimate sign of Jewish hospitality to aliens and strangers, a fundamental principle of faithful Israel from the Torah.[8]

So how do the Emmaus disciples receive him? By inviting him into their home for table fellowship and the first post-resurrection Eucharist,[9] a table they have prepared for his resurrected body. They prevail upon him to abide with them at this table, for they wanted the conversation on the road to continue—it did, after all, give them burning hearts—but perhaps even more they wanted to take care of this stranger and feed his body. Yet this stranger gets even stranger when they finally recognize him as the crucified and risen Christ, and then he vanishes from their sight in the breaking of the bread. Little did they realize that their burning hearts from his teaching on the road compelled them to eat the body and drink the blood of Christ, whose suffering invites us into a life of suffering for our neighbor. Their

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[7] Demetrius Dumm, "Luke 24:44–49 and Hospitality," in *Sin, Salvation, and the Spirit*, ed. Daniel Durken (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1979), 234.

[8] Dumm, "Luke 24:44–49 and Hospitality," 233.

[9] For the argument that the Emmaus meal connects the Last Supper with the Lord's Supper in the post-Easter church, see Arthur A. Just Jr., *Luke 9:51–24:53*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1997), 981–988, 1006–1014; see also R. Kolb and T. Wengert, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 246 (Ap XXII 7): "They cite the passages in which bread is mentioned, as in Luke 24[:35], where it is written that the disciples recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread. . . . . [W]e do not seriously object if some of these passages are understood as referring to the sacrament."

taking care of the resurrected body of Jesus, their hospitality, led to the first communion with the resurrected body of Jesus in the Eucharist.

But the strangeness continues. After the Emmaus disciples reported to the eleven how Jesus spoke to them on the way and was known to them in the breaking of the bread, Jesus stood in the midst of them and said, "Peace to you," showing them his hands and feet with their wounds. He then said to them, "I AM myself; touch me and see, because a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see me having" (Luke 24:39). No wonder the disciples "disbelieved for joy" (Luke 24:41), that deliciously ambiguous saying that suggests "this is too good to be true." Then, as if sensing they needed more proof, Jesus asks what appears to be a totally random question—"Do you have anything to eat here?" So the eleven disciples take care of the resurrected body of Jesus by giving him a piece of roasted fish, and Jesus took it and ate it before them.

Think about those eleven disciples in that moment, what they might have felt about "the strangeness of the risen body of Jesus. The disciples were looking at the first, and so far the only, piece of incorruptible physicality."[10] And Jesus shows them how to take care of his resurrected body with all its wounds to prepare them to take care of his body, the church, in the post-resurrection world. Luke 24 teaches us that Jesus is a resident alien for whom faithful Israelites need to show hospitality. When we speak about caring for the body of Jesus, we begin with the confused and shocked disciples inadvertently taking care of Christ with his strange, incorruptible, resurrected flesh. From that first eighth day, the question is this: How will the world receive him, and then take care of his body, the church?

To recover a theology of the body, we need to affirm of first importance that in the Parousia the resurrection of our bodies will be like Jesus' glorious body. For a theology of the body must embrace a body that suffers and one day, like Jesus, will rise in a transformed body that will reflect the image of God he first created in paradise.

Taking Care of the Living and Dying Body of Jesus

During my days as director of deaconess studies, I reflected with our students on how remarkable it was that women took care of the body of Jesus. In reading the Gospels, I encouraged them to follow the body of Jesus and observe what happens to it. See how the infant body of Jesus is wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger by his mother, Mary. Observe his body traveling throughout Galilee, touching lepers and coffins, using his spittle to heal, allowing a sinful woman to cause a

[10] N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), 160.

scandal in the home of a Pharisee by washing his feet with her tears, drying them with her hair, kissing them with her lips, and anointing them with expensive oil. Years later, six days before the Passover of his death, another woman in Bethany pours oil over his head and anoints his body in preparation for burial (Mark 14:3–9). Even now, we remember her. Watch then what happens to the body of Jesus during the week we now call holy—how it is beaten, scourged, pierced with nails, a spear thrust in his side, and then at the ninth hour how he gives up his Spirit and dies. Listen to Joseph of Arimathea, a Pharisee, ask Pilate for the body of Jesus, and then take it down quickly from the cross, anoint it with spices, wrap it with linen cloths, and lay it in a tomb. View the women who followed Jesus from Galilee go to the tomb to observe how his body was laid so that, after the Sabbath, they could bring spices and myrrh to complete the anointing of his body. Witness their shock and fear when they come to the tomb and find it empty. And then watch Peter running to the tomb, looking in and seeing only the linen cloth bands. The tomb was empty. Jesus had been raised from the dead.

In Luke's Gospel, cloth bands wrapping the body of Jesus are a sign of the incarnation (his infant body wrapped in swaddling clothes—Luke 2:12), a sign of the atonement (his dead body wrapped in linen cloths—Luke 23:53), and a sign of the resurrection (Peter seeing the linen cloths by themselves—Luke 24:12).

The disciples and women take care of the body of Jesus because that is what comes naturally to people who love their neighbor and their friend. The most concrete and intimate expression of love is to take care of the body of someone broken in sickness or death. That is what Jesus did throughout his ministry. People came to Jesus by the thousands to touch his body and he, in turn, used his touch to heal them. People fed his body and he fed theirs, especially in that miraculous feeding of the five thousand by the Sea of Galilee where God showed hospitality to sinners. Except for his circumcision and the shedding of his blood at eight days old and his temptations in the wilderness by Satan, the Gospels are relatively silent about the physical suffering of Jesus before his passion. Perhaps when the people of Nazareth dragged him outside the city to throw him off the hill he suffered from being buffeted about by their anger and passionate desire to kill him.

Quite possibly, Jesus' most acute suffering before his passion came from seeing the results of sin as countless people came to him who were possessed by demons, stricken by disease, overcome by sin, and grieving over death. Luke's programmatic Nazareth sermon shows that Jesus came to release from bondage those who are captive and broken by demons, sickness, sin, and death. In the catalogue of miracles that follow that sermon—casting out the demon in the Capernaum synagogue and healing Peter's mother-in-law—Luke concludes the account by saying:

> When the sun was setting, all those who had ones suffering sickness with various diseases brought them to him. And laying his hands on each one of them, he healed them. And demons also went out of many, crying and saying, "You are the Son of God." And rebuking them, he did not allow them to speak, because they knew him to be the Christ. (Luke 4:40–41)

In my translation, I added "suffering" because that is what people experience when they have diseases and are possessed by demons. Their whole being, body and soul, suffers. Jesus has compassion on them and heals them by laying on his hands. His holy body touches their unclean bodies. Cyril of Alexandria reminds us how powerful the touch of the body or flesh of Jesus is on humanity's suffering flesh:

> Jesus laid His hands upon the sick one by one, and freed them from their malady. He demonstrated that the holy flesh, which He had made His own, and endowed with godlike power, possessed the active presence of the might of the Word. He intended us to learn that, although the Only-begotten Word of God became like us, yet He is none the less God. He wants us to know that He is easily able, even by His own flesh, to accomplish all things. His body was the instrument by which He performed miracles. . . . But observe again, I ask, how great is the usefulness of the touch of His holy flesh. For it both drives away diseases of various kinds, and a crowd of demons, and overthrows the power of the devil. It heals a very great multitude of people in one moment of time.[11]

Luke reports when the day came, Jesus departed Capernaum and journeyed into a desert place (Luke 4:42). From his other retreats into the wilderness, we know that Jesus did so in order to pray (see Mark 1:35 and Luke 5:16). Could Jesus also be fleeing the crowds into the wilderness because he was overcome by their suffering? Could this be what he was praying about in the desert, that the cup of suffering was too much to bear? For where do the sicknesses and the suffering of the people go? Do they simply vaporize into thin air? Do the sicknesses and suffering have an object? Could it be Jesus' body? Jesus suggests as much when he says on more than one occasion that "the power has gone out from me to heal" (Luke 5:17; 6:19; 8:46). Could there be a great exchange in Jesus' healings; namely, that as the power goes out of him to heal those suffering with diseases, their suffering now flows into Jesus as he absorbs *in his body* the sickness of people who could, like the woman with the flow of blood, be healed by simply touching the tassel of his garment? Could this be what Matthew means when, after Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law and many others possessed by demons and sicknesses, he writes: "This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, 'He took our infirmities and bore our diseases'" (Matt 8:17;

[11] Cyril of Alexandria, in Arthur A. Just Jr., *Luke*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 86.

see Isa 53:4)? While the Gospels never tell us that Christ had illnesses, nor that specific diseases and physical maladies were transferred to his body, the prophecy of Isaiah reveals the mystery that he bore all our sufferings, including those arising from diseases.

Jesus is the sin-bearer from the moment of his conception, proclaiming this publicly at his baptism, where he stands in the waters of the Jordan in substitution for us and in solidarity with us. His sin-bearing reaches its goal at the cross, where his body prepared for sacrifice bears our sins once for all.

Perhaps Jesus retreats to the desert because his body was so overcome by taking on the sufferings of our infirmities and diseases that he was tired and needed to rest quietly in prayer with his Father. Perhaps he was struggling with the reality of bearing in his body all this brokenness and needed to take care of his body—something the crowds, even the disciples, could not fathom. Perhaps he also knew it was not time to reveal the full extent of the good news that he was bringing, what those whose bodies were released from demon possession confess about him, that "You are the Son of God." They know him to be the Christ, which leads Jesus to rebuke them in the same way he rebuked the man with the spirit of an unclean demon and the fever of Peter's mother-in-law. He rebukes them because it was not their place to announce that he was the Christ, even though the people of Nazareth wanted to kill him for saying of the prophecy from Isaiah, "Today, this Scripture is fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:21). His time has not yet come. His final suffering on the cross is still a few years away. But even now, his suffering is so great he has to get away from it. His body was broken by bearing all that suffering. How could the crowds understand what is happening to his body as they search for him and find him? Yet, curiously, when they do find him he does not heal them. Instead he says, "Also to other cities it is necessary that I proclaim as Good News the kingdom of God, because for this purpose I was sent." And Luke reports that he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea (Luke 4:42–44).

"A body you have prepared for me" (Heb 10:5). The body of the Creator came to his creation to send out from his body by his word and his touch the power to heal, and then to bear in his body our infirmities and diseases and sins. This is the good news of the kingdom that culminates in the narrative of his suffering in Jerusalem. The passion narratives in the Gospels tell the story of how the suffering of all the righteous saints of the Old Testament now reaches its goal in Jesus' suffering, righteous flesh. He is the final consummation of the pattern of suffering set by Moses, the prophets, and the psalmists. This consummation demands that God's innocent and righteous Messiah suffer an agonizing death and be raised on the third day. In the words of Martin Hengel: "The suffering 'of the righteous' is to be integrated completely and utterly into the suffering of the Messiah. *The Messiah alone*

is the righteous and sinless one par excellence. His suffering therefore has irreplaceable and unique significance."[12]

In his final words to his disciples, Jesus says that his suffering and resurrection is the fulfillment of what was written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets *and the Psalms.* Why the Psalms? The last word of Jesus from the cross is from Psalm 31:5: "Father, into your hands I commit my Spirit" (Luke 23:46). This final word from the cross is characterized by a serene tone of confident trust in God as the one who redeems, rescues, and delivers those who suffer. In citing Psalm 31, Jesus expresses the message of all the psalms that God will give meaning to the suffering of his righteous saints because the entire pattern of Jesus' life, suffering, and rejection to the point of death completes the suffering of the prophets. Committing his spirit to the Father is the climactic moment of the passion narrative of suffering. Jesus—the suffering, righteous one—suffered in his body to give meaning to the suffering of God's innocent, righteous saints and to point to the resurrection of his body and the resurrection of their bodies.[13] Jesus' suffering "vindicate[s] . . . the Old Testament teaching that God is always and in every action utterly just and righteous. . . . The Resurrection of Jesus *had* to happen, if the teaching of the Old Testament about God is true."[14] The resurrection of Jesus' body gives meaning to our suffering and points toward the hope of the resurrection of our bodies.

How Paul's Suffering Body in Galatia Preaches the Gospel

Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus and his commission to be an apostle to the Gentiles was the defining moment of his life. But it was Ananias who heard what the Lord had in store for Paul as an apostle to the Gentiles: "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and sons of Israel; for I will show him *how much he must suffer for the sake of my name*" (Acts 9:15–16, emphasis added).

That Paul suffered for the sake of the gospel there can be no doubt. His catalogue of sufferings in 2 Corinthians indicates how much he was persecuted for being an apostle to the Gentiles:

> Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from

[12] Martin Hengel, *The Atonement* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 41.

[13] See Darrell Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 148; Just, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, 946–947.

[14] J. McHugh, "A Sermon for Easter Sunday," *Clergy Review* 71 (March 1986): 92.

> Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. (2 Cor 11:24–28)[15]

During his first missionary journey to southeast Asia Minor, known to us as southern Galatia, Paul healed a crippled man in Lystra (Acts 14:8–10), continuing the healing ministry of Jesus. As a result of this healing, he and Barnabas had to fight off attempts by the pagan crowds to elevate them to the status of the gods Zeus and Hermes, as people wanted to offer sacrifice to them (Acts 14:11–18). Perhaps they did not yet fully understand the preaching of Paul in Antioch of Pisidia about Jesus' suffering and death. In this way, they were like "those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize [Jesus] nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him" (Acts 13:27). So in Lystra, after the people attempt to make Paul and Barnabas gods, Paul announced to them the good news that they "should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them" (Acts 14:15).

Paul's preaching in southern Galatia, where he announced Jesus' death, resurrection, and the forgiveness of sins, did not go down well with the Jews from Antioch Pisidia and Iconium, two places he and Barnabas had just visited before coming to Lystra. Paul now told them at Lystra that he and Barnabas had been appointed to bring this good news to Gentiles: "For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, 'I have [set you to be a light to] the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the [uttermost parts] of the earth'" (Acts 13:47). These Jews from Antioch Pisidia and Iconium were so incensed by Paul's preaching that they persuaded the people from Lystra to stone Paul and drag him outside the city, leaving him for dead on the side of the road. These folks from Lystra are the same ones who moments before had to be restrained from offering sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas as the gods Zeus and Hermes. But in typical Lukan understatement, he reports that when Paul's disciples "gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city" of Lystra that had just stoned him, and then Paul went on to Derbe, Iconium, and Antioch Pisidia (Acts 14:20–21). His miraculous restoration from his stoning gives him the courage to go back to these cities that tried to kill him, for the purpose, in Luke's words, of "strengthening the souls of the disciples, [exhorting] them to continue in the faith, and saying that *through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God*" (Acts 14:22, emphasis added).

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[15] Scripture quotations in the following sections are from the ESV.

What in the world would have compelled Paul and Barnabas to return to the scene of the crime to preach a gospel that almost killed Paul? Perhaps the answer to this question can be found in Paul's letter to the Galatians. Assuming an early dating, Galatians would be Paul's first letter. These enigmatic words in Galatians 4, filled with personal pathos, may be a clue to understanding what happened to him during his first missionary journey when he, for the first time, fulfills what the Lord said to Ananias about Paul's suffering for the sake of Jesus' name:

> Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You did me no wrong. You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first, and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus. What then has become of your blessedness? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me. (Gal 4:12–15)

Although there is some debate about the nature of Paul's "bodily ailment," whether it was some physical illness or his "thorn in the flesh" (see 2 Cor 12:7), the Greek word means "weakness of the flesh" (ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς, Gal 4:13), suggesting that his body suffered something physical. Could it be that Paul is referring to the persecution he received at the hands of the Jews after his time in Lystra, those many tribulations Luke refers to as a means of entering the kingdom of God? And could this physical ailment be a reference to the scars of Jesus Paul refers to in the second-to-last verse of Galatians (Gal 6:17)—his stigmata?[16]

Paul's body, beaten to a pulp, left half-dead alongside the road outside the city, would have been putrid, and like many beatings, his eyes would be swollen or completely shut. Maybe this is why Paul says to the Galatians, "you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me," because his eyes were affected by the stoning. That Paul had an eye condition could also account for his words at the end of Galatians, where he says, "See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand" (Gal 6:11). If the Galatians thought Paul was dead, it suggests that his condition was so bad that it would have scandalized people, even these Galatian mercenaries (many of these pagan converts likely were soldiers).[17] His beaten body would be a "temptation" (πειρασμόν, Gal 4:14) to the Galatians because his condition

[16] See Richard B. Hays, "The Letter to the Galatians," in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 11 (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 293; N. T. Wright, *Paul: A Biography* (New York: HarperOne, 2018), 123–124.

[17] On the Galatians as Celts and mercenaries, see A. Andrew Das, *Galatians*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014), 20; F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 4–5; Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches of Galatia* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 2–3; R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1990), lxii–lxiii.

was a result of his persecution for preaching the gospel. In most translations, it says that the Galatians "did not scorn or despise" Paul (Gal 4:14), but a more literal rendering would be "despise or spit out" (ἐξεπτύσατε), suggesting that under normal conditions Paul's body would be such that the Galatians were "hoping to cleanse their mouths of the unclean odors they inhaled in his presence."[18] But instead, what happened? Paul writes that the Galatians "received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus" (Gal 4:14).

What further puzzles is Paul's enigmatic statement that "You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first" (Gal 4:13). Perhaps Paul is saying that his brutally beaten body preaches the gospel to them. Paul returned to the city of his bodily persecution because now he had something to show them as well as tell them. His body showed them that he was no Zeus. "Look at my body," he tells them. "It tells the story of the gospel, the story of Christ's sufferings. For the same hostile powers that attacked me are the ones that caused Jesus to suffer during his passion; the same powers that caused the darkness—that killed Jesus—those same powers attacked my body and left me for dead. But I arose to return to you to preach the gospel *through my body*—look at me and be as I am. Be prepared to suffer many tribulations." And as he says in the penultimate verse of Galatians: "From now on let no one cause me trouble, *for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus*" (Gal 6:17). These marks are Paul's "stigmata" (τὰ στίγματα). They are Jesus-scars. Paul's suffering body was God's ἄγγελος, his messenger of the gospel, because in his stigmata the people saw Christ Jesus, receiving Paul in his brokenness in the same way they will receive Jesus in body broken, blood poured out, because now they understand the meaning of Jesus' suffering through the suffering body of this beloved apostle. "Be prepared to imitate me in my sufferings as I imitate Christ" (see 1 Cor 11:1), Paul is telling them, "and this will give meaning to your own suffering."

Paul begins these middle chapters of Galatians by chastising them for not understanding his preaching, as Jesus chastised the Emmaus disciples for not believing the Old Testament: "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that *Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified*" (Gal 3:1, emphasis added). Paul chastised these Galatians, the ones who received him on the road out of Lystra as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus—the ones who would have gouged out their eyes for him. As he writes these words, Paul does not know if these precious pagan converts would now receive him as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus. They had been bewitched by the false gospel of Paul's Jewish Christian opponents.

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[18] J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 421.

By undergoing circumcision, they were trading the scars of Paul's body for the scars of circumcised flesh. Paul publicly portrayed Jesus as crucified before their eyes, graphically preaching about the suffering of Jesus during his passion. But they did not understand it, for they quickly deserted him for another gospel (Gal 1:6). Did they not understand that the true meaning of the gospel is the suffering of Jesus? Did they not see how Paul's suffering body told the story of Jesus' suffering? Did he not tell them in that lyrical statement in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me"? Paul's final words to the Galatians proclaim to them his whole identity in Christ crucified: "But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal 6:14).

On the road outside Lystra, Paul's eyes were opened to the reality that only through tribulations will we enter the kingdom of God, just as his eyes were opened by Ananias after being blinded by the light on the road to Damascus as the Lord said to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" (Acts 9:4). Paul now understood that his body was the place where the sufferings of Christ could be seen. But now Paul is not the persecutor but the persecuted. Jesus is being persecuted in his body! Is this not what Paul means later on in Colossians where he says, "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church" (Col 1:24)? Paul is not saying that the atonement is incomplete. On the contrary, he is saying that not only is the atonement complete (or in the words of Hebrews, "once-for-all"), but Christ's sufferings are ongoing in the suffering bodies of the saints who, through their sufferings, proclaim the gospel and therefore give meaning to their suffering. It was only when Paul received his first stigmata on the road outside Lystra that he began to understand the meaning of Ananias's words, how he would suffer for the name of Jesus, and how "through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).[19]

J. Louis Martyn in his commentary on Galatians summarizes the full meaning of this for us:

> The contrast between Paul's being viewed as a sick and evil magician and his being welcomed as an angel sent by God is a matter Paul can explicate only by referring to Christ. For only in Christ himself are people given the power to perceive strength in weakness. As God's messenger, Paul preached Christ

[19] See W. F. Flemington, "On the Interpretation of Colossians 1:24," in *Suffering and Martyrdom in the New Testament: Studies Presented to G. M. Styler by the Cambridge New Testament Seminar*, ed. William Horbury and Brian McNeil (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 84–90.

> (1:16); and that preaching included the conviction that, as he had himself suffered crucifixion with Christ, so in his present life he bears in his body physical scars—and illnesses—that are marks of his association with Jesus (6:17; cf. 2 Cor 4:5, 10). It was then the crucified Jesus Christ lived in him, paradoxically transforming his weakness into strength without removing it (3:1; 2:19–20).
>
> The odiously sick, apparently demonic figure was seen, then, to be in fact an angel sent from God, just as the legally executed criminal was seen to be in fact God's own Son. That correspondence caused the Galatians to welcome Paul, and that correspondence caused their attachment to Paul to be an attachment to Christ.[20]

Participating in the Suffering of Jesus

The one thing they did not teach me in seminary in the 1970s was how much people suffer. This I learned quickly as a parish pastor in Middletown, Connecticut. But I was ill-equipped at first to give meaning to people's suffering. I did not have the language. I did not understand that language to comfort the suffering comes from the narrative of Christ's passion, from his suffering body, and that to give meaning to the suffering of my members, I had to connect them to Christ's suffering, to help them in their suffering to hide in the wounds of Christ. This is when I realized what it means to take care of the body of Christ, his church—that this corresponded to what the women and Jesus' disciples did in taking care of his body.

But it was only after my wife and I suffered a great loss four months after my ordination that I began to understand the meaning of suffering—that our bodies tell the story of Christ's suffering—and that to take care of suffering bodies means seeing them as the narrative of Christ's passion. But still, full understanding of what it meant to participate in the sufferings of Christ only came when I began to understand for myself, and for the suffering saints whom I served, the mystery of these words of St. Paul: "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" (1 Cor 10:16).

[20] Martyn, *Galatians*, 421.

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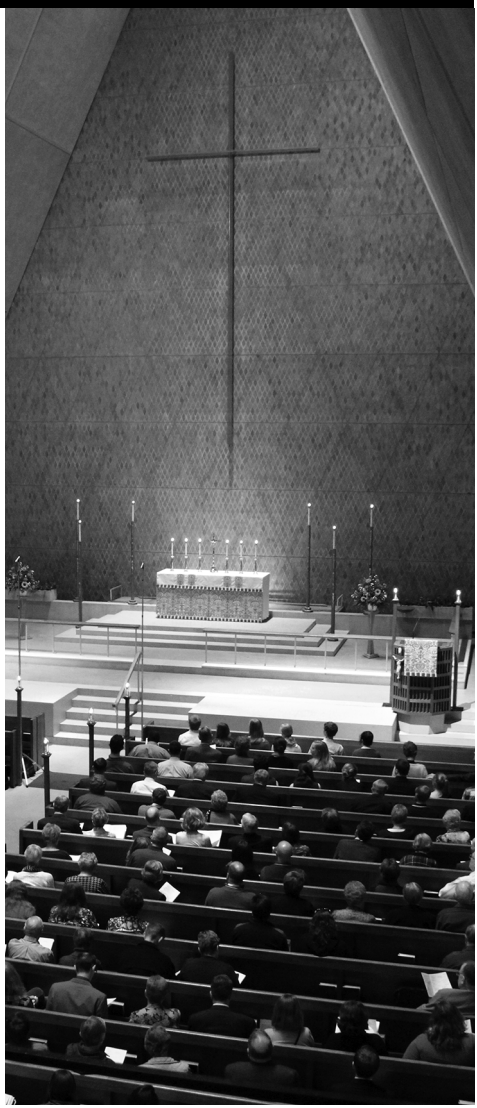

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What's Old Is New Again: The Art of *Seelsorge*

Harold L. Senkbeil

This study looks at the nature of the care of souls and its impact on the church in various eras, including our own. While it is addressed to everyone interested in the church's ministry to people, including laity, it addresses especially and particularly the pastors of the church and their work as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Specifically, I wish to provide perspective on the art of the care of souls—what it is, why it originated, how it was practiced during much of the church's history, and how it flourished for centuries in our Lutheran tradition. I will point out why, in my estimation, it went into hibernation for much of the twentieth century, only to surface again in recent decades and—most importantly—why I am convinced it is essential for the tumultuous times in which we live.[1]

When I began my seminary training decades ago, we were instructed not in the care of souls, but what was then called "pastoral counseling." Not that counseling is a bad thing, mind you; some of my best friends are counselors. But at least as I began my preparation for the ministry as a young seminarian in 1967, my general impression was that biblical studies, homiletical skills, and dogmatic theology lived in one world, while pastoral care lived in another—a world where Rogerian client-centered therapy held sway. So we were assigned to write up verbatims (again, a useful pedagogical technique) and practiced role playing in class where we were judged primarily on our ability to practice non-judgmental empathetic listening.

I want to hasten to add that compassion and empathy are useful skills for every conscientious pastor. And careful listening is indispensable. I consider these to be the very first stage in effective pastoral care. You cannot treat what you have not diagnosed. And you cannot diagnose unless you first listen—and listen well, as I have written[2]—not just with your ears but with your heart and your whole being: compassionately and empathetically, in other words.

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[1] One word of warning: if you are looking for the definitive academic analysis on any of these topics, you will be disappointed. My colleague John Pless has covered that masterfully: John T. Pless, "Pastoral Care in Contemporary Lutheranism," *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (March 2023): 61–80. This will be a view from the trenches, where I have spent the five decades of my ministry providing care for souls first of all in congregations, then in the classroom, and now primarily for pastors in my work with my DOXOLOGY colleagues.

[2] Harold Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls: Cultivating a Pastor's Heart* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019).

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But my point is that all of us seminarians at the time had the impression that pretty much the sum total of pastoral care was identifying with the predicament of the person with whom we were dealing. Sure, if we could throw in a Bible passage or two and close with a prayer, so much the better. But we had the impression that the healing lay in our empathy, not the word of God or its sacramental application. The net effect of this approach is that it erected a kind of firewall between the church's dogma and people's lives.

Seelsorge in the History of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

It was not always so in the Missouri Synod. C. F. W. Walther himself suffered from some poor pastoral care during his student days in Germany. He speaks of it quite candidly in the extracurricular evening lectures he delivered to his students, which were later transcribed and published in book form as his famous *Gesetz und Evangelium* (*Law and Gospel*). As a young Christian with a troubled conscience, he had been pointed not to the cross of Jesus and his saving gospel as the foundation of his relationship to God, but to the complex inner workings of his mind and the pious affections of his heart.

In the course of those lectures at Concordia Seminary, St Louis, he quotes extensively from the writings of theologians of the period of Lutheran Orthodoxy. Many of these sources were steeped in the theology and practice of the ancient art of *Seelsorge*. These theologians play even a larger role in Walther's *Pastorale,* helpfully published by CPH in an unabridged translation[3] that is replete with extensive footnotes from these same pastoral theologians.

Likewise, Walther's magisterial *Kirche und Amt* (*Church and Office*)—which has been officially adopted not once but twice as our church's official position on the church and the office of the public ministry—is full of quotations from generations of pastoral theologians.[4] The clear implication and application is that sound doctrine leads to healthy souls and, conversely, that false or inadequate theology is detrimental to the spiritual health of people.

The twentieth century has not been kind to pastoral theologians. They have been sidetracked to make room for the heavy traffic generated by the fundamentalist-modernist controversies of the early decades of the 1900s and their suc-

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[3] Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, *American-Lutheran Pastoral Theology*, ed. David W. Loy, trans. Christian C. Tiews (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017).

[4] C. F. W. Walther, *The Church and the Office of the Ministry, the Voice of Our Church on the Question of Church and Office: A Collection of Testimonies regarding This Question from the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and from the Private Writings of Orthodox Teachers of the Same*, ed. Matthew C. Harrison (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2012).

cessor fights—not the least of which was our own "battle for the Bible," on which some of us cut our teeth as young pastors in the LCMS.

The legacy of these debates has not been helpful for the spiritual life and health of Christ's holy people. Well-intended pastors have assumed the best they have to offer people struggling with a burdened conscience because of their own sin or suffering from the wounds inflicted by the sins of others is to give them a boatload of correct doctrine.

Again, let me hasten to add that the church's dogma is the distillation of the teaching of the living word of God. Instructing people in the rule of faith drawn from the Bible indeed belongs to the pastoral task. However that is only the science that is the foundation of good pastoral care. There is both a science and an art to our work as pastors. Doctrine and theology is the foundation, of course. But the art of the care of souls is the right distinction of law and gospel—bringing to bear the gifts of God in Christ as they need to be applied in this particular instance for this particular wounded soul. To do that correctly and faithfully is the aim of the discerning pastor. Pastoral care is not one-size-fits-all. It is not as simple as tossing a struggling soul one of the articles of faith and hoping for the best. Systematic theology is the root of pastoral theology, but in itself it is not truly pastoral in the fullest sense.

Unfortunately, some have abandoned doctrine entirely for what they consider greener pastures. The net result is that the word "pastoral" has been pitted against "doctrinal," just as "missional" has been pitted against "confessional," and "mission" has been pitted against "ministry." The general implication is that you need to make up your mind: you can be an evangelist and missionary (a mover and a shaker involved in vibrant outreach to the lost), or on the other hand you can be a pastor (pretty much just a custodian or caretaker of souls minding the shop at some church on the verge of closing its doors).

In addition, for many, the adjective "pastoral" has been equated with leniency and laxity. To be pastoral in your work with people is to free them to live their best life now, unencumbered by the restraints of the church's dogma and catechesis. In our era of expressive individualism, people do not take kindly to the limitations imposed by the law of God—and to be quite honest, they are not too impressed with the gospel either. The news that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not counting their trespasses against them, strikes them as old news, not good news. What they are looking for instead is some practical way to live a fulfilling and exciting life of Christian discipleship and to feel good about themselves, and for that they are looking beyond the gospel. And let's face it: the law will always sound like good news in a world in moral and spiritual freefall because it not only provides a buffer against chaos, but offers the tantalizing hope of self-improvement.

But by the works of the law no one is justified in God's sight, since through the law comes the knowledge of sin (Rom 3:20). Though the law of God is indeed good and wise, ever since Eden the law always accuses unbelievers, even as it reveals the sins of believers to bring them to repentance. Though the law can and should guide our ways, especially in this increasingly depraved and darkened world, it can never motivate or impel us toward love and good works; only the gospel of the free grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord does that. For our sakes God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might be made the righteousness of God (2 Cor 5:21).

This is where dogmatic theology and pastoral theology intersect. Justification is the chief article not only when it comes to preaching and teaching, but also in the care of souls. Jesus Christ alone is our life, and in his gifts alone do we have life and light in this world of darkness and death.

What Is *Seelsorge*?

But pastors provide those gifts to Christ's sheep and lambs only after proper diagnosis, with great care and discernment. This is why I have called the pastoral task a craft. It is the art of arts, you might say, to deliver accurately and compassionately the healing gifts of Christ to suffering souls by means of his word faithfully preached and sacramentally applied.

The church in her mother tongue has called this art the *cura animarum*, or "care/cure of souls." This translates into our German Lutheran terminology as *Seelsorge* from the combination of *Seele* ("soul") and *Sorge* ("care"). This care is provided routinely all life long in corporate worship in the Divine Service as the word is delivered orally in preaching and teaching and applied tangibly in Holy Baptism, which you might call the "watered word" since it is the word of God in and with the water that delivers the goods, and in the Holy Supper, which is the "edible word" since these external elements are the very life-giving flesh and blood of Jesus by virtue of their consecration by his word.

When I was a young pastor attending pastoral conferences, occasionally a veteran of the cross would be introduced as "a real *Seelsorger*." I knew just enough German to be dangerous. I knew the word meant a pastor who cared for souls. I surmised that he was a gentleman who was known as a caring and compassionate pastor. Usually he was, in fact. But as I said earlier, there is no healing in a man's empathy, no matter how compassionate he is. What our forefathers meant by *Seelsorger* was a curate, or a physician of souls—one called to the preaching office who delivered Christ's gifts to his people not merely in the Divine Service, but also in visitation and one-on-one conversation.

At least since the fourth century, pastors have been known as spiritual physicians. That is, they were intent on providing spiritual healing through the Holy Spirit's gifts in word and sacrament. As far as I can determine, many ancients considered these ministrations no less vital than medical care. What physicians of the body, mind, and soul had in common is that they all proceeded from symptom to diagnosis to treatment. They treated each individual individually. They began by carefully discerning the presenting problem. By careful study and long experience in collaboration with other experienced practitioners, they arrived at a working diagnosis. Then and only then did they proceed with treatment specifically designed to treat not the symptoms of distress, but the source of the symptoms.

Diagnosis

So it is with faithful and responsible pastoral care. Seelsorgers do not treat every situation the same; what is sometimes called "pastoral discretion" does not mean an educated guess or personal preference or gut feeling, it means careful and accurate discernment. Faithful *Seelsorge* involves two sides of one coin: (1) attentive diagnosis, and (2) intentional treatment. In other words, paying attention in Jesus' name is the first step. This may take a while, and it also includes the soul's previous experience with God and others.

When I was teaching this approach to future pastors at Concordia Theological Seminary, I had a particularly skilled medical doctor in Fort Wayne. One day during a routine visit, I briefly informed him that I was teaching my students the art of careful diagnosis, joking that it would be wonderful if we pastors had a spiritual CT scan or MRI machine that could give us an accurate picture of the soul's condition before God. He told me something I have never forgotten: "It's a common misconception that we doctors rely on those tests for our diagnoses; they are excellent to tell us what's happening right now at this moment inside a person, but that's only a small percentage of an accurate diagnosis," he said. "To get the full picture I rely on an oral history." What this doctor was telling me is that you have to listen to a soul to be able to find out what is going on internally. But of course, you need to know how to listen, because all listening is not created equal.

This complicates things. As the ancients noted and we still find today, the soul often lies to itself about itself. We pastors are always working in the dark, as it were. We need the light of God's word and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit to see what otherwise remains hidden. This is why pastors are craftsmen throughout their ministries. They are always honing their skills based on the experience of colleagues in the ministry, some of them long dead, who have paved the way for our craft. The art of proper diagnosis, you might say, is a skill better "caught" than taught. We need

to develop the proper *habitus* for ministry. That is to say, we need a mentality and outlook, a mindset properly honed by long experience and hanging around colleagues in ministry.

That is where casuistry discussion among pastors comes in. We need to discuss difficult cases amongst ourselves as professional colleagues and brothers in office—not in order to mimic woodenly what someone else did in a similar situation. Rather, we need to consider all the complex factors that impact a given soul and its relationship to God. As Eugene Peterson used to say, each person has been in dialog with God for a very long time before you enter into the scene to provide pastoral care. We come late to the conversation, and we need to take time to read the minutes of that conversation—that is, get to know that person as best we can and get a grip on his or her personal experience with God and others before we can accurately assess what has gone wrong and where and how we can help with the precise gifts of God's word and sacrament needed in that exact situation.

There is thus not just one faithful and confessional response to multiple similar cases. We need to learn from each other just as medical doctors consult with one another during their training and afterward to learn how better to diagnose accurately their patients' illnesses and treatments. We pastors need all the help we can get. As St. John Chrysostom put it, "the shepherd needs a thousand eyes, to examine the condition of the soul from every angle."[5]

Treatment

Once we have a working diagnosis, then and only then can we proceed to the treatment phase. It is not as simple as "take these two Bible passages and call me in the morning." We want to bring the precise words of judgment and grace that will address the complexities of souls suffering from sins both committed and suffered, and that takes not only training in exegesis, systematics, and learning from pastoral care givers throughout church history, but it takes long practice as well. This is what Walther called in his *Pastorale* the *habitus* or disposition of the pastor's own soul acquired by the external means of God's Spirit, whom he himself has received as one of the sinner/saints of God ever since his Baptism into Christ.

Faithful spiritual treatment for the soul is intentional and deliberate. It is not haphazard or reckless, based on a hunch or vague impression, but genuinely formed and informed by God the Holy Spirit working through his word. Part of this happens week after week, of course, in the public ministry of the faithful proclamation of God's word and the reception of Christ's healing gifts in the Holy Supper of his

[5] John Chrysostom, *Six Books on the Priesthood* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1964), 58.

cleansing blood and most holy body. This is ordinary pastoral care—not that there is anything "ordinary" or mundane in preaching and the sacrament. But these are what God has ordained or decreed in his church for the care of the flock of God that he purchased with his own blood.

Besides these gifts received every Lord's Day through the ministry of God's servant, every soul is entitled to personal attention as needed. This "extraordinary care," or what Walther calls the private care of souls, is what my contemporaries and I were trained to think of as "pastoral counseling." Indeed, there is frequently counsel given in the context of those personal conversations. In these convoluted days in which we live, people need all the godly counsel they can get. Some of that helpful advice and counsel they can get from their brothers and sisters in the faith. In that sense, every baptized Christian provides the care of souls for troubled minds and hearts in need of the Savior's healing. They love their Christian siblings because Jesus first loved them, and so they weep with those who weep and they rejoice with those who rejoice. Besides, remember that the word of God is not the private possession of pastors. Mothers and fathers, friends and co-workers, fellow saints within the Christian congregation, all are given to tell of the hope that is within them and to speak the word that brings life and light to wounded hearts and fearful souls.

In my experience most people these days are not quick to acknowledge how they have grieved God or injured others. I often had people confessing sins to me when I was a parish pastor, but those sins were not their own! They came to tell me how they had been wronged by a spouse, by an employer or acquaintance. They wanted me to help with a problem, but the problem was usually caused by another person. They really wanted advice, not care for their souls, in other words. It is no good in those situations to turn them away because that is not in our job description.

It is perfectly normal for people in difficult situations to ask for help. We do the same with our medical doctors, do we not? We do not merely want his or her treatment for our ailments, we want to know what we can do to help alleviate our situation. And so it is with physicians of the soul as well. Part of the art of the care of souls is to turn these requests for counsel or advice into occasions for attentive diagnosis and intentional treatment. Jesus once had a man come to him with a financial problem and he turned it into a spiritual care dialog. "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me" (Luke 12:13). Jesus used that request as a teaching opportunity about covetousness and spiritual treasures vs. worldly wealth, using the parable of the rich fool who had things sewed up monetarily but was not rich toward God.

The Care of Shepherds

You and I are not Jesus. We do not have divine omniscience and wisdom. You are only a man, just another sinner exactly like the person who is coming to you for help. If there is no healing in our personal warmth and empathy, there certainly is no genuine healing for spiritual wounds anywhere inside us at all. We are only channels of the healing that comes from the Holy Spirit through the gifts Jesus gives in his sanctifying word and holy sacrament. Our motto is like that of John the Baptist: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). When people come to us for help, we have no help to give in and of ourselves. They need us to be Christ's ambassadors for them, God making his appeal through us (2 Cor 5:20). We are, I like to say, nothing more than "errand boys for Jesus." All we really need to do is show up and listen with Jesus' ears and speak with his mouth, and he will do the rest. Christ Jesus is the true pastor. He is the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep.

That Jesus tends and feeds his lambs and sheep using our mouth and hands is a miracle of God's grace and part of the real joy that goes with the vocation of pastor, or Seelsorger. As we like to say in DOXOLOGY, pastors are not shepherds, but sheepdogs. A sheepdog takes his direction from the shepherd. No matter how difficult those sheep can be, his tail is always wagging because he knows he is doing the will of the shepherd. The dog most likely has no comprehension of what the shepherd's larger plan is for any given sheep; he is bonded to the shepherd and therefore gladly and eagerly takes up his duties as he is directed—never mind how depleting and exhausting the task. But he is not always working. So when they are at rest, the shepherd and his dog are found together. As one observer put it, a good sheepdog is always on the go with eagerness, delightedness, and tireless discipline. But that dog "would not have kept that peculiar and intimate relation unless he had sat down and looked at the shepherd a good deal."[6]

So every pastor needs a pastor. He needs to hear the voice of the great Shepherd for himself. What a terrible thing it is when the shoemaker's children go without shoes! Perish the thought that a dentist would lose his teeth because he himself has gone without competent dental care. Why then do we assume that the minute we are ordained we can go without hearing the word of God addressed to us by God's called and ordained servant? Why should we think we are so strong and invincible in our faith that we no longer need forgiveness for our sins? Why might we be so audacious to think that we no longer need to hear the word from the mouth of a brother or father confessor coming to us *extra nos*—external to our own conflicted and confused mind and heart—so that we can believe and take comfort that by that

[6] Evelyn Underhill quoted in Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls*, 123.

word of holy absolution spoken by human lips our sins are forgiven before God in heaven?

We are not private entrepreneurs in the ministry. Pastoring is a collective enterprise; we need each other. The missionary commands of the New Testament are all given in the plural. What does this mean? This means that all the people of God are in mission together as the body of Christ. And evangelists, pastors, and teachers are working collectively to tend the flock and gather in the sheep not yet of this flock so that there will be one flock and one shepherd. It is dangerous and foolhardy to venture out in this fallen world all on our own. Not only do we need the company, we ourselves need shepherds for our own souls so we might receive the gifts that Jesus died and rose again to bring so we might have hope and light in this dark and despairing world. So if you do not yet have a pastor, get one. You are flirting with disaster if you are a one-man show.

Pastoral Self-Care

The *Seelsorger* also needs to tend his own soul. Despite the fact that a good share of his daily routine is wrapped up in study and teaching of the word of God, he needs to see to it that a significant amount of time is spent sitting perfectly still looking at the Shepherd—that is, being like Mary, who in distinction from her harried and frenzied sister Martha, took the time to sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to him.

Three things make a theologian, Luther said: *oratio*, *meditatio*, and *tentatio* (prayer, meditation, and affliction). As I have often said, in pastoral ministry—as in the Christian life in general—the affliction takes care of itself; it goes with the territory. But prayer and meditation take some discipline. As Luther details it in his masterful little tract[7] for Master Peter Beskendorf, his barber, prayer and meditation are both rooted in the careful and mindful recitation and repetition of the spoken word of God. Choosing a verse or two from a psalm or elsewhere in the Bible, the idea is to listen carefully to that word as you recite it—not just to commit it to memory, but to glean what the Holy Spirit means to tell you by means of this precise word. You do not want to study it so much as to chew it over in mind and heart—to masticate it and ruminate on it much as a cow chews her cud. Then, as that word takes on greater and greater clarity, you begin to dialog with God regarding what he is telling you there in that specific text. Again, pray out loud. Thus properly understood, Luther sees this oral approach to prayer rooted in God's word as conversation with God. We speak as God has spoken to us. And by means of his word, God the Holy Spirit himself even preaches to us.

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[7] Martin Luther, *A Simple Way to Pray*, trans. Matthew Harrison (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2012).

I once heard the late Kurt Marquart say that the pastor's personal prayer to God begins not with the first person pronoun "I," but the second person "you." That is, the pastor needs to first address God when he opens his mouth to pray. He consciously should conceive himself in dialog with God the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, as his very own beloved father for Jesus' sake, addressing him directly, boldly, and confidently as any dearly loved child addresses his own beloved father. Luther suggests such meditative prayer is a wreath woven of four strands: precept, thanksgiving, confession, and petition. Each of the strands flows directly from the word. First, we simply echo back to God what he has told us. We thank him for what he has there told us or promised us. We confess how we have neglected or despised what he is telling or giving us there, and finally we ask him to grant that his will may be done and his kingdom may come in our lives regarding that word of God.

The multiple assaults and afflictions of devil, world, and flesh that pile up in our lives are not merely hurdles to overcome. As we see in the book of Job, even the devil unwittingly serves God's purposes. By means of Satan's attacks, God desires to draw us ever closer to his loving arms and care. Thus the cycle continues, Pastor Luther suggests, speaking from his own experience of affliction and calamity. The more the devil rages, the more he drives us to God's word where we find our refuge and strength in every time of trouble so that we can all the better pray, praise, and give him thanks. Thus theologians are made and nurtured. I commend this practice of spoken prayer and meditation to you if you have not yet encountered it. Always remember: the soul you save may be your own.

So there in a nutshell you have it. The time-honored heritage of the *cura animarum*, or *Seelsorge*, the care and cure of souls. As our culture grows ever darker and more deluded, losing sight of its God and Savior, do not despair. Of course you do not have what it takes for ministry in such a confused and confusing environment. But then, Christ's servants never have. Our sufficiency is not in ourselves, but in the Lord who bought us with his blood and commissioned us and set us apart by call and ordination to be his emissaries in this foreboding world to speak his word and bring his gifts to all who will hear and receive them. For every hurting, wounded soul, for every burdened, sorrowing sinner, you bring the healing ministrations of Jesus, the great physician. You bring his care and cure to all the casualties of the cosmic battle going on till the end of time when Jesus returns in glory to claim his bride.

You have been given an eternal gospel to proclaim which alone brings light and truth into a world in spiritual and moral freefall. Take heart, find courage. Salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. In this dark world we serve Christ Jesus, who once was dead, but is alive forever and forevermore. He remains the light of the world, the light no darkness can overcome!

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"You Are Not Your Own. . . . So Glorify God in Your Body"

Walter A. Maier III

I. Introduction

Paul states at the beginning of 1 Corinthians 6:20, "[F]or you were bought with a price." Gregory Lockwood comments, "No other NT saying brings together in such compact form both the essence of the Gospel and its implications for the Christian life."[1] Paul, in words immediately preceding and following his statement, spells out explicitly what those implications are: "You are not your own. . . . So glorify God in your body" (1 Cor 6:19–20). Against the Greek philosophers of his day, Paul emphasizes the goodness of the body (it was not to be despised as evil) and its importance in our human existence, specifically in our life as God's sanctified children on this earth. Joel Green notes that "as bodily creatures, humans are intrinsically related to the material world in which they live, which, then, provides the context for their relatedness to both non-human and human creatures and for ethical comportment."[2]

To glorify God means to give him thanks, praise, and honor for who he is and what he has done and will do. We do this in our bodies as human beings and with our bodies as instruments. So, we confess the triune God and proclaim his attributes and activity with our vocal cords and lips. With our hands, feet, and muscles we carry out acts of service for the glory of the Lord and for the good of our fellow man. Also involved are our eyes, ears, and other parts of the body, including our brain, one of the organs of the body. Mention of the brain reminds us that, to borrow an observation from John Kleinig, "the whole body with its respective organs is not only involved in perception and action but also in all mental and emotional activity."[3]

Paul's highlighting of the body takes us back to Genesis 2. There Moses, after reporting in Genesis 1 that God *created* the first humans as male and female, goes

[1] Gregory J. Lockwood, *1 Corinthians,* Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 221.

[2] Joel B. Green, "Body," in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld et al., vol. 1, *A–C* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006), 484.

[3] John W. Kleinig, *Wonderfully Made: A Protestant Theology of the Body* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021), 8.

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into more detail as to what exactly took place. He makes it very clear that they were creatures with *bodies*. Yahweh *formed* the man from the dust of the ground; God gave him a body (Gen 2:7). Then Yahweh *built* a rib he took from the man into the woman; she, too, had a body (Gen 2:22). This set Adam and Eve apart from the other moral beings created by God—namely, the angels. The angels glorified God as his servants who did not have bodies; the man and the woman glorified God as his servants in and with their bodies. Adam and Eve exercised their God-given dominion over the physical creation and acted as his stewards through their *bodies*.

What was true for the first man and woman before the fall into sin is also true after the fall for all *regenerate* people who have lived or will live. We as human beings with bodies and as believers are to glorify God in and with our bodies. We live for him *bodily*. Paul brings this out a number of times in his epistles. The following passages are examples, in addition to 1 Corinthians 6:19–20.

> Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. (Rom 6:12–13)

> Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (Rom 12:1)

> The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. (1 Cor 6:13)

> I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal 2:20)

> It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. (Phil 1:20)

A related and overlapping truth, according to Paul, is that the bodies of believers are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19). Kleinig explains what this means.

> The body of each Christian is a mobile shrine that takes the triune God out and about in the world; it discloses God and conveys his blessings to other people. Just as God's hidden glory had filled the tabernacle and the temple, so God's hidden glory now fills the body of each Christian as a shrine; his glory is now manifest in their bodies, just as it had been manifest in the tabernacle (Exod 29:42 [and 43]; 40:34–35; Lev 9:6, 23–24) and the temple (1 Kgs 8:11; 2 Chr 5:11–14; 7:1). They therefore are to glorify God with their bodies. That is their

> theophanic, glory-manifesting, God-showing vocation . . . ! [T]heir bodies are holy shrines that God uses to disclose himself to other people in their social context.[4]

Although reference has been made to Genesis 1 and 2, thus far there has been a review especially of what the New Testament says about believers and their bodies. What follows will be further examination of the topic mainly in light of the Old Testament.

II. An Examination of the Old Testament

As already noted, Genesis exhibits a high view of the human body so carefully made by God on the sixth day of creation, before the fall into sin. Yet the Old Testament maintains this high view despite the fall and the fact that bodies are now ruined by sin. In part this is because God is involved in the formation of every human being, as indicated by a number of passages, of which the following are examples.

> Your hands shaped and made me. . . . You clothed me with skin and flesh, and wove me together with bones and sinews. (Job 10:8, 11)

> Did not he who made me in the belly make him [i.e., my servant]? And did not one fashion us in the womb? (Job 31:15)

> Come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before Yahweh, our Maker! (Ps 95:6)

> Your hands made me and fashioned me. (Ps 119:73)

> For you acquired my inward parts; you wove me together in my mother's belly. (Ps 139:13)

The Song of Songs certainly celebrates the body as God's good, beautiful workmanship. Another message from the book is that when the body engages in sexual relations as intended by God within marriage, the marriage being between a man and a woman, that use of the body glorifies God, who gave the gift of sex to human beings, who have bodies.

The Old Testament view of what a human being is or consists of carries with it a high view of the body. According to this testament, man must be seen in a holistic way. He is *both* soul, or spirit, and flesh, or body.[5] Ecclesiastes 12:7 states that, upon

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[4] Kleinig, *Wonderfully Made*, 95.

[5] To avoid unnecessary complexity, this article will not enter into the debate about the bipartite or tripartite division of man—that is, whether the human consists only of body and soul, or of body, soul, and spirit. For the sake of space, the twofold division will be followed. In the following discussion, "soul" and "spirit," as well as "heart," are regarded as equivalents.

the death of a believer, "the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it." These two parts, the dust, or body, and the spirit, or soul, together make up a psychophysical organism, a human.[6] As N. W. Porteous states, man does not *have* a body but *is* an animated body, "a unit of life manifesting itself in a fleshly form."[7] Dietrich Bonhoeffer has a similar viewpoint: "Man's body is not his prison, his shell, his exterior, but man himself. Man does not 'have' a body; he does not 'have' a soul; rather, he 'is' body and soul. . . . The man who renounces his body renounces his existence before God the Creator."[8] C. B. Bass writes that the Old Testament "sees body and soul as coordinates interpenetrating each other in function to form a single whole."[9] Robert DiVito sums up this holistic view put forth by the Old Testament by referring to the human being as a "differentiated unity,"[10] and Green uses the phrase "an integrated whole."[11] F. B. Knutson observes that in the Old Testament there is no dualism, in which the soul or the heart is sharply distinguished from the flesh or body. He concludes that the opposite is the case—that "the external and internal human aspects are closely tied together."[12] Knutson cites Psalm 84:3 (ET 2) as an example: "My heart and flesh cry in joy to the living God."[13]

G. W. Bromiley's comments in his article on biblical anthropology pertain to both the Old and New Testament. He echoes the previously cited authors but adds a new thought.

> Man has a physical side and he has a spiritual side. . . . Both belong together in a psychosomatic unity. Both are integral to human life. . . . Man is . . . a body-soul. . . . If there is differentiation, there is also unity. But if there is unity, there

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[6] The phrase "psychophysical organism" is that of C. B. Bass, "Body," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, fully rev. ed., ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley et al., vol. 1, *A–D* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 528; and N. W. Porteous, "Man, Nature of, in the OT," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick et al. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 3:243.

[7] N. W. Porteous, "Soul," in Buttrick et al., *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 4:428.

[8] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall/Temptation: Two Biblical Studies* (New York: Touchstone, 1959), 51. This reference was found in an article by Kent Burreson and Beth Hoeltke, "The Gift of Our Bodies in Life and Death," *Concordia Journal* 47, no. 3 (Summer 2021): 23, 32.

[9] Bass, "Body," 529.

[10] Robert A. DiVito, "Anthropology, OT Theological," in Sakenfeld et al., *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 1, *A–C*, 173.

[11] Joel B. Green, "Soul," in Sakenfeld et al., *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 5, *S–Z* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2009), 359.

[12] F. B. Knutson, "Flesh," in Bromiley et al., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, fully rev. ed., vol. 2, *E–J* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 314.

[13] See also N. P. Bratsiotis, "בָּשָׂר," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 2, גָּלָה–בדל, rev. ed., ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John T. Willis (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 326, where he speaks of the "twofold nature" of man, and man as a "twofold entity."

> is also order. The body is finally subordinate to the soul, not the soul to the body.[14]

Bromiley concludes,

> True humanity consists in the harmony of body and soul under the direction of soul. . . . There is no dualism in the sense of separation, as though there could be full man either as body alone or as soul alone. Yet monistic explanation, whereby body is subsumed under soul or soul under body, is also excluded. Both body and soul are from God. Both are given for a purpose. Both are to work in integration, in ordered unity, as together they make up the one man.[15]

In another article, Bromiley asserts that, since the soul and body belong together, without either the one or the other there is no true man.[16]

There is a Hebrew word that the Old Testament uses to present this holistic view of man: *nephesh* (נֶפֶשׁ). Now, when נֶפֶשׁ is mentioned, many think right away of the translation "soul." That rendering in certain passages is not incorrect, but this is not the only meaning of the word in the Old Testament, and it is probably not even the dominant sense. Brown-Driver-Briggs has at the beginning of its discussion of the word nine renderings;[17] *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* sets forth nine meanings and then has a miscellaneous section;[18] and *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* lists seventeen possible translations.[19] נֶפֶשׁ can mean life; a life (individuated); creature; a being (as alive); essence, essential self; vital (living) self; an existence that is passionate ("passionate" in the sense of involving emotions and will) and has drives and appetites. In its most synthetic usage it can designate a living individual in his or her entirety—that is, body and soul/spirit—the whole being. In some passages נֶפֶשׁ is best rendered by the words "person" or "self" or by the personal pronoun. Bruce Waltke further explains that נֶפֶשׁ "adds an intensely personal element to the notion of self. Indeed *nepesh* could be substituted with the

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[14] G. W. Bromiley, "Anthropology," in Bromiley et al., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1:134.

[15] Bromiley, "Anthropology," 134.

[16] G. W. Bromiley, "Psychology," in Bromiley et al., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, fully rev. ed., vol. 3, *K–P* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 1045.

[17] Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1906), 659.

[18] Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann Jakob Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. and ed. M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 2:711–713.

[19] David J. A. Clines, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, vol. 5, נ–מ, (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2001), 724. H. Seebass, "נֶפֶשׁ," in Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, vol. 9, נָקָה–מָרַד, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 509, 515 holds that נֶפֶשׁ is emphatically affirmative of life; it can mean "vital force."

personal pronoun in these passages, but the intensity of feeling would be lost."[20] Because of this holistic aspect of נֶפֶשׁ J. Barton Payne draws the rough and generalized equation that בָּשָׂר, "flesh," plus רוּחַ, "spirit," equals נֶפֶשׁ, "self, individual."[21]

These thoughts regarding נֶפֶשׁ play into an interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:5: "You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart [לֵבָב] and with all your *nephesh* and with all your might [מְאֹד]." In this passage "heart" signifies the inner man, the place of his intellect, emotions, and will. That is where things start, for "out of the heart come evil thoughts" (Matt 15:19) but also love for God in the case of the believer. נֶפֶשׁ in this verse is a more comprehensive term, signifying the whole person, not just the inner man. In addition, because of the personal element connected with נֶפֶשׁ, the word in this verse brings across, as H. Seebass explains, "the intensity of involvement of the entire being."[22] מְאֹד, usually an adverb, here is a noun: "strength, might, power." In Deuteronomy 6:5 it accents the idea of total commitment to the Lord.[23]

With this holistic view of man, it is no surprise that the Old Testament highlights as one aspect of worship of Yahweh the use of the body. Kleinig writes that "we participate with our bodies in our worship of God,"[24] and the ancient Israelites certainly had an awareness of this. The dancing mentioned in the Old Testament can be seen in such a light. It was a matter, at least in part, of praising God with the body. So the Israelite women, led by Miriam, went out dancing with tambourines, praising Yahweh for the miracle and deliverance he wrought at the sea (Exod 15:20–21). David leapt and danced with all his might before Yahweh as the ark of the covenant was brought into Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:14, 16).[25] Psalm 149:3 gives this encouragement to worshipers: "Let them praise [God's] name with dancing; let them sing praises to him with tambourine and lyre." Psalm 150:4 is similar: "Praise him [God] with tambourine and dancing; praise him with stringed instruments and pipe."[26]

Mention of the psalms leads one to recall how they indicate the important role the body plays in the worship of the Lord. This importance comes through in two ways. First, there are those passages that strongly *imply* the use of the body in worship. For example, some psalms speak of God giving ear to the *words* of the

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[20] Bruce K. Waltke, "נֶפֶשׁ (nepesh)," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 2:589.

[21] J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 225. This equation does not cover all the biblical data.

[22] Seebass, "נֶפֶשׁ," 511. See also Green, "Soul," 359.

[23] The idea for this interpretation came from Waltke, "נֶפֶשׁ (nepesh)," 589.

[24] Kleinig, *Wonderfully Made*, 89.

[25] Andrew E. Steinmann, *2 Samuel*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), 107, after analyzing the Hebrew verb, suggests that this dancing "involved a circular whirling motion of some sort."

[26] Cf. Judges 21:16–24; Psalm 30:12 (ET 11).

psalmist (e.g., 5:2 [ET 1]; 17:6) or paying attention to the *sound* of his cry (e.g., 5:3 [ET 2]), or of the psalmist crying to the Lord with his *voice* (e.g., 5:4 [ET 3]), which Yahweh hears. This implies the use of the mouth, lips, and vocal cords. So, too, do those psalms that mention singing to Yahweh; raising a shout to him; telling, recounting, or proclaiming his deeds and his righteousness; and boasting in the Lord. Psalms that speak of offering sacrifices to Yahweh, or of performing vows, or of bearing gifts or tribute, imply the use of hands and other parts of the body, as does the mention of playing skillfully a stringed instrument (33:3) and the use of tambourines. The same implication is conveyed by the appearance in the psalms of terms for musical instruments: lyre (כִּנּוֹר), harp (נֵבֶל), strings (מִנִּים), ten-stringed harp (נֵבֶל עָשׂוֹר), and cymbals (צֶלְצְלִים). The mention of the pipe (עוּגָב), trumpet/clarion (חֲצֹצְרָה), and horn (שׁוֹפָר) implies the use of the hands and the mouth. As already observed, there is reference to dancing in Psalms 149 and 150, which of course implies the use of feet and legs and other parts of the body. Some psalms speak of bowing down and kneeling before the Lord—postures of the body involved in worship.

The second way the psalms show the importance of the body in worship is by *specifically mentioning* parts of the body. For example, Psalm 19:15 (ET 14) reads, "May the words of my *mouth* and the meditation of my *heart* be acceptable before you." The two parts of the human are represented: the body with the word "mouth" and the inner person with "heart." "*Mouth*" appears in many other psalms, as does "*tongue*" (e.g., 35:28: "my *tongue* will speak of your righteousness"). Both words occur in Psalm 37:30: "The *mouth* of a righteous man speaks wisdom, and his *tongue* tells of justice." Psalm 149:6 reads, "Let the praises of God be in their *throats*." David says in Psalm 40:10 (ET 9) that he has not restrained his *lips* from speaking in the great congregation, and in Psalm 51:17 (ET 15) he prays, "O Lord, open my *lips*, that my *mouth* may declare your praise." The word "*lips*" occurs in a number of the psalms. In some psalms the psalmist speaks of lifting up his *hands* in worship (e.g., 28:2) or spreading out his *hand(s)* in prayer (e.g., 88:10 [ET 9]). Psalm 47:2 (ET 1) joyfully proclaims, "Clap your *hands*, all peoples!" in praising the Lord. Part of worship is hearing the word of God, and Psalm 44:2 (ET 1) reads, "O God, with our *ears* we have heard . . . the deeds you have done."[27] In Psalm 119:18 the psalmist prays, "Uncover my *eyes* that I may see wonderful things from your law." While the psalmist in general is praying that God would give him revelation from his word, at least in part he is specifically indicating that he would be reading God's word with his *eyes*. Another aspect of worship is going to the sanctuary, which involves the use of the *feet*. David says in Psalm 122:1–2, "I rejoiced with those saying to me, 'Let us

[27] Cf. Psalm 40:7 (ET 6); 49:5 (ET 4).

go to the house of Yahweh. Our *feet* were standing in your gates, O Jerusalem,'" where the ark of the covenant was kept in a tent in the time of David. Interestingly, David states in Psalm 35:10 that even his *bones* would make confession of the Lord: "All my *bones* will say, 'Yahweh, who is like you?'"

An awareness of how the Psalter highlights the importance of the body in the worship of Yahweh could help in understanding a verse such as Psalm 6:6 (ET 5): "Because there is not in death remembrance of you; in Sheol who will give praise to you?"[28] The rhetorical question asked by David has the answer "no one." Regarding "Sheol," there is not unanimity as to how to define the word nor what it signifies in any given passage. It seems that for this word various nuances of interpretation are possible, depending on context. This author sees three main meanings for "Sheol." The first is that it signifies death and the grave (Job 17:13–16; probably also 1 Kgs 2:6, 9). The second is that "Sheol" refers to the "abode" of the dead. (The spirit world is not bound to our dimensions of space and time.) According to this usage, Sheol is the place of the afterlife in general, where *all* go after their time on earth (Gen 37:35; Isa 38:10; Ps 16:10; Job 7:9). The third main meaning is that "Sheol" refers specifically to hell (Deut 32:22; Ps 49:11–16 [ET 10–15]; Prov 5:5; 9:18; 15:24; 23:14).[29]

Many take "Sheol" in Psalm 6:6 as death and/or the grave. The words "death" in the first half of the verse and "Sheol" in the second half are seen as equivalents. That could be correct. The point of the verse would then be that the dead are not with the living here on earth and they do not in a public way recount the deeds of God and give him praise. However, my inclination is to see "death" and "Sheol" as indeed parallel to each other but not as equivalents. That is, "Sheol" here has the second meaning given above: the abode of the dead, the place of the afterlife in general. What if this understanding of "Sheol" in the verse is the right one? The interpretation of the first half of verse 6 would remain the same, but now there needs to be a different interpretation of the second half, in light of the passages in Revelation that indicate to us via symbolic imagery that the saints in heaven are praising God. The *apparent* conflict between Psalm 6:6b and Revelation can be resolved by considering the crucial role of the body presented in the Psalter for the worship of Yahweh. Those in Sheol, in the afterlife, specifically in heaven, do not have their bodies (except for Enoch and Elijah). Thus, the saints in the celestial

[28] Cf. Psalm 30:10 (ET 9); 88:11–13 (ET 10–12); 115:17; Isaiah 38:18–19. These verses, though, may be seen as not exactly paralleling Psalm 6:6.

[29] There would be debate concerning most of the passages listed in this paragraph regarding into which of the three categories each of the passages should be placed. This discussion of "Sheol" was taken from Walter A. Maier III, *1 Kings 1–11*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2018), 274.

abode cannot praise Yahweh. Putting this in a more precise way, they do not praise Yahweh *in the same way* that they did while living on the earth, before death.

This article has assumed that the Old Testament teaches, and the faithful of the Old Testament era believed in, a life after death, in a continuing existence after existence on the earth. The question that now arises is this: Does the Old Testament teach, and did the faithful of the Old Testament era believe in, the resurrection from the dead? In light of the esteem the Old Testament has for the human body, that testament's holistic view of the human being, and the Psalter's presentation of the crucial role of the body in the worship of Yahweh, the answer to that question is "Yes, of course!"

Now, it could be proposed that what has been presented already is sufficient evidence for that answer. This affirmative response can be seen as a legitimate deduction, bringing to the surface and making clear a truth contained in many of the verses that have been examined. Nevertheless, additional scriptural passages will now be reviewed (the list is representative, not exhaustive) that fall into one of two categories: those that explicitly teach the resurrection, and those that teach the resurrection in an implicit manner. The passages in the first category are well known and most of them can be quickly covered. There will be discussion to some length of each in the second category.

Resurrection: Explicit Old Testament Passages

> And after my skin has been stripped off [or "struck off"] in this way, even from my flesh I will see God, whom I will see for me. Even my eyes will see and not as a stranger. How my inwards long within me! (Job 19:26–27)

Job thinks he is going to die and there will be no vindication for him before his death. But there will be an undeniable time of vindication: the last day. Job's body will be raised, and he will see God vindicating him at the final judgment. God will have the last word on the last day.

> He will swallow on this mountain the face of the covering, the covering over all the peoples, and the woven thing which has been woven over all the nations. He has swallowed up death forever. Adonai Yahweh will wipe away tears from all faces. (Isa 25:7–8)

"This mountain" is a reference to spiritual Zion, the kingdom of God, his church. The "covering" and "woven thing" of verse 7 are parallel words signifying essentially the same concept. One way to understand these words is that they refer to a mourning veil or head covering (cf. 2 Sam 15:30; 19:4; Jer 14:3), based on the mention of death in verse 8. God's swallowing death benefits those in his church—

already here on earth. However, the blessings of salvation believers enjoy on earth they experience in fuller measure in heaven and the new creation. The resurrection and glorification of believers' bodies on the last day is the ultimate aspect of God's "swallowing" death. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:54 quotes Isaiah 25:8 in reference to this climax, this culmination of the victory over death God grants to believers.

> Your [i.e., God's] dead ones will live; my corpse—they will arise. Awake [קִיץ] and give a cry of joy, dwellers of the dust . . . [the] earth will cause to fall [the] rephaim [רְפָאִים, "bodiless souls"]. (Isa 26:19)

Isaiah 26:19 speaks of the resurrection on the last day. The verse has a cumulative effect, mentioning the "dead," "corpse," and "dwellers of the dust." The Hebrew word decisive for interpretation comes last: רְפָאִים, "*rephaim*."

Isaiah declares (and his fellow believers do too) that "[y]our [i.e., God's] dead ones will live."[30] The reference is to God's people who have died. Though dead, they still belong to him. In fact, they shall once more be physically alive.

The next phrase, literally "my corpse—they will arise," pairs a singular noun (keeping the Masoretic Text and its pointing) with a plural verb. Isaiah, apparently, sees the dead believers as one unit. Their dead bodies poetically can be grouped together and called a "corpse." With this "corpse" the prophet closely identifies ("my"). Yet each individual member of this unit of dead believers will come back to physical life—"*they* will arise."[31]

Isaiah continues to focus on these dead believers when he uses the phrase "[you] dwellers in/of [the] dust." They can be called such, since their bodies have been placed in dusty graves or tombs and have crumbled into dust (Gen 3:19).[32] Looking ahead to the last day, and speaking as God's prophet the word of God (which God's power accompanies), Isaiah issues commands to the "dwellers." They are to "awake"

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[30] It appears best, because of the preceding verses, to take Isaiah as the speaker, and the suffix "your" (masculine singular) as a reference to God. Isaiah 26:20 and 21 reinforce this decision.

[31] Joseph Addison Alexander, *Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, rev. ed., ed. John Eadie, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: John Greig and Son, 1865; repr. with vol. 2 as *Commentary on Isaiah*, [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1992]), 430; Geoffrey W. Grogan, Isaiah, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein et al., vol. 6, *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 168n; cf. Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, vol. 2, *Chapters 19–39* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 226 (where he notes also the "strange" pointing of "corpse," a feminine noun in Hebrew but construed here with a masculine verb). F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, vol. 1, trans. James Martin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, reprint 1969), 450; J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 219; and John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 486, think "corpse" is a collective noun (singular in form but plural in meaning).

[32] Cf. Psalm 7:6 (ET 5); 22:16 (ET 15); Job 7:21; 20:11; 21:26; Daniel 12:2.

(awake from death = "arise")[33] and "give a cry of joy," because of their ultimate liberation with the resurrection and glorification of their bodies (Rom 8:21, 23; 1 John 3:2).

The final phrase of verse 19 reads literally, "[The] earth will cause to fall [Hiphil] [the] *rephaim*." The *rephaim*, specifically, are (according to what has preceded in this verse) the souls of *the believers* who have died. Nevertheless, this phrase depicts the physical resurrection of God's people. The idea is that the earth *yields* these dead (who are buried in it). God's people before death consisted of a soul and a body; at death they were put into the earth. The soul, though existing in the afterlife, in a sense was "in" the earth. If the souls are yielded, so are their bodies.

The verb form (literally) "cause to fall" is used a number of times in the Hebrew Bible with the nuance of "cast" (as "to cast a lot").[34] A legitimate rendering of the text, then, and one that flows smoothly here, is "the earth shall cast out the dead" (NKJV).[35] On the other hand, John Oswalt presents another possible sense of "cause to fall": that the earth, having seized the dead in its mouth (so to speak), now (at God's command) "causes to drop," or "lets drop," the prey from its jaws.[36]

Thus, Isaiah 26:19 is even more explicit than 25:8: "He has swallowed up death forever." That both passages are concerned with only the resurrection of believers does not mean that Isaiah denied a general resurrection (of the righteous *and* unrighteous). Isaiah's selective treatment is similar to that of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 and 1 Corinthians 15.

> I in righteousness will see your face; I will be satisfied when I awake [קִיץ] with your form. (Ps 17:15)

This verse in the context of Psalm 17 speaks of awaking from the sleep of death—in other words, of arising from the dead.[37] Willem VanGemeren writes, "It seems that the psalmist by inspiration is looking for a greater experience with God that can only be a part of the postresurrection world. . . . This present life may be

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[33] For the pairing of "sleep" and "death," cf., e.g., Psalm 13:4 (ET 3); Job 3:13; Jeremiah 51:39, 57; Daniel 12:2; Luke 8:52; John 11:11; Acts 7:60; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–16.

[34] Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 658.

[35] Scripture quotations marked NKJV are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

[36] Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39*, 476 n 22. Cf. Isaiah 26:21; Jeremiah 51:34, 44; Job 29:17; Revelation 20:13.

[37] So also, e.g., Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973), 89–90; Herbert C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1959), 160–161; Timothy E. Saleska, *Psalms 1–50*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2020), 331, 335–336.

filled with testings . . . but the newness of life (when we 'awake,' v. 15) will bring the rewards of vindication and glorification."[38]

> Surely God will ransom my *nephesh* from the power [lit. "hand"] of Sheol because he will take [לָקַח] me. (Ps 49:16 [ET 15])

One way to interpret this verse is that a believer is confessing that he would die but God would bring him back to life. God would take him from the hand of death, or from the place of the dead, and bring him into a situation of life. Specifically, this points to his resurrection. VanGemeren explains that in this verse "the confidence of hope breaks through . . . with the affirmation of the resurrection and of fellowship with God."[39]

> And many of those sleeping in the land of dust will awake [קִיץ], some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting reproach and abhorrence. (Dan 12:2)

Jesus alludes to this verse in John 5:28–29: "Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment." When Daniel says "many," he is not excluding the idea of "all"; he is rather emphasizing the idea of "a great number." The same usage of the word "many" is seen in other passages of Scripture. For example, Matthew 20:28 reads, "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."[40]

The sleeping referred to in the Daniel passage is the sleep of death.[41] The phrase "the land of dust" brings to mind Genesis 3:19c, "For dust you are and to dust you shall return," as well as Isaiah 26:19a, "Awake and give a cry of joy, dwellers of the dust." The Hebrew verb "awake" in that Isaiah verse is the same one appearing in the Daniel passage and in Psalm 17:15—קִיץ in the Hiphil—and all three occurrences have the same significance: awaking from the sleep of death, or arising from the dead. Those who died in the faith will be raised to everlasting life, and those who died as unbelievers will rise to experience everlasting reproach and abhorrence.[42]

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[38] Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein et al., vol. 5, *Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 167.

[39] VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 371. See also Saleska, *Psalms 1–50*, 732, 734. Cf. Psalm 73:24.

[40] See also Matthew 26:28; Romans 5:12, 15, 16.

[41] So also, e.g., Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 204; Herbert C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1949; reprint 1969), 529–532; Andrew E. Steinmann, *Daniel*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2008), 560–561. See also Psalm 13:4 (ET 3); Job 3:13; Jeremiah 51:39, 57; Luke 20:27–38.

[42] See also Matthew 25:46; John 5:28–29.

The reproach will be from God, first of all, but also from the holy angels and the believers.

Resurrection: Implicit Old Testament Passages

> And enmity I will put between you [Satan] and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will wound you with regard to the head, and you will wound him with regard to the heel. (Gen 3:15)

A brief interpretation will suffice for this well-known passage, the *protevangelium* (first gospel proclamation). The seed of the woman is the Savior who is promised by God. This Savior, a descendant of Eve and her husband Adam, but also very God, would enter into combat with Satan, who led the first people into sin. Against the background of the post-fall scene in the Garden of Eden in which human beings and a serpent were present, God uses figurative language to depict this combat and its outcome. The Savior would wound the head of Satan, while the devil would wound the Savior's heel. A head wound is worse than a heel wound. A crushed head is a fatal wound; a crushed heel will heal up. In the struggle, the Savior would decisively be the victor, while the devil would be the loser.

This is a brief interpretation, but more must be said. The Old Testament believers, starting with Adam and Eve, knew that in the struggle the Savior would die. This was depicted by all the animal sacrifices, starting with those of Abel, which were one with the sacrifices of the patriarchs, which were one with the sacrifices of the Mosaic legislation. Think of all the blood that was shed during the Old Testament era and what that signified! At the same time, though, the Old Testament believers knew from Genesis 3:15 that the Savior would rise from the dead. A heel wound will heal up! He had to rise from the dead in order to be the victor over the mortally wounded Satan.

Further, there is another gospel truth that is always connected with the resurrection of the Savior. Paul brings this out in 1 Corinthians 15 in his discussion of the resurrection of believers.

> Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. . . . And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. . . . But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. (vv. 12–13, 17, 20)

According to Paul, if the dead (and he is talking specifically about the dead saints) will not be raised, that means the Savior has not been raised, and he in fact is

not a savior. This can be turned around: if the Savior has been raised, that means the dead will be raised. As Lockwood explains,

> For Paul, Christ's resurrection is inseparably connected to the future resurrection of Christians; they are two sides of the same coin. . . . Paul's entire argument hinges on the unbreakable connection between Christ's resurrection and the resurrection of believers on the Last Day. . . . [T]he risen Christ is not the only one who would rise; he is the 'firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. . . . Christ's resurrection was the pledge that all who had fallen asleep in him would be physically raised as he was.[43]

What Paul writes also holds true for the passages in the Old Testament foretelling the resurrection of the Savior, starting with Genesis 3:15.[44] Where this fundamental gospel truth is set forth in the Old Testament, there by implication is the teaching that those who died believing in the Savior would also rise from the dead. The resurrection of the Savior, a human being with a body, means the resurrection of believers. He bestows the spoils of his victory over Satan on his people; his triumph will be their triumph. Yes, because of the devil, people are sinful and so they physically die. But the Savior undoes the work of Satan; thus, the bodies of those who died believing in the Savior will come back to life. According to the holistic view of the Old Testament, humans are both body and soul; so, saving them involved not only their souls but also their bodies.

> Enoch walked with God and he was not because God took him. (Gen 5:24)

For the Old Testament believers, God's taking Enoch alive to heaven was reinforcement of the resurrection truth drawn from Genesis 3:15. In turn, this resurrection truth found in Gen 3:15 and 5:24 was reinforced by Elijah's ascension into heaven (2 Kgs 2:1–12). The Enoch and Elijah events point to a *bodily* existence with God after life here on earth. All believers (specifically, their souls) will go to heaven, as did Enoch and Elijah. Likewise, all believers will exist in the afterlife with the Lord in their bodies, as happened with Enoch and Elijah. Except for those two men, though, the bodies of all believers will first die (but not the bodies of believers who are alive on this earth when Christ has his second advent [1 Thess 4:16–18]). What God did with Enoch and Elijah *implies* Christ's raising of the bodies of believers on the last day and joining them once again to their souls.

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[43] Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 564, 568.

[44] See also, e.g., Isaiah 53:10–11; Psalm 16:9–10 (see Acts 2:24–32; 13:30–37); Psalm 22:15–22. Jonah coming out of the big fish was a typical event, foreshadowing Jesus coming out of the tomb (Matt 12:38–40).

Against the background of Genesis 3:15 and Enoch's going alive to heaven, it is no surprise that Job, who probably lived during the time of the patriarchs, could give such a strong confession of his belief in the resurrection in the nineteenth chapter of the Book of Job (see above). Another possibility is that God gave to the early believers specific revelation that he would raise his people from death—revelation that has not been recorded in Scripture. Recall how, according to Jude 14–15, Enoch knew about God coming on the last day with thousands of his holy angels "to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed . . . and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Yet God's revealing this truth to Enoch or those before him is not recorded in Scripture.

> And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." (Exod 3:6)

Regarding death, the Old Testament and New Testament both treat this in two ways. These are not conflicting truths but complementary. One way is that, when a person dies, he—namely, his soul—goes to the afterlife. The other way is that, with death, the person—precisely speaking, his body—falls asleep; "he" then is resting or sleeping in the tomb, grave, or earth and will be awakened (recall the Hebrew verb קִיץ) at the resurrection. This latter truth figures into the following discussion.[45]

Jesus' encounter with the Sadducees who asked him a question about a woman who was the wife of seven brothers is instructive (Matt 22:23–33; Mark 12:18–27; Luke 20:27–38). The Sadducees did not believe in the immortality of the soul (they thought the soul died with the body) nor in the afterlife and the bodily resurrection, and they apparently accepted as authoritative only those teachings that they saw as coming from the Torah of Moses.[46] Jesus meets the Sadducees on their own terms in responding to their denial of the resurrection, which was what prompted their question about the woman and the seven brothers. Christ goes to the Torah of Moses, quoting specifically Exodus 3:6, God's words to Moses from the burning bush. Jesus emphasizes the present tense: "I am," not "I was." The present tense, implied by the nominal Hebrew sentence in Exodus 3:6, is made explicit by the verb εἰμί, "I am," in LXX Exodus 3:6 and in Matthew 22:32 (see also the present tense ἔστιν, "he is" the God of the living, in Matt 22:32; Mark 12:27; Luke 20:38). Jesus, again, is playing along with the rules of the Sadducees; so, his point is not about the existence of the patriarchs' souls in the afterlife, but rather about the nature and character of the patriarchs' God. In essence Christ is saying to the Sadducees, "God

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[45] Maier, *1 Kings 1–11*, 292–293.

[46] In addition to the three gospel passages already cited, see Acts 23:8; Josephus, *Ant.*, 13.293–298; 18.16–17; Josephus, *J.W.*, 2.162–166.

is not the God of nothingness or nonexistence." (The Sadducees affirmed that human existence came to an end with death.) Yahweh said, "I *am* [not *was*] . . . the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exod 3:6). The patriarchs, Jesus shows, are thus still in existence; they are still "alive." Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are merely *sleeping,* which means that one day they will be *awakened*—that is, raised from the dead.[47]

> Then David lay down with his fathers and he was buried in the City of David [Jerusalem]. (1 Kgs 2:10)[48]

This clause, that he "lay down with his fathers," appears at the beginning of 1 Kings 2:10 to indicate that David died, and it is used of other monarchs throughout Kings for the same purpose. In the books of Kings and Chronicles, this euphemism is applied only to royalty.[49]

"He lay down with his fathers" has been equated by some to burial in the family vault, but this is not correct. David *first* "lay down with his fathers" (1 Kgs 2:10a)—that is, he died—*and then* "he was buried" (2:10b).[50] Also, the verb (the Qal of שָׁכַב) is active: David "lay down" with his forefathers, not "was laid," and David did not place himself in the tomb. There are, furthermore, these considerations: first, there was for David no family vault, containing the bones of his ancestors, in Jerusalem.[51] Second, when Solomon "lay down with his fathers" (1 Kgs 11:43), only David was in the familial tomb. Third, Baasha, of the tribe of Issachar (1 Kgs 15:27), was buried in Tirzah (16:6), the capital of the Northern Kingdom at that time, and was probably not laid to rest in the sepulcher of his fathers. Other similar cases could be set forth from Kings.

Further, the clause does not refer to joining one's ancestors in the afterlife. A person *goes down* or *is brought down* to Sheol (1 Kgs 2:6, 9; Ezek 31:17–18; 32:21; see the discussion of Sheol above).

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[47] Maier, *1 Kings 1–11*, 293.

[48] The following discussion concerning 1 Kings 2:10 is taken from Maier, *1 Kings 1–11*, 292, 294.

[49] In Genesis 47:30 Jacob says, "I will lie down with my fathers," and in Deuteronomy 31:16 Yahweh says to Moses, "[Y]ou are going to lie down with your fathers." Compare the clause "he was gathered to his people," which, in Genesis, is used only of Abraham (Gen 25:8), Ishmael (Gen 25:17), Isaac (Gen 35:29), and Jacob (Gen 49:33). That clause is used elsewhere in the Old Testament of Aaron in Deuteronomy 32:50 (similarly, Num 20:24). Similar clauses are used of Moses in Numbers 27:13 and 31:2. In Deuteronomy 32:50 God says to Moses, "[B]e gathered to your people."

[50] This sequence is also seen, for example, in Genesis 47:29–30, where Jacob/Israel states, "I will lie down with my fathers" while still in Egypt but asks to be buried in the promised land after his bones are carried there.

[51] David's tomb was still identifiable in Jerusalem in Peter's day; see Nehemiah 3:16; Acts 2:29.

However, one's "lying down" can carry with it the thought of his "getting up" again. When a person rests or sleeps, he will be roused once more to action or will be awakened. This paper proposes that "he lay down with his fathers" implies the resurrection of the dead. When the author of Kings chose these words to mark the end of a monarch's career, the author was sending an underlying message to his readers. That man, who had entered the sleep of death, would one day be awakened; he would arise from the dead.

III. Application

Selected points of application will be discussed in succinct form.

1) A proper theology of the body militates against abortion. According to the psalmist, God knits each person together in his mother's womb. What is inside the mother should not be regarded as a mass of cells that have randomly come together but as a person who has been uniquely crafted by the Lord. To destroy an embryo or a fetus is to destroy God's workmanship.

2) A proper theology of the body leads us to emphasize that the body is important too, not just the soul. We serve God with and through our bodies. That is why God gave us bodies. Thus, we regard them as valuable, precious gifts from God. They actually belong to him, since he made them, has redeemed them, and sustains them. We use our bodies, then, to honor God as Creator and Sustainer. Our bodies are not for our glory but for God's glory.

Thus, our intention is to take care of our bodies and be good stewards of them, managing and maintaining them in the proper way. This of course involves the areas of nutrition, exercise, sleep, and cleanliness.

We will emphasize this view of the body especially with young people who are surrounded by the unbelieving world's wrong views of the body and its use. Young people need to hear that the body is not some dirty thing to be stared at in pornographic films, videos, and magazines to bring on a salacious thrill. Rather, they must hear that the body is God's awesome, beautiful creation, to be appreciated according to God's guidelines with godly modesty.

It is God who decides, as God and Creator, how the body is to be used. His standards stand opposed to those of the wicked world. God teaches us in his word what his will is; his word is our guide. Thus, "not anything goes." The use of the body that is contrary to God's will is not to be included but excluded; not to be accepted but rejected; not to be affirmed but condemned. It is necessary for young people to know that God will judge the wrong use of the body.

It is even more important for them to hear again and again the gospel of forgiveness of all sin through faith in Christ; of the transformative power of the

gospel; of the strength in Christ to lead a chaste and decent life—that is, to use our bodies in the right way. They will come to a fuller understanding of how we glorify God with our bodies: when we use them in worshiping him, keeping his commandments, and helping other people.

3) A proper theology of the body leads us to tell the elderly that God lets them remain on the earth because he still has work for them to do. As long as they are on the earth, they are serving God *with their bodies*. What about the aging process and the toll it takes on the body—increasing physical weakness, arthritic impairment, and the loss of certain abilities? Their bodies are still important. They use the organ of the body known as the brain to pray to God and think of praise for him. They use their throat, lips, and mouth to sound forth his praise and to give a witness to others. As they are able, they use their hands to knit sweaters and blankets for the needy and to write sympathy notes. They use their legs and their feet to visit their neighbors in the senior home and offer them a word of reassurance and encouragement. These elderly ones are not as active as they once were and not able to do as much, but they still can do much, united with Christ in faith. Their very bodily presence is a comfort to their loved ones, and in that way too they glorify God with their bodies.

4) A proper theology of the body leads us to speak in basically the same way with a fellow believer who is bedridden because of terminal cancer or in a wheelchair because of ALS. We can tell him that his body is still God's splendid workmanship, with its veins, arteries, pumping heart, and working organs. It is still the temple of the Holy Spirit. Up to his dying moment he can use his brain and perhaps other parts of his body to praise the Lord.

5) A proper theology of the body leads us to hold that God assigns us our sex at our conception. God, moreover, does not make mistakes. According to his will we exist either as male or female according to the sex he assigned us. For a person to try to change his or her biological sex therefore goes against God's plan. This attempt involves the mutilation and poisoning with hormones of God's workmanship and will not result in an actual change of sex (which is in our DNA). We counsel against such an operation, which is rebelling against the Lord. We try to lead the person to accept his or her sex and to resolve to glorify God with the body God gave to him or her.

To state the obvious, the real problem in this case is sin, and the fact that we are living in a sin-ruined world. We walk with this person in his struggle, ministering to him and bringing in all necessary resources, trusting that Christ through his means of grace can bring about a right attitude and outlook.

In addition, Genesis and the rest of God's word make it clear that God's plan was that humans exist in their bodies as male or female, period. Adding more categories is adding to God's plan and thus counter to his will for the human race.

6) Yet if God does not make mistakes, why are some born with a cleft lip, or missing a limb, or with a faulty heart valve, or with spina bifida, or with Down syndrome? If God's hand is in the formation of every person in the womb, what does this say about God?

We struggle with these difficult questions. It is not a matter of God erring or being cruel, but rather of a sin-ruined creation and what God allows according to his permissive, mysterious will. Here one might add that corrective surgery is good and necessary. This, however, is different than mutilating the body in a so-called sex-change operation. Further, existing as a male or female is of the nature of that person as created by God; a faulty heart valve is not.

We all, so to speak, started with a physical challenge. As soon as we were conceived we were dying, because of original sin. Regarding the Christian brother with other physical challenges, a proper theology of the body leads us to tell him that he can and does glorify God with his body, as the Lord guides him and gives him wisdom. With Christ, each one of us engages in victorious bodily living, but in different ways, according to our unique situations and circumstances.

7) A proper theology of the body leads us to emphasize that God saves our whole person, not only our souls but also our bodies. Lockwood puts it this way:

> Contemporary Christians, including preachers, sometimes seem to forget that the final Christian hope is not just for the soul to enter Christ's presence after the death of the body. It is surely true that the Christian's soul goes "to be with Christ" immediately upon death (Phil 1:23; see also Lk 23:43; 2 Cor 5:8; Rev 6:9). At times, however, it seems as though this has become the only goal in the minds and hearts of believers, and that the return of Christ Jesus and the resurrection of the body do not play as vital a place in everyday living, believing, and hoping.[52]

Proper perspective is necessary. Going to and being in heaven is great, but that, so to speak, is an intermediate state. It is salvation, but salvation uncompleted. The great and final hope toward which the church looks is the glorious raising of believers' bodies and the unification once again of body and soul. The bestowal of our perfect, magnificent resurrection bodies will be God's resolution for us of the ills of our former sin-ruined bodies and their mortality.

IV. Conclusion

The awesome gospel truth is that the Son of God became incarnate and will remain embodied into eternity. He entered into our fleshly existence. With him

[52] Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, 565.

there was the greatest glorification of God with the body. Jesus, in whom dwelt the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form, paid the ultimate price for our salvation with his body. He bore our sins in his body and bought us with his own blood. He now feeds us with his body and blood. Because of the incarnate Son of God *we*, by God's grace, glorify God with *our bodies* now, and with *our resurrection bodies* we will do so forever in the new creation.

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Bane and Blessing: Assessing the Liturgical Impact of Vatican II at Its Diamond Jubilee

Thomas M. Winger

I. Trads and Rads

When young people today rebel against their hippie parents, what do they become? Traditional! A generation of Roman Catholics who were raised on the so-called *Novus Ordo*,[1] the vernacular mass enacted in the wake of Vatican II, have rejected it together with their parents' ponytails and bell bottoms, and embraced their great-grandparents' church. The popularity of the Traditional Latin Mass (TLM) in the Roman Catholic Church today may be exaggerated, but it is a force to be reckoned with. A survey of TLM parishes in the United States in 2021 showed that, while only 4 percent of parishes offered TLM regularly, attendance had grown by a stunning 71 percent in less than three years.[2] In the same period, how much had attendance *declined* at mainstream Roman Catholic masses?[3] Unbeknownst to the survey administrators, Pope Francis was about to release his bombshell motu proprio, *Traditionis Custodes* (July 16, 2021),[4] which restricted access to the TLM on the grounds that it was injuring the church's unity. TLM adherents were rightly

[*] This essay was presented to the Good Shepherd Institute at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, on November 7, 2022, in observance of the sixtieth anniversary of Vatican II.

[1] *Novus ordo*, or "new order," is an unofficial moniker popularly applied to the revised Roman Rite promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1969 and published in 1970.

[2] "The Growth of the Latin Mass: A Survey," *Crisis Magazine* (blog), July 26, 2021, https://www.crisismagazine.com/2021/the-growth-of-the-latin-mass-a-survey. The Latin Mass Directory indicated at the time of the survey (July 2021) that some 658 parishes in the US offered at least one TLM regularly; out of 16,702 parishes, that constituted a meagre though notable 4 percent. "Countries," Latin Mass Directory, https://www.latinmassdir.org/countries/.

[3] And note that this period spanned the lockdown restrictions of the pandemic, which devastated worship attendance overall. It has been suggested that the old mass, which features a non-participatory ritual that can be observed from a distance, is well-suited to live-streaming and physical restrictions; but the reality is that adherents of the Latin mass were more likely to reject such novelties. In any case, online viewers were not included in the survey attendance figures.

[4] Francis, *Traditionis Custodes: On the Use of the Roman Liturgy Prior to the Reform of 1970*, The Holy See, July 16, 2021, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/motu_proprio/documents/20210716-motu-proprio-traditionis-custodes.html.

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mystified that *they*, with their traditional views and practices, could be accused of divisiveness.[5]

So what are we to make of this new traditional generation, who take up with pride the insults thrown at them, these Radtrads, Madtrads, Badtrads, and Gladtrads, these Trentecostals and Tradismatics? Are they grumbling Israelites in the wilderness longing for the fleshpots of Egypt, or penitent exiles by the waters of Babylon singing soulful songs of Zion? An admittedly extreme YouTube collage[6] contrasts the reverent ritual of the old rite with cool-dude concelebrating priests jiving before the altar. How should we interpret this debate? As confessional Lutherans committed to traditional worship, it is tempting to cheer for the Tradismatics, who are looking for a mass observed with reverence, dignity, and a sense of mystery, who reject the fads and experimentation of the '60s and '70s. But the two combatants in this Roman Catholic war cannot be simplistically aligned with liturgical Lutherans on one side and the contemporary crowd on the other. Lutherans make strange bedfellows with these adherents of the Council of Trent, so opposed to liturgy in the language of the people and so committed to the sacrifice of the mass. But neither may we simply cheer for the *Novus Ordo*, as if Vatican II represented the Roman church's better-late-than-never embrace of the Reformation. It is more complicated than that. If there is an analogy in our own churches, it may lie in the mixed reception of *Lutheran Worship* (1982) with its not insignificant departures from the Common Service tradition in order, text, and music. And though *Lutheran Service Book* (2006) has to some extent reconciled the polarities, there is increasing strength in the voices advocating a return to the one-year lectionary, the primacy of Setting Three, and eastward-facing celebration of the Eucharist. This admittedly more friendly Lutheran skirmish is the perfect backdrop for a close examination of Vatican II on this sixtieth anniversary of its opening.

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[5] And they were chagrined that Francis had chipped away at previous allowances given by both John Paul II and Benedict XVI for use of the old rite: John Paul II, *Quattuor abhinc annos* (Oct. 3, 1984), Adoremus, December 31, 2007, https://adoremus.org/2007/12/quattuor-abhinc-annos/; and Benedict XVI, *Summorum Pontificum: On the Roman Liturgy Prior to the Reform of 1970*, The Holy See, July 7, 2007, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_ben-xvi_motu-proprio_20070707_summorum-pontificum.html. The chilling edict seems to have had an effect, as the Latin Mass Directory now lists only 603 parishes in the US offering TLM regularly (an 8 percent decline): https://www.latinmassdir.org/countries/, accessed September 27, 2022. The directory lists, e.g., 40 parishes in Canada (3 per 1 million nominal Catholics), 58 in Australia (11 per 1 million), 202 in France (5 per 1 million), 92 in Italy (2 per 1 million). Setting aside countries with very small and therefore statistically dubious populations, the outstanding example of the TLM's popularity is the UK, with 153 parishes (31 per 1 million).

[6] Catholic Crusader Films, "The Novus Ordo vs the Traditional Latin Mass Full Movie," March 28, 2020, https://youtu.be/gwBDY-WXeqY.

II. After a Century of the Liturgical Movement

One sceptical analyst has compared this young generation's adoption of the Latin mass to a browser in an antique shop who picks up a mechanical gramophone and a gear-driven hand drill. Fascinated by the quality of their craftsmanship, he starts playing old vinyl and drilling holes for fun. But he has no memory of life's exhausting labour before the advent of electricity. So also there can be an innocent nostalgia among those who extol the old rite, but who never experienced an average Catholic mass pre-Vatican II. A wise old pastor recently made a similar comment to me about a new generation of Lutherans who have rediscovered the Common Service, but who do not remember communion just four times a year with a dry mass from page five in between, the pastor speaking while the congregation sang their responses, or the Gloria in Excelsis wheezed out on a reed organ. So, also, before we join the Trentecostals in condemning the *Novus Ordo*, we ought at least to see what Vatican II was trying to fix.

On the eve of the Reformation, the mass was, at its best, a grand drama of sight and sound, processions and pageantry. At its worst, it was a priest rattling off the words alone at a side altar. In an average town it was a sad blend of the two, with the chief Sunday mass taking on the low ceremonial of a votive mass. The priest at the altar spoke the mass in dialogue with a single assistant while the congregation looked on. The words were in a language of which they understood only snippets, spoken in a hurried and hushed voice that made it even harder to understand. The Scripture readings were read in Vulgate Latin by a priest who did not even bother to turn and face them.[7] Sermons were rare, as the average priest was not educated enough to have a preaching licence. In such a spoken, low mass, without even choral music to inspire their attention, congregants had little explicit role. It was common to wander and chatter as the priest carried out the mass on their behalf, though the pious might pray privately from a book of hours. Since the early Middle Ages, the prayers that surrounded and included the words of institution had been spoken silently. So to call attention to the holy moment of the consecration, a sacred bell was rung, signalling the laypeople to run forward to kneel in adoration and watch the elevation of Christ's body.[8] This spiritual communion was the norm for people who might partake orally only once a year.

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[7] This reality explains the otherwise peculiar rubrics in many early Lutheran church orders that instruct the priest to read the Scriptures "facing the people"!

[8] Thomas Cranmer told of how people might run from one altar to another on Sunday to observe the elevation multiple times and increase their spiritual reward. See Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 98.

Ceremonial matters were not at the center of the Lutheran Reformation, which focused its critique chiefly on the sacrifice of the mass. But though "the active participation of the laity" was not an explicit principle, early Lutherans did reincorporate the laity into the liturgy through vernacular Scripture readings and hymns, sermons at every service, restoring the Prayer of the Church, the vernacular proclamation of the words of institution, and communion in both kinds. While rejecting most of these Lutheran changes, the Council of Trent introduced its own reforms; but they were chiefly concerned with stamping out regional variations. And though Trent, famously, pulled up short of banning polyphonic choral music, the mass in post-Reformation Catholicism became even more universally a purely spoken affair.[9] For three hundred years thereafter, the mass was an action rendered by the priest on behalf of the people, while the latter carried out their private devotions.[10] It was an era when adoration of the sacrament outside mass became more important than the mass itself.[11] When the people did commune, it, too, usually took place outside the mass (even *before* mass!) as they received elements reserved in a tabernacle; thus, mass and communion became separate events.[12]

It is against this background that the nineteenth-century stirrings known as the Liturgical Movement must be interpreted. From a confessional Lutheran standpoint, I have on many occasions heartily condemned the movement's theological weaknesses, its anthropocentric emphases, its tendency towards "liturgical archaeology," and its naïve Romanticism.[13] It may be true that the Liturgical Movement

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[9] The popular Lutheran retort that chanting is (Roman) Catholic is quite opposite to reality. It is Lutherans who preserved the sung service. In the Baroque and Classical eras, Roman Catholic composers set the text of the mass for musical performance in a non-liturgical concert setting. Post-Vatican II documents endeavoured to restore the *sung* mass as the norm.

[10] See the (admittedly tendentious) depiction of the pre-Vatican II mass in Rita Ferrone, *Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Rediscovering Vatican II (New York: Paulist, 2007), 1–3.

[11] See Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), 289, who claim the emphasis on eucharistic adoration was a reaction to the denial of the real presence by some Protestants. The architectural changes are attributed to the Jesuits.

[12] See I. H. Dalmais et al., *Principles of the Liturgy*, ed. A. G. Martimort, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, The Church at Prayer: An Introduction to the Liturgy, new ed., 4 vols. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1985), 1:70.

[13] Hermann Sasse, "Liturgy and Lutheranism," in *Scripture and the Church: Selected Essays of Hermann Sasse*, ed. Jeffrey J. Kloha and Ronald R. Feuerhahn, Concordia Seminary Monograph Series (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1995), 31–46; Sasse, "Liturgy and Confession: A Brotherly Warning against the 'High Church' Danger," in *The Lonely Way*, vol. 2 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002), 299–315; Bryan D. Spinks, *Luther's Liturgical Criteria and His Reform of the Canon of the Mass* (Bramcote, Notts.: Grove Books, 1982) and "Mis-Shapen: Gregory Dix and the Four-Action Shape of the Liturgy," *Lutheran Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (1990), 161–177; Timothy C. J. Quill, *The Impact of the Liturgical Movement on American Lutheranism* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1997); also Charles J. Evanson, *Evangelicalism and the Liturgical Movement and Their Effects on Lutheran Worship*, ALCM Pamphlet Series (Association of Lutheran Church Musicians, 1990).

introduced dangerous foreign viruses into our Lutheran bloodstream. But a decade of dialogue with Roman Catholics has encouraged me to be more understanding of what it meant for them. What was the Liturgical Movement trying to do?

While its inauguration has been pinned to a lecture in 1909,[14] the scholarly spadework had been underway for nearly a century. A lengthy recitation of names will not help us, but suffice it to say that it grew into a cluster of study centers in Belgium, France, and Germany.[15] The movement's key theological principles were

- an ecclesiology focusing on the church as the mystical body of Christ, rather than the hierarchy;
- hence, the liturgy as Christ working through his entire body, rather than the priest alone;
- hence, the well-known slogans: the "full, conscious, and active participation" of the laity, and liturgy as "work of the people";
- more use of the vernacular language in the liturgy, a broader reading of Scripture, and regular preaching;
- a return to mediaeval or even earlier ("undivided") church norms;
- a consequent interest in borrowing from Eastern Christian rites; and
- an emphasis on the "mystical" nature of worship as a participation in Christ's work of salvation.

These principles were worked out practically in certain experimental changes to the mass in their monastery gatherings, including the following:

- diglot printed mass books that gave the Latin text with a vernacular translation alongside
- inviting the people to speak the responses that hitherto had been said by the server alone (or sung by the choir), which came to be known as a "dialogue mass"
- subsequently, asking the people to speak (or sing) the ordinary texts of the mass as well
- encouragement to regular reception of the sacramental elements during mass

However we might criticise their theology, we are all indebted to the magisterial research published in such works as Josef Jungmann's *The Mass of the Roman Rite*

[14] "La vraie prière de l'Église" (the true prayer of the church) at the National Congress of Catholic Works, Malines, Belgium (September 1909). This was identified as the birth of the Liturgical Movement by Dom Bernard Botte in 1973. See John R. K. Fenwick and Bryan D. Spinks, *Worship in Transition: The Liturgical Movement in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Continuum, 1995).

[15] See, e.g., Fenwick and Spinks, *Worship in Transition*, 1–35; Quill, *The Impact of the Liturgical Movement*, 1–63.

(1951) and Gregory Dix's *The Shape of the Liturgy* (1945). From south of the Alps, the hierarchy watched the movement with a mix of suspicion and caution. In a series of documents in the first half of the twentieth century, this grew to cautious approval. Pope Pius X in *Tra le Sollecitudini* ("Among the Concerns," 1903) addressed church music, calling for operatic and sentimental music to be suppressed and for Gregorian chant to be restored as the "supreme model." This was intended to give the people a pattern of liturgical music that was actually singable for them. This papal pronouncement also included for the first time affirmation of key Liturgical Movement language: "Our people assemble for the purpose of acquiring the true Christian spirit from its first and indispensable source, namely, active participation in the most sacred mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church."[16] Two years later Pius X issued *Sacra Tridentina* (1905), the "Decree on Frequent and Daily Reception of Holy Communion," which urged the faithful to partake orally.

Pierre Jounel observed that in this first period the aim had been "to bring the existing liturgy within reach of the people," but that after World War II "there was a clear perception of the need for a radical reform of the rites and for a partial introduction of the vernacular into the celebration."[17] A more substantial approval for such moves was given by Pope Pius XII in *Mediator Dei* (1947), the first encyclical devoted entirely to the liturgy. From the start, this *magna carta* praised the movement's positive results and affirmed its core principles:

> With more widespread and more frequent reception of the sacraments, with the beauty of the liturgical prayers more fully savoured, the worship of the Eucharist came to be regarded for what it really is: the fountain-head of genuine Christian devotion. Bolder relief was given likewise to the fact that all the faithful make up a single and very compact body with Christ for its Head, and that the Christian community is in duty bound to participate in the liturgical rites according to their station.[18]

But it simultaneously pulled back on the reins. "Severe reproof" is aimed at those who would "introduce novel liturgical practices" such as "use of the vernacular in the celebration of the august eucharistic sacrifice" (§59). On the eve of Vatican II, such statements must have given a false sense of security to traditionalists, who expected the council to halt the movement's progress.

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[16] *Tra le Sollecitudini*, par. 5; translation from Ferrone, *Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 6. See also Quill, *The Impact of the Liturgical Movement*, 9; and Martimort, *Principles of the Liturgy*, 1:73–74.

[17] Martimort, *Principles of the Liturgy*, 1:75.

[18] Pius XII, *Mediator Dei* (Nov. 20, 1947), §5, The Holy See, www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_20111947_mediator-dei.html.

Reading *Mediator Dei* closely, one senses that its concern is more to assert centralized authority for reform of the mass than to reject the movement's proposals as such. For, having slapped it lightly on the wrist, the document proceeds to affirm the people's participation in the sacrifice of the mass (§85), their learning the liturgy so that they might dialogue with the priest (§§105, 192), their singing vernacular hymns (§§105, 194), and their reception of communion in the mass (§§115, 121). The pope's willingness to proceed with reforms was indicated by his establishing a commission, which worked from 1948 to 1960. The commission prepared revisions of nearly all the liturgical books before the council opened, but chose not to publish them in deference to the upcoming deliberations.[19] The exception was the new rites for the Easter Vigil and Holy Week, published in 1955.[20] That these revisions in particular were released is significant for two reasons: firstly, the Easter Vigil was a perfect example of how the old rites had become corrupt, as it was normally observed on Holy Saturday *morning* even while its texts said "this is the night,"[21] it was conducted by the priest and a few assistants alone, and it was usually *followed* (incoherently) by the final Lenten Vespers.[22] Secondly, the revision of Holy Week put into practice one of the chief theological themes of the Liturgical Movement: the expansion of the "mystery of Christ" beyond his death on Good Friday to include his resurrection.

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[19] Commission for the General Reform of the Liturgy (1948–1960). Upon the death of Pope Pius XII in 1958, Pope John XXIII pressed pause on the former's liturgical plans. In his motu proprio *Rubricarum instructum* (Code of Rubrics, July 25, 1960), he deferred further reform to the upcoming council. This represents the final set of rubrics for the "old rite," which led to publication of the final edition of the old Roman Missal in 1962. See Martimort, *Principles of the Liturgy*, 1:76; Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies*, 302–303.

[20] See *Dominicae Resurrectionis, De solemni vigilia paschali instauranda,* The Holy See, February 9, 1951, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_19510209_dominicae-resurrectionis_la.html; and finally, *Maxima Redemptionis*, The Holy See, November 19, 1955, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_19551116_maxima-redemptionis_la.html. Included in the reforms was a revision of the Palm Sunday ritual, moving the Maundy Thursday Communion from the morning to the evening (separating it from the Mass of Chrism at which the oils of anointing and exorcism were consecrated), moving the Good Friday service from the evening to the afternoon, as well as the revisions to the Easter Vigil described above. In each case the purpose was to restore the chronological faithfulness of the observances. The "remembrance of Baptism" in the vigil was a novelty.

[21] Evening masses were problematic because of the requirement to fast (from midnight onwards) before receiving the sacrament. Moving the service to the morning mitigated this. In *Sacram Communionem* (1957) Pope Pius XII reduced the requirement to three hours, making evening masses more practical. In 1964 Paul VI reduced the requirement to one hour.

[22] See Ferrone, *Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10–11.

III. The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) and *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963)

When the Second Vatican Council is approached along this historical path, one can see that its liturgical program did not appear *de novo*, but was the capstone on a 150-year construction.[23] Whether the new order published in 1970 accurately reflected the intention of the council is a question to be addressed in due course; likewise, whether it went too far, too quickly. But these questions cannot be answered without first knowing what Vatican II was up to. By all accounts, Pope John XXIII surprised everyone when, just three months into office, he announced his intention to convene an ecumenical council (January 25, 1959). There was no doctrinal crisis; its intention was explicitly "pastoral" and evangelistic, to respond to the needs of the modern world. The goals were vague—to promote "enlightenment, edification, and joy" among Christians and to invite the separated Christian communities (such as Lutherans) to join in a "quest for unity and grace."[24] More colloquially it was said that the pope wanted to "open the windows of the Vatican in order to—in his very words—'let in some fresh air.'"[25] It would turn out to be the largest business meeting in history, with 2,860 official participants plus ecumenical observers filling the massive nave of St. Peter's. The council opened on October 11, 1962, and met in four annual periods, each lasting three or four months, until concluding on December 8, 1965. Each of the 168 working days began with mass, often in an unfamiliar, non-Roman rite to acquaint the gathering with the international breadth of the church. (In later years the daily mass would begin to display elements of the proposed new rite.) It is popular today to speak vaguely of "the spirit of Vatican II," sometimes encapsulated with the terms *aggiornamento* (Italian for "updating") and *ressourcement* (French for "back to the sources"). While it may seem that these terms represented the tension between modernizing and traditionalism, in reality they expressed two sides of reform's coin. For, particularly in the case of the liturgy, *ressourcement* meant looking behind the Tridentine mass to the church's more venerable tradition in order, ironically, to make the liturgy meaningful to modern people.[26]

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[23] In the introduction to the new missal (1969), Pope Paul VI wrote: "No one should think, however, that this revision of the Roman Missal has come out of nowhere. The progress of liturgical studies during the last four centuries has certainly prepared the way." Quoted from Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies*, 304–305.

[24] John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 17, citing the pope's announcement.

[25] Massimo Faggioli, "*Sacrosanctum Concilium* and the Meaning of Vatican II," *Theological Studies* 71, no. 2 (2010): 446.

[26] O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, 36–43.

In the three years leading up to the council, ten Preparatory Commissions produced draft documents for the council to debate. By the end of the council, sixteen documents had been approved. Of first rank were the four "constitutions": "On the Sacred Liturgy" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*), "On the Church" (*Lumen Gentium*), "On Divine Revelation" (*Dei Verbum*), and "On the Church in the Modern World" (*Gaudium et Spes*). Next came nine "decrees," which included seminary education, ecumenism, mission, bishops, and priests. Finally there were three "declarations," including controversial views on non-Christian religions and religious liberty. It is notable that the first document to be debated and approved was the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*).[27] It was the only schema (draft) to survive debate substantially intact, for there was more consensus on the need to reform the liturgy than on other topics. The debate took place from October 22 to November 13, 1962, and featured passionate speeches by both traditionalists and proponents of change. Despite the vigorous debate, the schema required only minor changes before it was returned to the floor a year later (December 4, 1963) for the final vote, which it won by a resounding 2,147 to 4.

The document's surprising success can only be explained against the historical background we have reviewed. Although Vatican II was revolutionary for the Roman Church in many ways, and although the change in direction it announced was bitterly opposed by a strong and traditional minority at the council, its teachings did not appear out of the blue. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was simply the next step in the church's qualified acceptance of the Liturgical Movement. Theologically it affirmed the new ecclesiology (which would be explicated later in *Lumen Gentium*): the church defined not simply as the hierarchy but as the full mystical body of Christ.[28] The Constitution consists of seven chapters:

I. General Principles for the Restoration and Promotion of the Sacred Liturgy
II. The Most Sacred Mystery of the Eucharist
III. The Other Sacraments and Sacramentals

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[27] See O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, 129–141; and Ferrone, *Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 13–18. The official text is available in multiple sources as well as on the Vatican website: *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, The Holy See, December 4, 1963, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html. Many of the documents to be cited below are most easily accessible in *Documents on the Liturgy, 1963–1979: Conciliar, Papal, and Curial Texts*, ed. Thomas C. O'Brien (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1982); hereafter to be referenced as *DOL* plus document number.

[28] Thus Vatican II thoroughly rehabilitated Yves Congar. Ferrone, *Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 23–50, helpfully identifies "seven essential concepts" in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, which the present essay ignores in favor of following the document's own section divisions. Ecclesiology is number four. Though speaking of the "mystical body of Christ," *Lumen Gentium* more frequently used the controversial new slogan, "the people of God."

IV. The Divine Office
V. The Liturgical Year
VI. Sacred Music
VII. Sacred Art and Sacred Furnishings

It begins by stressing the central importance of the liturgy itself, using traditional language of the sacrifice of the mass; but already here the responsibility of the laity is newly emphasized: "For the liturgy, 'through which the work of our redemption is accomplished,' most of all in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church" (§2). Parish pastors in particular have a responsibility to teach this significance so that "the faithful take part fully aware of what they are doing, actively engaged in the rite, and enriched by its effects" (§11). The Constitution firmly maintains the uniqueness of Christ's real presence in the sacramental elements, but also insists that "Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations" (§7). While this, too, constitutes a new emphasis on the laity, it remains also a christological principle, for "the liturgy is . . . an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ," and therefore "is performed by the [whole] Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and His members" (§7).

This theological foundation leads to the document's premier expression of the Liturgical Movement's central thesis:

> Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people" (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4–5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism. (§14)

While it seems that Rome has here adopted the Protestant idea of the priesthood of all the baptized, notice that their liturgical role is to participate in offering the sacrifice of the mass (§48)—not a principle derived from Luther!

The Constitution proceeds from these basic principles to propose norms for the reform of the mass. Although the document seeks to be practical, the proposals remain vague:

> In this restoration, both texts and rites should be drawn up so that they express more clearly the holy things which they signify; the Christian people, so far as possible, should be enabled to understand them with ease and to take part in them fully, actively, and as befits a community. (§21)

> The rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity; they should be short, clear, and unencumbered by useless repetitions. (§34)

Some specifics are included in the recommendations: "To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes" (§30). The details are to be worked out locally by the territorial bodies of bishops.

The reform must promote a "warm and living love for scripture" (§24). This emphasis on God's word leads to the exhortation that "there is to be more reading from holy scripture, and it is to be more varied and suitable" (§35.1)—a proposal that would lead to restoring the Old Testament reading and creating the three-year lectionary (§51). The sermon is to be part of every mass (§52). The Prayer of the Church is to be restored in its historic place (§53). These new emphases compel the Constitution to address the question of the vernacular. While it is popularly believed that Vatican II enacted the vernacular mass in one fell swoop, it may be surprising to read what it actually says:

> [T]he use of the Latin language is to be preserved in the Latin rites.
>
> But since the use of the mother tongue, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or other parts of the liturgy, frequently may be of great advantage to the people, the limits of its employment may be extended. This will apply in the first place to the readings and directives, and to some of the prayers and chants. (§36)

Thus, the Constitution envisioned at the very least—and probably no more than—that the vernacular be permitted in the readings and prayers, while the people should be encouraged to join in singing the *Latin* responses and ordinary texts. The Canon of the Mass itself was to remain in Latin.

The practice of the sacrament received only two minor course corrections: the faithful were now to receive communion immediately after the priest, within the mass itself; and bishops could authorize communion in both kinds in certain circumstances, such as at the first mass following an adult Baptism.

IV. The New Rite (1970)

This is a very brief summary of the goals *Sacrosanctum Concilium* proposed for reform of the Divine Service. Conspicuously absent are the more radical changes popularly associated with Vatican II:[29]

- a completely vernacular mass, including the ordinary and Canon
- freestanding altars with the priest facing the people (*versus populum*)
- communion in the hand, while standing (not kneeling)[30]
- new liturgical roles for the laity, such as lay readers and communion servers[31]

It is also notable that major changes to the Roman rite itself had not yet been proposed, such as:

- a public penitential rite at the beginning of mass;
- replacing the mediaeval Offertory texts with briefer and less sacrificial prayers of preparation; and
- providing four Eucharistic Prayers, only one of which was the age-old Roman Canon!

These (and countless smaller) changes were carried out rapidly over the next six years by a special *consilium* (consultation) established by Pope Pius VI.[32] The

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[29] John R. Stephenson, "'Jein' to Vatican II," *Logia* 23, no. 1 (2014): 55, writes: "Remarkably, every Tom, Dick, and Harry, of all confessions and none, tend to have firm views about Pope John's council, and, equally remarkably, many of these opinions have little basis in reality. For example, the council fathers did *not* authorize mass in the vernacular tongues, communion in the hand, and celebration *versus populum*; rather, in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the first document approved at the council, they approved only some modest fine-tuning of the existing rite, so that the massive changes of the *Novus ordo missae* were unilaterally imposed by Paul VI Montini on the advice of some determined ideologues within the curial bureaucracy."

[30] Communion in the hand was cautiously approved with restrictions and qualifications in 1969 after a survey of bishops; see *DOL* 260 and 261. The regional versions of the *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* (*GIRM*) give slightly different advice on reception of the sacrament. But it must be said that communion in the hand while standing is not *mandated* but only *permitted* in the post-Vatican II documents.

[31] Although *Sacrosanctum Concilium* did not explicitly institute such "lay ministries," it referred to servers and lectors and called for each component of the gathered assembly to do its unique part (§28–29); its theology of active participation was later cited as support for these new roles. See *DOL* 257 and 259 for the introduction of lay communion servers in 1967. The motu proprio *Ministeria quaedam* (Aug. 15, 1972, *DOL* 340) revised the "minor orders" and converted "reader" and "acolyte" into lay ministries, which by definition were no longer seen as steps towards the priesthood. The rite for the institution (installation) of readers and acolytes was promulgated on December 3, 1973 (*DOL* 341). These were envisioned as offices and were formally restricted to men, though the bishops had the authority to give their *functions* to women (see *DOL* 340, n. R1; *DOL* 319; and the original 1969 *GIRM*, §70).

[32] *Consilium ad exsequendam Constitutionem de sacra Liturgia*, established by the motu proprio *Sacram Liturgiam* (Jan. 25, 1964), *DOL* 20. The driving force behind *Sacrosanctum*

consilium released three instructions on the developments that would eventually be published in the new Roman Missal of 1970. The first, published already in September 1964,[33] reduced significantly the number of texts spoken by the priest alone: the people were to join in the Our Father, and the so-called "Last Gospel" (a reading of John 1 at the end of mass) was omitted. Specific instructions were given on how to read the Scriptures, including an admonition to face the people (not the altar) when reading. Details are given for restoring weekly preaching and the Prayer of the Church. Use of the vernacular is extended to the ordinary and propers. And for the first time, approval is given to the experimental practice of the priest presiding from behind a freestanding altar, facing the people.[34] Thus, surprisingly, what *defines* the new mass for many Roman Catholics was not promulgated by the council fathers themselves, but by a committee tasked with preparing the new rite! Another dramatic move was taken in 1967 when the second instruction[35] permitted the priest to speak the Roman Canon aloud and in the language of the people—a move that *Sacrosanctum Concilium* had specifically prohibited just four years previously. In 1968 a decree introduced three new Eucharistic Prayers, something that had not been imagined by anyone at the council.[36] These prayers were the most prominent textual change in the new rite. The new three-year lectionary was released in 1969; and a third instruction in 1970 expanded provision for communion in both kinds.[37]

Pope Paul VI's new Roman Missal was promulgated in April 1969 and published in 1970 as an authoritative Latin text.[38] The rite brought together the changes elaborated in the three "instructions," including the new opening penitential rite and the four Eucharistic Prayers. The Introit was suppressed and the Gradual replaced by a full Psalm. Translations of the missal into the vernacular were under the authority of regional bishops' councils; but the English translation released in 1973 had been produced by an international committee (International Commission

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Concilium, Cardinal Annibale Bugnini, was appointed as secretary of the *Consilium*, and is recognized as the architect of the *Novus Ordo*. See his chronicle, *The Reform of the Liturgy, 1948–1975* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990).

[33] *Inter Oecumenici* (September 26, 1964, *DOL* 23).

[34] Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies*, 294, indicate that the new rite (1950) for the Church of South India (a merger of Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists) was the first to introduce presiding *versus populum*, as well as other changes emerging from the Liturgical Movement.

[35] *Tres Abhinc Annos* (1967, *DOL* 39).

[36] *Preces eucharisticae* and *Norms* (May 23, 1968, *DOL* 241 and 242). See the astonished comment by Pierre Jounel in Martimort, *Principles of the Liturgy*, 1:80: "At the Council not a single Father had proposed or even envisaged the introduction of several Eucharistic Prayers into the Roman liturgy. Yet this had been done by 1968."

[37] *Liturgicae Instaurationes* (Sep. 5, 1970, *DOL* 52).

[38] *Missale Romanum ex decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum* (1970), *DOL* 213. A second typical edition appeared in 1975, and a third in 2002.

on English in the Liturgy, ICEL). In line with principles espoused by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, this English translation gave priority to understanding over verbal fidelity, in texts that were more paraphrased than literal. A famous example is the translation of *et cum spiritu tuo* as "and also with you."[39] The words "the mystery of faith," which appeared enigmatically in the midst of the words of institution in the Roman Canon, were explained with a congregational acclamation expressing the paschal mystery: "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again"—which would be picked up by *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978). Ironically, having adopted such "ecumenical" translations, Lutheran hymnals fell out of step with Roman Catholics after Pope John Paul II called for a return to more literal translations in 2001.[40] The resulting revision of the English text (2011) returned to "and with your spirit," and the eucharistic acclamation became the more prosaic: "We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again." Only Lutherans are still saying these things the old way (or is it the new way?).[41]

V. Critique of the New Rite

From a Lutheran perspective there is much to cheer in the new Roman rite,[42] as our old foes finally caught up with reforms we made five hundred years ago: the use of the vernacular, preaching in every service, restoration of the Prayer of the Church, both kinds (in the sacrament of the altar) for the laity, and the strong encouragement to oral communion. These are blockbuster changes. At the same time, if we look at the differences between the Tridentine mass and the post-Vatican II *Novus Ordo* in terms of its text and order, the differences seem relatively minor.[43] But the fervent hostility to the *Novus Ordo* expressed by proponents of the TLM

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[39] See Quill, *The Impact of the Liturgical Movement*, 167–183.

[40] *Liturgiam Authenticam* (Mar. 28, 2001).

[41] *Lutheran Service Book* (2006) retained a mix of "and also with you" and "and with your/thy spirit," particularly where the familiar music demanded one or the other. The original ICEL translation of the mystery proclamation is preserved in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006). The Roman Missal provides as an alternative anamnestic acclamation Paul's words, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor 11:26). Their appearance after the *verba* in the left-hand column in *LSB*, Settings One and Two, thus parallels the new Roman use. But that Pauline passage was present already in *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941) as a post-communion versicle.

[42] Cf. Jaroslav J. Pelikan, "A Response to *Sacrosanctum Concilium*," in *The Documents of Vatican II: In a New and Definitive Translation, with Commentaries and Notes by Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Authorities*, ed. Walter M. Abbott (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), 179–182.

[43] Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies*, 306, contend that the moniker "new" is inaccurate inasmuch as the revisions tended to take the Roman rite back closer to its seventh-century form under Pope Gregory. Nicola Bux, *Benedict XVI's Reform: The Liturgy between Innovation and Tradition*, trans. Joseph Trabbic (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), 84, asserts the opposite.

simply cannot be understood through such a Lutheran lens. Certainly, to a great extent the reaction is visceral, a distaste for all things contemporary. The 1970s colloquial language of the ICEL translations, for example, was certainly not up to the elegant standards of the old Latin or the Cranmer translations used by Anglicans and Lutherans. And though experts knew the changes had been discussed for a century, to the man in the pew the new rite *looked* like a sudden and radical break with tradition. Yes, to understand traditionalist hostility we need to recognize the far greater prominence ceremonial matters hold in Roman Catholic minds. More important than the change in *text* from the 1962 to the 1970 missal was the change in *rubrics*. The new and highly detailed *General Instruction on the Roman Missal*, published prominently in the missal's opening pages, gave the new rite a wholly different look and feel. Although freestanding altars and presiding *versus populum*, as well as communion in the hand, were merely recommended, not binding rubrics, they rapidly became standard practices marking out the new rite—and they have been widely interpreted as indicating a weakening of the confession of the real presence and a decline in commitment to the sacrifice of the mass.[44] For some it appears to be a capitulation to Protestant theology, hence a change in the doctrinal position of the church. To others it is a decline into informality, a loss of reverence for what is sacred.

If such criticisms are legitimate, it is not strictly fair to level them at Vatican II itself, which envisioned radical changes to the *understanding* of the mass but only modest changes to its *order* and *practice*. Formally, such criticisms are properly laid at the feet of the consultation (*consilium*), which developed the new order in a way that the Vatican fathers may not have envisioned.[45] That, at least, is the perspective of those like Pope Benedict XVI, who was an ardent participant at Vatican II as Joseph Ratzinger, and later supported those calling for "a reform of the reform."[46]

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[44] Traditionalists argue that the *ad orientem* position more clearly expresses the sacrificial nature of the mass, whereas the *versus populum* position expresses the "Protestant" idea of meal. Lutherans who advocate for the traditional position need to be careful about what arguments they use. For the Roman Catholic traditionalist position, see Uwe Michael Lang, *Turning towards the Lord: Orientation in Liturgical Prayer* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004); Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 74–84; and Bux, *Benedict XVI's Reform*, 120–124.

[45] In 1967 at the Synod of Bishops an experimental celebration of the proposed new rite was held and the bishops asked to give a non-binding vote. The group was much more divided than at the approval of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* itself: of 187 in attendance, 78 voted in favour, 62 with reservations (*juxta modum*), 43 against (*non placet*), and 4 abstentions. See Bux, *Benedict XVI's Reform*, 68.

[46] Benedict supported advocates of the old rite with his motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum, on the Roman liturgy prior to the reform of 1970* (July 7, 2007), which expanded permission for use of the "Extraordinary Form." See also Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*; and Bux, *Benedict XVI's Reform*. Bux, 78, quotes Benedict's cover letter: "[I]t has clearly been demonstrated that young

But I would argue that the most common criticisms of the *Novus Ordo* arise more from the widespread but idiosyncratic practices of individual priests. Certainly this observation applies to outrageous innovations like folk masses and clowning. But it is also applicable to the freestanding altar. Setting aside principled objections based on how best to express the sacrifice of the mass, distaste for *versus populum* celebration arises mostly from the slapdash, irreverent practice of many priests, who spread papers across the altar as if it were a desk and lean on it like a kitchen table (a critique applicable to some Lutheran pastors as well). And note that common practice is to stand behind the altar and face the people for the entire mass (not just for the consecration)—a posture that not only confuses sacrificial and sacramental actions, but makes people uncomfortable! The new altars themselves were often erected hurriedly and lack the beauty and monumental character of the ancient altars now languishing in the apse. So one must ponder penetrating questions: is it the new *rite* or the new *rubrics* that has unsettled the church? Is it the letter of Vatican II or its "spirit"?

VI. The Influence of Vatican II on the New Lutheran Rites?

When addressing the influence of Vatican II on the new Lutheran rites of the '70s and '80s, we must proceed with the same critical caution. Firstly, we must carefully distinguish between Vatican II and what the 1970 missal did. Secondly, we must distinguish between what Lutherans may have borrowed from these Roman sources and what they developed along parallel lines from the Liturgical Movement, or what Lutherans just recovered from their own history. And thirdly, we must acknowledge that some changes arose simply from the spirit of the age. At the very least, we should stamp out the sloppy retort, "We got it from Vatican II."

Here I must restrict my comments to how Vatican II influenced the Lutheran reform of the Divine Service. (More could be said about the daily office, the church year, the so-called rites of initiation, care of the sick and dying, church music and art, and so on.) And to avoid drowning in details, permit me to label the Common Service (1888),[47] represented by *LSB* Setting Three, as our "old rite," while lumping together as a Lutheran *Novus Ordo* the revised services in *LBW*, *LW*, and *LSB* (Settings One and Two). Strictly speaking, the single formal change in our rite that came directly from Vatican II is the three-year lectionary, which was specifically called for by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. With it came the proper Psalms as an alterna-

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persons too have discovered this liturgical form, felt its attraction and found in it a form of encounter with the Mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist, particularly suited to them."

[47] General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, *The Common Service for the Use of Evangelical Lutheran Congregations* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1888).

tive to the Gradual. Even the new Roman Missal (1970) does not seem to have had much direct textual influence on Lutheran orders, aside from the aforementioned acclamation of the paschal mystery in *LBW*. Having said that, however, the "spirit of Vatican II," or rather the new ecclesiology of its chief constitutions, is apparent in a number of innovations in our new rite. The Sharing of the Peace after the consecration was taken from, or at least paralleled, the new Roman rite, and has drawn as much criticism for its frivolity in Roman circles as in Lutheran.[48] The new and rather ambiguous role of assisting minister, to whom the first two Scripture readings and various prayers are given, certainly reflects Vatican II's concern for the active participation of the laity and mirrors their subsequent introduction of lay readers and servers. And here we Lutherans may wonder whether the innovation of the assisting minister—at least when given to a layman—was solving a problem we did not have, while simultaneously importing the theologically problematic idea of the liturgy as "work of the people."[49]

In a second category, we may place changes made to the rite that come from the Liturgical Movement in general. The recovery of an Old Testament reading, which had been widespread for decades prior to the three-year lectionary, and is today accepted even by firm adherents of the one-year series, is certainly a positive fruit of Liturgical Movement research. The extended Kyrie in *LSB* Settings One and Two is adapted from Eastern rites, and restores the practice of the Roman church before the sixth century. But this lovely addition to our rite came not from contemporary Roman reforms, but had already been introduced by *Service Book and Hymnal* (1958). The expansion of eucharistic praying to include the language and structures of ancient Eastern anaphoras has been more controversial. But just as the four Eucharistic Prayers in the 1970 Roman Missal had not been proposed by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, so also the new Eucharistic Prayers in some Lutheran books were simply part of the interest in recovering historical practices that the Liturgical Movement had spurred. My own view on the value and legitimacy of (re-)introducing these new/old prayers has changed over the years, and we should at least set aside the political perspective that made them a confessional marker between liber-

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[48] *LBW* (1978) had departed from the Roman model and placed the Sharing of the Peace immediately after the Prayer of the Church, following the ancient Eastern practice. *LW* (1982) moved it back into the Roman position to connect it with the Pax Domini, but in this position the holy moment was greatly disturbed. The *LSB* liturgy committee moved it back to the *LBW* position to avoid this disruption and to reflect Matthew 5:22–24.

[49] See my early essay in the *LSB* project: "'Serving at the Altar': The Role of the Assisting Minister in Lutheran Worship," in *Through the Church the Song Goes On: Preparing a Lutheran Hymnal for the 21st Century*, ed. Paul Grime and Jon D. Vieker (St. Louis: Commission on Worship, 1999), 169–181. See also Quill, *The Impact of the Liturgical Movement*, 152–167. "The Work of the People" is a chapter heading in Philip H. Pfatteicher and Carlos R. Messerli, *Manual on the Liturgy: Lutheran Book of Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979), 9.

als and conservatives decades ago.[50] As I noted in the *Companion to the Services*, *LW* itself had retained one of the three Prayers of Thanksgiving found in *LBW*, and the *LSB* liturgy committee believed the inclusion of one alternative pattern of eucharistic praying was beneficial. The recovery of the ancient and biblical cry, "Come, Lord Jesus" (*maranatha*, 1 Cor 16:22), is perhaps its single most welcome contribution.[51]

Other changes in our new rites came from renewed interest in our own Lutheran history. The rubric in *LBW* that made the preparation rite optional did not, as far as I can tell, come from Roman influence (indeed, the new Roman rite had *added* a public penitential rite where they had none before). This rubric simply recognized what the committee that created the Common Service had said a century earlier, that most early Lutheran rites did not have a public Confession.[52] The option to replace the Introit with a full Psalm goes back to Luther's own suggestion.[53] The inclusion of Psalm 116, "What Shall I Render to the Lord," as an Offertory alternative to "Create in Me" (Psalm 51), came from *Service Book and Hymnal* (1958); a century earlier, Löhe's agenda had provided five texts, four of which were from the Psalms, that could be sung while the offering was collected and the altar prepared.[54] And in numerous small ways, such as restoring "Amen" as the response to the Pax Domini, *LSB* went back to old Lutheran practices.

In a third category, we may note practices that came into our churches by osmosis. The modernized and often paraphrased English translations that characterized Lutheran liturgical books from 1969 onwards, may formally have followed a path blazed by the Roman Catholics (ICEL); but it was simply the way of the world at that time, the era of the Living Bible.[55] In the same way that we uncritically picked up the use of individual cups from the Reformed, so also lay readers and commu-

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[50] This polemical perspective marks the lengthy chapter in Quill, *The Impact of the Liturgical Movement*, 185–220.

[51] The Maranatha had been included in *Contemporary Worship* 2 (1970) and then in *LBW* (1978) as a response to the post-Sanctus Prayer of Thanksgiving. *LW* (1982) included a slightly different post-Sanctus prayer but dropped the Maranatha.

[52] Frank C. Senn, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 387–388; Edward T. Horn, "The Lutheran Sources of the Common Service," *The Quarterly Review of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, n.s. 21, no. 2 (1891): 248.

[53] Martin Luther, *An Order of Mass and Communion For the Church at Wittenberg* [*Formula Missae*] (1523), vol. 53, p. 22, in *Luther's Works, American Edition*, vols. 1–30, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–76); vols. 31–55, ed. Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–86); vols. 56–82, ed. Christopher Boyd Brown and Benjamin T. G. Mayes (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009–), hereafter AE.

[54] *Service Book and Hymnal of the Lutheran Church in America* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1958), 6, 26; *Wilhelm Löhe: Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 7.1, *Die Kirche in der Anbetung, 1. Teilband: Agende für christliche Gemeinden des lutherischen Bekenntnisses*, ed. Klaus Ganzert (Neuendettelsau: Freimund, 1953), 60–61.

[55] See "The New Style of Language," 11–13, and "The Language of Worship," 17–19, in Pfatteicher and Messerli, *Manual on the Liturgy: Lutheran Book of Worship*.

nion assistants, while never rubricked in our books, crept in as our people visited Roman Catholic churches and admired their innovations. (We should remember that prior to the 1960s, in both Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches, these roles were reserved to men in training for the priesthood.) It is true that Luther himself first mused on the value of moving the altar out from the wall and presiding from behind it,[56] but aside from a few examples I have discovered, his suggestion was never widely adopted in Lutheranism. Surely, then, the move to freestanding altars and *versus populum* celebration that accelerated among Lutherans in the 1970s came through Roman influence, even though we explained it according to our Lutheran theology of the sacrament's gift character. But while there is today a movement advocating a return to eastward celebration on the grounds of its long-standing tradition (and in response to irreverent abuse), the antithesis of *versus populum* and *ad orientem* is not in our circles so clearly aligned respectively with the new and old rites. The same must be said of the debate over the one- and three-year lectionaries; *LSB* does not connect the two respectively to the old and new rites, even if advocates of the one-year series are more likely to prefer Setting Three.

VII. Bane or Blessing?

As we light sixty candles on Vatican II's cake, we may sing "Happy Birthday" with somewhat mixed emotions. Surely we must rejoice when reading *Sacrosanctum Concilium* to see its profound reverence for the inscripturated and proclaimed word of God, its emphasis on the full mystery of Christ's passion and resurrection, and its desire to involve the laity more fully in the Divine Service by hearing the gospel and receiving the sacrament. In these major ways and even in many details, the Roman reform of the 1960s and 1970s finally caught up with what Lutherans had been doing for five hundred years. At the same time, we must with sadness recognize that our "separated brethren" are as committed as ever to the sacrificial interpretation of the mass nailed down at Trent; their inclusion of the laity in the priest's act of sacrifice makes the offense greater, not less. We may join with the traditionalists in ridiculing the irreverence and frivolity that often accompanies their *Novus Ordo*, or lament with the modernizers the return to an incomprehensible ritual. But someone else's birthday is also a reminder of one's own mortality. Just as Vatican II was both bane and blessing for the Roman Catholic Church, so also was the great era of liturgical revision for us. We have yet to resolve such major liturgical issues as which lection-

[56] "Here we retain the vestments, altar, and candles until they are used up or we are pleased to make a change. But we do not oppose anyone who would do otherwise. In the true mass, however, of real Christians, the altar should not remain where it is, and the priest should always face the people as Christ doubtlessly did in the Last Supper. But let that await its own time." Martin Luther, *The German Mass and Order of Service* (1526), AE 53:69.

ary is best, whether our Prayers of Thanksgiving are commensurate with the great gift we receive, or how best to express the triangle of prayer, proclamation, and consecration through our posture at the altar. But I, for one, have been enlightened and resourced by the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, to which I today raise a glass of *prosecco* and say, *felice anniversario!*

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Spirituales Motus: Sanctification and Spiritual Movements in Believers

Gifford A. Grobien

One of the ways the Lutheran Confessions address true good works is by reference to new spiritual movements or inclinations in believers. Spiritual movements are powers and inclinations of the Christian, caused by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, which indicate God's favor, indwelling, and work, and which produce distinctively Christian works related to humility, love, and concord.[1] In this essay, I will describe these spiritual movements, consider their meaning anthropologically, and address some questions regarding sanctification and growth in holiness. Understanding spiritual movements is crucial if we are to understand the fullness of the Lutheran confession of the work of the Holy Spirit, give hope to people struggling with sin, and have an answer to the perennial charge of antinomianism and laxity that our opponents cast against our confession and church.

Describing Spiritual Movements

The concept of spiritual movements in Christians—new movements not previously experienced while unregenerate—is expressed primarily in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, although it is first referred to in AC XVIII and reiterated in the Solid Declaration.[2] The Apology discusses them primarily in the section on

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, quotations of the Book of Concord are from W. H. T. Dau and F. Bente, eds., *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church, German-Latin-English* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921). Hereafter, Dau and Bente.

[2] "Nature . . . is unable to produce the interior movements, such as the fear of God, faith toward God, chastity, patience, etc." (AC XVIII 9, my translation). Four times the Apology refers to spiritual movements in Article IV (III), paragraphs 124–125 (3–4). References to spiritual movements also occur in Ap II 35; Ap IV (III) 136, 171, 175, 250, and 352 (15, 50, 54, 129, and 231); and Ap XXIV 26. AC XX says that the heart is endowed with *novos affectus* so that it is possible to bring forth good works (29). The German Book of Concord rarely uses the general term "movements" (*Bewegungen*, only in FC SD II 70, 89), but refers to such movements concretely, as specific virtues and acts coming from the regenerate heart. So, for example, through faith we "increase in the Spirit . . . . so that we shall rightly fear and love God from the bottom of our hearts" (Ap IV [III] 124 [3], my translation), and faith renews and changes the heart "so we begin to fear God, to love, to thank him, to praise him, to ask and expect all help from him, and also to be obedient to him according to his will in all tribulation . . . . [T]here is now within, through the Spirit of Christ, a new heart, mind, and soul" (Ap IV [III] 125 [4], my translation). The Solid Declaration uses the terms "virtue" (*Tugend*/*virtus* [II 24, 71; III 35; XI 73]) or "power" (*Kraft*/*vis* [II 65; IV 10]) as well.

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Christian love and the fulfilling of the law in relation to justification. It is concerned, on the one hand, to distinguish carefully justification from good works, yet, on the other hand, to iterate that Christians perform good works out of faith and the renewal of the Holy Spirit:

> [T]he Law ought to be begun in us, and be kept by us more and more. Moreover, we speak not of ceremonies, but of that Law which gives commandment concerning the movements of the heart, namely, the Decalog. Because, indeed, faith brings the Holy Ghost, and produces in hearts a new life, it is necessary that it should produce spiritual movements in hearts. And what these movements are, the prophet, Jer. 31:33 shows, when he says: I will put My Law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. Therefore, when we have been justified by faith and regenerated, we begin to fear and love God, to pray to Him, to expect from Him aid, to give thanks and praise Him, and to obey Him in afflictions. We begin also to love our neighbors, because our hearts have spiritual and holy movements. (Ap IV [III] 124–125 [3–4])[3]

First, the Apology confesses that the law ought to be kept by the justified, and thus to increase in the Spirit (Ap IV [III] 124 [3]). Such keeping of the law, however, refers not to ceremonies (Ap IV [III] 124 [3]), mere outward actions (AC XVIII), or works performed *ex opere operato* (Ap XIV 3 [26]), but to the power and actions of the heart, those works that truly are commanded by the Decalogue.

Such actions result from a heart changed from a spiritually corrupt heart controlled only by original sin to a new heart, regenerate, with some ability to work against the corruption of original sin (Rom 7:25; FC SD II 63–64). The justified person is able to begin to do interior good works because faith brings with it the Holy Spirit and new life. Faith "necessarily" produces these new movements and works (Ap IV [III] 250 [129]).

An important distinction is to be made between outward, natural works of civil righteousness and "those things which belong peculiarly to the divine Law," that is, "the affections of the heart towards God" which "cannot be rendered without the Holy Ghost" (Ap IV [III] 130 [9]).[4] At the same time, good works include both the works of the heart and also external works. The fundamental difference between mere natural, civil works and good external works is that "the heart must enter into these works, lest they be mere, lifeless, cold works of hypocrites" (German Ap IV [III] 136 [15]).[5] Furthermore, note that good works are done not only with respect to other men, but also in relation to God, with respect to worship; truly good works

[3] Dau and Bente, 157.
[4] Dau and Bente, 157.
[5] Dau and Bente, 159.

are not limited to the love of neighbor. Slogans such as "God doesn't want your good works" undermine the testimony of the Confessions in this matter. Other than the object of the act itself, the true difference between good and evil works is the condition of the heart, not with whom one relates in the work.

Therefore, when the Apology refers to new, spiritual, or holy movements, it means powers and actions of the regenerate heart, mind, and soul, and, as regenerate, distinguished from natural, civil works of the unregenerate, which are hypocritical in that they do not reflect the condition of the actual soul of the person doing them.

Ontology or Ascription?

Are these spiritual movements *ontological* or *ascriptive*? By ontological, I am not referring to any specific ontology or philosophical school. I am merely asking if the terms refer to the nature of the human heart and soul. Are these movements attributes characteristic of the regenerate heart, expressions of its being? Or, is the confessional language merely ascriptive, that is, stating how the heart is viewed or judged by God, but not actually describing its nature?

There is nothing in the semantics of the terms or context of these passages to suggest an ascriptive meaning. The context is regeneration, that is, new life and renewal. The Apology expects the believer to do good works, to fulfill the law, to love. Good works are actions taken toward others which are either perceptible to the senses or to one's spirit. A human action is of the will and is characterized by the nature of the will, either good or bad. A bad will does not produce works which are bad but are nevertheless spiritually ascribed or labeled as good. There are imperfect good works in which a Christian is nevertheless declared fully righteous on account of Christ, but the works themselves are not simply evil. They are conducted out of an incipient, impure, and incomplete righteousness of sanctification (FC SD III 32). There is a real righteousness here that has begun in the believer.

Per Apology IV, the Christian is only able to do this because, anthropologically, the Holy Spirit through faith has created new life in the heart, so that the Christian has a new mind and spirit which produce good works (German Ap IV [III] 125, 129 [4, 8]). Solid Declaration IV confesses that faith makes Christians "entirely different men in heart, spirit, mind and all powers" (Luther, quoted in FC SD IV 10).[6] Other articles iterate the same teaching, even when explicitly addressing the question of original sin. Apology II confesses that the Holy Spirit begins "to mortify the concupiscence, and creates new movements in man" (Ap II 35).[7] Solid Declaration II

[6] Dau and Bente, 941.
[7] Dau and Bente, 115.

confesses that "God in conversion changes stubborn and unwilling into willing men through the drawing of the Holy Ghost, and that after such conversion, in the daily exercise of repentance, the regenerate will of man is not idle, but also cooperates in all the works of the Holy Ghost which He does through us" (FC SD II 88).[8] Here the change is explicitly not a mere verdict or designation, but the man himself is changed, after which he also cooperates with the Holy Spirit.

We recognize further that the Christian cooperates with the Holy Spirit in doing these good works not by natural powers, but from the "powers and gifts" given by the Holy Spirit in regeneration. Such powers and gifts remain only so long as the Holy Spirit rules, guides, and leads the Christian, which is only so long as the person has faith (FC SD II 65–66). Yet these powers and gifts are not simply powers of the Holy Spirit and his activity operating through Christians, as though they were inanimate, unwilling, unreflective instruments (FC SD II 60). After all, what can "cooperate" mean if the new movements are solely the work of the Holy Spirit? If the Holy Spirit alone operates in a man, in such a way that the man is merely an instrument, an inanimate tool puppeted by the Holy Spirit, then the Formula could not speak of a believer cooperating, working with the Holy Spirit. A man cooperates by using his own converted will and understanding. To be sure, he does this not from natural powers, but from the "powers and gifts" given by the Holy Spirit in regeneration. Only so long as the Holy Spirit does rule, guide, and lead him, can he be said to have a free will.[9] Nevertheless, he cooperates just the same. Either the Holy Spirit alone is the subject, working the work, or the believer also is a subject, working with the Holy Spirit, albeit surely from a much weaker, more dependent stance. The Confessions could not speak of cooperation apart from some regenerate subjectivity on the part of the believer.

One might offer as a counter-argument the following passage from the Solid Declaration: "[A]lthough the regenerate even in this life advance so far that they will what is good, and love it, and even do good and grow in it, nevertheless this (as above stated) is not of our will and ability, but the Holy Ghost . . . works such willing and doing" (FC SD II 39).[10] What are we to make of this in light of other passages in the very same article, which confess that the will is renewed, knows and desires what is good, works to do good, and cooperates with the Holy Spirit?

This passage says that the advancement of the regenerate "is not of our will and ability, but the Holy Ghost . . . works such willing and doing," that is, "nicht *aus*

[8] Dau and Bente, 915. Nor are conversion and regeneration a new creation *ex nihilo*, as though the old man is destroyed and "a new essence of the soul is created out of nothing" (FC SD II 81; Dau and Bente, 911).

[9] See details in FC SD II 60, 63–67, 70.

[10] Dau and Bente, 895.

unserm Willen und unserm Vermögen, sondern der Heilige Geist . . . wirkt solch Wollen und Vollbringen" or "non *a* nostra voluntate aut *a* viribus nostris proficiscitur, sed Spiritus Sanctus . . . operatur in nobis illud velle et perficere." Both the German *aus* and the Latin *a* are prepositions of source and direction, which the English "of" does not always capture. It may have been more accurate to translate that the advancement of the regenerate occurs "not out of our will and ability," or "not from our will and ability." The passage goes on to say that the Holy Spirit works the Christian's willing and doing, that is, the Holy Spirit is the source of the regenerate person's desiring and acting in accordance with the good. Or, the Holy Spirit is the source and cause of a person having a free will and movements. Yet, by the Holy Spirit, a person has a free will and movements to act well.

When we consider the context of the arguments in FC SD II, this conclusion is supported. Paragraph 39, which states that the activity of the regenerate is "not of our will and ability, but the Holy Ghost . . . works," comes in the section discussing the fallen will of man prior to regeneration. Even though the passage briefly mentions regeneration and the actions of a regenerate man, the purpose of the section is to emphasize the Holy Spirit's work alone in justifying and sanctifying. The argument being made here is that an unregenerate man can do nothing out of his natural power to cause himself truly to will and to act righteously. Only the Holy Spirit can give such a will and movements.

The other passages already referred to earlier come in a later section of FC SD II (roughly paragraphs 58–72) which refers to the will of the person made regenerate by the Holy Spirit. It is in this context, that of a person already justified and made alive by the Holy Spirit, that the article speaks of the freedom of the will, new movements, and exertion to do good. Thus we can understand FC SD II as confessing that no powers of natural man contribute to justification or regeneration, while the newly created spiritual powers and movements of the Holy Spirit in the mind and will of the believer do cooperate with the Spirit to do good works.

This is clear especially from FC SD II 63:

> But when man has been converted, and is thus enlightened, and his will is renewed, it is then that man wills what is good (so far as he is regenerate or a new man), and delights in the Law of God after the inward man, Rom. 7:22, and henceforth does good to such an extent and as long as he is impelled by God's Spirit. . . . And this impulse of the Holy Ghost is not a *coactio*, or coercion, but the converted man does good spontaneously.[11]

It is only the renewed will that does good, not the natural will. The renewal itself is not "out of" the natural powers, but the Holy Spirit alone. Nevertheless, once re-

[11] Dau and Bente, 905.

newed, the Holy Spirit does not coerce, but the converted man does good spontaneously, according to the human way of willing and doing.[12] The newness of the believer from this perspective is not merely ascriptive, but it is ontological: of the nature of the believer because of the effects of faith in him. He is consoled, has the Holy Spirit, and begins to love God and neighbor with a renewed mind, heart, and will.[13]

To emphasize the point, the Solid Declaration asserts that without a change to the faculties, a person is not converted: "[I]t is manifest that where no change whatever in the intellect, will, and heart occurs through the Holy Ghost to that which is good . . . there no conversion takes place" (FC SD II 83).[14] The converted person experiences an anthropological change in which he begins to know and desire God's good will.

This distinction between the powers of the natural man and what the Holy Spirit makes a person through regeneration and his gifts is apparent also in SA III III. In this article, Luther is contrasting what some imagine they may bring in repentance to contribute to the satisfaction of sins before God. Luther asserts:

> [R]epentance is not piecemeal and beggarly, like that which does penance for actual sins, nor is it uncertain like that. For it does not debate what is or is not sin, but hurls everything on a heap, and says: All in us is nothing but sin. What is the use of investigating, dividing, or distinguishing a long time? For this reason, too, this contrition is not uncertain. For there is nothing left with which

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[12] For more on the *modus agendi* see FC SD II 61–62, and also 89–90: "So also when Luther says that with respect to his conversion man is *pure passive* . . . his meaning is not that . . . in conversion no new emotion whatever is awakened in us by the Holy Ghost and no spiritual operation begun; but he means that man of himself, or from his natural powers, cannot do anything or help towards his conversion . . . .[T]he intellect and will of the unregenerate man are nothing else than *subiectum convertendum*, that is, that which is to be converted, it being the intellect and will of a spiritually dead man, in whom the Holy Ghost works conversion and renewal, towards which work man's will that is to be converted does nothing, but suffers God alone to work in him, until he is regenerate; and then he works also with the Holy Ghost that which is pleasing to God in other good works that follow" (Dau and Bente, 915).

[13] "[B]ecause it receives the remission of sins, and reconciles us to God, by this faith we are [like Abraham] accounted righteous for Christ's sake before we love and do the works of the Law, although love necessarily follows. 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. And because this faith alone receives the remission of sins, and renders us acceptable to God, and brings the Holy Ghost, it could be more correctly called *gratia gratum faciens*, grace rendering one pleasing to God, than an effect following, namely, love. Thus far, in order that the subject might be made quite clear, we have shown with sufficient fulness, both from testimonies of Scripture, and arguments derived from Scripture, that by faith alone we obtain the remission of sins for Christ's sake, and that by faith alone we are justified, i.e., of unrighteous men made righteous, or regenerated" (Ap IV [II] 114–117; Dau and Bente, 155).

[14] Dau and Bente, 913.

> we can think of any good thing to pay for sin, but there is only a sure despairing concerning all that we are, think, speak, or do, etc.
>
> In like manner confession, too, cannot be false, uncertain, or piecemeal. For he who confesses that all in him is nothing but sin comprehends all sins, excludes none, forgets none. Neither can the satisfaction be uncertain, because it is not our uncertain, sinful work, but it is the suffering and blood of the innocent Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. (SA III III 36–38)[15]

Luther is speaking about repentance, not about good works. When it comes to repentance, the contrition and faith which receives the forgiveness of sins, there is indeed nothing in a person himself which contributes to forgiveness or satisfaction. Contrition, confession, and satisfaction are unable to pick out works here or there by which one could claim righteousness, but rather acknowledge wholly one's guilt before God, the comprehensive character of confession, and the utter dependence on satisfaction outside of oneself, that is, in the merits of Christ. There is nothing in one's works, nature, or character which contributes any part to reconciliation with God.

Furthermore, sin remains in Christians and continually needs to be forgiven. When it comes to satisfaction or forgiveness at any point in the Christian life, works contribute nothing. The flesh of original sin lusts against the Spirit and against the new man regenerated by the Spirit (Ap IV [III] 168–171 [47–50]). A Christian prior to his death never reaches perfection, and all of his good works are imperfect and need the continued imputation of Christ's righteousness before God. Beginning to fulfill the law does not please on its own, but according to the continuous forgiveness of sin and merit of Christ (Ap IV [III] 166–169 [45–48]).

Yet even in SA III III, Luther recognizes the work of the Spirit to bring regeneration, to change a person, and to bring forth good works in a Christian, not for the satisfaction of sin, but simply as the fruit and result of forgiveness: "Paul, Rom. 7:14–25, testifies that he wars with the law in his members, etc.; and that, not by his own powers, but by the gift of the Holy Ghost that follows the remission of sins. This gift daily cleanses and sweeps out the remaining sins, and works so as to render man truly pure and holy" (SA III III 40).[16] Regeneration itself depends on the presence, power, and gifts of the Spirit, has no basis in the powers of natural man, and follows upon the forgiveness of sins, contributing nothing to it. Yet in regeneration we see here also that the Holy Spirit dwells in the heart to cleanse, purify, and sanctify. Such cleansing and purification compares to the Spirit's contention with concupiscence,

[15] Dau and Bente, 489.
[16] Dau and Bente, 489.

mortification of evil lusts, and purification "to produce new spiritual movements" (Ap IV [III] 170–171 [49–50]).[17]

The Relation of Good Works to Sanctification

If there is unease or confusion about new movements in believers as an anthropological change, perhaps consideration of the relationship between good works and sanctification will help to clarify. It is common both among dogmaticians and popularly among Christians to equate sanctification with good works. Indeed, Pieper's narrow definition of sanctification refers to the good works and renewal of the regenerate Christian apart from justification.[18] Formula III also makes this statement in several places: sanctification is renewal, not part of justification, and includes instruction on love and good works (FC SD III 28–29); renewal, sanctification, love, virtue, and good works are not to be mixed with justification (FC SD III 35, 39). The concern in the Confessions and traditionally among the dogmaticians is that people not confuse the effects (fruits and love) with the cause nor mistakenly teach that an effect justifies (Ap IV [III] 145 [24]). Rather, upon justification through faith, the believer begins to fulfill the law. Sanctification and justification must be distinguished from each other.

Yet the biblical language of sanctification, and the language of the Confessions in other places, while distinguishing sanctification from justification, does not separate them from each other. In Exodus and Leviticus, for example, sanctification is parallel to or equated with consecration, or being set apart from the secular or profane, which in turn is associated with atonement, purification, and forgiveness. The New Testament continues this line of thinking, with sanctification typically referring generally to the work of the Holy Spirit setting apart the church and the Christian, whether for forgiveness, purification, consecrating, doing good works, or perfecting.

That sanctification does not refer simply and only to good works is perhaps most obvious in the explanation of the Third Article of the Creed in the Large Catechism. Luther begins simply and literally, stating that the Holy Spirit "makes holy" (LC II 35). The Spirit does this by the church, by forgiveness, by resurrection, and by eternal life, the things confessed in the Third Article. Focusing on our present life in the world, sanctification refers to gathering in the holy congregation where Christ is preached (LC II 37). In the believer, sanctification includes knowledge and faith, by which Christians are brought to Christ and receive his goods (38–42).

[17] Dau and Bente, 171.

[18] Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, trans. Walter W. F. Albrecht, vol. 3 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 3–5.

Sanctification includes clinging to and persevering in the church. Because the church itself is gathered in the first place by preaching (45), sanctification includes the Holy Spirit's work in the office of the ministry to present the means of grace to the church. The word and the means of grace cause the church "daily to grow and become strong in the faith and its fruits which He produces" (LC II 53).[19] Here, while there is distinction between faith and the fruits of faith, they are grouped together without any separation as effects of sanctification.

In contrast to the Formula and later dogmaticians, the Large Catechism makes very little effort to separate sanctification from justification, as though justification occurred prior to and under different operations from sanctification. Rather, the Large Catechism places justification as the creation and strengthening of faith within the broader work of sanctification, which includes also the fruits of faith.

One might argue that the strengthening of faith differs from the beginning of faith, and since the beginning of faith, when a person is first consoled from the terror of the law, is justification, justification is still excluded from sanctification here as the beginning of faith versus the ongoing strengthening of faith, which could be interpreted simply for the effects or fruits of faith, that is, love. However, the Large Catechism argues differently. It continues with the argument that sanctification includes the ongoing forgiveness of sins through preaching, the sacraments, and the ministry. Such ongoing forgiveness is necessary because people—including Christians—are never without sin (LC II 54–55). Justification as receiving the forgiveness of sin is an ongoing work of God included under the ongoing work of sanctification in the church.

The Large Catechism confesses also that the Holy Spirit "daily increases holiness upon earth by means of . . . the Christian Church and the forgiveness of sins" (LC II 59)[20] and considers this increase in holiness part of sanctification. Increase in holiness is a fruit of ongoing forgiveness. Both justification and increasing holiness fall under the broader rubric of sanctification. Increase in holiness, nevertheless, remains only partial, to be completed in the resurrection when Christians will "rise to perfection" (LC II 57–58).[21]

From this discussion, we see that the Large Catechism holds the broad understanding of sanctification, which includes everything the Holy Spirit does to call and keep a Christian unto salvation in the church, as is succinctly stated in the Small Catechism. This broad definition is also recognized by Pieper.[22]

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[19] Dau and Bente, 693.

[20] Dau and Bente, 693–695.

[21] Dau and Bente, 693.

[22] Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 3:4. See also the Apology, which confesses that the Holy Spirit grants to us Christ, the forgiveness of sins, justification, "eternal life, eternal righteousness," "to

As an aside, we should note here the danger of sayings such as "[s]anctification is . . . *the art of getting used to justification*," when such sayings suggest that sanctification is no different from justification.[23] The Confessions teach that sanctification is more than justification, even if it includes it. To say that sanctification is simply getting used to justification either reduces sanctification to justification, and says nothing about the consecration, renewal, keeping, and perfection of the Holy Spirit, or it makes justification equal to sanctification, and confuses the righteousness of faith with renewal and its fruits.

We do, nevertheless, confess that sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit, regardless of whether we consider the narrow or broad definition. Even sanctification narrowly speaking is the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, the regeneration and strengthening of the new mind, will, and powers—spiritual movements. Good works are the *fruit* and *effect* of sanctification, done in cooperation by the Christian with the Holy Spirit wherein a Christian acts willingly in accordance with the renewal and movements of the Holy Spirit. For example, the Solid Declaration states that after justification a person is renewed and sanctified, "from which renewal and sanctification the fruits of good works then follow" (FC SD III 41).[24] The Solid Declaration (FC SD III 21) further refers the reader to Luther's *On the Councils and the Church* (1539) for further explanation of the relationship between justification and sanctification. In this work, Luther ties the sanctification of renewal intimately with justification: "[T]he Holy Spirit gives people faith in Christ and thus sanctifies them, Acts 15 [:9], that is, he renews heart, soul, body, work, and conduct, inscribing the commandments of God not on tables of stone, but in hearts of flesh, 2 Corinthians 3 [:3]."[25] Luther goes on to say that works themselves are done as fruits of this renewed man.

Sanctification is not simply the doing of good works. Rather, it is everything the Holy Spirit does to bring and keep a person in the church, cause him to grow in holiness, and perfect him in the resurrection and life everlasting. Whether we are speaking of sanctification broadly or narrowly, both definitions ought to be distinguished from good works, strictly speaking, because sanctification is more than good works. However, when sanctification is seen simply as equivalent to good works, and when

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manifest Christ in our hearts," and to work "other gifts, love, thanksgiving, charity, patience, etc." (Ap IV [III] 132 [11]; Dau and Bente, 159).

[23] Gerhard Forde, "The Lutheran View," in *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*, ed. Donald L. Alexander (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 13, emphasis in original.

[24] Dau and Bente, 929.

[25] Martin Luther, *On the Councils and the Church* (1539), vol. 41, p. 145, in *Luther's Works, American Edition*, vols. 1–30, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–76); vols. 31–55, ed. Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–86); vols. 56–82, ed. Christopher Boyd Brown and Benjamin T. G. Mayes (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009–), hereafter AE.

sanctification is rightly seen as the work of the Holy Spirit, Christians may mistakenly conclude that good works are simply the work of the Holy Spirit, and no purpose or exertion should be directed toward good works in the Christian life. However, as we have seen from the Confessions, good works are worked by the free, renewed will, mind, and heart of the Christian in cooperation with the Holy Spirit.

Progressive Sanctification

Another concern may surround the question of progressive sanctification. If a regenerate man actually changes anthropologically, and is to exert himself in good works, then should he also progress, grow, or improve in his good works? As already noted, although the regenerate have spiritual, holy movements, they also are far distant from perfection according to the law (Ap IV [III] 175 [54]). "For now we are only half pure and holy, so that the Holy Ghost has ever to continue His work in us through the Word, and daily to dispense forgiveness" (LC II 58).[26] The point here is to ever hold before our minds that "justification must be sought elsewhere" than in the fulfilling of the law (Ap IV [III] 176 [55]).[27]

Nevertheless, while maintaining justification apart from the law, the Confessions state in several places that a Christian ought to grow or increase in his movements and observance of good works. Twice in the early parts of Apology IV (III), *Of Love and the Fulfilling of the Law*, it states that the law be "kept" or "observed" "more and more" (Ap IV [III] 124, 136 [3, 15]).[28] Apology XX confesses that upon receiving the Holy Spirit, good fruits follow because Christians "increase in love, in patience, in chastity, and in other fruits of the Spirit."[29] In these passages, both the movements or virtues of love, patience, etc., increase, as should also good works in accordance with the law.

The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit further causes an increase both in faith and in good works, as FC SD II confesses: the Holy Spirit brings us to the church in the ministry of word, wherein he sanctifies us, causing both the church and individual Christians "daily to grow and become strong in the faith and the fruits of the Spirit" and "daily grow in faith and good works," such that Christians "even in this life advance so far that they will what is good, and love it, and even do good and grow in it" (FC SD II 37–39).[30]

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[26] Dau and Bente, 693.

[27] Dau and Bente, 171.

[28] Dau and Bente, 157, 159.

[29] "Denn wenn wir durch den Glauben den Heiligen Geist empfangen haben, so folgen gute Früchte, da nehmen wir denn zu in der Liebe, in Geduld, in Keuschheit und andern Früchten des Geistes" (Ap XX 15 [92]; Dau and Bente, 342).

[30] Dau and Bente, 895.

We ought to increase in good works because they agree with the will of God. FC SD XI gives a further purpose for growing in good works:

> [B]elievers, likewise, should not be idle, and much less resist the impulse of God's Spirit, but should exercise themselves in all Christian virtues, in all godliness, modesty, temperance, patience, brotherly love, and give all diligence to make their calling and election sure, in order that they may doubt the less concerning it, the more they experience [perhaps "perceive, recognize, realize"] the power and strength of the Spirit within them.[31]

Here the formulators state that a purpose of trying to do good works, in cooperation with rather than in resistance to the power of the Holy Spirit, is to perceive and realize the power and strength of the Spirit within themselves, and thereby decrease doubt regarding one's election to eternal life.

For some, this may come across as a somewhat incongruous confession, particularly in view of the general, consistent emphasis in the Confessions on the means of grace as communicating assurance and consolation—the work of Christ outside of oneself communicated specifically to a person by the Spirit. It is true even in this very place in the Confessions that the formulators quickly move back to the certainty of the forgiveness of sins: "[W]hen His children depart from obedience and stumble, He has them called again to repentance through the Word, and the Holy Ghost wishes thereby to be efficacious in them for conversion" by the word and sacraments (FC SD XI 75, cf. 76).[32]

Nevertheless, as little as we may want to emphasize the encouragement caused by good works revealing the activity of the Spirit, the formulators are explaining the scriptural teaching of 2 Peter 1:10: "[G]ive diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (KJV).[33] While good works done in cooperation with the Holy Spirit may not be the assurance or consolation of the forgiveness of sins, they do indicate the work of the Holy Spirit and, thereby, give evidence of election.

Two points should be distinguished. First, again, that good works do not bring about the actual consolation of the heart and conscience that one's sins are forgiven and his person is justified. This consolation, this comfort of the heart, can only come about through the communication of Christ's person and work, the atonement by

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[31] "[D]amit sie desto weniger daran zweifeln, je mehr sie des Geistes Kraft und Stärke in ihnen [in sich] selbst befinden [discover, discern, recognize, detect]/ut tanto minus de ea dubitent, quanto efficacius Spiritus Sancti virtutem et robur in se sentiunt" (FC SD XI 73; Dau and Bente, 1086).

[32] Dau and Bente, 1087.

[33] Scripture quotations marked KJV are from the King James or Authorized Version of the Bible.

which the wrath of God is actually removed. Works of the law, whether done merely outwardly by natural powers, or even if done inwardly with the Spirit, are never perfect, and therefore never provide actual satisfaction of the will of God. Second, therefore—and this may be a rather fine, technical point, but it is still worthwhile—good works as fruit and evidence of the Spirit are simply that: evidence that the Spirit is working in our lives, and therefore evidence that God is reconciled to us. They are evidence of one's election to salvation. They are not evidence, strictly speaking, of the forgiveness of sins, nor are they on their own satisfying or consoling. Upholding this distinction between evidence of election and satisfaction for sin may be helpful in understanding this benefit and purpose of good works, and in using it in pastoral care.

As an increase in good works gives evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in a Christian's life, it also decreases doubt regarding one's eternal election. Because of this, a Christian should not resist the Holy Spirit, but strive to work in accordance with the Spirit's activity and to recognize this activity more and more.

Measuring Good Works

When speaking of growth or increase in good works, some are likely to ask, "If there is growth and increase, how are we to measure this growth?" To enter the discussion of measuring good works is to enter into what is for some a very uncomfortable arena indeed! Nevertheless, let us consider what the Confessions say, for we may find that they reassure us with respect to our discussion of growth and progress.

First of all, it may be helpful to begin with this passage from the Solid Declaration II:

> [T]here is a great difference perceptible among Christians not only in this, that one is weak and another strong in the spirit, but each Christian, moreover, experiences in himself that at one time he is joyful in spirit, and at another fearful and alarmed; at one time ardent in love, strong in faith and hope, and at another cold and weak. (FC SD II 68)[34]

Rather than assuming steady growth and progress, the Formula instead recognizes fluctuations in the Christian life, between joy, fear, alarm, love, hope, coldness, and weakness. While some passages speak generally of growth, this passage speaks of variation, suggesting that while there may be overall growth in faith and fruits of the Spirit, the temptations and weaknesses of any given moment may lead to fluctuations and relatively unfruitful periods. Here the Apology explains helpfully:

[34] Dau and Bente, 907.

> This faith of which we speak arises in repentance, and ought to be established and grow in the midst of good works, temptations, and dangers, so that we may continually be the more firmly persuaded that God for Christ's sake cares for us, forgives us, hears us. This is not learned without many and great struggles. How often is conscience aroused, how often does it incite even to despair when it brings to view sins, either old or new, or the impurity of our nature! This handwriting is not blotted out without a great struggle, in which experience testifies what a difficult matter faith is. (Latin Ap IV [III] 350–351 [229–230])[35]

Here the light is rightly focused on repentance: becoming aware of sin and sorrowing over it. Good works, temptations, and dangers confront the Christian with his vices, sins, and inability to overcome sin by his natural powers. Throughout one's Christian life, whether in striving to do better, or in the temptations and afflictions that the Christian experiences, he becomes more and more aware of his sin and weakness. In these moments of confrontation, the Christian may feel and act coldly, he may experience doubt, the burden may inhibit him from acting well. In short, sanctification, the work of the Holy Spirit to keep a person unto salvation, will likely include these times of doubt and dryness. All is not a smooth increase in good works.

In fact, these times of dryness are given so that we would continue in faith and be strengthened in it. The Apology continues, "[W]e are cheered in the midst of the terrors and receive consolation" (Ap IV [III] 351 [230]).[36] When our own works, virtues, and strength fails, Christ still works for us, protects us, defeats what opposes us, consoles us, and enlivens us again in thankfulness and joy. Good works, and even faith itself, are difficult and require great struggle. But Christ never fails to be our Lord and champion over those things which are too great for us. Times of dryness and difficulty come upon us to turn us again and solely to the consolation of Christ's person, work, mercy, and presence. Justification must be sought elsewhere than in the fulfilling of the law.

In the same breath, the Apology continues, "And *while* we are cheered in the midst of the terrors and receive consolation, other spiritual movements at the same time grow" [emphasis mine].[37] Because the Holy Spirit and faith are the causes of spiritual movements and good works, weakness, vice, and sin become situations in which not only is faith strengthened, but the fruits of faith also. The more a Christian grows in faith, the more he is aware of his sin and weakness, repents of it, and with the increased consolation of faith grows also in the movements and fruits of the Spirit. "From these statements the candid reader can judge that we certainly require good works, since we teach that this faith arises in repentance, and in repentance

[35] Dau and Bente, 217.
[36] Dau and Bente, 217.
[37] Dau and Bente, 217.

ought continually to increase; and in these matters we place Christian and spiritual perfection, if repentance and faith grow together in repentance" (Ap IV [III] 353 [232]).[38] Growth, then, really comes in spiritual awareness: increased awareness of the corruption, sin, and weakness of one's natural powers. Such awareness in the midst of temptation means there will be times—even extended times—of emptiness, dryness, and darkness, perhaps bordering on despair. Yet growth also comes with the consolation of the person and work of Christ through faith, and increasing faith in times of temptation that the Christian—no matter his sin and weaknesses—can look with confidence to his Lord Jesus, and grow in faith and confidence. With such growth, then, the activity of the Spirit is manifest, and a submissive awareness of this activity, along with a renewed, faithful cooperation, means growth also in the fruits of the Spirit.

A word, finally, about what such fruits look like. It is sound and salutary for a Christian to be cautious about simply viewing his good works as though checking off a list of commandments that are fulfilled each day, or tracking how often one commits some kind, merciful, or charitable act toward another person. Indeed, tracking one's good works is hardly necessary nor expected in the Bible or the Confessions. On the other hand, both the Bible and the Confessions expect that good works will come forth, and that in the usual course of daily life, these good works will be apparent. Yet, as the discussion of weakness, sin, dryness, and temptation indicates, our failure to do good works will also be quite apparent. Awareness of good works and sins, spiritual movements and vices, comes about through regular self-examination. Self-examination is commended in Scripture and the Confessions, and widely encouraged across confessional Lutheranism. "Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments" (SC V 20)[39]; "Let each one examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in himself alone" (Gal 6:4, my translation); "Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the LORD!" (Lam 3:40, ESV). We think of self-examination in relation to preparation for confession, to be aware of our sins. Such examination properly takes place according to the law, for it is only by the law that we know truly good works and distinguish them from false, imaginary works of our own invention.

But if such examination is according to the law, then it will also reveal spiritual movements and good works, when they exist. Should the Christian deny, upon self-examination, that he has done good works? Not at all, for such would be to deny the testimony of the Spirit and the word of God. St. Paul even says that upon examining one's own work, a person will have reason for boasting (Gal 6:4). Granted that

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[38] Dau and Bente, 217.

[39] Quotations from the Small Catechism are from *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*, copyright © 1986, 1991 Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved.

the one who boasts, boasts in the Lord (1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17), this nevertheless indicates the awareness and confession of the Lord's good work in us by the Holy Spirit. Far from ignoring the good works that we do, the awareness of these works that comes by a true submission to the word of God (not by a facile quantification of works) reveals not what is good from ourselves—for the law surely shows that by our natural powers we are utterly corrupt and do no good works—but what good has been done in us by the Holy Spirit and his regeneration.

In this light, what are we to make of Matthew 25:34–40, where the righteous appear ignorant of the good works they have done? Firstly, one should carefully note that the text does not say that the righteous are ignorant of good works in general, but that they express ignorance that their works were done to Jesus. They do not say to Jesus that they never fed, gave drink, clothed, or visited anyone. They simply say that they do not know when they did it to Jesus. There is no indication here that the righteous are unaware of good works they have done, as such.

Secondly, in this passage, we have Jesus' testimony that the righteous do good works, and that they do them for him. So whatever the cause of the ignorance in the passage, the text itself reveals to the hearer of Scripture that the good works of the righteous are done to Christ. That is, Jesus in this passage is teaching the church—by including the teaching in the Scriptures that the church reads—that the righteous do good works for Jesus. So, again, whatever may be the reason for the ignorance of some of these righteous on the last day, it is not necessary, nor even Jesus' desire, that the righteous in general remain ignorant of the good works they do to Jesus.

In fact, this account in Matthew 25 helps us to grow in our awareness of the true benefits and purpose of good works. Good works are not about measuring the quality of one's character in an isolated fashion, or in comparing with another's righteousness. Good works are for serving others in the church, that is, ultimately serving the body of Christ. Truly good works and spiritual movements are always about humble charity toward the neighbor and congregation. Apology IV [III] 125 [4] clearly confesses that such works consist of fear and love of God, prayer and expectation toward God, thanks and praise to God, and perseverance in affliction. Love toward the neighbor, likewise, has "infinite offices externally towards men" (Ap IV [III] 226 [105]), and is the "bond of perfection . . . the binding and joining together . . . of the many members of the Church" (Ap IV [III] 232 [111]).[40] All of these works are done in relation to others, for the praise of God and building up of other people, and cannot be understood in some sense of individual virtue or merit.

Indeed, love cannot exist except in relation to others. Consider the various catalogs of spiritual movements in the New Testament. They typically include fruit such

[40] Dau and Bente, 183, 185.

as godliness, humility, love, patience, meekness, concord, hospitality, thanksgiving, and joy, among others. These are not mere personal habits which an individual exercises in an isolated way to improve his character, tempting him to pride in his accomplishments. Such movements and fruit take a person outside of personal interest into relation with others, both God and men. Godliness is right, humble submission to God's word and thankful, joyful, praiseworthy response to him. Love opens one up to the interests of those around him, calling him further to hospitality and concord. In short, such spiritual movements and fruit can only be exercised among those who have the mutual share of Christ's body and are each members of it in the unity of the Spirit (1 Cor 10:17; 12:12–14; Eph 4:1–4). Truly good works always occur in relation to others, in the humility of the self before God and in loving fellowship with other Christians.

Therefore self-examination according to the word of God leads not to pride and vainglory, but to true humility in relation to the perfection of the word and the activity of the Spirit. Truly good works, true spiritual movements, are the fruit of the Spirit toward the neighbor and toward God. The aphorism that one should not look inward for righteousness, then, ought to be qualified in the sense that one should not look to his natural powers for righteousness, but a Christian certainly does perceive in his heart the movements of love toward God and neighbor that are worked by the Holy Spirit, who dwells within him.

Conclusion

In this essay, I have described what the Confessions sometimes refer to as "spiritual movements," namely, new powers and inclinations to love God and the neighbor, to expect good from God and to thank him, to open oneself to the needs of the neighbor, and to act in accordance with these inclinations. The Confessions describe these as new, real inclinations in the nature of the regenerate man, worked by the Holy Spirit through faith, and residing in the mind, heart, and will. These spiritual movements would be lost were the Spirit to depart from a man, yet they are also true movements by which a Christian cooperates, unequally, with the Spirit to do good works. By further showing the relation of good works to sanctification, we have been able to offer a confessional understanding of growth in holiness which is not quantifiable, but of which the believer is nevertheless aware through spiritual self-examination and awareness of the Holy Spirit at work within him. Aware of this inward work of the Spirit, Christians rejoice in their life together with God and with other Christians, each as members of the body of Christ, sharing in the bond of love, which is the Holy Spirit.

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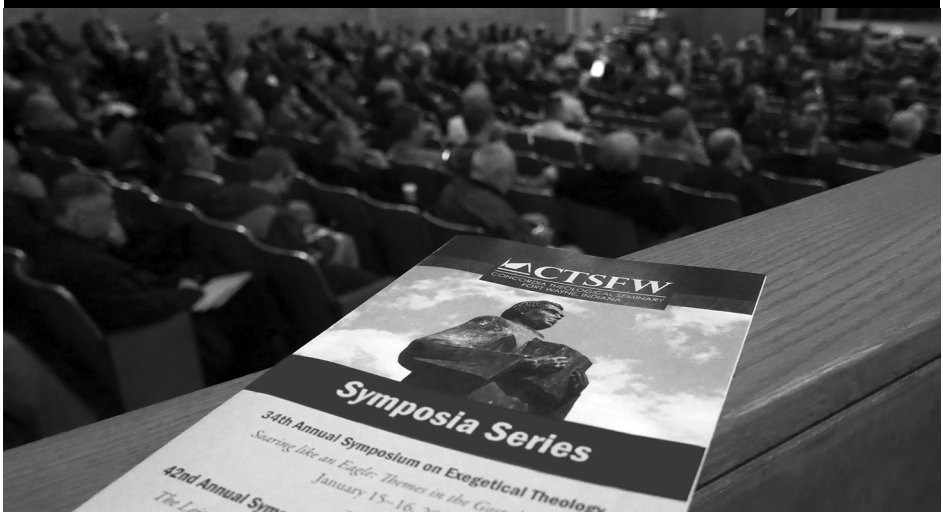

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What Happens If We Say Two Plus Two Makes Five? The Role of Wisdom and Creation in Matters of Salvation

Peter J. Scaer

To Tell the Truth

Amen, amen! Our Lord speaks the truth, and is the truth (John 14:6). He came not only to redeem but to reveal: "For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice" (John 18:37). Come to Jesus, and "you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). For the truth lights the path that leads to life.

So then, when Satan lies, he does so in character, "for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). Having been thrown down from heaven, the great dragon seeks to deceive the whole world (Rev 12:9). Satan offers the kind of knowledge that turns what would otherwise be wise men into fools (Rom 1:22). The devil's promise of liberation is a mirage that ends in an enslavement to sin (John 8:24), mammon (Matt 6:24), and the elementary principles (Gal 4:3). This slavery leads to death (Rom 6:16; Gen 2:17). For good reason, a "lying tongue" stands next to "hands that shed innocent blood" in Solomon's list of abominations (Prov 6:17).

Accordingly, our Lord warns us to be on the lookout for pseudo-prophets whose aim is deception (Matt 24:24). In these latter days, "Some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons" (1 Tim 4:1). As it was in the serpent's deception of Eve (1 Tim 2:14), so will it intensify during the time of strong delusion, when condemnation will come on all who, delighting in unrighteousness, do not believe in the truth (2 Thess 2:11–12).

What Is Truth?

Pontius Pilate asks, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). The answer begins with declaring that Jesus is Lord (1 Cor 12:3). Confess that Jesus is Lord, and all else follows. But confession can never be boiled down to a single and solitary statement. Faith in Christ fits within a matrix that includes the virgin birth, incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection. Deny any of these events, and Christianity comes to nothing, and our faith is in vain (1 Cor 15:14).

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But then, no portion of the truth can be hermetically or hermeneutically sealed off from truth in its entirety. An infection left untreated can turn the corpus into a corpse. We confess the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds for our bachelor's and master's degrees, with doctorates in the Athanasian. The Book of Concord takes us further still. Such a full confession is more than enough for our salvation. And yet, at the same time, it may not be nearly enough. While the Bible may be found in a wonderful museum, it cannot be left there, for the truth must be asserted anew everywhere the lie is told, everywhere sheep are being led astray.

Steeples and Foundations

What is truth? Long before Augsburg and Nicaea, there was Caesarea Philippi. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And upon this confession, Christ built his church (Matt 16:13–19). Peter was soon pressed to incorporate the upcoming crucifixion into his thinking. But instead of moving forward, we must now contend with things prior. While our attention may be drawn to crumbling steeples, it is the foundation that cries out for our attention. Though we crave heavenly food, we must return to the milk. How might we confess Christ when the meaning of our words is stripped away, when our language no longer comports with reality? When the story of salvation is divorced from creation? When two plus two no longer makes four?

Women's Ordination: The Coal Mine's Canary

Word on the street is that certain church bodies are in crisis over the question of women's ordination. With our Lord, we pray, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). But having seen this movie so many times, we know how it ends. Long before the pronoun wars, liberal churches were addressing God as mother, turning him into a her. With women's ordination, the secular agenda takes the seat of authority, with abortion seemingly a given, along with rainbow pride, gender madness, and whatever else happens to be on the secular agenda. Allow women's ordination, and the Holy Spirit is replaced with the spirit of the age. We must take to heart the teaching of 1 Corinthians.[1] One word of Scripture outweighs the world of the progressives. But St. Paul's prohibitions are not Levitical laws given for a few and for a time. In the minister and his congregation, we have a glimpse into things deeper.

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[1] For a helpful summary of the situation, see Gregory Lockwood, "Excursus: The Ordination of Women," in *1 Corinthians* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 516–544. For an up-to-date look at the exegesis, see John Nordling, "The Women's 'Speaking' at Corinth," *CTQ* 86, nos. 3–4 (July/October 2022): 241–259.

Theological Sand: The Challenge of Birthing Persons

St. Paul preaches the great mystery of a groom's love for his bride. Our Lord beckons us to pray, "Our Father." But how can people hope to attain such heights if they can no longer give coherent answers to such elementary questions as "What is marriage?" or even "What is a woman?" Is it possible somehow to keep the faith, even if we concede the reality that undergirds it? Will our people become such skilled jugglers so as to keep the gospel ball up in the air, when so many torches are thrown their way? How can they trust God when he tells them who he is, when they do not trust him to tell them who they are?

Parents Magazine: A New Catechism

Consider the popular and decidedly mainstream *Parents* magazine, a go-to resource for raising happy and healthy children. A typical example of the trouble is found in Alex Hazlett's article "When Can You Find Out the Sex of Your Baby?"[2] Though writing about pregnancy, Hazlett never makes mention of a woman or a mother, but speaks only of "the pregnant person." And this is no accident. From a blood test, one may learn a baby's biological sex, but we cannot yet say whether the baby is a girl or boy. As Hazlett explains, "Babies grow up to be kids who can tell their parents about themselves, and the labels they're assigned at birth don't always match their feelings about themselves."[3] Whether a child is a boy or girl cannot be determined by biology, and therefore, it is suggested that parents forgo the traditional birth certificate designation of male or female and choose "x," leaving the ultimate choice up to a child who is purposefully left dazed and confused.

Granted, the new regime takes some getting used to, but Stefanie LeJeunesse, childbirth educator and lactation counselor, wishes to ease our minds on the matter: "Changing the language around pregnancy and birth is not difficult; in fact, it's one of the easiest ways to improve affirming baselines. Using accurate terms like 'pregnant parent' and 'breast/chest feeding' does nothing to diminish the magic and honor of guiding a new parent through their pregnancy, labor, and birth."[4] Meanwhile, reality-affirming language is deemed psychologically damaging. David Minerva, who identifies as a transgender man, describes her pregnancy experience

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[2] Alex Hazlett, "When Can You Find Out the Sex of Your Baby?," *Parents,* November 11, 2022, https://www.parents.com/pregnancy/my-baby/gender-prediction/qa-how-soon-can-you-find-out-babys-sex/.

[3] Hazlett, "When Can You Find Out the Sex of Your Baby?"

[4] Amber Leventry, "Trans and Nonbinary People Can Be Pregnant Too," *Parents*, January 5, 2023, https://www.parents.com/pregnancy/my-body/pregnancy-health/trans-and-nonbinary-people-can-be-pregnant-too/.

this way, "I was deeply uncomfortable with how cis-normative the whole culture of pregnancy was. Phrases like 'pregnant women' and 'expectant mothers' made my skin crawl and made me feel wrong."[5] Skin crawls indeed.

As this is indeed something new, Amber Leventry urges, "Continued education is a must."[6] She adds, "And with more mindfulness, folks will start to accept what was once considered impossible as normal."[7] It is doubtful that the angel Gabriel had this in mind when he told Mary, "For nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:37). But given the widespread acceptance of things that quite recently seemed unthinkable, the fulfillment of Leventry's prophecy seems a pretty safe bet.

Parents magazine reminds us that abortion, rainbow pride, and the transgender phenomenon are not so much separate lies as they are the chief and complementary parts of the secular catechism. In the same article that we learn about men having babies, we are also told, "Abortion rights are not just women's rights, nor is access to birth control or fertility treatments."[8] As gender activists promote abortion, abortionists promote gender madness. Appearing before the Oversight and Reform Committee of Congress, Planned Parenthood doctor Bhavik Kumar testified, "Men can have pregnancies, especially trans men."[9] Wholly in character, Planned Parenthood, the center for our national holocaust, has become the go-to source for adolescent women to be treated with testosterone in the transitioning process. And thus the business that takes little lives with syringes and scissors now offers the kind of medical care that leads to top surgery.

Teach Your Children Well: Government Schools and Children's Television

While *Parents* magazine is written for would-be mothers, the indoctrination of our children is also in full swing. Public schools catechize gender fluidity, introducing such characters as the Genderbread Person and the Gender Unicorn.[10] According to TSER (Trans Student Educational Resources), "Biological sex is an ambiguous word that has no scale and no meaning besides that it is related to some sex characteristics."[11] Add to that the presence of boys in girls' bathrooms, and males

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[5] Leventry, "Trans and Nonbinary People Can Be Pregnant Too."

[6] Leventry, "Trans and Nonbinary People Can Be Pregnant Too."

[7] Leventry, "Trans and Nonbinary People Can Be Pregnant Too."

[8] Leventry, "Trans and Nonbinary People Can Be Pregnant Too."

[9] Alec Schemmel, "'This Is Medicine': Men Can Get Pregnant, Planned Parenthood Doctor Tells Congress," *The National Desk*, September 30, 2022, https://thenationaldesk.com/news/americas-news-now/this-is-medicine-men-can-get-pregnant-planned-parenthood-doctor-tells-congress-bhavik-kumar-andrew-clyde-transgender-trans-pregnancy-abortion#.

[10] Learn about this teaching in Ryan T. Anderson, *When Harry Became Sally* (New York: Encounter Books, 2018), 29–33.

[11] Trans Student Educational Resources, "Gender Unicorn," http://www.transstudent.org/gender.

awarded trophies in female sports, and we get a sense of the problem. These oddities are in fact representative of the ideology espoused by our nation's largest teachers union. Speaking at an NEA convention, President Becky Pringle rallied a cheering crowd: "As we have for decades we will fight tirelessly for the right to choose. We will fight unceasingly for the rights of our LGBTQ+ students and educators. We will say gay. We will say trans."[12] Parents are beginning to rebel, if only in fits and starts.

As at school, so also at play. Drag queens tell stories at our public libraries. Disney movies feature same-sex kisses. American Girl puts out a children's book on "Body Image" featuring a chapter on gender joy.[13] Nickelodeon's beloved show *Blue's Clues* recently produced an episode featuring a drag queen leading a rainbow pride parade, accompanied by songs of infectious propaganda.[14] But things get worse. Social media is flooded with videos and channels targeting our children, urging transitioning as a means to self-discovery. Children are advised to keep their new identities secret from their parents. As one mother told me, by the time you learn about the problem, it is usually too late.[15] The harrowing documentary *Dead Name* captures the heartbreak of parents desperately trying to save their children from the predators and groomers.[16]

Can the Lambs Lie Down with the Lie?

The truth will not save us if it is no longer on our lips, if we do not take pains to protect our children, and ourselves, from the great delusion. Lying becomes a habit, and when coerced, it claims our highest allegiances. No man can serve two masters. Many young lambs have already been led astray or to the slaughter, and many old goats have swallowed the new ideology hook, line, and sinker. Is it possible to play along? Might we utter the lie with fingers crossed? While too heavy a burden should not be placed on tender faith, Paul reminds us that "with the mouth one confesses and is saved" (Rom 10:10). Will it be possible to hold the truth within our hearts, while playing along with the lie? Or having spoken the lie long and often enough,

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[12] Richard Smith, "Remarks as Prepared for Delivery by Becky Pringle, President, National Education Association, to the 101st Representative Assembly," *National Education Association,* July 3, 2022, https://www.nea.org/about-nea/media-center/press-releases/remarks-prepared-delivery-becky-pringle-president-national-education-association-101st.

[13] Mel Hammond, *Body Image: How to Love Yourself, Live Life to the Fullest, and Celebrate All Kinds of Bodies*, Smart Girl's Guides (Middleton: American Girl, 2022).

[14] "The Blue's Clues Pride Parade Sing-Along Ft. Nina West!," *Blue's Clues & You* (video blog), YouTube, May 28, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4vHegf3WPU.

[15] Parents who wish to join forces and learn more may wish to learn about The Kelsey Coalition: Working to Change the Systems That Failed Our Kids (https://genderresourceguide.com/kelsey-coalition/).

[16] See https://www.deadnamedocumentary.com/.

will we not also become comfortable and complicit, and even begin to believe it ourselves? And what of our children and grandchildren who have never lived in a world in which the lie was not put on parade?

Pronoun Hospitality?

Understandably, many are looking for ways out of the trap, striving to be as clever as serpents, while staking a claim on the innocence of doves. Writing for The Center for Faith, Sexuality, and Gender, Gregory Coles has popularized the phrase "pronoun hospitality." In what is labeled a "Pastoral Paper," Coles suggests that "Christians can and should use pronouns that reflect the expressed gender identities of transgender people, regardless of our views about gender identity ethics."[17] For Coles, the use of false and new pronouns is simply a matter of referring to a person the way he/she/they/ve/ze wishes to be identified. Pronoun hospitality is offered as a means to meet people where they are at.

One wonders whether Coles understands the situation. When we speak about pronouns, we enter into a minefield of tripwires and booby traps meant to silence and stifle frank conversation. This is not a world in which a naïve boy is rewarded for saying that the emperor has no clothes, nor is it a matter of a poor and demented fellow who claims to be the Queen of England. This is, as Anthony Esolen has called it, "the war over reality."[18] And the stakes are high.

Caesar's Incense

The use of prescribed pronouns, along with other participatory rites of the rainbow religion, is more akin to burning incense to an emperor. Consider the Orwellian-named Respect for Marriage Act, which puts the truth of marriage on par with the bigotry of those who deny interracial marriage.[19] As the emperor places his fingers on the scales of justice, the faithful must brace for social and legal consequences.

At many workplaces, the new pronoun usage is mandatory. Indiana music teacher John Kluge, fired for using last names instead of false pronouns, was in no position to engage in hospitality. Minnesota's Professional Educator Licensing and

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[17] Gregory Coles, "Pastoral Paper: What Pronouns Should Christians Use for Transgender People?," The Center for Faith, Sexuality, and Gender, https://www.centerforfaith.com/resources/pastoral-papers/11-what-pronouns-should-christians-use-for-transgender-people.

[18] Anthony Esolen, "Pronouns, Ordinary People, and the War over Reality," *Public Discourse*, October 13, 2016, https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2016/10/17811/.

[19] See Gregory S. Baylor, "What You Should Know about the Respect for Marriage Act," *Alliance Defending Freedom*, December 14, 2022, https://adflegal.org/article/what-you-should-know-about-respect-marriage-act.

Standards Board will soon require teachers "to affirm the validity of students' backgrounds and identities," a list which includes gender identity and sexual orientation.[20] As Doug Seaton, president of Minnesota's Upper Midwest Law Center, says, "Their teachers are going to have to be faced with hiding their beliefs or getting denied [for a state teaching license]."[21] Again, the ACLU has received a summary judgment in a case against a Catholic hospital that has refused to perform a hysterectomy, removing a healthy organ from a woman claiming to be transgender.[22]

What will we say to our people, many of whom are teachers in the public school, or are medical professionals, or pharmacists and businesspeople? For something analogous, we might consider the martyrdom of Polycarp. Larry Hurtado observes of early Christianity, "And yet it seems clear that the aim of Roman authorities was not particularly to execute Christians, but to turn them from what the authorities (and large numbers of the public at large) saw as their perverse and dangerous allegiance. That is, the object was not death but conformity to the demands of imperial authority."[23] So also today.

So Paul urges, "Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth" (Eph 6:14). "You will be hated by all for my name's sake," said our Lord (Matt 10:22). This is not simply a matter of loving a Christ of popular imagination, but of abiding in him and his words (John 15:7). Clinging to Christ will surely bring division, even within our own families (Luke 14:26). That is to say, salvation is free, but faithfulness comes at a price. Truth has consequences.

To Every Thing There Is A Season

As Christians, we are witnesses to Christ and his love for all people. Christ died for sinners, and as God's enemies we have been reconciled (Rom 5:10). Our Lord came precisely to save tax collectors and sinners. Our Lord goes so far as to say, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matt 5:44). The redeemed speak with the humility that comes with a keen awareness of their own and abiding fallen nature.

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[20] Joy Pullmann, "Minnesota Poised to Ban Christians, Muslims, and Jews from Teaching in Public Schools," *The Federalist*, January 12, 2023, https://thefederalist.com/2023/01/12/Minnesota-poised-to-ban-christians-muslims-and-jews-from-teaching-in-public-schools/.

[21] Pullmann, "Minnesota Poised."

[22] Wesley J. Smith, "Maryland Catholic Hospital Liable for Refusing Transgender Hysterectomy," *National Review*, January 12, 2023, https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/maryland-catholic-hospital-liable-for-refusing-transgender-hysterectomy/.

[23] Larry W. Hurtado, *Why on Earth Did Anyone Become a Christian in the First Three Centuries?* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2016), 57.

But our present challenge is to speak the truth in love, most especially to speak frankly for the sake of our people (Lev 19:17). Our Lord talks so often of hell not because he is fixated on judgment, but because he wants something better for us (Heb 6:9). Perhaps shockingly, the preacher reminds us that while there is a time for love, there is also a time for hate (Eccl 3:8). Accordingly, the psalmist instructs, "You who love the LORD, hate evil!" (Ps 97:10). Knowing the destructive and eternal power of the lie, the psalmist sings, "I hate and abhor falsehood, but I love your law" (Ps 119:163). While we are encouraged to bless those who persecute us, repaying no evil with evil, Paul adds, in the very same breath, "Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good" (Rom 12:9). When the world confesses that love is love, they are spreading a confusion that leads to chaos, heartache, and death. We are called to offer a better way, to the love that is wedded to truth.

A Secular Prophecy and a Maccabean Witness

Christians have no monopoly on insight. George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984* memorably depicts the power of the lie and its effect on the human spirit. Protagonist Winston Smith says, "Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two makes four. If that is granted, all else follows."[24] Natural law cannot lead us to revealed knowledge, but its denial puts up roadblocks on the path to true wisdom. Perhaps, we may propose, "Say that two plus two makes five, and all else falls apart." This simple math is available to all, as is the difference between a boy and a girl.

When Orwell says that two and two makes four, he is urging us to the integrity of truth that relies on natural knowledge. When the Maccabean martyrs refused to eat pork, they were being faithful to a Levitical command given specifically for God's people through revelation. Friends urged Eleazar to dissemble, to bring his own meat to the feast, but he refused, lest he scandalize the young and make a mockery of the God whom he served. As Eleazar put it, "At our age it would be unbecoming to make such a pretense; many of the young would think the ninety-year-old Eleazar had gone over to an alien religion. If I dissemble to gain a brief moment of life, they would be led astray by me, while I would bring defilement and dishonor on my old age" (2 Macc 6:24–25).[25] Eleazar would not cross his fingers behind his back. He understood that his life and death would be, for better or for worse, a witness to others.

And when at the birth of a child, we cry out, "It's a boy," or when, in defiance of the dominant culture, we confess that a marriage is between one man and one

[24] George Orwell, *1984* (Farmington Hills, MI: Thorndike Press, 2017), 133.

[25] New American Bible, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. All rights reserved.

woman, and that a woman is an adult female, we are speaking from both natural and revealed knowledge. In speaking simple truth, we encourage others, and we keep open the road to higher truth still. Lies are dispiriting, while courage buoys the spirit. When a Christian suffers for the truth, he offers up a witness to the way, the truth, and the life. By speaking the truth, we are saying that there are things that matter more than our lives and livelihoods, even if it means we become a laughingstock. Our Lord says, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10, KJV).[26] And, we must add, speaking the truth about things so basic is no little thing.

What Is Required of a Prophet?

The truth is one and whole, but we have different duties given our various stations in life. To the apostles, our Lord said, "Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven" (Matt 10:32). Pastors must teach all that our Lord has commanded (Matt 28:20). Seminaries and ordination aid in that process. But a faithful shepherd must also be willing to teach those things that are unpopular, things that could cause all sorts of worldly problems for himself and his hearers. For that, there is courage.

What Is Required of All Christians

While prophets are called to speak, all Christians are called to listen. "The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward" (Matt 10:41). This means that we must never be ashamed of our Lord or his words (Mark 8:38), including the words he has to say about male, female, and marriage (Matt 19:4–5).

Say that two plus two equals four, and all else follows, says Orwell. But should we expect our people to shout that truth from the rooftops? A few Christians take signs or megaphones to the public square, and for that we should be thankful. The opportunities are myriad. Others caution that certain behaviors might cross the line from courageous to foolhardy, but prayers for discernment should never be used as an excuse for silence or inactivity.

Sheep should not be expected to face perils from which their shepherds flee. The waters are tricky, our people will tell us, *sotto voce*. That being said, it is striking that thus far, the greatest heroes of our time have included a baker, a florist, photographers, high school teachers, and others whose seemingly simple faith may put

[26] Scripture quotations marked KJV are from the King James or Authorized Version of the Bible.

our own faith to shame. When such courageous people rise in our midst, we should run to them, and not away from them, sharing their burden, and identifying with their faithfulness, supporting them with our tithes and offerings so that their example might strengthen us.

The Failure of the Christian Elite

While liberal denominations promote the lie, too many Bible-believing churches seek to distance themselves from the truth and its consequences. Carl Trueman speaks of this phenomenon in his *First Things* article "The Failure of Evangelical Elites." These elites crave the approval of our cultured despisers, and accordingly remain silent about abortion, and most especially the rainbow pride. A seat at the table of our betters requires our acquiescence. Better still if we can join in their cause. As Trueman notes, Christian leaders see promotion of the diversity, equity, and inclusion agenda as "a perfect opportunity for Christian leaders to place themselves (for once) on the 'good' side of a moral debate that is generating turmoil in a wider society, and thus to stand with the cultured despisers."[27] Within the ruling elite's definition of inclusion, we find again the rainbow pride, and within equity is embedded Marxism. Christians will be called upon to judge the angels (1 Cor 6:3), and yet in their schools, too many follow the secular trend of ceding judgment to offices of diversity, equity, and inclusion, whose rulings are based on an ideology inimical to the faith.[28]

Among the cultured despisers may be numbered Andrew L. Seidel. In his book *American Crusade: How the Supreme Court Is Weaponizing Religious Freedom*, Seidel speaks disparagingly of Jack Phillips, Kim Davis, and even our own Trinity Lutheran Church.[29] Seidel indicts Jack Phillips for the sin of discrimination. Kim Davis is labeled a bigot, simply because she did not want to become complicit in the lie. Catholic charities are called out for not adopting out children to same-sex couples. Jemar Tisby, who may be numbered among the evangelical elite, seems to have no sympathy for such faithful Christians, endorsing Seidel's book with the blurb, "I couldn't stop highlighting as I read . . . because my understanding of religious freedom's uses and abuses increased with every page." Churches that invite the likes of Tisby to be their teachers would do well to think of the faithful whom the elite

[27] Carl R. Trueman, "The Failure of Evangelical Elites," *First Things*, November 2021, https://www.firstthings.com/article/2021/11/the-failure-of-evangelical-elites.

[28] Voddie T. Baucham Jr., *Fault Lines: The Social Justice Movement and Evangelicalism's Looming Catastrophe* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2021).

[29] Andrew L. Seidel, *American Crusade: How the Supreme Court Is Weaponizing Religious Freedom* (New York: Union Square, 2022). See Supreme Court of the United States, *Trinity Lutheran Church of Columbia, Inc. v. Comer, Director, Missouri Department of Natural Resources*, October 2016, https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/16pdf/15-577_khlp.pdf.

have abandoned. Paul speaks to us today, "For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise" (1 Cor 1:26–27). Perhaps, instead of seeking the approval of our betters, we would do well to recalibrate, and make for ourselves friends in low places.

Live Not by Lies

What is expected of us? Not everyone is ready to be a hero. Upon his arrest and subsequent release into the West, Soviet dissident Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn released the text of the essay "Live Not by Lies." Solzhenitsyn spoke of living under the tyranny of atheistic communism. During the darkest of times, people lost hope, saying, "But really, there is nothing to be done! Our mouths are gagged, no one listens to us, no one asks us. How can we make *them* listen to us? To make them reconsider—is impossible." Many of today's faithful feel the same way. So what shall we say to our own soldiers of the cross? Solzhenitsyn suggests: "We are not called upon to step out onto the square and shout out the truth, to say out loud what we think—this is scary, we are not ready. But let us at least refuse to say what we *do not* think!"[30] If we cannot change the world, at least we may safeguard our souls. If we are not yet ready to speak the truth, we can refuse to repeat the lie.

Drawing upon Solzhenitsyn, Rod Dreher describes our present situation: "Today in our societies, dissenters from the woke party line find their businesses, careers, and reputations destroyed. They are pushed out of the public square, stigmatized, canceled, and demonized as racists, sexists, homophobes, and the like. And they are afraid to resist, because they are confident that no one will join them or defend them."[31] For every faithful confessor, there are a dozen ready to say that he could have said things more politely, delicately, or quietly—that he had it coming.

In what ways can Christians exercise their faith and confess the God of creation? In our day and age, this might be as simple as declining an invitation to a so-called gay marriage, even if it includes a close family member. It may mean declining to offer up our own personal pronouns. For someone in the medical profession, it may mean refusing to take part in a gender transition surgery, or to dispense damaging drugs. It may mean challenging those who claim authority. The list is endless and may be different in every situation. We need not know calculus. We must simply be

[30] Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, "Live Not by Lies," The Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn Center, 1974, https://www.solzhenitsyncenter.org/live-not-by-lies.

[31] Rod Dreher, *Live Not by Lies: A Manual for Christian Dissidents* (New York: Sentinel, 2020), 8–9.

willing to refuse to say that two plus two makes five. Refuse to deny the biblical and biological math, that apart from one man and one woman, two cannot become one.

It may be good to think of courage as a muscle. Baby steps are encouraged. Taking part in a pro-life march may be the easiest starting point. If we would be faithful in much, we must first be faithful in things little. It should not surprise us that the Coptic martyrs who died on the Libyan shore had themselves lived lives of bodily and spiritual discipline.[32] It may be good to hear the simple testimonies of those who have refused to play along. Such preparations are best made as pastors and people gather, and the possibilities are many. But for faith to grow strong, it must first be exercised.

The Great Heresy of Our Age

Many have seen that a new religion has filled the void left by Christianity's decline. Nancy Pearcey's *Love Thy Body* speaks of a new Gnosticism, in which the body becomes purely instrumental.[33] Noelle Mering calls it the Cult of Progressive Ideology.[34] Carl Trueman's *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* demonstrates how the road to our present delusion can be traced through such thinkers as Rousseau, Nietzsche, Marx, Darwin, and Freud.[35] Has there ever been a time such as ours? A Roman emperor may have married a horse, but those of the equestrian class were not fooled, and neither were the plebeians or patricians. Call this new ideology yet another example of Gnosticism, or a hyper-nominalism, or simply secularism run amok. But a thorn by any other name is still a thorn, and what we have is a real problem on our hands.

Anthropology at the Center

Even as our people are under fire, our churches are breaking apart and dividing on these same issues. Carl Trueman recently offered up a *Wall Street Journal* editorial "The Church of the Sexual Revolution," subtitled, "Today's theological fault lines mostly concern matters of earthly morality." Trueman writes, "Whereas the problems for Christian institutions in the early 20th century might be described as having been a crisis in the understanding of God—could he become incarnate, rise

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[32] See Martin Mosebach, *The 21: A Journey into the Land of Coptic Martyrs* (Walden, NY: Plough Publishing, 2019).

[33] Nancy Pearcey, *Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions about Life and Sexuality* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018).

[34] See also Noelle Mering, *Awake, Not Woke: A Christian Response to the Cult of Progressive Ideology* (Gastonia, NC: TAN Books, 2021).

[35] Carl R. Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020).

from the dead and reveal himself to his creatures?—the problems of the 21st century are different in kind."[36] This virus seems not to discriminate, and no church bodies seem to be immune. According to Trueman, our divisions may be categorized under the heading of anthropology. He explains, "They can be characterized as a crisis in what it means to be human. Are embryos persons? Are sex differences morally significant? Is 'gender identity' different from sex?" Trueman closes, "It's ironic that disagreements about the creature may prove more devastating than those about the Creator."[37]

Is It Really about the Creature Rather Than the Creator?

But are the fault lines simply about morality and anthropology? Such a proposition is appealing, for we might then be tempted to think that the higher things will remain untouched. Might we lose anthropology but save Christology? Katherine Schuessler reacted to Trueman's op-ed in this way: "A Christian's confession, however, is that Jesus Christ was and is both fully human and fully God. That means that Christ is the definition of what it means to be a human being, and subsequently the incarnation and resurrection say everything about what humans are and will be. Christians can only address gender and sexuality, then, by constantly considering Christ." Schuessler hits the nail's head. Any assault on our humanity is an assault on the one through whom the world was created, the one in whose image we were created, and the one who became a man that he might win for us salvation. If we are to think rightly, we must behold the man (John 19:5).

The Assault on the God of Our Salvation: Mary's Baby Boy

Indeed, every assault on true anthropology is an assault on Christology. Through abortion, Satan expresses his hate for the Christ child. Through transgender hormones and surgery, Satan takes aim at the God of creation. Paul's sweet gospel depends on the truth of creation and procreation, "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman" (Gal 4:4).

If Mary is simply a birthing person, if at the birth of a child, we are no longer able to say, "It's a boy," everything else falls apart. Everything depends on us confessing "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). Have you not read, "Therefore a man shall

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[36] Carl R. Trueman, "The Church of the Sexual Revolution," *Wall Street Journal*, November 10, 2022, https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-church-of-the-sexual-revolution-moral-teaching-lgbtq-methodist-catholic-pride-religion-gender-identity-theology-pastor-11668091110.

[37] Trueman, "The Church of the Sexual Revolution."

leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" (Matt 19:5; see Gen 2:24)? And if you do not believe and confess this, whatever do you mean when you say that Christ is the groom who laid down his life for his bride, the church? Pull a string, and it all unravels, and our confession is reduced to babble.

The Deceivers and the Deceived

Charity is a must. Many are deluded, others are confused and hurt. Still many others are rightfully fearful. In a recent journal article, we read, "Abortion is a cultural issue in the United States because some Americans think a woman's right to choose is overall good while other Americans believe abortion is wrong and therefore think that right allows, even promotes, evil. It is the same with same-sex marriage, critical race theory, climate change, socialism, social media, and many other topics."[38] To be sure, the culture wars have many causes, and people fall on either side for various reasons. And that confusion can be found in our own pews. But that is all the more reason for the church to preach and teach the truth apparent in nature, and given to us in God's revelation of his holy word.

As we have seen, core cultural issues are predicated on competing worldviews. While we battle in politics and culture for the preservation of flesh and blood, we do so against powers and principalities. This so-called culture war has a decidedly theological dimension. In *Irreversible Damage*, journalist Abigail Shrier tells the story of Lucy, who has enrolled at a liberal arts college in the Northeast. Upon entrance, she is asked her name, sexual orientation, and gender pronouns: "Lucy registered the new chance at social acceptance, a first whiff of belonging. When her anxiety flared that autumn, she decided, with several of her friends, that their angst had a fashionable cause: 'gender dysphoria.' Within a year, Lucy had begun a course of testosterone. But her real drug—one that hooked her—was the promise of a new identity. A shaved head, boys' clothes, and new name formed the baptismal waters of a female-to-male rebirth."[39] Remarkably, Shrier, though not a Christian, sees clearly what many who bear the name do not.

Abortion, Culture, and Religion

It is good to learn from others, to delight in the food, dress, and wisdom that other people have to offer. Such openness is encapsulated by our Lord's directive to

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[38] Joel Okamoto, "How Culture Matters," *Concordia Journal* 48, no. 4 (Fall 2022): 18.

[39] Abigail Shrier, *Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2020), xviii.

the seventy to eat and drink what is provided for them (Luke 10:7), not declaring anything unclean that our Lord has declared clean (Acts 10:9–16).

But not every cultural practice can be enjoyed or baptized. Thus, as the flock of Israel is about to enter the promised land, Moses warns them not to be ensnared by the customs of the pagans: "You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the LORD hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods" (Deut 12:31). The Israelites were especially forbidden against offering up children as sacrifices to Molech (Lev 20:1–5). Indeed, our Lord refers to hell itself as Gehenna (Mark 9:43, 45, 47), which is the valley of Hinnom, the place where sons and daughters were offered up in sacrificial fire to Molech (Jer 7:31; 32:35).

As is so often the case, the sons of this age are shrewder than the sons of light. The enemy so often sees that what we call cultural issues run to the very core of our existence, and to the essence of our faith. A prime example of this may be found in Planned Parenthood's Margaret Sanger who aimed to rewrite the very book of Genesis. Sanger compared husbands to priests, as those who would keep us from eating the tree of knowledge. As such, they must both be toppled. For Sanger, "The marriage bed is the most degenerating influence in the social order."[40] She looked forward to a day when "interest in the vague sentimental fantasies of extra-mundane existence would atrophy . . . for in that dawn men and women will have come to the realization, already suggested, that here close at hand is our paradise, our everlasting abode, our Heaven and our eternity." In this new age, women would be freed from the lies of the church, and "through sex, mankind may attain the great spiritual illumination which will transform the world, which will light up the only path to paradise."[41]

Carl Trueman is right to awaken us to the lies of Rousseau, Shelley and Nietzsche, Marx, Darwin, and Freud. But we may well have to stop thinking about them simply as philosophers, poets, and scientists, and understand that they pose as the theologians of the church and would now supplant our own.

Proverbs: The Truth Is Written into Creation

What then shall we say and do? For the present crisis, faithfulness and courage are key. Parents can take nothing for granted when it comes to their children's

[40] Bishop Victor Galeone, "Death or Life: The Choice Is Ours," Banquet talk at the Florida Respect Life Conference, October 14, 2006, https://www.dosafl.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/oct2006_HomilyTalk.pdf.

[41] Margaret Sanger, *The Pivot of Civilization* (1922; reprint, New York: Maxwell Reprint Company, 1969), 237.

education, the information and images they consume, or the people who influence them. The place of screens, computers, and cellphones must be topics for counsel.[42] A purposeful experience in nature, to the truth of the birds and the bees, may be in order. Young children should not be sent as evangelists to wolves. Christians must gather in discussion and encouragement towards faithfulness.

It would be foolish to claim that any individual or group has the answer or knows precisely the path forward. Some will attempt to reform the public schools, some to strengthen the Lutheran schools, some to homeschool. Some public school teachers may try to maneuver their way through the system, others will stick it out until retirement, while still others will abandon the enterprise for something new. To be sure, one size does not fit all, and Christians will see the situation differently and will make different choices. But whatever we choose, Christian freedom must be exercised in accordance with the truth. That which is lawful may not be helpful. And while we have a certain freedom, our choices have consequences. And for that, there is wisdom.

Wisdom and Common Sense

When a man wins a beauty contest for women, or a teenage boy is declared prom queen, it is hard not to conclude that the world has gone mad. As we contend for the truth, we are battling for reality, the notion that things make sense. Consider George Orwell's secular assessment of totalitarian ideology. "In the end the Party would announce that two and two made five, and you would have to believe it. It was inevitable that they should make that claim sooner or later: the logic of their position demanded it. Not merely the validity of the experience but the existence of external reality was tacitly denied by their philosophy. The heresy of heresies was common sense."[43] For the secular ideology to thrive, it must deny lived experience, that which can be plainly seen. In such a world, nothing is more dangerous than a walk in the woods, an old book or movie, or the wisdom of those who came before us.

Wisdom Cries Aloud in the Street

The Psalms have seen a resurgence within the devotional life of our people. Their rugged poetry is a powerful resource for the spiritual life. But it may be just as important to recover the book of Proverbs. Wisdom literature occupies a special place within the biblical canon, residing at the intersection of natural and revealed

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[42] Editor's note: For a start to the conversation, see Cal Newport, "On Kids and Smartphones," *Cal Newport* (blog), May 4, 2023, https://calnewport.com/on-kids-and-smartphones/.

[43] George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1983), 62.

knowledge. It should come as no surprise that Solomon busied himself studying the workings of the created world: "He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall. He spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of reptiles, and of fish" (1 Kgs 4:33). That is, Solomon spent much time exploring the truth of Genesis chapter one. Wisdom comes from experience, and with wisdom comes a return of common sense.

Every culture has a wisdom tradition whether oral or written. Ben Franklin can tell us about hard work, and African proverbs can tell us that excess leads to waste. Indeed, scholars have noted an overlap between the wisdom of Proverbs and that which is found in the Egyptian *Wisdom of Amenemope*, which appeared at least one hundred years before Solomon's reign.[44] Much can be learned about life from reading Cicero or Seneca.

Biblical wisdom runs deeper. Our Lord himself is the Wisdom from on high, "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24). Before John spoke of the divine *Logos*, Wisdom let us in on the mystery, saying,

> When he established the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man. (Prov 8:27–31)

Indeed, it was through Wisdom that the world was created. Ignatius of Antioch understood this Wisdom to be the Holy Spirit, while Irenaeus identified Wisdom as the pre-incarnate Son.[45] The question is admittedly complicated, but then, when a matter is spiritual, it is surely christological, and vice versa. James writes, "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere" (Jas 3:17). When James speaks of wisdom, does he mean the fruit of the Spirit or that of Christ? For today, we may speak of the Spirit of Christ, and leave it at that.

Since wisdom is present in creation, it leaves a divine mark on the very order of things. As Andrew Steinmann notes, wisdom "is characterized by insight into ways that God has ordered the world and into the ways that sin corrupts the world."[46] Wisdom in its highest form can be found in Christ, but wisdom is especially that

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[44] See Harold C. Washington, *Wealth and Poverty in the Instruction of Amenemope and the Hebrew Proverbs,* SBL Dissertation Series 142 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 11–24.

[45] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 4.20.3.

[46] Andrew Steinmann, *Proverbs* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009), 25.

truth that is passed down through the generations. Wisdom can be won through the school of hard knocks, though such learning may leave the student physically or emotionally damaged, or worse.

Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother

Wisdom at its heart is the passing down of practical knowledge from one generation to the next. Men and women are sinners, but fatherhood and motherhood remain. For good reason, honoring mother and father is the first commandment of the law's second table. In this commandment, we are reminded that fatherhood and motherhood are written into the created order, neither incidental nor changeable. To abandon the truth of marriage is to do an injustice to children. Fathers and mothers have different but complementary roles. A mother holds her child tightly to her breast. A father tosses that child into the air. A child needs both, and this, not simply according to law, but to wisdom.

Wisdom, building off of the law, seeks practical application. Accordingly, the book of Proverbs calls children to the wisdom of mom and dad. "Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching, for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck" (Prov 1:8–9). Since there is a command to honor parents, so also parents have an obligation toward their children. Reproof is necessary, for "a child left to himself brings shame to his mother" (Prov 29:15). And again, "Discipline your son, and he will give you rest; he will give delight to your heart" (Prov 29:17). For how to do such things, there is no law, but there is wisdom.

There is much more to think about here, but David Lawrence Coe's work *Provoking Proverbs: Wisdom and the Ten Commandments* may be a helpful way to begin the process of recovering wisdom in our own families and congregations.[47] Do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, nor covet. These are not merely Levitical commands, nor is the breaking of the commandments simply a kind of code violation. The commandments are good, and they are for our good. The Proverbs make the commands practical.

Hard work may not always lead to prosperity; nevertheless, we should know and teach that "a slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich" (Prov 10:4). A get-rich scheme may end up well, but not usually: "Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it" (Prov 13:11). That girl, though attractive, might end up more trouble than good (Prov 5:1–14).

[47] David Lawrence Coe, *Provoking Proverbs: Wisdom and the Ten Commandments* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2020).

Lies not only endanger one's own soul, but they hurt others: "A lying tongue hates its victims, and a flattering mouth works ruin" (Prov 26:28).

This is not to say that the Proverbs have all the answers we need today. But they set us on the right course. In a world gone mad, we may very well need to begin at the beginning. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov 1:7). Therefore, let us begin.

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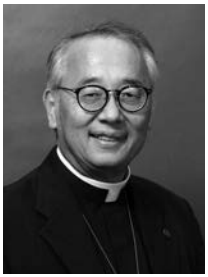

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Research Note

On the Numbering and Teaching of the Decalogue

During nearly four decades of teaching the Bible to undergraduates, I have encountered the same question about the Ten Commandments almost every year: Why are there different ways of numbering them?[1] The division of Exodus 20:2–17 and Deuteronomy 5:6–21 varies among several Christian and Jewish traditions, yet all begin and end at the same places. In this brief essay, I would like to undertake two different tasks: a literary analysis of the Decalogue and a defense of the pedagogical use of it in Luther's catechisms.

The Literary Arrangement of the Decalogue in Exodus and Deuteronomy

Two observations about the Decalogue as it appears in the Pentateuch have influenced my thought on this matter:

1. The "ten words/sayings" (עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרִים) in both Exodus and Deuteronomy are supposed to be what God said from Mount Sinai (Deut 4:13; 10:4), yet, as far as I know, no enumeration of them takes seriously the prologue's gospel emphasis as a guide for understanding the Decalogue (Exod 20:2; Deut 5:6).
2. Deuteronomy 5 is not merely a repetition of Exodus 20. Unless we are blinded by the historical-critical treatment of the Pentateuch, we must acknowledge that Deuteronomy 5 is informing a new generation of God's instructions to their parents and grandparents. It comes forty years after the first giving of the commandments. These forty years of experience under the commandments are important, especially if we heed what the Scriptures tell us about human sinfulness. During those forty years, there must have been ways in which the Israelites tried to find loopholes in the law or attempted to reinterpret them to serve their own sinful desires. I believe this explains most, if not all, the differences between the two presentations of the Decalogue in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. From this perspective, Deuteronomy 5 should be seen not

[1] On this topic, see also Paul L. Maier, "Enumerating the Decalogue: Do We Number the Ten Commandments Correctly?," *Concordia Journal* 16, no. 1 (January 1990): 18–26; Nathan Jastram, "Should Lutherans Really Change How They Number the Ten Commandments?," *Concordia Journal* 16, no. 4 (October 1990): 363–369; Horace D. Hummel, "Numbering the Ten 'Commandments': A Response to Both Jastram and Maier," *Concordia Journal* 16, no. 4 (October 1990): 373–383. —Ed.

merely as a restating of the commandments, but something akin to its official interpretation.

With this in mind, we now turn to the Decalogue itself. I would propose that the following is the enumeration of the commandments as suggested by the text itself.

The First Command: "I am Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the place of slavery. Do not have other gods besides me" (Exod 20:2–3; Deut 5:6–7).[2] Note that this contains a gospel statement followed by a law statement—precisely what Luther presupposes in his catechisms. The presumption from the beginning is that God intends this to be a discourse focused not only on the first and second uses of the law, but also on the third use. Furthermore, this would seem to indicate that the nine commands that follow this first one may be only more specific applications. That is, breaking any other command contained in the subsequent nine commands amounts to the most dangerous idolatry of all—the worshiping of one's own being and desires above all others (compare LC I 48).

The Second Command: This is the prohibition against constructing images in order to worship them, including the familiar Close of the Commandments learned as part of the Small Catechism (Exod 20:4–6; Deut 5:8–10). Note that this command ends with another statement about "Yahweh your God"—a statement of law followed by gospel, motivating the Israelites to keep the law (third use).

The Third Command: This contains the prohibition against wrong use of Yahweh's name (Exod 20:7; Deut 5:11).

The Fourth Command: The command to honor the Sabbath appears with several differences between Exodus 20:8–11 and Deuteronomy 5:12–15. These variations seem to be speaking to the new generation. Perhaps during the forty wilderness years some had tried to whittle down the Sabbath's all-encompassing prohibition of work. They could have argued that they were *remembering* (זָכוֹר) the Sabbath, and, therefore, they were observing the command. The word *keep* (שָׁמוֹר) interprets what *remember* meant. The phrase "as Yahweh your God commanded you" (Deut 5:12) tells the new generation that this is not merely a social custom invented by a previous generation. Instead, it is a command of Yahweh. The expanded list of who is to rest (ox and donkey are added in Deuteronomy) and why they are to be given rest ("so that your male and female slaves may rest as you do"; Deut 5:14) closes a perceived loophole that some may have tried to open in the command. It also further interprets what work is.

The different motivation clauses for keeping the command—God's creative activity in Exodus 20:11 but God's deliverance of his people from Egypt in Deuter-

[2] All Scripture quotations are the author's translation.

onomy 5:15—seem to speak to the needs of the two generations. The first generation was told why the Sabbath was every seventh day. The next generation was reminded of the rest they had been given from the slavery of Egypt. They did not experience the exodus deliverance but were benefiting from it. Thus, they were reminded of this. Note that in both cases this is gospel motivation.

The Fifth Command: This is the instruction to honor parents (Exod 2:12; Deut 5:16). Again there are some differences in the text of Deuteronomy as compared to Exodus. The phrase "as Yahweh your God commanded you" again indicates that this is more than mere social convention. The addition of "and so that it will go well with you" may be Moses' prophetic interpretation of the promise of this command—another gospel motivation.

The Sixth Command: This is the prohibition of murder (Exod 20:13; Deut 5:17).

The Seventh Command: Adultery is specifically forbidden. Note that this command is slightly different in Deuteronomy in that it begins with the copula, as do all the subsequent prohibitions (cf. Exod 20:14 [לֹא תִּנְאָף] with Deut 5:18 [וְלֹא תִּנְאָף]). This would seem to suggest that the first five commands were one "table" of the law (note that all but one contain gospel motivation), while the final five are the other "table" (note that none of these contain gospel.)

The Eighth Command: This law prohibits theft (Exod 20:15; Deut 5:19).

The Ninth Command: False witness is proscribed (Exod 20:16; Deut 5:20). Note the difference in the adjectives describing false witness. In Exodus it is a lying witness (שָׁקֶר), while in Deuteronomy it is a worthless witness (שָׁוְא). It is hard to determine the reason for the difference there. Perhaps it is redefinition by use of a synonym.

The Tenth Command: This final stricture is the prohibition of covetousness (Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21). There are several differences in Deuteronomy. First is the transposing of *neighbor's wife* (אֵשֶׁת רֵעֶךָ) and *neighbor's house* (בֵּית רֵעֶךָ). Second is the use of a different but synonymous verb to describe coveting of house, field, servants, and cattle (Exodus: תַּחְמֹד/Deuteronomy: תִּתְאַוֶּה). Third is the addition of *field* (שָׂדֶה) to the list of property covered in the prohibition. All these differences can be explained by the different setting of Deuteronomy. The moving of wife forward to the initial position may be a reaction to the use which could have arisen out of the original form of this command. Some may have used the original form ("Do not covet your neighbor's house. Do not covet your neighbor's wife . . .") to view *wife* as a type of property. With the form in Deuteronomy ("Do not covet [תַּחְמֹד] your neighbor's wife. Do not desire [תִּתְאַוֶּה] your neighbor's house . . ."), this is not possible, since wife is listed first and a different verb is used for property. That some Israelites abused the command in this way during the wilderness wanderings is pure speculation on my part. However, it is not an unreasonable suggestion considering

how humans often try to twist even modern laws to suit their desires. Furthermore, the interchange of *wife* and *house* seems to indicate that this is one command, not two. The addition of *field* to the list in Deuteronomy is understandable, since the Israelites were soon to be acquiring land.

The Pedagogical Use of the Decalogue

Would I suggest, then, that we renumber the commandments in catechetical instruction on the basis of literary analysis? No, I would not—for two reasons. First, no matter what the literary arrangement of the Decalogue is, catechesis is a pedagogical endeavor, not a literary one. Teaching the faith is more than literary-historical analysis. Luther's genius in his explanation of the commandments lay in his emphasis on arranging and explaining them in a way which is easy to understand and easy to remember. It has stood the test of time. Furthermore, it is not insignificant that Luther's arrangement follows the traditional enumeration in his day and has generally helped Lutheranism avoid the iconoclastic misuse of the prohibition of images to which the Reformed are prone. Lest this be taken too lightly, I remember on more than one occasion during my parish ministry when otherwise well-informed lay members of my congregation would object to crucifixes because they were images prohibited in Exodus 20. This appears to me to be an unfortunate Reformed heritage from our culture. It certainly was not a result of the way the commandments were arranged in the catechism. The lingering Reformed shape of American culture should never be taken lightly. Moreover, we ought to think twice before acquiescing to the Reformed enumeration of the commandments merely on literary grounds.

Second, while the Scriptures make at least three references to "ten words/sayings" given by God to the people on Mount Sinai, the Scriptures themselves are never concerned enough to enumerate them for us. Thus, any literary analysis used to divide the commands into ten, no matter how convincing, cannot be made decisive for faith and life. Instead, we must use the analogy of faith and the analogy of Scripture to determine how much emphasis to place on the individual statements of Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 in our catechesis. It would seem that in light of the divine command to Moses to fashion a bronze serpent and the divine approval of animal and angelic images on the ark of the covenant, the tabernacle, and the temple, it is wise to downplay the images emphasis which the Reformed bring to the Decalogue. Instead, we need to continue teaching a more general view of idolatry as putting anything before God. On the other hand, since St. Paul himself notes that it was the command against coveting that made the reality of sin known to him (Rom 7), it is proper that we retain somewhat of a double emphasis on coveting. This helps to beat down the Pharisee in all of us, which would like the law to be only an outward

obedience to God. If we could accomplish such a thing with God's law, we could convince ourselves that we have kept the entire law, since we did so outwardly. To lose the catechism's emphasis on sinful desires may mean diluting the power of the law to prepare for the gospel.

Literary analysis is useful in helping to determine the message and meaning of the biblical text. However, literary analysis is not and should never be the final arbiter of how the Christian faith is taught. There are several reasons for this, including the fact that the Scriptures are more than a single pericope or literary work. To base the numbering of the Decalogue, and therefore the catechesis of the church, on literary studies of Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 would be foolish. It would be ignoring the prophetic and apostolic application of the Decalogue.[3] Moreover, it would subordinate the word of God to the changing standards and methods of literary criticism.

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[3] Not only do we possess Moses' own prophetic interpretation of God's words from Mount Sinai (Deut 5), we have other scriptural references such as found in Proverbs and the Sermon on the Mount. See, for example, Andrew E. Steinmann, *Proverbs*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009), 61–64.

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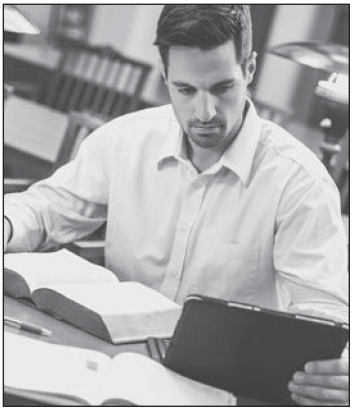

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Theological Observer

Funeral Sermon for Jordan Louis Scaer[1]

"Let the little children come to me" (Mark 10:14).[2]

Dear friends in Christ,

Today we acknowledge together, gathered in the company of each other and in the presence of our Lord Jesus, that Jesus also weeps with us and that he cries over the death of this child, Jordan Louis. He loves you both, John and Anyssa, and he loves your child Jordan. He weeps with us, and he shows forth his love and compassion for us. In the midst of our tears, sorrow, and anguish, can we say with the psalmist, "O, give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endures forever"?

Today we rest our hearts and minds on God's word. We know that it is only God's word that will comfort and sustain us through these days. He says, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14). No, Jordan did not have the opportunity to be baptized, but we also know from Scripture that faith comes by hearing, and we believe and trust in the promises and mercy of God, that not only did our Lord create this life inside your womb but he also sustained Jordan for a time, through word and prayer. When we all heard the news of the pregnancy, we immediately began to pray for the faith of the child, and continued to do so for those few months. Our congregation has been praying for this child as well as JoAnn and me, family, friends, and many others. God hears the prayers of the faithful. Did Jordan hear the word of Christ? Yes, absolutely. He heard when John and Anyssa would have their daily devotions and read Scripture and sing hymns, and when you were present in God's sanctuary on Sunday mornings, hearing the lessons read, hearing the preaching of the word, the hymns rich with God's word sung reaching through Anyssa's body to the ears of Jordan. He heard the Creed and the Our Father too. There is no way he could have not heard. Knowing the promises of God, we can be assured that the Holy Spirit worked faith in his tiny heart. And according to Christ, that faith saved him. Can we also understand, although dimly, that when Anyssa received Christ's very body and blood at the altar, there Jesus was present also for little Jordan?

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[1] This sermon was preached on September 21, 2022, at Ascension Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana, at the funeral for the unborn child of John and Anyssa Scaer. It is included here as an example for pastors and as comfort for Christians who have suffered the same loss.

[2] All Scripture quotations are the author's translation.

How close was Mary to Elizabeth when Mary extended her greeting to her? Did she speak loudly? Did she shout or even whisper? We don't know. But we know that John heard her just fine in the womb. Christ came near and proclaimed and was proclaimed by the greeting of Mary, even while still in the womb. John leapt for joy. He heard, and he believed. He responded with joy. The word of the Lord does not return empty or void, but the Holy Spirit continues to call, gather, and enlighten regardless of age. The kingdom of God belongs to this child, and we will have eternity to get to know him.

As we all await the resurrection of all flesh and the age to come to be with those who have died in the faith, we gain comfort in the here and now from God's word:

Psalm 119:28 says: "My soul weeps because of grief, strengthen me according to your word."

Lamentations 3:32: "For if he causes grief, then he will have compassion, according to his abundant lovingkindness."

Psalm 31:24: "Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the Lord."

2 Corinthians 1:7: "Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort."

John 16:33: "Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows, but be of good cheer for I [Jesus] have overcome the world."

Psalm 139:13: "You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit them together in my mother's womb."

Romans 15:13: "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

And so we move forward in hope. There is no timetable for grief. Others may expect you to "move on" when truly all you can do is move forward. You will never "get over" your loss, but with God's help you will get through it.

Know that although you are hurting now, you are not alone, and there will be joy in your life again. Moving forward doesn't mean that you are forgetting your baby. We will all have a special place in our hearts for Jordan Louis. As God leads you and us, we remember Jordan on his due date and other special days ahead. He will always be a part of us, but especially of you, Anyssa.

Remember, it takes time to heal a broken bone; healing your broken heart will also take time, and the healing process can be different for each person. Please give yourself time and grace as you move from one day to the next, all the while embracing the hope of Jesus on your journey as he cares for you. "Casting all your worries and cares on him for he cares for you" (1 Pet 5:7).

When Jesus heard that Lazarus was ill, he delayed going there for two days. Even though Lazarus had died, Jesus referred to him as taking a rest in sleep and that he

would go awaken him. When Jesus arrived at Bethany, it was Martha who questioned his delay, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (John 11:21). We might also question our Lord at this time. Why did you allow this, Jesus? Or, we might even blame ourselves. But let us fix our eyes on Jesus now. He delayed his coming because he knew the future. He knew he was going to die for the sin of the world and rise again to new life. That is why he said to Martha, "Your brother will rise again." And then, prompted by the Holy Spirit, Martha confessed her faith, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She responds, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world" (John 11:23–27). When Jesus came to the tomb, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out—and the man who had died came out" (John 11:43–44).

On the day of the resurrection of all flesh, Jesus will command all of us to "come out" of our resting places: you, me, and, of course, little Jordan. Until that day, cling to Christ. Hold on to his word and promises. Rejoice in his redemption for Jordan and for you, won for you through his death and resurrection. For Jesus has prepared a place for all who know and love him—even the smallest of the small. For to such belongs the kingdom of God. The peace of the Lord be with you always. Amen.

Gary Zieroth
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Ancient Creation?

On July 12, 2022, NASA released the first pictures from the James Webb Space Telescope. "Webb will explore every phase of cosmic history—from within the solar system to the most distant observable galaxies in the early universe, and everything in between."[3] The galaxies and stars in the Webb pictures represent the furthest objects from Earth ever recorded. As furthest from Earth, it is claimed that the light from these stars will have originated from those stars near the time of the big bang and taken billions of years to travel to Earth. These reports of the long existence of

[3] "NASA's Webb Telescope Launches to See First Galaxies, Distant Worlds," NASA, December 25, 2021, https://www.nasa.gov/press-release/nasas-webb-telescope-launches-to-see-first-galaxies-distant-worlds.

the universe may create new doubts in the minds of many Christians. How can scientists affirm such huge time periods of the universe if God created the universe as detailed in Scripture?

Scripture states, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1). Christians believe this by faith. In the face of foundational and beautiful science, such as the images from the Webb telescope, we as Christians often feel foolish when stating our faith in biblical creation. But is our faith foolishness? Is it not, in fact, the world that has chosen folly? "For the wisdom of this world is folly with God" (1 Cor 3:19). We cannot expect respect from those who are foolish to God.

Well-known contemporary Chinese artist Ai Weiwei has created many works of art based on old or ancient materials. In his creation of *Han Dynasty Urn with Coca-Cola Logo* (1993), Weiwei painted the Coca-Cola logo on a two-thousand-year-old urn. This work is considered a contemporary statement decrying the influence of modern globalism on Chinese culture. But is this creation contemporary art or an antiquity? Certainly if analytical dating techniques were used, the scientists would declare the urn ancient, yet clearly Weiwei created this piece of art in 1993. Thus it is a mixture of old and new.

So it is with God and creation. He is omnipotent and thus able to do anything. In the creation of Eden, he certainly did not create only new plants (that is, seeds), but mature trees: "And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food" (Gen 2:9). So the creation was not chronologically "new" but filled with animals and plants which were mature and of varied ages. A mature redwood would appear hundreds of years old, yet a mature insect may be only a few hours old—all were present in the newly created Earth. Likewise God created the heavens, the new universe, in a mature form. Genesis tells us that the stars were made on the fourth day of creation, but there was no wait for the light to travel light-years till they were visible on Earth. God created the stars *and* their traveled light at the same time so that the stars could be seen from the vantage of Earth *on the fourth day*.

Therefore, do not fret at the new pronunciations of the validation of the age of the universe in terms of billions of years. God is indeed omnipotent, and his creative force was more than a child's nursery story, but the source of a vast universe with far more complexity than mankind can imagine. Science and engineering are indeed giving us fascinating new views of the created universe, both pictures and measurements of faraway galaxies and the intricacies of the human body, but these are discoveries of what God has already made rather than proof that the biblical

creation is false. "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb 11:1).

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2 Corinthians 5:20: Ambassadors for Christ[4]

Through words and lives of all believers, the kingdom of God is realized. Paul says we are living letters on whose lives the love God in Christ is written (2 Cor 3:2). At the same time we cannot diminish the divinely established role of the pastor as the guardian of the congregation. To understand the unique role that Paul himself and the other apostles had and that now our pastors have, careful attention should be given to 2 Corinthians 5:20, "We are ambassadors for Christ."

"We are ambassadors for Christ," says our text (2 Cor 5:20). Who? "We." Who is this "we"? It's not just Paul the apostle, but also Pastor Timothy (2 Cor 1:1). The letter is from them to the Corinthians. "*We* are ambassadors for Christ." The apostles and the pastoral office are the "we" in this verse. But many people take "we" to mean not Paul, Timothy, and pastors who share their vocation. They understand it to mean "me and all Christians." They think *everyone* is an ambassador toward everyone. "Every citizen an ambassador," is perhaps what they mean. But that's not what an ambassador is in the real world, and it's not Paul's meaning here. What ambassadors do is this: they represent the monarch officially, toward citizens and foreigners alike. They aid citizens in foreign lands; they help foreigners come to our country, negotiate treaties, and bring official messages from the monarch to any and all. Not all sons of the kingdom are ambassadors, just as not all members of the family are fathers. So also, not all Christians have the ambassadorial office. As Paul says elsewhere, "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?" (1 Cor 12:29). If the "we" means "all Christians," then who is the "you"? "We are ambassadors for Christ. . . . We implore *you*." It's a common problem. People often misidentify the "we" because they are not aware that God has established a special ambassador office within his church. It would be as if a group of people had no idea what the vocation of husband, wife, father, or mother is, and when they came to a Bible passage dealing specifically with fathers, they would apply it to themselves no matter what their

[4] This sermon was preached February 23, 2023, at Kramer Chapel, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne.

vocation. "*We* are ambassadors for Christ": the apostle Paul, Pastor Timothy, and those who have the same vocation.

"For Christ" they are ambassadors. The word "for" in English can mean a number of things, such as, "These flowers are for you," or "I'm working for Taco Bell," or "He is an ambassador for the king." The English word "for" is broad in its meaning. Now these ambassadors are not doing it as a gift for Christ, or in order to do something nice for Christ, like "these flowers are *for* you." Rather, they are ambassadors *on behalf of* Christ, or "in the stead of Christ." That's what the Greek here means. "We, in the stead of Christ and on his behalf, implore you."

"God making his appeal through us." These ambassadors are not mere couriers or mailmen. They do not just give you the Bible and say, "Read this message." Instead, they are ambassadors, and what it means is this: "God is making his appeal through them." When they persuade people (v. 11) and teach and reprove and correct and train in righteousness and warn and console in conformity with Scripture (2 Tim 3:16; Rom 15:4), God is making his appeal through them, in the present tense. They're not just couriers. The ambassador office does more than if you just read the Bible: it applies the message to *you*. It says to *you*, "Be reconciled to God." The ambassador office is there to *apply* it to you.

Of course, the office does not give the message its power. The gospel itself is the power of God unto salvation (Rom 1:16). Now if the power for salvation is in the gospel itself, why do we need the office? To which I might also ask: If the power to heal is in the medicine itself, why do we need the pharmacist? Precisely because of the application. The message is applied to you by the ambassador office, like the right medicine for your particular condition is applied by the physician and pharmacist. The gospel without the ambassador office would be like the telephone game. The message would quickly get distorted. To prevent this, God has put the message in written form, and has also established the ambassador office to ensure that it is preached and believed aright. God directs us both to the message and to the teaching of the ambassador office.

Why? Because, as Paul says, "God is making his appeal through us." The ESV rightly makes this a participle: "God making his appeal through us," just as it is in the Greek. But most English Bibles take it as contrary-to-fact: "*as though* God *were* making his appeal through us." They would say, "But he's not." We say, "But he is!" This passage, 2 Corinthians 5:20, is why we can rightly say in our Small Catechism: "I believe that when the called ministers of Christ deal with us by His divine command, . . . this is just as valid and certain, even in heaven, as if Christ our dear Lord

dealt with us Himself."[5] He *does* deal with us himself, but he does so through means, through the called ministers of Christ. It is the same as when Paul and Timothy say, "God is making his appeal through us." God has entrusted to Paul and Timothy the message of reconciliation and therefore they are ambassadors, and therefore God is making his appeal to you through them.

This is a comfort. God has not left you alone in the world without an ambassador. So many people want to find God speaking in the here and now, just as the ancient Greeks sought oracles. People look to omens, visions, and the desires of their own heart, thinking that God wants to speak to them through these things. People look for God to tell them what job to take, what school to attend, what car to buy, what spouse to marry. But what they hear is not what God in the Bible has told us is the message he has for us. But at the present time, God is actually speaking to you through his ambassadors. And what they say is, "Be reconciled to God." Sorry if that's not the message you were looking for! But it's the message God is revealing to you in the present time.

"Be reconciled to God." God has already reconciled the world to himself through the merit and death of Jesus. "One has died for all, therefore all have died" (2 Cor 5:14) in such a way that God does not count their trespasses against them. The reconciliation is total and universal. All people have been reconciled to God through Christ.

And yet the reconciliation must be applied. And so God makes his appeal through the ambassador office, saying: "Be reconciled to God." How can he say this if the full and total reconciliation of the world already happened in Christ's death? How can he then say, "Be reconciled to God"? He can say both of these things, because the reconciliation has been earned by Christ, and now it is being applied to you specifically. For example, a peace treaty has been signed, ending a war, but some units did not get the message and are still fighting. The peace needs to be proclaimed to them, and they need to believe it and stop fighting. So also here: the reconciliation of the world has been achieved, and now it is proclaimed to you so that you will believe it and have it. He does not say, "reconcile yourself to God," nor "reconcile God to yourself," nor "appease and propitiate God." Rather, "be reconciled." It's like saying, "Believe the peace treaty. Stop fighting!" Or, "Let me apply this reconciliation to you." Or, "Stop running away! Stop rejecting it!" Or, "Repent, and believe the gospel."

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[5] Small Catechism, Confession, "What do you believe according to these words?" Quotations from the Small Catechism are from *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*, copyright © 1986, 1991 Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved.

My dearly beloved brothers and sisters: God is making his appeal to you. Be reconciled to God. "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (v. 21). Especially now, let us all listen closely to his ambassadors as God makes his appeal through them. This message is applied to you. God is speaking to you right here, right now. The peace treaty has been signed. God wants you back. Amen.

Benjamin T. G. Mayes

Social Media and the Christian Church

Technological advances have impacted society and each one of us in profound ways. How should the Christian church respond to the advent of the internet, cell phone proliferation and usage amongst Christians, and social media usage amongst Christians? Are these technological advances a blessing or bane to the Christian church?

Christianity is a relational religion. God initiates the relationship. He calls people into the Christian faith through word and sacrament ministry. God then gathers believers together to be the body of Christ here as the church militant. Christians are not meant to live out their lives as isolated individual units but rather as important members of a greater whole. From the very beginning of Christianity, groups of Christians were formed into congregations of people working together to support and encourage one another in service to God and their neighbor above themselves. This grouping of people into congregations was not done in such a manner that the group did not have a leader or head. Pastors, that is, under-shepherds of Christ, were sent out to preach, teach, and gather people into congregations. Initially Jesus chose the twelve apostles to do the gathering, teaching, and preaching. The apostles appointed elders (pastors) to serve the churches.

Part of responsible pastoral care is that the pastor visits the flock of believers entrusted to his care. Christian sheep need a Christian shepherd. Shepherding of the sheep requires that the pastor not only preach and teach the word of God to the sheep, but also that he knows the sheep intimately and admonishes the sheep when necessary as well as comforts the sheep in their time of need.

With the above understanding of pastors as under-shepherds of Christ, these questions need to be contemplated:

1. Does social media lend itself so that the complete pastoral work of a pastor can be carried out?
2. Is social media something that the Christian church should be involved in, given the predominantly negative nature of social media?

3. What are the long-term ramifications for the Christian church if it does not participate in social media?
4. Does social media provide an opportunity for local congregations to gain members?
5. If the LCMS is engaged in social media, what cautions should be considered concerning its use?

In 1977, Clifford G. Christians wrote about his concern regarding the burgeoning field of electronics and the effect it was having on people. One wonders what he would say today about the internet and social media. His warning concerning electronic media is insightful. He stated: "Electronics as a technological form encourages us to accept life as an infinitely malleable confluence of factors. It promotes style at the expense of substance. The electric noösphere works us over like a giant chiropractor and gradually creates a world with centers existing everywhere, margins nowhere."[6] It is interesting to note that Christians sees the problem of electronic technology as one that does not enable in-person relationships and involvement. He states: "I resist strongly any short-term, enthusiastic faddishness which becomes a substitute for long-term conviction, authentic vision, and personal involvement."[7] Admittedly Christians is writing about oral communication, but the point that he makes about the oral word is the intimacy involved in proclaiming God's word. He also states that he sees the electronic media form of evangelism as lacking in intimacy:

> Verbal vows, morally compelling and sincerely meant, are a distinctive mark of the Christian life as they were in pre-print societies. Our careful attention to them—in marriage, church membership, professions of faith, adult baptisms, and elsewhere advances something momentous in an electronic age devoid of believable words and lasting commitments. Singing, learning prayer at a parent's knee, discussing, and sharing as groups, communication within families, individualized instruction, testimonies, personal witness, intimate prayer together—every possible face-to-face relationship should be promoted with all the vigor and imagination God can provide us.[8]

In response to our first question posited above, namely, "Does social media lend itself so that the complete pastoral work of a pastor can be carried out?" the answer is a definitive "no." Baptism and Holy Communion require in-person interaction of

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[6] Clifford G. Christians, "Communications and the Church's Outreach (1): An Historical Perspective," *Reformed Journal* 27, no. 2 (February 1977): 20.

[7] Clifford G. Christians, "Communications and the Church's Outreach (2): An Historical Perspective," *Reformed Journal* 27, no. 3 (March 1977): 11.

[8] Christians, "Communications (2)," 13.

the pastor with the congregant. Conducting a funeral for a member of one's congregation is not satisfactorily done via a virtual-reality connection.

Having noted the reality that a pastor cannot give complete pastoral care through social media, the next question needs to be addressed: "Is social media something that the Christian church should be involved in, given the predominantly negative nature of social media?" Today's social media is a 24/7 influx of communication. This sort of communication can be addictive. It can be misused and has been misused. The 24/7 connectivity has had its effect on us. Vassa Larin posits: "The advent of the Internet, along with mobile devices that ensure our 24/7 connection with it, has changed us and continues to change us. And by 'us' I mean not only all of humanity in general, but more specifically the smaller 'us' that are church communities."[9] She further states the downside of internet connectivity by noting:

> But the Internet's chaotic flow of information is challenging not only because it is 24/7 and from everywhere, but also because, in our "post-truth" world, it is sometimes only half-true or even patently false. . . . Our online "desert" is often crawling with little and big lies—not just the ones we might tell about our individual selves in social media posts, but also those we might perpetuate collectively, as a society, as a nation, or even as a Church.[10]

Part of the negative aspect is that we are dealing with Web 2.0. Initially the internet was a Web 1.0 situation. It was mainly static information that one could access, very much like looking up something in an encyclopedia. But due to interactive platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and so forth, Web 2.0 has come into existence. Web 2.0 is characterized by the interactivity that is now commonplace on the internet. This interactivity can promote relationship development. But the interactivity can also have an extremely negative downside. *Ad hominem* attacks can occur via the interactivity, and they often do occur. David Dunaetz reminds us of a sobering negative reality that has been noted with the influx of smartphones and the internet connectivity provided by them: "Since around 2012, when Americans and Europeans with smartphones first outnumbered those without smartphones, teen depression and suicide rates have increased dramatically, especially among teenage girls. Our technology-inspired cultural transformation has a dark side that can produce many undesired effects."[11]

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[9] Vassa Larin, "Monastic Martyria or Witness in the Internet Age," *The Wheel* 21 (2020): 46.

[10] Larin, "Monastic Martyria," 48.

[11] David R. Dunaetz, "Evangelism, Social Media, and the Mum Effect," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 43, no. 2 (April 2019): 144.

The Christian must be prepared to receive negative responses to witnessing to the truth of God's word on social media platforms. The response can be vicious and unrelenting. Larin, in her discussion of witnessing in the electronic age, states:

> When speaking or posting today on our politically correct social media, a truth-embracing Christian will be painfully aware of—and "anxiously concerned" about—walking a tightrope. One false move and you just might lose your Facebook "friends," your academic position, your church appointments, or—in the case of a celebrity—your TV show, your film or stand-up career, and so on. "False moves," by the way, include not expressing sufficient indignation about someone else's "false move"; or using the wrong pronoun for a transgender person; or having done so in a tweet eleven years ago; or calling non-Orthodox churches "churches"; or even touching on issues like female ordination or same-sex marriage; or being photographed with someone who has touched on these issues; or going to an academic conference that discusses them.[12]

Christopher Coyne, in his article entitled "Digital Growth: Nurturing the Seed of Faith in a Distracted Society," points out that there can be positive effects of using social media while at the same time warning of some of the negative effects. Coyne states:

> There are, however, risks and downsides to our digital-media formation: isolation, a loss of real embodied community, a preference for the virtual over the real, the development of nasty subcultures of anger, hatred, gossip, detraction, bullying, violence and, most significantly, pornography, which now makes up most of the traffic on the cyber highway. The Christian preacher in the present era must not only seek to evangelize within the digital culture but must evangelize the medium itself, making it more about the good news than the dark territory it can become.[13]

The point that Coyne makes concerning evangelizing the medium itself is interesting. Perhaps a better way to state it is that the Christian can be salt and light to a world of unbelievers on social media. The reality is that the majority of people in the world are involved in social media. Even in impoverished nations, cell phones abound. Certainly in the United States, cell phone usage and internet connectivity are the norm. Cell phone usage is second nature to young people in this country. M. Peter Singh describes young people as "digitizens." He states: "Digitizens can also be

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[12] Larin, "Monastic Martyria," 49.

[13] Christopher James Coyne, "Digital Growth: Nurturing the Seed of Faith in a Distracted Society," *America* 215, no. 11 (October 17, 2016): 16.

referred as the 'iGeneration' or described as having been born with 'digital DNA' having begun to fuse their lives into technology and they seek online spirituality."[14]

Young people engage one another through cell phones and social media apps. This is also happening for a great portion of congregational members. In order to answer the second question posited at the beginning of this article, it is important first to consider the third question: "What are the long-term ramifications for the Christian church if it does not participate in social media?" In the case of the Missouri Synod Lutheran context, the majority of churches are participating on the internet and to some extent on social media. And that is good. The mode of communication has changed. The internet phenomenon is no less society-changing than the printing press was in the time of Martin Luther. To not participate on the internet and social media platforms is to stick one's head in the sand and to miss the boat, so to speak. Good can come out of social media engagement. Unfortunately, the majority of congregations' websites are designed to serve the members of the congregation and are not developed for reaching out to the non-churched. These websites essentially function like the telephone book ads did years ago, when congregations paid to have their phone book listing. They are Web 1.0 type of websites imparting information only and not inviting any type of interaction or relationship building opportunities. This type of website is about as effective as the old phone book listings were in bringing prospective members into congregational membership.

It is important that pastors and their congregations be involved in witnessing for Christ via the means that are available to them. It has been noted that social media platforms are the new agoras of ages past. The agora in ancient Greece was a place of political discussion and social interaction.[15] Today, digital agoras function in a comparable way, providing places for conversation, collaboration, work, and learning.[16] I maintain that it is possible for these digital agoras to be places where Christian witnessing can occur with the understanding that these digital agoras will not replace the in-person relationships that must occur for a person to be fully obedient to God's word (cf. Heb 10:24–25) and to receive fully the means of grace which God desires to give to a Christian. The digital agoras are places to initiate a discussion with people concerning the true God and what he desires to give to them. They can be places where relationships begin and develop somewhat, but they never will replace the need for a physical gathering into local congregations of true

[14] M. Peter Singh, "Social Media: A New Location for Christian Mission to the Digitizens," *In God's Image* 38 (June 2019): 55.

[15] Justine Renus F. Galang and Willard Enrique R. Macaraan, "Digital Apostleship: Evangelization in the New Agora," *Religions* 12, no. 2 (February 2021): 1.

[16] Calvin Chong, "Exploring Innovations, Impacts, and Implications of New Communications and Media Development," *Journal of Asian Evangelical Theology* 18, no. 2 (September 2014): 100.

believers in the triune God. The other difficulty with digital agoras is they are not located in a particular location but are located in cyberspace. Thus, you can engage people who may not live near the congregation that one is a member of or that a pastor serves. Vashti Murphy McKenzie highlights the opportunity of engaging a person digitally as well as pointing out the lack of the physical locality of such engagement. She states: "Let's face it, the majority of teens, 20 somethings and 30 somethings are having conversations every day in the digital world. If we do not engage them in conversation, we will not have a chance to lead them."[17]

The question of time invested in a digital agora becomes important. Engaging a person or persons via social media takes time. What is the best usage of a pastor's time as far as engaging people locally or in cyberspace? I suggest that there must be a measured approach to engaging people via social media. The pastor would be best suited to spend more time actually engaging people in-person and not so much online. I am not advocating that a pastor should not be involved in social media at all. A pastor should share the gospel of Jesus Christ both in cyberspace and with people in his locality where he serves. He is, after all, the *pastor loci,* of the community where his congregation is located and to where he has been called. I reiterate that a measured approach in engaging people via social media should be practiced, especially in light of the warning that David Petersen has given in his recent theological observer entitled: "A Warning and a Strategy about the Dangers of Digital Media."[18]

Petersen points out that the amount of screen time engaged in by a person via television, computer usage, cell phone usage, and digital gaming is not neutral in its effect upon individuals. Too much screen time can negatively impact an individual. Petersen wisely points out that pastors should limit their usage of digital media: "They should set strict weekly time limits for watching television, Netflix, and other media, as well as be careful about what they watch. The hours saved not looking at screens can be put to other, healthier recreational activities such as exercise or puzzles or doing chores."[19] Further, pastors should warn their parishioners about the negative effects of too much screen time.[20] Petersen does not advocate that pastors and parishioners should completely disengage from the usage of digital media. He sees two usages of digital media that can be beneficial: (1) advertising the church

[17] "Multimedia Ministry: AME Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie," *The Christian Century* 129, no. 6 (March 21, 2012): 10.

[18] David Petersen, "A Warning and a Strategy about the Dangers of Digital Media," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 83, no. 3–4 (2022): 351–370.

[19] Petersen, "A Warning and a Strategy," 353.

[20] Petersen, "A Warning and a Strategy," 353.

on congregational websites and Facebook pages, and (2) connecting with shut-ins.[21] I am suggesting that digital media can be used for more than just advertising and shut-ins connection. I am advocating that digital media can be used to share the gospel message with unbelievers in order to begin to build relationships, and that digital media has value in staying connected particularly with younger people who are using texting as a primary form of communication.

Indeed, social media platforms may be the best way to stay connected with the youth in a congregation and to reach out to prospective youth. According to a 2021 census in *Common Sense Media* measuring tweens (eight- to twelve years old) and teens (thirteen to eighteen years old), "about three in 10 of all 8- and 9-year-olds have their own phones; among 12- to 13-year-olds, about seven in 10 do; and among those age 14 or older, about nine in 10 have their own phones."[22] Considering this data, it is advisable that LCMS congregations provide their pastors with smartphones so the pastors can communicate with the youth in their congregations and with youth they are engaging in evangelism endeavors.

This leads to the fourth question of consideration posited above, namely, "Does social media provide an opportunity for local congregations to gain members?" In the context of LCMS congregations, there is no evidence to my knowledge that cyber-space interactions have led to a substantial number of people joining an LCMS congregation. That is not to say that there have not been people from the local community who have seen a church's website or watched a church's Divine Service broadcast and then joined the congregation. There has been this response. However, the numbers of new members brought into membership via digital means are not tremendous to my knowledge. Further study is warranted to ascertain if social media engagement and internet presence of a congregation have a felicitous effect within the local community with effectiveness measured by new converts and/or new members in a congregation.

Finally, the last question to be considered is this: "If the LCMS is engaged in social media, what cautions should be considered concerning its use?" The reality is that many in the LCMS are engaged in social media, and they have been engaged for some time. What further guidance, therefore, should be offered for its use?

Social media can be an avenue of eighth commandment breaking. Where this has occurred, repentance is in order. False and partially false narratives about synodical, district, and congregational happenings have occurred via social media. This is not appropriate, and repentance is needed. Luther stated things in a most concise and beautiful way: "Put the best construction on everything." Putting the

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[21] Petersen, "A Warning and a Strategy," 354.

[22] Victoria Rideout et al., *The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Tweens and Teens, 2021* (San Francisco: Common Sense, 2022), 22.

best construction on everything must be practiced by all Christians, both laypersons and clergy alike, if LCMS Christians are to be light and salt in the darkness that so pervades social media platforms today.

Social media can be very divisive. Websites dedicated to a certain type of person abound. Private chat rooms and groups abound. How do these sorts of gatherings encourage one to serve God and one's neighbor above oneself? How do they promote unity within the LCMS? There is only one way that unity in the LCMS is gained. Unity in doctrine and practice come about only through the Holy Spirit working through the means of grace to bring us all into consensus or *concordia* as our forefathers in the LCMS stated it.[23] This was vitally important to our LCMS forefathers, as evidenced by so many institutions and congregations in the LCMS bearing the name "Concordia."

In conclusion, Christians and pastors may use social media to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with others. A measured approach to social media engagement and local in-person engagement should be practiced. Christians and pastors engaging others through social media platforms should be prepared for *ad hominem* attacks and negative feedback. Christians and pastors should not engage in *ad hominem* attacks, gossip, or false narrative promotion.

Social media as an online agora offers the opportunity for sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, but it cannot supplant actual in-the-flesh engagement with members of the parish and with evangelism prospects who might join the local parish.

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[23] Latin *Concordia* also means "concord" and was featured prominently on the title page of the 1580 Book of Concord.

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Book Review

***Luther's Large Catechism with Annotations and Contemporary Applications.* Edited by John T. Pless and Larry M. Vogel. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2022. 734 pages. Hardcover. $39.99.**

Hermann Sasse lamented in 1948 that world Lutheranism needed confessional renewal, in which the pastors and people committed themselves to serious study and application of the Lutheran Confessions, beginning with Luther's Large Catechism.[1] The same is true today in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Pastors and church workers in our synod rely on materials about the Christian life by American evangelicals. Much of our social engagement in today's hostile pop culture—at least at the ground level—flows from secular political commentary. Yet, the Large Catechism is a treasure trove of salutary theology and pastoral wisdom that remains largely unmined.

Our synod's publication of *Luther's Large Catechism with Annotations and Contemporary Applications* seeks to remedy this problem. This volume accomplishes the goal, set by synodical resolutions from 2013 and 2016, of providing updated catechetical resources that would be "more comprehensive and apologetic in scope."[2] It provides readers with some of the finest contemporary scholarship on the historical background and theology of the Large Catechism through introductory essays written by renowned teachers and pastors from around the Lutheran world, and through extensive and detailed footnotes. The work also contains commentary addressing some challenges to our faith in the world today. Here the theology of the Large Catechism is applied apologetically in a manner faithful to the doctrines of the Lutheran Confessions and applicable in a society that vacillates between hostility and ambivalence toward Christian faith and practice.

This volume is not aimed only at theological professionals but at all Lutheran Christians. Here there are riches for all who seek to understand better what it means to be a child of God in Christ and how to live that out.[3] At the same time, pastors, church workers, and those studying for these vocations should be urged to study and put to use the insights in this work. They will find help for encouraging Christians to confess and live out their faith in the context of false teachings such as

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[1] Hermann Sasse, "Status of the Lutheran Churches of the World," trans. Paul Peters, in *Letters to Lutheran Pastors*, vol. 1, *1948–1951*, ed. Matthew C. Harrison (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2013), 15–16.

[2] *Convention Proceedings: 65th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 2013), 123.

[3] *Luther's Large Catechism with Annotations and Contemporary Applications*, 3–4.

evolution and in the face of social ills like gender dysphoria, abortion, and euthanasia. In this volume, pastors and church workers have a ready, useful, and faithful resource for thinking through and addressing these and many other contemporary issues facing Christians.

Yet, despite its catechetical and apologetic value, confessional faithfulness, and usefulness today, *Luther's Large Catechism with Annotations and Contemporary Applications* has received opposition. Misrepresentation, false witness, and genuine concern have all been expressed. Though it is beyond the scope of this review to recount all the reactions to the work, I will address one.

One criticism is that theological works published by the LCMS should contain only the work of LCMS theologians. While it is certainly true that nothing heterodox should ever be put forth by our synod, its subsidiaries, seminaries, or universities, it does not follow that no synodical publication should ever contain anything by someone who is not a member of the synod or a lay person belonging to a congregation of the LCMS. If we can never use anything by someone outside the LCMS, then *Lutheran Service Book* should not contain hymns or liturgies written by non-LCMS Christians. Many of the hymns we sing are by Roman Catholics, Calvinists, and Methodists. Many aspects of our liturgy are common to other Lutheran church bodies, past and present. Should we never sing "This is the Feast" or "Silent Night"?

Our commitment to doctrinal purity does not rule out publishing non-LCMS authors. What it does rule out is publishing heterodox teaching. In my opinion, *Luther's Large Catechism with Annotations and Contemporary Applications* meets the standard of orthodox teaching and should be commended for use by the pastors, professors, church workers, and all people of the LCMS.

Some in the LCMS rely on sources that are not Lutheran and that do contain false teachings about salvation, ecclesiology, the Office of Holy Ministry, and the sacraments. *Luther's Large Catechism with Annotations and Contemporary Applications* provides an alternative source for study, teaching, discussion, and practice that is faithful, confessionally Lutheran, and germane to our present context. As President Matthew Harrison states, "You have before you one of the greatest resources for Christian faith and living ever produced by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod."[4] So, use it.

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[4] *Luther's Large Catechism with Annotations and Contemporary Applications*, xv.

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Books Received

Baier, Johann Wilhelm and C. F. W. Walther. *Atonement in Lutheran Orthodoxy: Baier-Walther*. Translated by Theodore E. Mayes. Sidney, MT: Synoptic Text Information Services, 2023. 131 pages. Paperback. $4.29.

Barrett, Matthew. *The Reformation as Renewal: Retrieving the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2023. 1,008 pages. Hardcover. $59.99.

Bird, Michael F. and Scot McKnight, eds. *God's Israel and the Israel of God: Paul and Supersessionism*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2023. 168 pages. Paperback. $28.99.

Bird, Michael F. and Scott Harrower, eds. *Unlimited Atonement: Amyraldism and Reformed Theology*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2023. 240 pages. Paperback. $25.99.

Eliav, Yaron Z. *A Jew in the Roman Bathhouse: Cultural Interaction in the Ancient Mediterranean*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023. 392 pages. Hardcover. $45.00.

Halvorson, T. R. *Vicarious Satisfaction in Lutheran Catechisms, Confessions, and Hymns*. Sidney, MT: Synoptic Text Information Services, 2023. 158 pages. Paperback. $4.58.

Hoeksema, Herman. *I Believe: Sermons on the Apostles' Creed*. Edited by Marco Barone. Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2023. 336 pages. Hardcover. $31.95.

Huffstetler, Joel W. *Changed Eyes: Pandemic, Protests, Proclamation*. Hannacroix, NY: Apocryphile Press, 2023. 210 pages. Paperback. $17.99.

Kimble, Jeremy M. *Behold and Become: Reading Scripture for Transformation*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2023. 256 pages. Paperback. $24.99.

Laato, Timo. *The New Quest for Paul and His Reading of the Old Testament: The Contrast between the "Letter" and the "Spirit" in 2 Corinthians 3:1–18*. Irvine, CA: 1517 Academic, 2023. 264 pages. Paperback. $29.95.

Maspero, Giulio. *Rethinking the* Filioque *with the Greek Fathers*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2023. 326 pages. Hardcover. $49.99.

Migliore, Daniel L. *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*. 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2023. 568 pages. Paperback. $34.99.

Nauss, Allen. *Your Spiritual Brain: Owner's Manual for Living a Christ-like Life*. Murrells Inlet, SC: Covenant Books, 2023. 258 pages. Paperback. $29.95.

Pless, John T. *A Small Catechism on Human Life*. 2nd ed. St. Louis: LCMS Life Ministry, 2023. 97 pages. Paperback. $9.99.

Quarles, Charles L. and L. Scott Kellum. *40 Questions about the Text and Canon of the New Testament*. 40 Questions Series. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2023. 352 pages. Paperback. $26.99.

Stewart, Alexander E. and Alan S. Bandy, eds. *The Apocalypse of John among its Critics: Questions and Controversies*. Studies in Scripture and Biblical Theology. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2023. 304 pages. Paperback. $34.99.

Webster, Douglas D. *Pastoral Identity: True Shepherds in the Household of Faith*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Ministry, 2023. 192 pages. Paperback. $19.99.

Wielenga, B. *The Reformed Lord's Supper Form: A Commentary*. Translated by H. David Schuringa. Edited by David J. Engelsma. Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2023. 426 pages. Hardcover. $39.95.

Wollenberg, Rebecca Scharbach. *The Closed Book: How the Rabbis Taught the Jews (Not) to Read the Bible*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023. 272 pages. Hardcover. $39.95.

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Indices to Volume 87 (2023)

Articles, Research Notes (RN), and Theological Observers (TO)

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