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Pastoral Formation in Lutheran Orthodoxy and the Method of Theological Study Proposed by Johann Gerhard

Benjamin T. G. Mayes

Pastoral formation is a pastoral duty. Saint Paul said to Pastor Timothy and to all who share his vocation, "The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2).[1] Yet pastoral formation begins in the family and congregation. Saint Paul also said to Timothy, "I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also" (2 Tim 1:5). Pastoral formation is intense. It requires study and prayer. It is not simply a matter of making converts and then sending them out immediately to make more converts. Paul again says, "*Be diligent* to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15, emphasis added). The Lord Jesus prepared his apostles full-time for three years. Thus, we, who are teachers far inferior to the Lord Jesus, and disciples far inferior to the Twelve, may need just as much time for pastoral formation, and just as much intensity, or more.

As we consider how best to prepare pastors in our times, we should look to our own history for resources. Lutherans recognize the special blessings of the Reformation: In the sixteenth century, God led Martin Luther and his colleagues to preach and teach the law and gospel clearly from Holy Scripture. This same biblical doctrine was then established in the churches, schools, art, music, hymns, and theology of Lutheran Orthodoxy, from the time of the 1580 Book of Concord through the following century. If we want to see examples of the acme of Lutheran pastoral formation, this is where we should look.

Among Orthodox Lutherans, the arch-theologian was Johann Gerhard.[2] Gerhard (1582–1637) lived about a century after Luther. After a distinguished education at the University of Jena and elsewhere, he was called in 1606 to be a pastor and superintendent of twenty-six parishes in Heldburg, and a lecturer at a high school.

[1] Unless otherwise noted, Bible quotations are from the New King James Version.

[2] This is the judgment of Gerhard's contemporary Matthias Hoë von Hoënegg (1580–1645). Erdmann Rudolph Fischer, *The Life of John Gerhard*, trans. Richard J. Dinda and Elmer M. Hohle (Malone, TX: Repristination, 2000), 295.

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He was just twenty-three years old. Just by considering his first call, it is obvious that his contemporaries thought highly of the gifts God had given him. On January 7, 1615, Gerhard was called to the office of pastor and superintendent general (something like a bishop) of Coburg.[3] This was a promotion. Previously he had been a "specific superintendent." Now his supervision included more churches, subdistricts, and specific superintendents. He soon set to work writing a church order for his diocese, the "Church Order of Johann Casimir," which was finished by 1616.[4] Then, that year he was called to be a professor of theology at the University of Jena, where he served for the next twenty-one years, until his death in 1637. Gerhard's writings built up the church and Christian believers, and also defended the church against attacks.[5] He also wrote about pastoral formation.

While the formation of Christians begins in congregations and homes by means of the Sacraments, preaching, teaching, prayer, and devotion, here I will examine *formal* pastoral preparation at the time of Johann Gerhard. This consisted of three parts: (I) university curriculum, (II) personal study, and (III) ongoing assessment and quality control.

I. Pastoral Formation at German Lutheran Universities of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

Theological Faculties

Universities with their theological faculties were the Lutheran centers of pastoral formation in Germany in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In 1600, there were eleven Lutheran universities in the Holy Roman Empire (including Germany), with about 2,500 students.[6] The theological professors often had more to do than just teaching future pastors. Sometimes theology professors would also teach in the

[3] Fischer, *The Life of John Gerhard*, p. 72, sec. 5.2.

[4] Fischer, *The Life of John Gerhard*, p. 73, sec. 5.3; Martin Honecker, *Cura religionis Magistratus Christiani: Studien zum Kirchenrecht im Luthertum des 17. Jahrhunderts, insbesondere bei Johann Gerhard*, Ius ecclesiasticum 7 (Munich: Claudius, 1968), 43; and Johann Anselm Steiger, "Kirchenordnung, Visitation und Alltag: Johann Gerhard (1582–1637) als Visitator und kirchenordnender Theologe," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 55, no. 3 (2003): 229.

[5] For a biography of Gerhard, see Steven R. J. Parks, "Johann Gerhard (1582–1637)," in *Lives and Writings of the Great Fathers of the Lutheran Church*, ed. Timothy Schmeling (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2016), 163–178.

[6] Thomas Kaufmann, "The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age: The Education of Lutheran Pastors in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *The Protestant Clergy of Early Modern Europe*, ed. C. Scott Dixon and Luise Schorn-Schütte (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 121.

arts faculty, teaching Greek and Hebrew, or classical Latin and Greek texts.[7] Professors often had to fulfill nonuniversity tasks, too, such as representing the university or prince at meetings, being judges or jurors for church courts, and the like. Such activities were a nuisance to the professors, who complained that such extracurricular duties were preventing them from giving due diligence to their study and lectures.[8]

The theology faculties were small. At Wittenberg in 1580, there were four regular professors of theology. All four of the professors had the duty of lecturing on the Bible, and one of them from time to time was supposed to lecture on Christian doctrine. The four professors could decide among themselves who would teach what, and could even change from one area to another.[9] The statutes for the University of Rostock in the sixteenth century stipulated that each theology professor should take turns lecturing on every subject. While this was never fully implemented, the professors did commonly lecture in several different areas: books of the New Testament, books of the Old Testament, doctrine (theological commonplaces), and topics from the arts faculty, such as ancient languages or classical texts.[10]

Lectures

The official curriculum of the universities could vary somewhat from place to place but always focused on the Bible. Philipp Melanchthon wrote the statutes for the University of Wittenberg in 1545, and these were influential on all other Lutheran universities in Germany.[11] These statues stipulated that lectures would be offered on the Bible, the creeds, and Augustine's *On the Spirit and the Letter*. Courses were to be offered on Greek and Hebrew, and the faculty was responsible for the moral and mental development of the students. At later times, lectures on Melanchthon's *Commonplaces*, the Small Catechism, or the Augsburg Confession were added. The focus on the Bible is striking. Thus, the stereotype of the Lutheran

[7] Thomas Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung: Die Rostocker Theologieprofessoren und ihr Beitrag zur theologischen Bildung und kirchlichen Gestaltung im Herzogtum Mecklenburg zwischen 1550 und 1675*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte 66 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 1997), 399.

[8] Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 392–393n623.

[9] Marcel Nieden, *Die Erfindung des Theologen: Wittenberger Anweisungen zum Theologiestudium im Zeitalter von Reformation und Konfessionalisierung*, Spätmittelalter und Reformation, neue Reihe 28 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 116–117.

[10] Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 391–392, 402.

[11] Kaufmann, "The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age," 123; and Walter Friedensburg, ed., *Urkundenbuch der Universität Wittenberg*, vol. 1 (Magdeburg: Selbstverlag der Historischen Kommission, 1926), 261–265.

Orthodox theologians as "the dogmaticians"[12] needs to be challenged, since Lutheran universities did not make dogmatics dominant in their curricula until the latter half of the seventeenth century.[13] Before that, apparently, the doctrinal exposition of the Bible was more common. At Wittenberg in 1580, there were several professors of exegetical theology, but only one for dogmatics. Yet exegesis, too, was dogmatic. Lutheran exegetes were keenly aware of how the Bible supports Lutheran doctrine, and they often dealt with and refuted the wrongful exegesis of their theological opponents (such as Roman Catholics, Reformed, and, later, Socinians).[14] While the lectures usually focused on doctrinal books of the Bible (especially the prophets and the Pauline epistles), university sermon series were used to preach through the Gospels and historical books of the Bible.[15]

From circa 1575 to circa 1625, regulations for Wittenberg's theological faculty repeatedly emphasized that lectures must not go into too much detail; they must instead cover material that the students would need to know as future pastors, showing them good examples of how to exposit the words of the Bible and to defend the church's doctrine. Nevertheless, during this period the lectures tended to become long, detailed, slow dictations.[16]

Lectures at Rostock were never supposed to be held at the same time as another class. The blocks of time set forth for the lectures were up to two hours in length. Theoretically a student could attend every regular lecture offered. According to the statutes, time blocks were reserved for particular professors to lecture every day of the week,[17] surely excluding Sunday. Professors did not have to lecture on the same topic every day; some chose to lecture on two different topics at a time on alternating days.[18]

At the University of Jena, there were different kinds of classes: public lectures, *collegia* (which were extracurricular lectures or disputations), and sermon exercises. The professors themselves chose what they were going to teach. In order to keep professors accountable and make sure they were teaching subjects that the students

[12] E.g., Jacob A. O. Preus, "The New Testament Canon in the Lutheran Dogmaticians," *The Springfielder* 25, no. 1 (1961): 8–33.

[13] Kaufmann, "The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age," 123–124; and Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 391–392, 403–404.

[14] Nieden, *Die Erfindung des Theologen*, 245.

[15] Nieden, *Die Erfindung des Theologen*, 117; and Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 391–392.

[16] Nieden, *Die Erfindung des Theologen*, 115–117, 119–120; cf. Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 391.

[17] Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 392.

[18] Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 400.

needed to learn, printed lists of lectures were regularly published, which could be examined by the prince and his bureaucracy.[19]

A survey of printed class lists can give us a good picture of the Jena theological curriculum at the time of Johann Gerhard. Normally, Jena had three regular theology professors. In 1613, before Gerhard was teaching there, Ambrosius Reuden (1543–1615) offered one lecture series at a time. First he announced lectures on the Decalogue, which would be followed by doctrinal commonplaces on the gospel, repentance, providence, and predestination. Albert Grawer (1575–1617) offered two lecture classes: on Malachi and on Augsburg Confession II–IV. Johann Major (1564–1654) offered one lecture series: on Acts. At this time there was no mention of disputations or sermon exercises.[20]

In the winter semester of 1616, Johann Major was still lecturing on Acts. Johann Gerhard, a new professor, gave one lecture series at a time: first on the canonical and apocryphal books of the Bible; then an explanation of apparent contradictions in the New Testament; then his method of theological study. He announced that later he would lecture on the doctrine of God. At that time, there were only two theology professors.[21]

In 1617, Johann Himmel (1581–1642) had joined the theology faculty, bringing the number up to three. In the winter semester, Johann Major continued his lecture series on Acts, now having reached chapter 16. Johann Himmel offered one public lecture series on polemical theology and announced the continuation of a private theological class. Gerhard was more active. He offered the end of a lecture series on the method of theological study and the theological *praecognita* (which probably included what we call *prolegomena*, dealing with the nature of theology, the doctrine of Scripture, and revelation).[22] After that was done, he announced that the next lecture series would be a "synoptic" explanation of theological commonplaces. He would also begin a Bible seminar and would continue the "rest of the exercises of disputations and sermons." Among the "philosophical" studies, no classes on

[19] Ulrich Rasche, "Über Jenaer Vorlesungsverzeichnisse des 16. bis 19. Jahrhunderts," in *"Gelehrte" Wissenschaft. Das Vorlesungsprogramm der Universität Jena um 1800*, ed. Thomas Bach, Jonas Maatsch, and Ulrich Rasche (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2008), 17–18.

[20] Johann Tobias Major, *Prorector Academiae Ienensis Johannes Maior S. S. Theologiae Doctor, & Coeteri Professores L. S.: Socrates Ille Princeps Philosophorum Dicere Solebat: . . . P. P. Die 5. Septemb. A. O. R. 1613.* (Jena: Weidnerus, 1613); on the printed lists of classes at Jena, see Rasche, "Über Jenaer Vorlesungsverzeichnisse des 16. bis 19. Jahrhunderts."

[21] *Rector Et Senatus Academiae Ienensis L. S.: Quae Catalogi Lectionum Publicarum, Quos Semestres Edere Solemus . . . P. P. Calend. Septemb. 1616* (Jena: Beithmannus, 1616).

[22] Cf. the contents of Johann Heinrich Alsted, *Praecognitorum Theologicorum Libri Duo: Naturam Theologiae explicantes, & rationem studii illius plenissime monstrantes* (Frankfurt am Main: Hummius, 1615).

metaphysics or logic were offered in 1617, since "a professor of metaphysics and logic is still being sought."[23]

In the summer semester of 1618, Major again was lecturing on Acts. Himmel said he would lecture on Romans 9, followed by a "methodical synopsis of church history," followed by a succinct explanation of the minor prophets. He also had a private theological *collegium* (an extracurricular class of some kind). Gerhard was lecturing on theological commonplaces and leading disputations on the Gospels and polemical theology.[24]

From this sample of course offerings at Jena, we see a number of surprising things. If they did not have the right professor, they just did not offer the class. The professors offered usually just one lecture class per semester, but it was ongoing and thus probably always included brand new content. (These lectures were commonly turned into books later on.) Besides the main lecture, they often offered private classes, often in the form of disputations.

Collegia and Disputations

Many of the Jena class lists mention *collegia.* These were private classes, electives that did not have to be offered by the professors nor attended by students but could be offered according to the interests of the professors and students and seem to have taken place frequently.[25] The classes consisted of lectures, disputations, or preaching exercises. The purpose of these private classes was to supplement the public lectures with preparatory studies or exercises.[26] They also supplemented the professors' salaries, since professors could charge extra fees for them.[27] These *collegia* seem to be the way that our modern classes developed. The topics, manner, and duration of the old public lectures were fixed by university statutes and could not easily be changed. Private *collegia*, on the other hand, both provided extra income and allowed professors and graduate students to offer whatever topics the local academic market desired.

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[23] Johann Gerhard, *Rector Academiae Ienensis Johannes Gerhardus S.S. Theologiae Doctor, & Caeteri Professores L. S. D.: Aristoteles, Qui Teste Laërtio, Inter de Ambulandum Suiscum Discipulis Philosophari Solebat . . . P. P. Prid. Calend. Sept. A. O. R. 1617* (Jena: Steinmannus, 1617).

[24] *Rector Et Senatus Academiae Ienensis L. S. D.: Scipio Maior, Qui Vicit Hannibalem . . . ; P.P. Die 15. Martii A. O. R. 1618* (Jena: Typis Steinmannianis, 1618).

[25] Margreet J. A. M. Ahsmann, "Teaching in Collegia: The Organization of Disputationes at Universities in the Netherlands and in Germany During the 16th and 17th Centuries," in *Università in Europa: Le istituzioni universitarie dal Medio Evo ai nostri giorni strutture, organizzazione, funzionamento; Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Milazzo, 28 settembre -2 ottobre 1993*, ed. Andrea Romano (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 1995), 99–114.

[26] Rasche, "Über Jenaer Vorlesungsverzeichnisse des 16. bis 19. Jahrhunderts," 17–18, 22–23, 25, 28.

[27] Rasche, "Über Jenaer Vorlesungsverzeichnisse des 16. bis 19. Jahrhunderts," 28.

After lectures, disputations were seen as the most important educational activity. Disputations were supposed to help strengthen students' ability to think and argue clearly, and to make clear the truth of the faith and to show it as plausible by refuting contrary arguments.[28] In the seventeenth century, the popularity of disputations as an educational activity rose dramatically and characterized theological education in Lutheran Orthodoxy. This practice, which was originally supposed to train students to think critically and respond to the arguments of the opponents of Lutheran doctrine, was used increasingly by Lutheran professors in the seventeenth century for building consensus and for responding to new theological challenges in detail.[29]

Disputations were debates on theological topics. The purpose of academic disputations, as practiced by Lutherans such as Johann Gerhard, was truth and clarity, not just winning. A professor usually wrote theses and presided over the disputation as the "president." The "opponents" were usually students. In advance, they divvied up the theses and researched arguments against the theses in the books of the Lutherans' opponents. In the disputation, these "opponents" then brought arguments against the proposed theses. Their arguments were drawn from Scripture, church fathers, and philosophy. The "respondent" was often a senior-level student, and in many cases was a doctoral candidate, who had a difficult job. He had to defend the theses against the opponents. Often if a respondent had troubles, the president (i.e., the professor) would step in to defend the thesis.[30]

The disputation could also be an assessment tool. Often students of theology would avoid taking the degree of "bachelor of Bible" because of the high cost of the fees for this degree. Instead, they would hold a disputation, serve as the respondent, and maybe even author the theses. The theses were printed with the student's name as the respondent and could serve as sufficient proof of his theological learning.[31]

Despite the popularity of the practice, disputations were sometimes criticized. Professors sometimes complained of the large amounts of time they had to devote to conducting disputations. This, combined with defenses of the practice, indicate that disputations sometimes were perceived as deficient.[32] Johann Gerhard's rules

[28] Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 409.

[29] Nieden, *Die Erfindung des Theologen*, 123–127; and Kenneth G. Appold, *Orthodoxie als Konsensbildung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

[30] On the practice of disputations in the age of Lutheran Orthodoxy, see Appold, *Orthodoxie als Konsensbildung*; and Johann Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, in *On Interpreting Sacred Scripture and Method of Theological Study*, ed. Benjamin T. G. Mayes, trans. Joshua J. Hayes, Theological Commonplaces I–II (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), 191–198. On the practice of disputations in general, see Ahsmann, "Teaching in Collegia," 107–113. Luther's disputations will be translated and published in Luther's Works: American Edition, vols. 72–73.

[31] Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 413–414.

[32] Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 419.

for disputations, too, sound as though he was aware of problems that could occur in disputations—for example, sophistic arguments, heated passions, and striving to win instead of seeking to set forth and know the truth.[33]

Assessment

From the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, it has been estimated that students stayed at the University of Wittenberg an average of 1.8 years.[34] A university degree was not required in order to become a pastor. In fact, in early modern Germany, pastors with university degrees were usually not wanted for rural pastorates. The differences in background and interests between the pastor and people were too great and could easily lead to conflicts. Pastors without a degree and especially of peasant background were the most suitable for such parishes, also because they could be more easily controlled by patrons (rich lay leaders). Such pastors were known as "postil riders" (*Postillenreiter*), since they usually read sermons of other pastors to the people instead of writing their own sermons.[35] But in the cities and towns, and even in many rural places, having a well-educated pastor was regarded as important. While it was common for pastors to lack a university education at the beginning of the Reformation, the trend was toward increased educational requirements for pastoral candidates. Most Lutheran leaders saw increased formal pastoral formation as desirable, and as finances and teachers were increasingly available, standards rose.[36]

Theological study at a university was also quite different from modern North American practices, because university statutes (at least at Wittenberg) did not speak about or require grades or examinations, except when students wanted to graduate with a degree.[37] While programs of study and course offerings were well defined, there was a surprising amount of freedom. There were no set entrance requirements for the universities (aside from fluency in Latin), and there was no specific length of time that a student needed to stay at the university. Appointment to a parish as a pastor did not usually require a formal academic degree. Instead, the church's examinations were required, and these focused on the candidate's confession of faith, knowledge of the Bible and theology, and preaching. Thus, the length of study was tailored to students, who had differing abilities and education levels

[33] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 192–198.

[34] Nieden, *Die Erfindung des Theologen*, 116n69.

[35] Sven Tode, "Bildung und Wissenskultur der Geistlichkeit im Danzig der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Bildung und Konfession: Theologenausbildung im Zeitalter der Konfessionalisierung*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis and Markus Wriedt (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 93–94; and Kaufmann, "The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age," 132–133.

[36] Kaufmann, "The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age," 128–130.

[37] Nieden, *Die Erfindung des Theologen*, 245.

when arriving at the universities.[38] Qualification for the pastoral office depended wholly on the competency of the man, and the theological curriculum existed wholly to make the man competent to be a pastor. Thus, instead of a grade card or academic transcript, recommendation letters for candidates were commonly written, testifying to the candidate's moral character, ability to preach, and understanding of doctrine. These competencies were seen as requisite in order to be a pastor. That is, qualification for the pastoral office was based in part on the piety and character of the candidate. It was expected that candidates must first have experienced God's word and cultivated it in prayer and reading, and that they had been put to the test in the real world. These kinds of competencies (academic and personal) were far more important than any academic *degree* for most parishes and pastors.[39] This appears to be a rigorous kind of competency-based education.[40]

II. Pastoral Formation according to Johann Gerhard's *Method of Theological Study*

Now that we have considered pastoral formation from the standpoint of curriculum at Orthodox Lutheran universities, it is also important to consider what else pastoral formation included. Namely, it included prayer, intense private study of Scripture and theological texts, and careful note-taking. This leads us to consider how Gerhard directed students to carry out the private side of pastoral formation.

Methods of Theological Study

Since the officially stipulated courses of study were very flexible, many professors wrote methods of theological study in the form of advice to theology students, to lead students to prepare themselves well for the pastoral office.[41] Perhaps this indicates an implicit admission that the official curricula were not sufficient to form the students into competent pastors. Thus, the written methods of theological study were geared toward a student's personal, private study much more than toward an official curriculum at a university.[42]

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[38] Kaufmann, "The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age," 125, 127–128, 132.

[39] Kaufmann, "The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age," 134–136.

[40] Cf. Rebecca Klein-Collins, "Sharpening Our Focus on Learning: The Rise of Competency-Based Approaches to Degree Completion" (Champaign, IL: National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, 2013), https://learningoutcomesassessment.org/documents/Klein%20Collins%20OP20.pdf.

[41] Kaufmann, "The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age," 125; for a list of such works, see Johann Georg Walch, *Bibliotheca theologica selecta litterariis adnotationibus instructa*, vol. 1 (Jena: sumtu viduae Croeckeriane, 1757), 4–11.

[42] Kaufmann, "The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age," 126.

Gerhard's Method of Theological Study *(1617)*

Johann Gerhard published directions for theological study for his students at Jena.[43] In his *Method of Theological Study* of 1617, he incorporated Luther's general advice of prayer, meditation, and spiritual trial (*oratio*, *meditatio, tentatio*) into a work of three parts.[44] The *Method* arose from Gerhard's lectures as a new professor of theology at the University of Jena. In these lectures he led his students through a plan for a five-year course of study focused primarily on the study of Holy Scripture, though not neglecting other areas of theology. Here Gerhard sets forth a methodical approach to studying Scripture and dogmatic theology in which one is supposed to write down quotations and observations in large blank books organized by topic. The *Method* gives readers not just a list of *what* to study but also practical guidelines on *how*, guidelines that will benefit students and theologians even today. It is a rigorous method of study that centers on biblical exegesis in conversation with the Reformation and the early church, with a view to how this material can be used for pastoral life in sermons, teaching, and debate. To speak anachronistically, it integrates exegetical, systematic, historical, and practical theology.

Prerequisites of Theological Study

In the first part, Gerhard deals with the prerequisites of theological study, such as a right intention, piety, and daily prayer. Here he shows the connection between the academic study of theology and Christian faith.[45] For Gerhard, "study" does not imply that only mental faculties are to be involved. The Latin word *studium* means more than English "studying." It also means "zeal, exertion, endeavor."[46] At the

[43] According to Robert Preus, Gerhard had the study programs of Andreas Hyperius (1511–1564) and David Chytraeus (1531–1600) in mind as he was setting forth his *Method.* While he was not wholly original in setting forth the *Method*, he was indeed influential on those who read him. Robert D. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, vol. 1 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), 140; and Johann Anselm Steiger, "The Development of the Reformation Legacy: Hermeneutics and Interpretation of the Sacred Scripture in the Age of Orthodoxy," in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*, ed. Magne Sæbø, vol. 2, *From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 723.

[44] Johann Gerhard, *Methodus Studii Theologici: Publicis Praelectionibus in Academia Jenensi Anno 1617. Exposita* (Jena: Tobiae Steinmanni, 1620); and Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*. Walch writes about this book, "[Est] liber perspicue, adcurate ac prudenter scriptus ac quamuis non talem rerum adparatum praeferat, qualem nonnulla recentiora huiusmodi scripta complectuntur; solida tamen ac salutaria consilia dat cultoribus theologiae, auctorque eos, qui ante eum in argumento hoc versati sunt, longe superat. Sequitur Lutherum et ad studium diuinioris doctrinae, recte instituendum, requirit orationem, meditationem et tentationem." Walch, *Bibliotheca theologica selecta*, 1:5–6.

[45] See Nieden, *Die Erfindung des Theologen*.

[46] Charlton Thomas Lewis and Charles Short, eds., *A Latin Dictionary Founded on Andrews' Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), s.v. "studium" I.

beginning of the *Method* Gerhard discusses prayer and a godly, Christian life as part of this theological formation, and at the end he discusses *tentatio* ("testing"), which means two things: experiencing the truth of this theology personally, and suffering the testing of the devil. Thus, "study" refers to the formation of the whole person of the Christian, not just the mind.

Pre-Theological Studies

In the second part, he deals with the pre-theological studies (what we might call pre-seminary education), including Hebrew and Greek.[47] It was assumed that students already knew Latin, since Gerhard's book was written in Latin. Here we also see how Gerhard regarded philosophy.[48] Gerhard saw many parts of philosophy as useful for the study of theology, though God's revelation in Holy Scripture must always remain the master; philosophy is not allowed to undermine the revelation. Gerhard favored retaining the study of philosophy for theologians not simply because of its use by opponents, such as Calvinists.[49] Rather, for Gerhard "philosophy" includes a number of different fields of knowledge. As a whole, philosophy sharpens one's mind. The "real" parts of philosophy, such as astronomy, geography, physiology, and classical psychology, are useful—even necessary—to explain many biblical terms. The "instrumental" parts, such as logic and rhetoric, help a theologian to be clear in teaching.[50] Aristotelian metaphysics, on the other hand, is useless for theology. In general, Gerhard cautions against misusing philosophy, but his praise of it is due not just to its use by his opponents. He saw philosophy as being in service to God's revelation, not reigning over it. This allowed him to view it as useful.[51]

Personal Bible Study

In the third part, Gerhard deals with the course of theological study itself, which was projected to last five years, though Gerhard recognized that not all students would be able to progress through the entire course of studies.[52] With regard to the study of Scripture, Gerhard advised a twofold approach: cursory and accurate

[47] Donald Meyer, "John Gerhard on Philosophy in Theology," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 27 (September 1956): 721–724.

[48] See Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 1:122–126; and Meyer, "John Gerhard on Philosophy in Theology," 721–724.

[49] Cf. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 1:126.

[50] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 162–179.

[51] Cf. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 1:122, 130–131.

[52] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 180; Steiger, "The Development of the Reformation Legacy," 705; and Walch, *Bibliotheca theologica selecta*, 1:5–6.

reading.[53] With the cursory reading, one would read the Bible in the vernacular, two chapters of "doctrinal books" in the morning and two chapters of "historical books" in the evening. While reading, the student should write the theme of each chapter at the top of the page in his Bible, such as "creation" for Genesis 1.[54] Following this plan, the heavy thinking is done in the morning, and the lighter reading is done in the evening. The schedule allows around thirty days to be missed, and one could still finish reading the Bible in one year.

With the accurate, or painstaking, reading, the student is to read the Bible in the Greek and Hebrew, beginning with the New Testament Epistles, and he should read a trusted commentary on the original text alongside the Greek and Hebrew. In this manner of study, he might work through only a few verses per day. Gerhard says that for each chapter of the Bible, one should take notes on the following things: (1) the summary and scope of the chapter; (2) its general outline; (3) significant emphases of words or phrases (such as the definitions of unusual words or phrases); (4) the differing interpretations of ancient or recent teachers of the church (that is, a comparison of the most important translations of the Bible); (5) the resolutions of apparent contradictions; (6) significant doctrines and observations that are not obvious at first sight; and (7) solid sayings of the fathers.

By spending hours each day on this diligent reading of Scripture, and by copying and taking notes in their notebooks, pastoral candidates prepared for themselves a source of knowledge that would serve them throughout their ministries.

Reading Doctrinal Books

Gerhard next suggests studying and taking notes on doctrinal books. According to Gerhard, the student should first read a book of doctrine for beginners, such as Chemnitz's *Enchiridion*. After the principal "definitions and scriptural testimonies connected with them" have been memorized, he is ready to move on to a precise treatment of theological commonplaces. But this doctrine for beginners is important, since it gives the student the theological vocabulary and categories that will allow him to gather and organize theological knowledge in the future. Gerhard says, "For that can be one's greatest aid in the examinations, extemporaneous discourses, disputations, and sermons, and all throughout one's life—lest one wander into

[53] For the following, see Gerhard, *On Interpreting Sacred Scripture and Method of Theological Study*, 180–187; and Martin H. Jung, "'Est omnino sapientia donum Dei': spirituelle Aspekte des Theologiestudiums bei Melanchthon, Gerhard und Francke," in *Dona Melanchthoniana*, 2nd ed., ed. Johanna Loehr (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2005), 180–181.

[54] For an example of chapter summaries for the whole Bible, see Benjamin T. G. Mayes, "Mayes Bible Chapter Summaries," *Lutheran Orthodoxy* (blog), June 10, 2019, https://lutheranorthodoxy.blogspot.com/2019/06/mayes-bible-chapter-summaries.html.

unknown forests, so to speak, but rather he should know how to store everything away in its proper spot like a busy bee."[55]

When the student is ready to study theology (theological commonplaces) more deliberately, Gerhard recommends that he prepare a large blank book with sections of blank pages reserved for each article of faith and all its parts. Gerhard recommends following certain writers in order to organize one's theology notebook: Matthias Hafenreffer (1561–1619), Balthasar Mentzer (1565–1627), or Gerhard's colleague Johann Himmel. This listing of the parts of each doctrine helps the student to think clearly and to gather notes methodically for the rest of his life.[56]

At the end of his *Method*, Gerhard recommends that the fifth-year student begin to read church history, Luther's works, and the early church fathers. Gerhard's section on Luther's writings is quite short, only two pages in our English translation. He encourages students to begin not with the early Luther, to whom so much twentieth- and twenty-first-century attention has been directed, but with Luther's German writings from the time of the Augsburg Confession (1530) until his death. Only then should they go back to read the earlier writings. The same method can be seen regarding his Latin writings; students should start with the Genesis lectures (1535–1545) and only then read the other Latin writings of Luther.[57] The section on how to read the medieval scholastics is eight pages in English. Here Gerhard mostly just exposes their errors. The scholastics can be useful polemically, since many arguments against contemporary Roman Catholic doctrines can be found in them. Students are encouraged to read only Lombard's *Sentences*, Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, and the commentaries of Bonaventure and Biel on the *Sentences*.[58]

Gerhard's recommendations on reading the early church fathers are comparatively long, comprising nineteen pages in the English translation. Gerhard goes into detail to make clear what the fathers are not: norms of truth in the church. But besides this negative approach to the fathers, Gerhard also has a very positive approach. Constructively for Protestant theology, Gerhard recognizes that without the writings of the fathers, many exegetical insights would be lost. Thus, one cannot simply replace the fathers with an appeal to *sola Scriptura.* The fathers are irreplaceable. Without the fathers, the church's knowledge of Scripture would be decreased.

[55] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 188.

[56] For a different proposal on organizing analog commonplace books, see Benjamin T. G. Mayes, "How to Organize Analog Commonplace Books for Theology or Anything Else," *Lutheran Orthodoxy* (blog), May 14, 2023, http://lutheranorthodoxy.blogspot.com/2023/05/how-to-organize-analog-commonplace.html. For a digital implementation, see Joshua Hayes, "How to Organize Digital Commonplace Notes for Theology or Anything Else," *Lutheran Orthodoxy* (blog), May 15, 2023, http://lutheranorthodoxy.blogspot.com/2023/05/how-to-organize-digital-commonplace.html.

[57] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 211–212.

[58] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 230–238.

The fathers also play an important role in polemics for Gerhard. They were, after all, the common patrimony of the divided confessions, and an appeal to their writings was important and effective among discussion partners who wanted to be the successors of those revered fathers. Whatever criticism Gerhard had toward the fathers, he criticized as one who stood within that very Christian tradition. He criticized not all that the fathers wrote but only some; he criticized not from the outside but from the inside; he criticized not on the basis of subjective whim or the spirit of the age but on the basis of Holy Scripture. His theology continued to be formed intensely by the fathers, since the tradition of the ancient church was not just his history but also a part of his own present.[59]

Disputations

Gerhard valued disputations greatly. "The exercises of the school disputations have great advantage and advance students' studies in no small way. . . . They cause one to search for truth and its confirmation."[60] They help to free the mind from doubts. They train future pastors to be able to "convict those who contradict" (Titus 1:9; cf. 2 Tim 3:16). They help a student to be able to "give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Pet 3:15). "Moreover, these kinds of disputations were initiated and consecrated by Christ who, after turning twelve years old, 'sat in the midst of the teachers, hearing and questioning them' (Luke 2:[46]), and they have been repeated by continual use in the church among the piously learned."[61]

Yet most of Gerhard's teaching about disputations are rules that aim at keeping the disputations on track. "Sophistic argumentation unbecoming of theological order should be banished." "There should be no outbursts, taunts, or curses." "Beware of pointless logomachies and word fights." "Keep from interrupting one another." "The disputation should be about questions that are good to know, necessary to understand, and contained in the Holy Scriptures."[62] Such rules and warnings seem to be directed against the kinds of debates that many of us know: undisciplined, filled with personal attacks and often with irrelevant arguments. Gerhard was aware of the

[59] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 212–230; and Benjamin T. G. Mayes, "*Lumina, Non Numina*: Patristic Authority According to Lutheran Arch-Theologian Johann Gerhard," in *Church and School in Early Modern Protestantism: Studies in Honor of Richard A. Muller on the Maturation of a Theological Tradition*, ed. Jordan Ballor, David Sytsma, and Jason Zuidema (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 457–470.

[60] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 191.

[61] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 192.

[62] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 193.

abuses of the practice but still defended the usefulness of disputations, so long as they were conducted appropriately.

Preaching

Gerhard's advice on preaching in the *Method* has attracted attention in English.[63] His advice on applying Scripture to hearers in terms of teaching, reproof, training, correction, and consolation based on 2 Timothy 3:16 and Romans 15:4 is surely worthy of our attention. But beyond that, it is significant that for Gerhard, instruction in preaching does not begin until the fourth year of theological study. "Since those who rush into preaching before they have a firm grasp of heavenly doctrine and tried judgment usually run afoul, we have wanted to defer practicing church homilies until the fourth year of studies. Nevertheless we will not prescribe anything for those who, aided by a uniquely excellent talent or compelled by family needs, aspire to reach this goal and practice of theological study more quickly."[64]

Gerhard's concern makes sense to professors such as myself who hear student field workers preach from time to time. Not every student is ready in his first year to take homiletics. He really needs to achieve the competency of thorough biblical knowledge and clear theological thinking before he tries to preach. That is, he needs to have something to preach before he can preach it. Gerhard saw this and treated the learning of preaching in a way that recognizes varying competencies among students.

III. Pastoral Formation According to Johann Gerhard's Church Order

So, with the theological curriculum of the University of Jena and Gerhard's *Method of Theological Study*, a full and complete way of pastoral formation has been set forth. But what has not yet been discussed is assessment. How can the church be sure that this or that man is qualified to begin the pastoral ministry? For this, Gerhard's church order shows us how seriously Orthodox Lutherans took theological examinations within the call process.

[63] Benjamin T. G. Mayes, "The Useful Applications of Scripture in Lutheran Orthodoxy: An Aid to Contemporary Preaching and Exegesis," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 83, no. 1–2 (January/April 2019): 111–135; Adam C. Koontz, "Speak as the Oracles of God: Reinhold Pieper's Classical Lutheran Homiletic," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 85, no. 1 (January 2021): 23–36. Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 201–210.

[64] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 201.

Gerhard's Church Order

On June 5, 1606, Gerhard was called to be pastor and superintendent of Heldburg by Duke Johann Casimir of Coburg.[65] Four years later, in December 1610, he had made his report of an inspection of the churches and schools of Heldburg and had come to conclusions about how they needed to be improved.[66] Having successfully carried out this task, he was given the duty of conducting a general inspection of all of Johann Casimir's lands in Thuringia and Franconia in 1613.[67] By 1615, Gerhard had become general superintendent (the functional equivalent of a bishop) in Coburg and had written a church ordinance (or a "church order"), the "Church Ordinance of Johann Casimir," which was later published in 1626.[68] This church ordinance included chapters on many of the same topics that appeared in Gerhard's commonplace *On the Ecclesiastical Ministry*, such as the call, examination, ordination, investiture, and pastoral duties.

A church ordinance in early Lutheranism was both more and less than what we have in the *Handbook* of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). It was more in that it usually included a detailed statement of faith to which all the ministers had to adhere. This was the "body of doctrine." In Gerhard's church ordinance, instead of a body of doctrine, he explains that God's word is the only rule of doctrine and preaching, he explains which are the symbolical books of our church, and he explains how the writings of the church fathers are to be regarded. Then, Gerhard's church ordinance has chapters on the call, examination, ordination, investiture (i.e., installation), preaching, catechization, ceremonies, Confession and Absolution, Holy Communion, Baptism, marriage, visiting the sick, funerals, pastoral ethics, pastoral remuneration, duties of the laity, church and school visitation, the office of church superintendents, excommunication, church discipline, alms, lay leaders, hospitals, sacristans, and marriage cases. Then, in Latin, there are school regulations. Gerhard was not original in this. He basically took two existing church ordinances and edited them for the situation in Coburg. Of these two church ordinances, the

[65] Georg Berbig, *D. Johann Gerhards Visitationswerk in Thüringen und Franken* (Gotha: Th. Herm. Wechsung, 1896), 5.

[66] His report of the visitation is printed in Berbig, *D. Johann Gerhards Visitationswerk in Thüringen und Franken*, 32–36.

[67] Berbig, *D. Johann Gerhards Visitationswerk in Thüringen und Franken*, 5–6.

[68] Honecker, *Cura religionis Magistratus Christiani*, 43; and Johann Gerhard and Johann Casimir of Sachsen-Coburg, *Ordnung Wie Es in Deß Durchleuchtigen Hochgebornen Fürsten Und Herrn Herrn Johann Casimir . . . Fürstenthumb Und Landen . . . in Den Kirchen, Mit Lehr, Ceremonien, Visitationen Und Was Solchen Mehr Anhängig, Dann Im Fürstlichen Consistorio, Mit Denen Verbotenen Gradibus in Ehesachen Und Sonsten, Auch Im Fürstlichen Gymnasio, so Wol Land: Und Particular Schulen, Gehalten Werden Solle* (Coburg: Forckel, 1626).

one he quotes most often, both in his own church ordinance and in his *Theological Commonplaces*, is the 1580 church ordinance of Elector August of Saxony.[69]

In Lutheran Germany, churches were governed by a board of control called a "consistory," which consisted of theologians and lawyers appointed by the Christian ruler to deal with oversight of the churches in the realm. The cases it decided dealt with marriage; disputes over church property; supervision of life, doctrine, and conduct of pastors; protecting pastors from injustice; and the exercise of the major ban (excommunication).[70] This placement of church matters under consistories was widely adopted in all Evangelical territories in Germany.[71] The leading clergyman of the consistory was called a "superintendent." The model of church government by superintendent and consistory resembles the model of a bishop with his cathedral chapter. It is what the Lutherans were used to coming out of the Middle Ages.

Pastoral Formation Verified by the Call Process and Visitation

The call process in Gerhard's district, Coburg, was handled mainly by the consistory and the superintendent. Candidates were not permitted to request a particular parish, much less to give bribes to obtain it. (The fact that this prohibition had to be mentioned means that it must have been regarded as a danger, and may have happened.) The call process itself ran something like this. Those who have the right of patronage in a vacant parish should nominate suitable persons to the consistory. This has to happen so that the consistory can examine the candidate in person before he gives a trial sermon before the patron (and perhaps also before the congregation). If the candidates are found qualified—pure in doctrine and upright in life, testified by references—then they are presented to the congregation.[72]

Theology students normally are not allowed to take over pastorates right away. First they must serve as schoolteachers or as assistant pastors. This is so that they can learn the rituals of the church (*ritus ecclesiae*). With testimonies from their superintendents and pastors, students could later be called to sole pastorates or as senior pastors. Yet before such calls, they would need to be examined again. This

[69] Steiger, "Kirchenordnung, Visitation und Alltag: Johann Gerhard (1582–1637) als Visitator und kirchenordnender Theologe," 229.

[70] See August, Elector of Saxony, "Des durchlauchtigsten, hochgebornen fürsten und herrn, herrn Augusti, herzogen u. s. w. Vorordenung und befehl, was sich alle und jede in seiner churfürstlichen g. erblanden und incorporirten stiften underthanen auf die negst gehaltenen zwo visitationes anno 1574 und 1575, und dann anno 1577 bis auf ferneren befehlich und vorbesserung vorhalten sollen," in *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Emil Sehling, vol. 1.1 (Leipzig: Reisland, 1902), 200.

[71] Otto Friedrich, "Kirchenverfassung B. Evangelische Kirche," in *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon: Kirchlich-theologisches Handwörterbuch*, ed. Heinz Brunotte and Otto Weber, vol. 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956), 814.

[72] Gerhard and Casimir, *Ordnung*, 128–131.

examination consisted of a trial sermon and an inspection of their progress in learning and reading. The consistory carries out this examination and keeps records in a book of men waiting for a call. Particularly gifted men, equipped for preaching and well acquainted with the rituals of the church, may skip the diaconate period. The decision on this lies with the consistory. Not only is this examination required before the first call, but it is required also at subsequent calls to other parishes.[73]

There was a specified list of points that the consistory had to examine. Is the candidate's doctrine pure? Is he diligent in studying Scripture and reading other books? What kind of voice does he have? What is his health status? Does he lead a morally upright life? How old is he? And has he subscribed the Book of Concord?[74]

The trial sermon was also necessary. Here the consistory would pick a text, and the man being examined would have to give a short sermon on it. The consistory was supposed to pay attention not just to his oratory but also to his pronunciation and gestures. If the examination was a failure but the candidate was young and there was hope that he would improve, he was to be sent back to the academy for further study. (This indicates, again, that the length of formal seminary formation was variable, based on the competency of the individual man.)

Then there is a trial sermon before the congregation. The superintendent presents the candidate to the congregation, the candidate preaches, and afterward the superintendent asks the parishioners if they will have him.[75] The common people as a whole did not have a choice between several candidates, as in an American election. One candidate was put before the congregation, and after listening to him, they could accept him or refuse him.

The congregation has the right to refuse a proposed new pastor, but they have to give reasons. If the reasons are trivial, from misunderstanding or ignorance, their refusal can be overruled by the consistory. In this case, the congregation would be instructed by the superintendent before the new pastor begins. Why would the congregation's wishes not be followed in this case? Because, according to Gerhard's church order, it is not edifying to let a congregation continue in error, ignorance, or obstinacy.[76]

After the candidate has been cleared by the consistory and accepted by the laity, he still has to receive confirmation by the prince in Coburg. So, the candidate travels to Coburg and there preaches yet another trial sermon. After being given approval by the prince, ordination and installation follows.[77]

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[73] Gerhard and Casimir, *Ordnung*, 131–132.
[74] Gerhard and Casimir, *Ordnung*, 132–139.
[75] Gerhard and Casimir, *Ordnung*, 139.
[76] Gerhard and Casimir, *Ordnung*, 128–131.
[77] Gerhard and Casimir, *Ordnung*, 139.

Gerhard's church ordinance states also that repeated examination was required for preachers who had been serving for fewer than eight years, even though they had already been ordained. This would have to take place if their progress in study was not already known by the consistory.[78]

In Gerhard's church order it was also expected that periodic inspections (or visitations) would take place, conducted by the representatives of the superintendent and consistory, and at these inspections, one of the things investigated was the extent to which pastors had continued to study the Bible and theology. Besides this, the representatives investigated the pastors' sermons and diligence in carrying out their pastoral duties. Among the questions to be asked, the ministers of the church were asked about their loyalty to the Book of Concord, whether they had been reading the Bible through twice each year, and whether they had also been reading the symbolical books and Luther's works. They were asked which of the ancient and modern Bible commentators they had been using and whether they knew Greek and Hebrew. At each visitation, a book of the Bible and one or two articles of doctrine were assigned to the pastor, and he would be examined on them at the next visitation.[79] This ensured that a lazy pastor would continue studying and, most importantly, would study the things that would be most helpful to his people in defending and edifying their faith.

What can we learn from the church order of Johann Gerhard? The call process included a lot of preaching. People wanted to make sure that every pastoral candidate could preach well before he became a pastor. There were also many checks and controls on the purity of doctrine, as well as a clear program of continuing education and recertification. Pastors did not have to take classes, but each pastor had to demonstrate progress in his theological study. There were no requirements for any particular academic degree.

Thus we have seen that formal pastoral formation included curriculum, a method for personal study, and a manner of assessment. Working together, early modern Lutheran churches did the best they could in producing able ministers of the New Testament, who would be "complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:17).

[78] Gerhard and Casimir, *Ordnung*, 140.
[79] Gerhard and Casimir, *Ordnung*, 237–239.

IV. Conclusions and Applications

Our study of pastoral formation according to Johann Gerhard has brought forth results that may surprise some people. Some of the approaches to pastoral formation may be of great value to us today. But first, what does the seventeenth-century pastoral formation lack?

Perhaps the liturgical life and practice of worship was not covered at the universities in a consistent way. According to Gerhard's church order, this aspect of formation was, nevertheless, required of new pastors. Candidates lacking familiarity with the church's liturgical rites would need to serve as assistant pastors or schoolteachers at first, until they had learned the rites. The music of Lutheran worship was taught by requiring students to participate in worship and liturgical choirs.[80]

Mainly, practical-pastoral theology seems to have been limited to preaching advice and exercises. How would candidates learn to teach the catechism, do evangelism, or provide individual pastoral care? Such subjects were not taught at Jena, apparently, yet candidates for the ministry were supposed to have competency in some of these areas. Perhaps it was hoped that students would learn these skills under the tutelage of senior pastors out in the parishes. It is also possible that aspects of individual pastoral care and counseling were taught in exegesis.[81]

While there might be a plethora of valuable pastoral skills that a pastor should have, the old Lutheran pastoral formation instead aimed at making a young man competent in the Bible, doctrine, and self-directed learning. Apparently everything else could be learned somewhere else. The pastors were taught to be self-learners.

By and large, the ideal of a mainly biblical curriculum was followed in the lectures and disputations at Jena and other Lutheran universities. Yet side-by-side was the study of dogmatics, including the Book of Concord, and exegesis was conducted in such a way as to show that our dogma is biblical. One might say that nearly all the curriculum was dogmatic exegesis. In my humble opinion, this is desirable for our day and age. Our exegetes need to be at home in our dogmatics and should show our future pastors how and why every point of our doctrine is not just "what we as Lutherans believe" but exactly what God gave to us through the apostles and prophets. And, the other way around, our teachers of systematic theology need to see themselves as biblical theologians, should make sure to refrain from speculation, and should bind themselves to what Scripture actually says. As for church history,

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[80] Paul Graff, *Geschichte der Auflösung der alten gottesdienstlichen Formen in der Evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1937), 1:18–23.

[81] E.g., Friedrich Balduin, *Commentarius In Omnes Epistolas Beati Apostoli Pauli* (Frankfurt am Main: Mevius, 1654); and Friedrich Balduin, *Apostolic Agenda: The Epistles of the Holy Apostle Paul to Titus and Philemon*, trans. Eric G. Phillips and James L. Langebartels (Fort Wayne, IN: Emmanuel Press, 2020).

much of this could be put in a book and assigned as directed reading. In my experience, the best pastoral formation that happens in historical theology classes is when students are confronted with *theological* texts from the past and then discuss the *doctrine* and use of *Scripture*.

According to Gerhard and all the early Lutherans, pastors and theology students must develop a daily discipline of reading and methodical note-taking.[82] This, too, is desirable for pastoral formation today. Nowadays, there are more distractions than ever. Just as daily instrument practice is necessary for a professional musician, so also daily practice in focused reading, note-taking, and writing is necessary for a pastor. Could our curricula make more use of directed readings and less use of classes? Such directed readings could be assessed by means of a student's portfolio, in which he demonstrates that he has taken good, methodical notes on his readings, which he can then use throughout his ministry.

Gerhard's method of pastoral formation looks to me like competency-based pastoral formation. For being a pastor, no particular degree was required; no particular classes had to be taken. What was required was a thorough knowledge of the Bible and theology, an excellent ability to preach and teach, and piety. Formal assessment seems to have been mostly lacking. There was some assessment of students in early Lutheranism, though not as much as in a typical North American educational institution. Students were evaluated only if they wanted to be tested for a degree, or as part of their rigorous theological interview as part of the call process. A benefit of this method is that it might allow students the time they need to immerse themselves in reading and thinking during their years of study. A disadvantage is that a student might study for years and then, at the end, fail to pass his exams either for a degree or for pastoral competency. Our current system of classes with assessment every quarter (or semester) avoids such situations.

There was also a kind of accreditation. The seventeenth-century Lutheran universities were funded by the state, and therefore representatives of the state came to the universities from time to time to conduct inspections. Sometimes inspectors found that university statutes were not being followed. There always has to be accountability and quality control in some way or the other, and early modern Lutherans knew this too. But for the pastors, an *accredited* degree was not necessary. A man's actual theological knowledge, confession of faith, and ability to preach well were more important than where he studied or for how long.

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[82] Nieden noticed this with regard to sixteenth-century Lutheran theological study methods in general. Marcel Nieden, "Rationes studii theologici: Über den bildungsgeschichtlichen Quellenwert der Anweisungen zum Theologiestudium," in *Bildung und Konfession: Theologenausbildung im Zeitalter der Konfessionalisierung*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis and Markus Wriedt (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 222–225.

It is also interesting to me that the theology faculties were all small: three or four regular professors plus some adjuncts. There is no need for us in the LCMS to be ashamed of the size of our seminaries. Historically considered, our seminary faculties are large.

Some aspects of the seventeenth-century German Lutheran pastoral formation may seem appealing to busy twenty-first-century pastors and professors, but different is not necessarily better. For example, being able to lecture in detail straight through a book of the Bible (as Luther did, lecturing on Genesis from 1535 to 1545), or on a theological topic, or on a part of the Book of Concord, could lead to more good books. And if the same thing has to be said to students year after year in classes, why is this not instead turned into an article or book and simply assigned as reading? On the other hand, perhaps a continuous lecture over the course of years would be boring and not useful in giving a consistent pastoral formation to all students.

So, rather than advocating wholesale adoption of the early Lutheran pastoral formation process, the ideas I find most compelling for our consideration at the present day are the following. First, we should consider rigorous competency-based pastoral formation, with varying *durations* of seminary study tailored to the individual student's abilities and prior knowledge and experience. Second, we should consider more directed reading of the Bible (cursory and accurate/painstaking). Students should be able to present an extensive portfolio of their well-arranged notes, which will serve them in their ministries. Third, seminar-format classes should sometimes use the disputation model. Somehow or the other, recovering the practice of disputation could be of great benefit. Fourth, as Gerhard says, "He who prays diligently has completed half of his studies."[83] If this is true, then maybe prayer should be made a part of the *curriculum*. For example, perhaps the course load could be reduced and students could be taught to meditate on Scripture and then be expected to do it every day, recording their insights in their well-organized exegetical and theological notes.

In a world where computer software (like ChatGPT or Bing) can generate halfway decent prose on any subject, including Lutheran theology, some of our prior practices need to change. If a chatbot can spit out bland but correct prose on theological topics, then hastily graded writing assignments are a worthless learning activity. Instead, the most valuable activities will be those in which students are guided to create something useful for their future preaching and ministering, and in which the students become deeper thinkers and more thoroughly biblical and faithful. Finally, after significant learning, guiding their development as preachers and teachers will be most important.

[83] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 143.

Faithfulness in committing our faith "to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2) is of the utmost importance. It is the duty of the whole church, but especially of the ministry, and most especially of church leaders and called theology professors. Learning from our Lutheran history on pastoral formation can give us some tips and new approaches, which, while old, may be extremely timely here and now.

Delve into Isaiah 1–12

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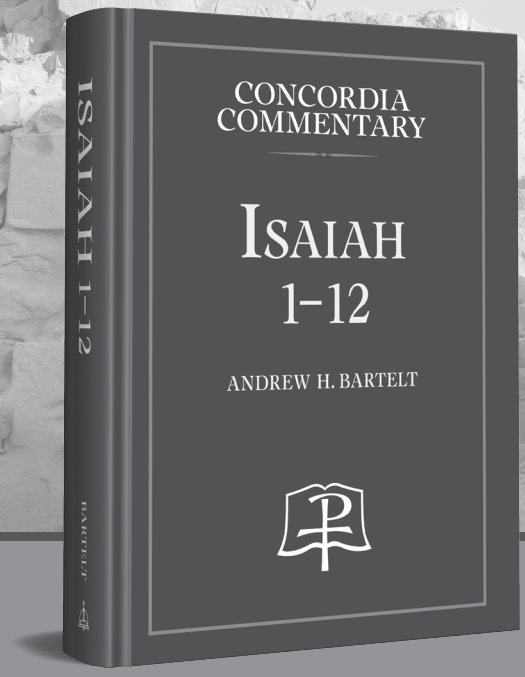

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Philosophy and Theology in the Early Philipp Melanchthon[1]

Jon S. Bruss

What position does philosophy hold in relation to Lutheran theology? Students of Lutheran dogmatics might be quick to point out that despite the plethora of Latin terms that pepper our systematic theology, those quasi-philosophical terms like the oxymoronic and therefore philosophically untenable phrase *modus praesentiae illocalis* ("the non-local mode of 'being there'") are often the invention of orthodox Lutheran scholastics (and others) working out a language that as closely as possible maps over biblical data points without making any philosophical claim whatsoever. And they would be correct in saying so. They might be just as quick to mention that when the formulators distinguished between *substantia* and *accidens* (FC Ep I 23), two philosophical terms with a long history in metaphysics, they were simply setting up camp on the philosophical turf staked out by Flacius so as to argue quite literally on his own terms. And they would be correct in saying so. They might be equally ready to point to Luther's strong anti-philosophical works in the early 1520s. And

[1] Abbreviations used in this article:

AE	*Luther's Works, American Edition*. Vols. 1–30, edited by Jaroslav Pelikan, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1976; vols. 31–55, edited by Helmut Lehmann, Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–1986; vols. 56–82, edited by Christopher Boyd Brown and Benjamin T. G. Mayes, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009–.
St.A.	Robert Stupperich et al., eds. *Melanchthons Werke in Auswahl [Studienausgabe]*. 7 vols. in 9. Gütersloh: Mohn/Bertelsmann, 1951–.
PL	Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Latina*. 221 vols. Paris: Migne, 1841–1865.
CR	*Corpus Reformatorum*. Vols. 1–28, *Philippi Melanchthonis opera quae supersunt omnia*, edited by Karl Gottlieb Brettschneider and Heinrich Ernst Bindseil. Halle: Schwetschke, 1834–1860.
WA	*D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe [Schriften]*. 73 vols. Weimar: Böhlau, 1883–2009.
Salazar	Philip Melanchthon. *Orations on Philosophy and Education*. Edited by Sachiko Kusukawa. Translated by Christine F. Salazar. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999.
Parker	Philip Melanchthon. *Paul's Letter to the Colossians*. Translated by D. C. Parker. Sheffield: Almond, 1989.
Preus	Philip Melanchthon. *Commonplaces: Loci Communes 1521*. Translated by Christian Preus. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014.

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they would be correct in doing so as well.[2] All these points would seem to lead to one conclusion: The handmaiden has been relieved of her duty by the queen; philosophy has been entirely ejected from Lutheran theology. This conclusion may, in fact, well represent the current popular consensus. To test this conclusion this article returns to the very inception of the Lutheran tradition and examines the oeuvre of the early Philipp Melanchthon.

The newly minted Tübingen master of arts was called to the University of Wittenberg as a professor of Greek on the philosophical faculty—the faculty of arts—in 1518. His job: to spearhead the humanistic reform of that faculty. In the reformatory environment of Wittenberg he quickly became interested in theology, earned the bachelor of divinity in 1519,[3] and was given a joint appointment to the faculties of the arts and theology. The first "systematic theology" of what would become the church of the Augsburg Confession, Melanchthon's *Loci Communes*, appeared in 1521. It was this inter-faculty cross-germination embodied in the person of Philipp Melanchthon along with the *ad fontes* orientation of both the Wittenberg Reformation and the Northern European Renaissance that proved to be so fruitful for him—and for the Evangelical Lutheran church—in thinking through the relationship between philosophy and theology, if there was to be any at all.

Indeed, initially it seemed there might be none whatsoever. For concomitantly with his burgeoning interest in theology Melanchthon was swept up into the anti-philosophical mood of Luther. In the 1517 *Disputation against Scholastic Theology* the latter had half sunk a nail in philosophy's coffin by stating, "It is an error to say that one does not become a theologian without Aristotle."[4] For Melanchthon, the anti-philosophical moment of the early Wittenberg Reformation perhaps came to a head for him just over a year later as a witness of the mash-up at the 1519 Leipzig Debate, where he saw firsthand the clash between the biblical theology of Luther and the Aristotle-inflected theology of Johann Eck. In an open letter to Oecolampadius on the Leipzig Debate he exasperatedly cried out, "How great a distance there is

[2] Even if in his maturity Luther's position changed significantly. See Dan Lioy and Jordan Cooper, "The Use of Greek Philosophy in Early Lutheranism," *Conspectus: The Journal of the South African Theological Seminary* 26, no. 1 (2018): 1–26.

[3] Karl Gottlieb Brettschneider, "Annales Vitae Philippi Melanthonis," in *CR* 1:cxlix.

[4] In WA 1:226 (= AE 31:12). All translations are the author's own. See also Luther's *Heidelberg Disputation* (1518), in WA 1:353–374 (= AE 31:35–70). And see his *Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation* (1520), in WA 6:457–458 (= AE 44:200–201): In *On the Soul* Aristotle taught "things of which he had not the slightest perception;" his *Ethics* is "directly contrary to God's will and Christian virtues" (WA 6:458 [= AE 44:201]); "the universities [are], as at present ordered, but, as the book of Maccabees says, 'schools of "Greek fashion" and "heathenish manners"' [2 Macc 4:12–13] . . . where . . . the blind heathen teacher, Aristotle, rules even further than Christ" (WA 6:457 [= AE 44:200]). Still, Luther can accept Aristotle's *Logic*, *Rhetoric*, and *Poetics*, along with Cicero's *Rhetoric*, though in every case without the scholastic commentaries (WA 6:458 [= AE 44:201]).

between the ancient theology—the one that belongs to Christ—and the novel and Aristotelian one."[5]

Distance, yes. But a far cry from what was at least *heard* as the wholesale rejection of Aristotle and philosophy by the early Luther.[6] In fact, Melanchthon's early criticism of philosophy is very much a reflection of his humanist *ad fontes* orientation. In the learned, polished Latin of his inaugural address at Wittenberg in 1518, "De Corrigendis Adolescentiae Studiis" (On rectifying the studies of the youth), the problem with theology—even with Aristotle himself—was not so much Aristotle as his inept scholastic heirs. The latter worked from poor Latin translations of the Greek text, and study of Aristotle was replaced by the study of comments upon comments upon comments.[7] Nor was the faculty whom he addressed in "De Corrigendis" spared from Melanchthon's critique—no choir-preacher, he—for when Philipp arrived in Wittenberg in 1518, philosophy was taught in the attenuated manner he outlined in "De Corrigendis." Three competing schools of Aristotle interpretation were, confusingly, represented on the one faculty—the ways (*viae*) of Thomas, Scotus, and Gregory of Rimini.[8] With that speech began a continuous reform of the philosophical faculty. The lectures according to the three *viae* were at first gradually reduced and ultimately done away with, to be replaced by lectures on Aristotle's *Organon.* By 1523 and the issuance of a new *Studienordnung*, even the lectures on the *Organon* were eliminated in deference to the study of "the three languages" (*trium linguarum studium*—Hebrew, Greek, and Latin), rhetoric, classical literary authors, and Pliny's *Natural History*.[9] Three years later there arrived another—for our pursuit important—change. The *Studienordnung* for the philosophical faculty of January 10, 1526, maintained the curriculum in roughly the same form, though with the important addition of dialectic.[10] This *Ordnung* remained in place until 1545, when, once again under Melanchthon's leadership, a new curriculum for the philosophical

[5] "inter veterem et Christi theologiam ac noviciam et Aristotelicam quantum intersit." Philipp Melanchthon to Johannes Oecolampadius, July 21, 1519, in *CR* 1:88 (no. 43).

[6] Luther's venom toward Aristotle seems to be at least partly, if not mainly, what instigated the student rebellion against the arts faculty in the early 1520s. See below, n. 59.

[7] Philipp Melanchthon, "De Corrigendis Adolescentiae Studiis," in *CR* 11:15–25; St.A. 3:30–42. Available in English in Ralph Keen, trans., *A Melanchthon Reader* (New York: Lang, 1988), 47–57.

[8] Heinz Scheible, "Die Philosophische Fakultät der Universität Wittenberg von der Gründung bis zur Vertreibung der Philippisten," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 98 (2007): 12–13; on the *viae*, see also Heiko Oberman, "*Via Antiqua* and *Via Moderna*: Late Medieval Prolegomena to Early Reformation Thought," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 48 (1987): 23–40.

[9] Scheible, "Philosophische Fakultät," 23–29.

[10] Scheible, "Philosophische Fakultät," 31.

faculty was adopted. This time Aristotle is specifically mentioned: his *Physics* and *Ethics* are to serve as the basis for courses in those areas.[11]

These changes seem to map over what was happening in the intellectual world of Philipp: for from 1519 through 1526 or 1527 he was working gradually through a doctrine of philosophy and theology. In the prefatory letter to his 1521 *Loci Communes* to Tilemann Plettener, Philipp decries "Aristotelian sophistries" (*Aristotelicae argutiae*).[12] Here Philipp of course has in mind much the same sentiment as he communicated to Oecolampadius in 1519—the wide gulf between biblical theology and Aristotle-inflected theology.[13] But another implicit comparison adumbrates his sense of how the scholastics "have fallen into delirium" (*hallucinati sint*): their infatuation with Aristotle has led them to take their eye off the ball. Thus, unlike the prodigious output of the scholastic theologians, prodigious because its development relied upon Aristotle, Melanchthon's treatment of theology will (a) be sparing and brief; (b) do nothing more than introduce a list of topics with brief adumbration; and, most importantly, (c) *serve as a foundation for reading and understanding the Scriptures*. Melanchthon's purpose in the *Loci Communes* is clear: his little tome should provide its reader with an entrée into the Scriptures. Even the secondary literature of the Wittenberg Reformation is oriented *ad fontes*. Indeed, "whoever seeks the shape of Christianity elsewhere than from Scripture in its canonical role is deceived" (Fallitur quisquis aliunde christianismi formam petit, quam e scriptura Canonica).[14] What governs theology is the Holy Scriptures, not the dictates of philosophy.

This notion gets an airing in the first locus of the *Loci Communes*, "De Hominis Viribus Adeoque de Libero Arbitrio" (On the powers of man, including free choice).[15] Here, Melanchthon asserts that philosophy, integrated with theology, has twice over made a wreck of the biblical teaching. First, it was Platonism. Early on, in Philipp's account, Christian theology began to mix Platonism with Christian doctrine. This "brought in the . . . dangerous word 'reason' from the philosophy of Plato" (Additum est e Platonis philosophia vocabulum Rationis . . . perniciosum).[16]

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[11] Meanwhile, in the Lutheran reforms of the University of Tübingen undertaken by Melanchthon's friend Joachim Camerarius, Aristotle was awarded a much greater role. See Susan Mobley, "Making a University Lutheran: Philipp Melanchthon and the Reform of the University of Tübingen in the 1530s," *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* 21, no. 2 (Eastertide 2012): 41–45.

[12] Philipp Melanchthon, dedicatory letter to Tilemann Plettener, in *Loci Communes Rerum Theologicarum seu Hypotyposes Theologicae*, in *CR* 21:82 (= Preus, 20).

[13] Preus, 20n4.

[14] Melanchthon, *Loci Communes*, in *CR* 21:82–83 (= Preus, 20–21).

[15] Melanchthon, *Loci Communes*, in *CR* 21:86–97 (= Preus, 26–36).

[16] Melanchthon, *Loci Communes*, in *CR* 21:86 (= Preus, 26–27). On the humanistic element of this critique, see Adolf Sperl, *Melanchthon zwischen Humanismus und Reformation: Eine*

In the tripartite Platonic soul, reason outranks the spirit and the appetite. Knowledge of the Forms—that is, true knowledge—lies within the grasp of only the rational part of the soul. The philosophical task—here one may think of the Allegory of the Cave in Plato's *Republic*—is twofold: (a) to free the soul from its dependence upon appearances so that (b) the reason, having espied the Forms, might rule and govern the spirited and appetitive parts, which operate on the basis of opinion and sensory perception based upon appearance. Salvation, according to Plato, is thus predicated upon intellectual attainment, and there is no need for Christ; in Platonically modulated Christianity, salvation is a sort of gnosis.[17]

Second, somewhat simpler but related is Aristotle's distinction between the intellective part of the soul and the appetitive. Just as in Plato, the intellect has the ability to rule the appetites. When played out in the theological anthropology of medieval scholasticism, it became entirely permissible, in fact perhaps it was demanded, that it be within the power of the intellect to come to what the schoolmen called "unformed faith" (*fides informis*), derided by Melanchthon as "mere knowledge of the history" (*mera notitia historiae*) and no faith at all. In medieval theology, such *fides informis* "merited the first grace of justification . . . preeminently by the good work of believing God with his unformed faith."[18] This is the famous scholastic *facere quod in se est*: the one who gains a *notitia historiae* has done what

Untersuchung über den Wandel des Traditionsverständnisses bei Melanchthon und die damit zusammenhängenden Grundfragen seiner Theologie (München: Kaiser, 1959), 92, esp. n. 125.

[17] Eric Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005), 159–181.

[18] David C. Steinmetz, *Luther in Context* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1986), 37. To see this worked out in scholastic theology, see Helmut Feld, ed., *Wendelini Steinbach Opera exegetica quae supersunt omnia,* vol. 1, *Commentarium in epistolam S. Pauli ad Galatas* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1976), II.12.97.1–4, III.15.118.16–20, 16.131.6–10, 17.136.5–9, 21.176.13–21. See also Peter Lombard, the famous "Master of Sentences," *Sent*. III. d. 23, c. 4 (*PL* 192.805):

> What is it (a) to believe *in God* [*in deum*], or (b) to *believe God* [*deo*], or (c) to *believe God* [*deum*]? It is one thing to (a) believe in God, another to (b) believe God, and another to (c) believe God [to be]. To (b) believe God is to believe that the things he says are true, which even the wicked do. Even we believe a man, but not in a man. To (c) believe God [to be] is to believe that God himself exists, which even the wicked do. To (a) believe in God is to love by believing, to come to him by believing, to be joined to him by believing and to be incorporated amongst his members. Through this faith the unrighteous is justified so that finally the faith itself begins to work through love. Indeed, only those works are called good which come to fruition through the love of God. For this very love is called a work of faith. Therefore, the faith which the demons and false Christians have is a quality of the mind, but "unformed," since it is without charity. For the Apostle shows that even the wicked have faith, even if they lack charity, when he says, 1 Corinthians 12 [13:2], "If I have all faith, but do not have charity, etc." This faith, however, can also be said to be a gift of God, since some gifts of God are even in the wicked (Augustine, t. 8, *Enarratio* on Psalm 67).

is within himself. He has earned a *meritum de congruo* ("congruous merit").[19] And with the powers of the intellective part of his soul enlightened he may now proceed to meritorious works of love, a "faith formed by love" (*fides caritate formata*) that produces the condign merits (*merita de condigno*) that sanctify him—making him righteous in himself—before God in heaven. Just as with Plato, so here, it is in the power of the intellective part of the soul to overcome the "lower," appetitive part.

Philipp rejects such an injection of philosophy into theology. And yet, surprisingly, to erect his own anthropology, he deploys the following argument:[20]

(1) Major premise: the human soul is bipartite.[21]
(2) The bipartite soul comprises the "power of knowing" (*vis cognoscendi*) and the "will" (*voluntas*), which is both the seat of the emotions and controlled by them.
(3) Minor premise: the soul is like a state in which there is both a senate and tyrant.
(4) According to this analogy, the tyrant is the will and its affects, and the senate is the "power of knowing."
* *Implicit: in such a state the tyrant will always rule the senate.*
(5) The soul so formed must therefore always go as such a state does.
(6) Therefore, it is not the "power of knowing" that subdues the will and its affects; it is the will and its affects that bring the "power of knowing" under their thumb.[22]
(7) But the scholastics dream that the "power of knowing" has the power to control the will.
(8) Based upon this control of the affects, the scholastics deduce that man has "free choice" (*liberum arbitrium*).
(9) But the situation is actually the other way around. The affects control the "power of knowing." Therefore, *liberum arbitrium* is a dream.

The argument is entirely naturalistic.[23] Melanchthon offers no explicit appeal, for example, to Romans 7:19, "the good that I would, that do I not do," which would

[19] Gabriel Biel, *In secundum librum sententiarum* (Tübingen: Meyer et Otmar, 1501), dist. 27, qu. un., art. 3, dub. 4. For a brief summary of merit theory, see Carl L. Beckwith, ed., *Martin Luther's Basic Exegetical Writings* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), viii–x.

[20] Melanchthon, *Loci Communes*, in *CR* 21:86–87 (= Preus, 27–28).

[21] The distinction can be traced to Jean Gerson, *De Theologia Mystica Lectiones Sex*. Philipp Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1521: Lateinisch-Deutsch*, trans. and ed. Horst Georg Pöhlmann (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerhard Mohn, 1993), 26–27n36.

[22] On the Scotist background of the subjection of knowledge to will, see Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1521: Lateinisch-Deutsch*, 28n37.

[23] This, despite the fact that "Die *Loci* 1521 arbeiten mit der einfachen, von Luther übernommenen Schau des totus homo" and that "Melanchthon nennt dies das 'Herz' und identifiziert es mit den pscyhologischen Kategorien 'Wille' und 'Affekte.'" Peter Fraenkel,

well illustrate the strength of a wicked will. But it is difficult not to hear in the *vis cognoscendi* echoes of Paul's final salvo, "But I myself serve the law of God with my *mind*, but with my flesh, the law of sin" (Rom 7:25). Indeed, later in this locus Melanchthon's argumentation appeals directly to human experience. While external works (*externa opera*), such as greeting someone or not, are fully subject to human freedom, "by experience" (*experientia usuque*) we find that "the will, of its own, is unable to set aside love, hatred, etc.: when someone is spurned by one he loves, for example, he ceases any longer to love."[24] Even the works of the ancients that appear noble and virtuous are will driven. When a conflict of affects arises, it is not knowledge that informs the final choice but the relative strength of the competing affects. Alexander the Great, for example, "loved toil." But his love of toil was only an apparent virtue: although he also highly desired sensual pleasure, he desired glory even more, and toil, not sensual pleasure, was the factor of glory.[25] Similar arguments regarding the so-called virtuous pagans, largely philosophers, are brought to bear later in a discussion of the power of sin and its fruits. There, a whole battery of philosophers comes in for a licking: Socrates (twice), Xenocrates, Zeno, Marcus Tullius Cicero, and Plato, all of whom possessed "shades of virtue" beclouded by vicious motivation. And yet, even here, Melanchthon's derivation of their actions from φιλαυτία simply uses Epicurean doctrine to explain their motivation.[26]

Let me sum up my observations from the 1521 *Loci Communes*.

(1) To Melanchthon's mind, philosophical *doctrine* corrupts theology. When theologians adopt and then mesh Plato's and Aristotle's assignment of undue powers to the reason or the intellective power of the soul into theology, the teaching of Scripture (in this case, scriptural anthropology) is corrupted or entirely destroyed.

(2) Reason, or the *vis cognoscendi*, can know what it is given to know. When Melanchthon declares that the law is pertinent to the *vis cognoscendi*, he means to say that, as a datum or set of data, the law is available to the mind.

(3) The doctrines of philosophy may be put to apologetic use. An insightful observation emanating from the Epicurean school may be used to critique apparently virtuous actions.

(4) If philosophy is teaching about things observable apart from the revelation of God, in theology philosophical arguments may be brought to bear against

"Fünfzehn Jahre Melanchthonforschung: Versuch eines Literaturberichtes," in *Philipp Melanchthon: Forschungsbeiträge zur vierhundersten Wiederkehr seines Todestages dargeboten in Wittenberg 1960*, ed. Walter Elliger (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961), 39. For the former claim, Fraenkel cites Bengt Hägglund, *De homine: människouppfattningen i äldre luthersk tradition* (Lund: Gleerup, 1959), esp. 181–214.

[24] Melanchthon, *Loci Communes*, in *CR* 21:90 (= Preus, 32).

[25] Melanchthon, *Loci Communes*, in *CR* 21:91 (= Preus, 33).

[26] Melanchthon, *Loci Communes*, in *CR* 21:99 (= Preus, 41–42).

philosophical doctrines. Above, I have called Melanchthon's counterargument to the scholastic interpretation of the intellectual powers of the soul "naturalistic." He argues, just as the philosophers do, on the basis of what is given—the data of the created world.

(5) Whether he has proven the primacy of the *voluntas* over the *vis cognoscendi* in the question of the *liberum arbitrium*—the free choice—to the standards of philosophy is up for debate. But this may be debated philosophically. We may ask: Are his (naturalistic) premises correct? Does his argument unobjectionably follow from his premises? Are his conclusions warranted? However, whether he has proven the primacy of the *voluntas* to the standards of theology is not up for debate. The answer is clear. He has not. What, then, is the value of philosophy within a work that purports to be theology?

It appears that we are no closer to an answer on the role of philosophy in theology, at least as far as Melanchthon is concerned, than when we first started. He appears to give with one hand and take away with the other. The question before us is really this: Is there any reconciliation between the pessimistic evaluation of philosophy in his foreword to Tilemann Plettener and his apparently unashamed use of philosophy in the locus on the *liberum arbitrium*? I argue that there is. But it will take time for Melanchthon to uncover it.

Indeed, over the course of the next several years Melanchthon's understanding of the relationship between philosophy and theology both becomes clearer (to him) and comes into sharper focus (for us). In fact, I will argue, the way philosophy is handled in the 1521 *Loci Communes* actually represents (or comes to be represented by) a fully developed doctrine of the relationship between the queen and her handmaiden.

But the establishment—the articulation—of this relationship did not come easily, or immediately. The Wittenberg aversion to philosophy was hard to shake. In a 1520 letter to Amsdorf Melanchthon took up a Scripture passage that was to exercise him for the next six or seven years. Pointing to Colossians 2:8, "See to it lest anyone take you prey through philosophy and vain deceit," Philipp averred, "If [Paul] vehemently attacks the other doctrines of men, he emphatically, frankly, and loudly commands us to be on our guard 'lest anyone take us prey through philosophy.'" According to Philipp, "Saint Paul foresaw that all of Christianity [*rem Christianam*] would be toppled [*labefactandam*] by philosophical traditions." This is no wonder, according to Philipp, since by an astonishing consensus even the ancients themselves had condemned philosophy. To demonstrate this, Philipp promises Amsdorf to publish the text with commentary of Aristophanes' *Clouds*, in which Socrates is

ridiculed and pilloried, "lest our youth be unaware of the place to which antiquity had assigned [philosophy]."[27]

But 1520 was the same year in which *The Freedom of a Christian* was published. There, Luther brought a certain clarity on the distinction between law and gospel that had been in the works since 1518's "Two Kinds of Righteousness." This distinction between law and gospel would not only prove theologically fruitful for the Wittenberg Reformation but would also bear fruit in the educational and theological-educational culture that developed around Wittenberg. In a famous distillation, Luther puts the distinction like this: "a Christian is a perfectly free lord over all things and subject to no one; a Christian is a dutiful servant of all things, and subject to everyone."[28] *Coram deo*, the gospel; *coram mundo* or *coram hominibus*, the law. Melanchthon's 1521 or 1522 (the date cannot be determined) "Unterschidt zwischen weltlicher und Christlicher Fromkeyt" (Distinction between worldly and Christian righteousness) demonstrates how he had assimilated this teaching. Echoing Luther's sermon on twofold righteousness, Melanchthon also asserts two kinds of righteousness (*Fromkeyt*). The godly righteousness is the one that Christ along with the Holy Spirit works in us. Moved by the Holy Spirit to terror before God's wrath over our sin, it grasps the grace and forgiveness of sins in Christ, gains a cheerful and hearty confidence in God, gives itself over to him in the expectation of every good, and in this way is renewed and enlightened.[29] The other righteousness, which is really our interest in this paper, is the "worldly" righteousness.

> Paul, in his letter to the Colossians, calls worldly righteousness στοιχεῖα κόσμου [Col 2:8, 2:20], "the order of the world" [*der Welt Ordnung*]. This consists in outward discipline, honorable conduct, good behavior, customs and usages; and reason [*Vernunfft*] can grasp it. Yes, it has been implanted in the reason by God. Just as it has been implanted in a tree to bear this or that fruit, so has the understanding been implanted in man that we ought not to harm another, that we ought to maintain the common peace, that we ought to demonstrate self-discipline and self-restraint toward everyone.[30]

But that, his opening salvo in "Unterschidt zwischen weltlicher und Christlicher Fromkeyt," is as far as it goes for reason (*Vernunfft*). He continues, "Human reason [*vernunfft*] is incapable in and of itself of concluding anything certain vis-à-vis God." Instead, he writes, reason underestimates God on two scores. It observes that in this life men get off for their sins scot-free and deduces that God is not so angered

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[27] Philipp Melanchthon to Nikolaus von Amsdorf, December 1520, in *CR* 1:274–275 (no. 96).

[28] Martin Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian* (1520), in WA 7:21.1–14 (= AE 31:344).

[29] Philipp Melanchthon, "Unterschidt zwischen weltlicher und Christlicher Fromkeyt," in St.A. 1:173; *CR* 1:525.

[30] Melanchthon, "Unterschidt," in St.A. 1:171–172; *CR* 1:523–524.

against sin, that hell cannot be so hot. It can therefore all the less grasp that God wishes to forgive sins and be so kindly toward us as to take up our cause.[31] Those are the limits of reason.

Still, though this passage may seem entirely unremarkable to those practiced at the art of understanding the two kinds of righteousness, three important points stand out. First, Melanchthon glosses στοιχεῖα κόσμου (Col 2:8, 2:20) as *der Welt Ordnung*, "the order of the world." Second, this order can be grasped by reason (*Vernunfft*). Third, it has been implanted upon man's reason by God. The στοιχεῖα κόσμου are thus the creation of God. They exist both within man, in his reason, and outside of man, in the created world, so that there is a correspondence between the "implanted" στοιχεῖα κόσμου and the external στοιχεῖα κόσμου. As such, the external στοιχεῖα κόσμου are not only observable but also comprehensible—or, as Melanchthon puts it, "within our grasp." Finally, the στοιχεῖα κόσμου constitute an order, probably implied for Melanchthon in the term κόσμος. In other words, there is an orderliness, a tidiness, in all this, and the divinely established order is mapped upon mind and world reciprocally. It is within this reciprocal relationship that philosophy works.

Within five years, indeed, this insight has become fully developed with his 1526/1527 *Scholia in Epistulam Pauli ad Colossenses*.[32] There Melanchthon returns to that passage that much exercised his mind, Colossians 2:8, using it as a launchpad once again to take up his elaboration of the relationship between philosophy and theology.[33] His comments in the *Scholia* represent a significant amending or tempering of the views he had expressed as late as the 1520 letter to Amsdorf.

Melanchthon first places his entire discussion on Colossians 2:8 within the context of what he had developed in "Unterschidt" (1521/1522). Paul's dictum, "See to it that no one take you prey through philosophy and vain deceit," establishes, according to Melanchthon, a comparison between human righteousness and Christian righteousness. Under or as part of human righteousness Melanchthon lays philosophy.

But now Melanchthon advances his argument beyond what he had written in "Unterschidt." Not reason but philosophy itself is "a true and good creature of God, for it is, itself, the judgment of reason which God has given to human nature as a true and certain thing in matters having to do with nature and society."[34] To support

[31] Melanchthon, "Unterschidt," in St.A. 1:172; *CR* 1:524.

[32] In St.A. 4:210–303 (= Parker, 27–119). Perhaps as early as 1524; see Peter F. Barton, introduction to *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:209.

[33] Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:230–244 (= Parker, 46–57). The importance of his treatment of philosophy here is underscored by the fact that the "excursus" appeared already in 1527 as a monograph in Basel. Barton, introduction, in St.A. 4:209.

[34] Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:230 (= Parker, 46).

his attribution of the gift to God, he adduces Romans 2:15: "They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts."

Still, he maintains the same caveats: "Insofar as philosophy is the science of speaking and [the science] of things having to do with nature and [the science] of social customs—and only about things having to do with nature and social customs, at that—it affirms and teaches what it grasps by certain reasoning."[35] In other words, philosophy remains philosophy when it troubles itself with what is within its purview. And yet, its purview is large. In an incomplete list, Melanchthon mentions as philosophy's range of expertise social customs, communicating (*loquendi*; literally, "speaking"), natural science, number, measurement, building, and the cure of disease. Indeed, "since you hear that these gifts have been bequeathed to nature by God you should all the more venerate this philosophy which God has given as a bulwark for life."[36]

Before we get to some further distinctions, it is worth pausing for a moment to notice the breadth of what Melanchthon means by philosophy. We noticed, in "Unterschidt," that where for Luther the operative oppositions are gospel and law, *coram deo* and *coram hominibus*, righteousness of *faith* and righteousness of the *law*, for Melanchthon the opposition is *godly* righteousness and *worldly* righteousness, and the realm of worldly righteousness is that of reason—and now, in the 1526/1527 *Scholia*, of philosophy.[37] For Melanchthon, this is, of course, grounded in Romans 2:15, "they demonstrate that the work of the law is written on their hearts."

To his way of thinking, however, the law was not simply the Decalogue and its scriptural elaborations. Nor did it include, in addition, merely the civil and ceremonial law of the Old Testament—though it did include them. The law was, to put it one way, that creature by which the Lord governed the rest of his creation. This applied to the natural world no less than to the social world, and in a way that extended

[35] "Philosophia, quatenus est scientia loquendi et rerum naturalium et civilium morum et ea tantum de rebus naturalibus ac moribus civilibus, affirmat ac docet, quae certa ratione comprehendit." Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:230. Here my translation differs greatly from that of Parker, 46: "Philosophy, to the extent that it is the skill of speaking about natural affairs and social customs, declares or teaches as much of natural affairs and social customs as it can understand by plain reasoning."

[36] "quia audis haec dona Dei esse tradita naturae, multo magis debes hanc philosophiam venerari, quam Deus dedit ad vitae praesidia paranda." Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:231. I deliberately part with D. C. Parker's translation at this point, as well (Parker, 47), which reads "our nature" for my "nature." The *nostra* is certainly not in the text, and it is likely that Melanchthon's reciprocity notion underlies this: the natural world possesses number by God's ordering; the human mind is capable of discerning number due to the divine gift of philosophy.

[37] See also Philipp Melanchthon, *De Discrimine Evangelii et Philosophiae* (1527), in *CR* 12:690 (= Salazar, 24).

beyond what was obvious because revealed.[38] Thus, for example, sun, moon, and stars move predictably in their courses according to the word of God (Gen 1:14–19); vegetative life grows according to predictable patterns: a celery seed will always produce a celery plant (Gen 1:11–13); and when two horses mate, a foal is born, not a puppy (Gen 1:24–25). As such, "that I might pass over the other parts, if the sun has been created in such a way that it constitutes and governs the year, observation of the sun's course is necessary, for without observing its motions there are no distinctions between seasons and years. Wherefore it is not difficult to reach the conclusion that the observation of heavenly movements is both commended and commanded by God."[39] In other words, if the στοιχεῖα κόσμου outside of me are to have any of the value for me assigned them by God's design, they must find within me some correspondence. The Lord has also stitched into his creation things not quite so obvious, such as space and number. Space and number, too, are governed by divine law. 2 + 2 is always 4 and never 5; the square of the hypotenuse of a right triangle is always equal to the sum of the square of the triangle's two legs; the volume of a cylindrical space is always π times the radius squared times the height of the cylinder. Today we may consider all those truisms merely to be deductive observations about how space and number operate. But Melanchthon glosses Plutarch's θεὸν ἀεὶ γεωμετρεῖν—"God is always doing geometry"—like this: "He governs all things and rules the heavenly courses and all nature *by a most certain law.*"[40] It is by divine law—the στοιχεῖα κόσμου—that those things are that way.

That being so, the study of all such things, of the ways in which the Lord governs the world—whether that study be called geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, natural philosophy, rhetoric, dialectic, ethics, grammar, even history and the *trium linguarum studium*—was the naturally demanded living out of the reciprocity and correspondence between the στοιχεῖα κόσμου, the divine law, internal and external to man, and it was the province of philosophy. In other words, philosophy, reason, the external στοιχεῖα κόσμου, and the law of God go hand in glove.[41]

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[38] "Quod autem philosophia sit lex Dei, hinc quoque intelligi potest, quia est noticia causarum et effectuum naturalium, quae cum sint res ordinatae ex Deo, sequitur philosophiam esse legem Dei, quae est doctrina de illa divina ordinatione." Melanchthon, *De Discrimine*, in *CR* 12:690 (= Salazar, 24).

[39] See, for example, Philipp Melanchthon, "Praef. in Arithmeticen" ("Preface to Arithmetic") (1536), in *CR* 11:289 (= Salazar, 94).

[40] Philipp Melanchthon, "Praefatio in Geometriam" ("Preface to Johannes Vogelin's *Book on the Elements of Geometry*") (1536), in *CR* 3:114 (= Salazar, 104).

[41] "These precepts of moral philosophy have been dug up from nature or gathered from the laws of nature which God has written in our minds. Nor did he wish those laws to be held less sacred than those which he engraved on stone for Moses." Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:234 (= Parker, 50).

That said, in a fallen world, philosophy can—and often does—err. As Philipp takes up the errors of philosophy two more lines of thought can be discerned. The first we have already noted: philosophy has its realm—it is not more than "the science of speaking and of things having to do with nature and of social customs." The second way philosophy goes awry is when it is pushed out along school lines. In Melanchthon's estimation, the second is a derivative of errors in the first, transgressing the boundaries of philosophy.

To begin with the first, philosophy goes beyond its realm when it speaks of that of which it is not permitted to speak. "I say that philosophy is no more than this. It is that which proves nothing except by certain reason [*certa ratione*] or what has been observed by experience [*experientia animadversum*]."[42] "Observation by experience" speaks for itself. Whenever I put two things together with one thing I end up with three things. But it is specifically such observation that is the ground for "certain reason." If two things added to one thing has always yielded three things and never a different amount of things, I am warranted on the basis of "certain reason" to declare that 2 + 1 = 3 and that this has been, is, and always will be true as long as this creation exists. It is among the στοιχεῖα κόσμου, a created law governing the creation, and it cannot be broken.

But when my observations are of an incomplete data set, or my inferences are unwarranted, or I speculate as to the existence of things I have never observed, I have gone beyond what philosophy, as Melanchthon thinks about it, allows. Three examples of this follow. (a) Every time I walk into the ocean, the further away from the shore I go, it gets deeper. I have also had the privilege of seeing the Appalachians (on land), the Rockies (on land), the Alps and Apennines (on land), and the Black Hills (on land). Mountains go up; the seabed goes down. I have never seen a mountain in the sea. I might therefore (incorrectly) deduce that there are no suboceanic mountains. This is due to an incomplete data set. (b) The world is the most stable object I know of. It has been here ever since I was born (and, to hear it told, long before), and it will be here after I die (which I deduce from the fact that the world continues on after others die). I might therefore (incorrectly) deduce that the world is eternal. This is due to an unwarranted inference. Finally, (c) noticing the color red in many things, and reasoning that red cannot be a thing if it has no essence, since "to be" implies the possession of an essence, I may (incorrectly) conclude on the basis of the predication in the phrase "being red" that there is an essence of red somewhere that is all red and nothing else—just perfect redness in itself. This is Platonism—and the fruit of mere speculation. In each of these cases, according to Melanchthon, I have been up to something other than philosophy, whose job is limited

[42] Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:235 (= Parker, 50).

to "prov[ing] nothing except by certain reason or what has been observed by experience." 2 + 1 = 3 is the conclusion of a true philosophy and a law stitched into the στοιχεῖα κόσμου. But, "There are no mountains under the sea," "the world is eternal," and "red *qua* the essence of red exists" are conclusions of a faulty philosophy and not laws.

And yet this is exactly what philosophy driven along school lines has a propensity toward. Indeed, says Melanchthon, "many questionable opinions have been mixed in with teachings true and certain." But "to assent to uncertain and unverified things and to affirm them as verified, which does not happen infrequently, is most unworthy and most shameful for a philosopher."[43]

This is precisely where philosophy collides with theology. It is also the fruit of philosophy driven along school lines. Melanchthon gives the following examples: Aristotle attributed eternality to the world; the Epicureans' thoroughgoing materialism—ascribing a physical, atomic structure even to the soul of man—gives rise to and even demands Epicureanism's self-absorbed pleasure ethic;[44] equally self-absorbed is the Stoics' ethic of apatheia, not to mention inimical to such Christian virtues as mercy;[45] and the fact that all material things are a result of the random atomic swerve (a pillar of Epicureanism) comes to mean, in Epicureanism, that God—or rather, the gods—have no concern for or involvement in the created world.[46] While none of these philosophical doctrines were, prima facie, directed against Christianity (as yet unknown to these schools), the third-century Plotinus, according to Melanchthon, developed the doctrine of the emanation of the λόγος from the νοῦς "so as to frustrate Christian dogma concerning the Son of God."[47]

Whether deployed directly against Christianity, as in the case of Plotinus, or not, in Melanchthon's estimation all such philosophizing fails on two counts. First, it obviously contradicts what God has revealed about the same things. But even more, it fails to be philosophy by his definition: "In the disquisitions of the philosophers there are many things that are not only hostile to religion but even false and militate against natural reason, since many of them have been written down *without firm reasoning by those who are hardly level-headed* [*a parum prudentibus sine certa ratione].*"[48]

To summarize things thus far in the *Scholia*:

(1) Philosophy falls within the realm of the law.

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[43] Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:235 (= Parker, 50–51).
[44] Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:235 (= Parker, 50).
[45] Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:235 (= Parker, 50).
[46] Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:241 (= Parker, 55).
[47] Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:241 (= Parker, 55).
[48] Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:235 (= Parker, 50), emphasis added.

(2) By reciprocity and correspondence between the στοιχεῖα κόσμου internal and external to men, philosophy is that capacity of the reason that allows one to make proofs and teach things concerning the world under the realm of the law.
(3) The realm of the law extends far beyond the moral, civil, and cultic law revealed in Scripture, and includes "the laws of nature" and laws governing human interactions.
(4) Philosophy should be exercised only within this realm.
(5) Philosophy has a propensity to transgress this realm.
(6) Such transgression often creates, or is driven by, school interests.
(7) Such transgression cannot rightly be called philosophy.

Thus far we have observed philosophy only in its manifestations—only as it is applied to the *realia* of the created order and its results. And we have seen that it may reach both true and false conclusions. But there are two further philosophical tools—to use a contemporary phrase, I might call them "meta-philosophical" tools—that have much and everything, in Melanchthon's mind, to do with true and false philosophy: dialectic and rhetoric.[49] In Melanchthon's thought the two are held together under the concept of eloquence: "our ancients saw amongst themselves that these two things belonged together by nature, the knowledge of speaking well and the judgment of the mind; wherefore it was not silly in the least for them to say that speech is the exposition of the reasoning of the mind."[50] If rhetoric is the means by which truth is communicated, dialectic, a divine gift, is "the true way of teaching and reasoning."[51] His 1520 *Compendiaria Dialectices Ratio* explains the relationship between dialectic and rhetoric like this:

> Dialectic is the skill of making an apt and proper examination of any subject whatsoever. For it simply demonstrates the nature and components of any subject; and it explains whatever is laid before it in such certain terms that the truth or falsehood concerning whatever is under consideration cannot not be discerned. It differs from rhetoric in this, that while rhetoric creates a speech that is brilliant and aimed at captivating the people, dialectic provides the sure and precise direction, or rule, for rhetorical speech. . . . No one should think that dialectic is anything else than, as it were, the thread of human reason by which, in a certain order, we trace out the nature and components of a matter under

[49] Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:236 (= Parker, 51).

[50] Philipp Melanchthon, *Encomium Eloquentiae* (1523), in *CR* 11:55 (= Salazar, 65). See also Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:235–236 (= Parker, 51).

[51] "veram docendi et ratiocinandi viam sciamus Dei donum esse." Philipp Melanchthon, dedicatory letter to Johannes Camerarius, September 1, 1547, in *Erotemata Dialectices*, in *CR* 6:656 (no. 3992) (= Salazar, 87).

> consideration and by which we investigate what is true and what is false in any matter whatsoever.[52]

Melanchthon makes some big claims here: dialectic applies much more broadly than philosophy to "any subject whatsoever," "whatever is under consideration," "any matter whatsoever." Does that include theology?

A quick, unscientific survey of the 1520 *Compendiaria* demonstrates that the preponderance of authorities and examples are classical: Cicero; Demosthenes; Socrates; Plato; the Quirites (that is, citizens of Rome); the Roman gods; Chian, Smyrnean, and Campanian wine; the Peripatetics; Themistocles; Orestes; Horace; Virgil; Quintilian; Ethiopians (i.e., Black Africans); and others. As for dialectic's specifically theological application, it receives scant attention. To Paul in Romans 8 are credited rhetorical comparisons and amplifications;[53] Christ is credited in his use of parables with argumentation by example; Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:33 argues by means of a γνώμη or *sententia*;[54] in a discussion of coacervation, "heaping up," in syllogisms, Philipp lays out the syllogism of "Paul" in Hebrews 6 and 7 for the preeminence of Christ:

(1) The Mosaic priests are less than Abraham.
(2) Abraham is less than Melchizedek.
(3) Minor conclusion/minor premise: therefore, the Mosaic priests are less than Melchizedek.
(4) But Christ is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek.
(5) Major conclusion: therefore, the Mosaic priests are less than Christ.[55]

Now, dialectic is basically that branch of philosophy laid down by Aristotle in the so-called *Organon*: his *Categories*, *On Interpretation*, *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics*, *Topics*, and *On Sophistical Refutations*. In fact—though much later in a dedicatory epistle for what was the outgrowth of this early and first work on dialectic, the *Erotemata Dialectices*—Melanchthon expresses to young Johannes Camerarius his preference for students to take up dialectic not through a secondary work like the *Erotemata* but by using the *Organon* of Aristotle itself—in Greek. His only concern has to do with some passages that appear to have been distorted by copying. Otherwise, "[the works of the *Organon*] hand down dialectic correctly and can be understood by those who are refined by liberal teaching."[56] In fact, in that letter Melanchthon himself claims to "profess the true, untarnished, and original dialectic, *as we*

[52] Philipp Melanchthon, *Compendiaria Dialectices Ratio*, in *CR* 20:711.
[53] Melanchthon, *Compendiaria*, in *CR* 20:722.
[54] Melanchthon, *Compendiaria*, in *CR* 20:747.
[55] Melanchthon, *Compendiaria*, in *CR* 20:748.
[56] Melanchthon, dedicatory letter, in *Erotemata Dialectices*, in *CR* 6:657 (no. 3992) (= Salazar, 88).

have received it from Aristotle and some of his other unimpugnable interpreters, such as Alexander of Aphrodisias and Boethius."[57]

But to return to the question at hand, to Melanchthon's way of thinking, does dialectic have any role in theology? Perhaps to put it in starker terms, is it permissible for the *Organon* of Aristotle to be applied to the study of theology? And if permissible, is it obligatory?

If Philipp's answer in the 1520 *Compendiaria* is hesitant—exploratory at best—by 1526/1527 his answer is a resounding yes. In fact, in a sense, the *Scholia* on Colossians 2:8 is an extended argument for the indispensability of dialectic for the theological task. Early on in the excursus on philosophy he denounces those "infamous humbugs" who "still dare to say that condemning all this knowledge is godliness." If civil society has contrived penalties for those who steal others' food, it should also have contrived penalties for those who "steal men's minds from the study of these arts"—that is, the means of cultivating the internal and external correspondence of the στοιχεῖα κόσμου.[58]

The vehemence of his tone here is understandable against the backdrop of the student rebellion against the arts curriculum in the 1520s and the subsequent battle for its restoration and, connected with the student rebellion, the rise of theological fanaticism in the same period.[59] Neither group was a-theological in the sense that they had no concern to busy themselves with the word of God. In fact, the students just wanted to get on with taking theology from Wittenberg's rock-star theologians. It is simply that they could see no good use for the arts curriculum, and dialectic with it, in the theological task. So, for good measure, to round out this portion of his argument, Melanchthon adduces Augustine's plundering of Egyptian gold—his deliberate "claiming" of their goods from the philosophers as unjust owners—declaring that "without the knowledge of the languages and without these arts that teach one how to speak correctly and clearly, Scripture cannot be explained."[60]

Indeed, dialectic, the first and foremost part of *eloquentia*, Melanchthon claims, is the New Testament "gift of tongues or, if you like, of interpreting tongues" (1 Cor 12:10, 14:5). If a bishop should, according to 1 Timothy 3, be διδακτικός, he has to be skilled in dialectic.[61] Melanchthon sees a twofold use for dialectic in the

[57] Melanchthon, dedicatory letter, in *Erotemata Dialectices*, in *CR* 6:655 (no. 3992) (= Salazar, 86), emphasis added.

[58] Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in *CR* 4:231 (= Parker, 47).

[59] On this and for further bibliography, see Jon Steffen Bruss, "Melanchthon and the Wittenberg Reception of Hellenism, 1518–1526: *Bonae Literae et Renascentes Musae*," *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* 17, no.4 (Reformation 2008): 7–12, esp. 11.

[60] Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:232 (= Parker, 47–48); Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, 3.40.60 (*PL* 34.63).

[61] Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:236 (= Parker, 51).

theological task. First, it must be applied to the study of Scripture itself. Since Scripture is "full of the most subtle arguments," "the sacred text can in no way be understood" without dialectic. Philipp even brings up the matter of ἀμφίβολα—ambiguities—and the discernment of the coherence of arguments in this connection.[62] That is what I will call its readerly use. It also has a teacherly or doctrinal use, which has a twofold task. First, it must explain the teaching of Scripture straightforwardly, clearly, and in an orderly fashion. Second, dialectic is to be used in settling ecclesiastical disputes. It is an indispensable aid in ascertaining the extent and areas of disagreement and, in tandem with the teaching task, in settling these disputes decisively.[63]

This commendation of dialectic is where Melanchthon's favorable judgments in the 1526/1527 *Scholia* on the use of philosophy in theology come to an end. It is limited to the use of dialectic, that "meta-philosophy," as I called it, the engine that makes philosophy work. When he picks up the thread of philosophy per se, there is a discernible shift in judgment. Philosophy goes astray when it attempts to ascertain the will of God. While it may grasp God as creator, it cannot grasp his ongoing governance of the world. Furthermore, it errs when it creates an account of justification. And finally—and related to the last point—it is mistaken in arriving at the opinion that reason has the power to resist vice.[64] In each of these instances—and Melanchthon indicates that it would be possible to go through all the articles of the faith and arrive at the same conclusion—he demonstrates, from the Scriptures, that "here Christian doctrine teaches something different."[65] And his judgments against philosophy are strong: "Philosophy, or the formation of judgements according to the reason, cannot make reliable statements about the divine will. It can only form correct judgements about the nature of reality and about social morals. . . . To make judgements about Christian doctrine on the basis of philosophy is as insane as basing them on the principles of cobbling."[66]

Concluding Unscientific Postscript

This pessimistic view of philosophy raises the question whether, if philosophy must always err in the things of God, a part of philosophy must also always err in the things of God. In other words, in the 1526/1527 *Scholia* Melanchthon has created a schema whereby dialectic, Aristotle's *Organon*, may be safely—even profitably—

[62] Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St. A. 4:237 (= Parker, 52).
[63] Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:237 (= Parker, 52).
[64] Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:238–240 (= Parker, 52–54).
[65] "Hic doctrina Christiana diversum docet." Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:238 (= Parker, 53).
[66] Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:240–241 (= Parker, 55).

used in Christian theology, and should be. But what is to prevent dialectic from running amok in theology? If theology is the product of dialectic applied to the Scriptures, and dialectic is a part of philosophy, which may and often does err, what is to prevent an errant, corrupt theology? Melanchthon does not ask—much less answer—this question.

But perhaps we can begin to build a jar from a few shards. First, Melanchthon argues, the "vain deceit" Paul speaks of in Colossians 2:8 is the "arguments about the divine will gathered from philosophy," the conclusions arrived at by philosophy driven along school lines that have transgressed the boundaries placed upon philosophy. One should recall here Melanchthon's admonitions on the Epicurean deduction from the atomic swerve that the gods have no concern for the world, or on Stoic determinism. As such, he can call judgments on the divine will formed by reason not philosophy, but empty dreams.[67] Another possible clue comes a bit later: error in reason (i.e., in philosophy) "happens when it is not governed by the word of God."[68] To this point Melanchthon adduces Romans 1:21 and 1:28, and by the examples he supplies he seems to have in mind pagan philosophy driven along school lines.

The question remains: In Melanchthon's mind how is it possible for dialectic to participate in the theological act? He has shown that it is necessary. But what, in the nature of the task, allows it? I think an answer is available in what we have noted above: the "correspondence" between the internal and external στοιχεῖα κόσμου. Man can read the created order because the στοιχεῖα κόσμου have been mapped upon his mind. Language, itself a divine creature, works because of this internal-external correspondence; and God has specifically placed himself under the constraints of language in order to reveal himself. Indeed, in the 1523 *Encomium Eloquentiae*, Melanchthon foregrounds the specifically verbal revelation of God:

> There are things in sacred matters which no one would ever behold without God revealing them; nor does Christ become known to us, unless the Holy Spirit give instruction. Thus indeed Christ Himself says that it is by the Spirit δοξασθῆναι (that he is glorified). But beyond the matter of prophecy, the power of words must be known, in which the divine mysteries are stored up as if in a shrine. For what would happen if you were, in the way of magic, to speak forth words that were not understood? Is that not like telling a story to a deaf man?[69]

But God speaks not as a magician—his word is not hocus-pocus and other unintelligible gobbledygook. Nor does he speak to his creatures as to the unhearing.

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[67] Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:241 (= Parker, 55).
[68] Melanchthon, *Scholia*, in St.A. 4:242 (= Parker, 56).
[69] Philipp Melanchthon, *Encomium Eloquentiae*, in *CR* 11:64 (= Salazar, 75–76).

Instead, analogously to his enfleshment, by which he has subjected himself to and made himself known (John 1:14, 1:18) within the στοιχεῖα κόσμου—"of a woman, under law" (Gal 4.4)—in his inscripturated word he has likewise subjected himself to the very στοιχεῖα κόσμου he created. The ineffable word of the governor of the universe, the eternal intra-trinitarian dialogue, he makes to be governed by the very laws of the universe he created. He thereby creates a "sacred discourse,"[70] emphasis on "discourse," so that by the external-internal correspondence of the στοιχεῖα κόσμου he himself created he might make himself known to the crown of his creation.

[70] Philipp Melanchthon, *De Studio Linguarum* (1533), in *CR* 11:232 (= Salazar, 30).

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Sadducees, the Resurrection, and an Early Date for Matthew

David P. Scaer

New Testament scholarship leans toward dating Matthew at the end of the first century or maybe even a little later. Most scholars view it as the third and last of the synoptic Gospels, written after Mark and Luke. Should this be the case, Matthew would have been written about seventy years after the events in Jesus' life. His words, which Matthew purports to record, would have been derived from oral tradition that was passed through at least two or three generations rather than recalled from the memory of those who participated in the events, were eyewitnesses of them, or heard them from those who were present.

However, taken at face value, it is unlikely that the Gospel was composed at the end of the first century. The evangelist Matthew claims that at the time of his writing the Gospel, the account of the Council of Elders bribing the soldiers to say that the disciples of Jesus had taken the body out of the tomb is still a topic of conversation among the Jews (Matt 28:15). In comparison with the Gospels of Mark and Luke, each of which has only one explicit reference to the Sadducees, the Gospel of Matthew has eight references, which points to its being written not long after the resurrection, when it is likely that they were a force still to be reckoned with.[1]

I. Sadducees and Pharisees

The importance of the Sadducees in the life of Jesus may be considered by reassessing the Greek word ἀρχιερεῖς, which is commonly rendered in English translations as "chief priests." There is no reason that this word cannot be better translated as "high priests," which it often is, considering that in the singular it is consistently rendered not "chief priest" but "high priest." In the same verse, the singular and plural forms are often rendered differently: "Then the chief priests [ἀρχιερεῖς] and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest [ἀρχιερεύς], who was called Caiaphas" (Matt 26:3 RSV). This may give rise to the view that the high priests and the chief priests had to do with different ranks of priest, something like commissioned and noncommissioned officers. Its cognate "high priesthood" is used of

[1] Even where the Sadducees are not explicitly mentioned, as in Mark and Luke, they were members of the council (συμβούλιον) that is the Sanhedrin (Mark 15:1).

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Annas and Caiaphas, who alternated in holding the office: "in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas" (Luke 3:2).[2]

In each of the references to "chief priests" in John's Gospel, "high priests" would better fit the context, since the exalted title of "high priest," at least in English, fits their having immediate access to Pilate and daring to instruct him, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but 'This man said, I am King of the Jews'" (John 19:21). After all, since Pilate had appointed them and had entrusted them with the civil and religious affairs of the Jewish population, consultation with him would have been customary. So also in Matthew, the title of "high priests" is preferable to "chief priests." Their "high" position explains how they were well situated to ask Pilate to place a guard at the tomb (Matt 27:62) and how they were so confident of their access to him that they knew he would accept a bribe if he heard of the events at the tomb on the third day (Matt 28:11). Likewise, in Acts, all ten instances of ἀρχιερεῖς would be better rendered as "high priests." For example, Paul was authorized by the high priests to carry out the arrest of Christians in Damascus (Acts 26:10–12). Rendering the eighteen references in Hebrews to Jesus as the "chief priest" and not the "high priest" would sound strange to the ears of English speakers.

High priests, like other priests, were descendants of Aaron, the brother of Moses, and Zadok, the high priest during the days of David, from whose name "Sadducee" was derived. The right to appoint the high priest was given to Herod by Caesar Augustus in 37 BC. At Herod's death, his kingdom was divided among four of his sons, with a fifth part, Judea, including Jerusalem, becoming a province whose governance was entrusted to a prefect or governor, who assumed the right of appointing the high priest. At the time of Jesus, the governor was Pontius Pilate (Luke 3:1). Although Jewish religious and civil matters were put into the hands of the high priest, imposition of the death penalty was reserved for the Roman governor. Luke provides the names of the high priestly family: Annas, who is explicitly called the high priest, Caiaphas, John and Alexander (Acts 4:6).

Even before the Sadducees come to the baptism of John, Matthew has already introduced them in his birth narrative as those who, together with Herod and all of Jerusalem, are troubled about the magi coming to look for another king (Matt 2:1–4). Had the news of the birth of a legitimate descendant of David reached Caesar Augustus, he might have been all too happy to find a substitute for Herod, who was neither Roman nor Jewish and who sided with Anthony on who should succeed the assassinated Julius Caesar as the first Roman emperor. In responding to what he sees as a potentially political unsettling situation, Herod consults with the high priests and the scribes to determine in which city the heir to David's throne has been born

[2] Unless otherwise noted, all Bible translations are my own.

(Matt 2:1–4). Should a descendant of David be found, not only might Herod lose his position, but also the Sadducees would lose the political influence they have with Herod, and the Pharisees and the Sadducees would lose their standing among the people, who are content, even complacent, with the arrangement, evidence that they have compromised their position as the people of God.

The Sadducees did not have the influence on the people that the Pharisees had, but the Sadducees, from whom high priests were chosen, were politically well connected with the Roman occupational government. Their influence with Pilate was decisive in the events leading to the crucifixion of Jesus. In spite of being greater in number than the Sadducees, the Pharisees by themselves might not have succeeded in sentencing Jesus to crucifixion. From the family of Annas, Pilate had chosen Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas (John 18:13–24), as high priest in the year of Jesus' death. It was Caiaphas before whom Jesus acknowledged he was the Son of God (Matt 26:63).

Like many Jews since the time of the Maccabees, the Sadducees saw salvation chiefly in terms of being rewarded in this life for their good deeds,[3] a belief not uncommon today among Jews who identify themselves as liberal or conservative. Along with their denial of the resurrection, they also did not believe in angels or the existence of the soul after death (Acts 23:8).

In contrast to the elite Sadducees, who offered little of what was supernaturally concrete to the people to grasp, the Pharisees believed in the resurrection and offered a way to justification that the resurrection would bring by following ceremonial instructions. The Pharisees had come into existence as a countermovement to the Sadducees, who were lackadaisical in carrying out the rituals of the temple sacrifices prescribed by the book of Leviticus (Exod 30:17–21). Troubled that God's wrath would descend on the people due to the dereliction of the ceremonial duties, the Pharisees prescribed some of these rituals to the common people (Matt 15:2; Mark 7:3; Luke 11:38). Prescribed handwashing before eating, originally intended for the priests in carrying out the sacrifices, could be and was done by ordinary people in their homes (Exod 30:19; Matt 15:2; Mark 7:3). It was literally "a hands-on" religion, which consisted in doing things like rituals. These rituals continued to be practiced by some Pharisees who found their way into the early church, a matter that had to be addressed by Paul, as discussed below.

Belief in the resurrection of the dead and a better life after death gave the Pharisees a grip on the hearts of the people, who lived under Roman domination that could be cruel in imposing arbitrary crucifixion.[4] This kind of hope could not be

[3] N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 138–139.

[4] For a discussion of the Jewish concept of the afterlife, see Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 189–206.

offered by the Sadducees. Disciplined rituals and a survival after death comprised a religion that the people could believe and practice. They had something to hang on to. At best, the Sadducees offered a religion that was more of a philosophy. It was not as if all the people, or even most of the people, at the time of Jesus were Pharisees. However, their ideas and practices became part of the lives of the ordinary people concerning how they lived their lives and what it meant to be Jewish, as it remains for much of the Orthodox branch of Judaism to this day. In contrast, the people had less in common with the Sadducees, who constituted the upper crust and whose leaders were well placed by the appointment of their Roman overlords.[5]

Though the Pharisees are presented as the opponents of Jesus, they are regarded by Jesus as those who know how to interpret the Scriptures (Matt 23:2–3). A similar honor was not given to the Sadducees. Unlike the Pharisees, who held to the books of Moses, the Prophets, and the Writings—that is, the Old Testament Scriptures—the Sadducees held only to the Pentateuch and had come under the influence of Greek philosophy, as did Jews living elsewhere in the Roman Empire.

In Matthew, the Sadducees go with the Pharisees to the Baptism of John (Matt 3:7). The parallel accounts in Mark and Luke have no mention of either group. Though high priests are not listed among the Sadducees who go to be baptized, it is highly unlikely that they were not involved in sending the delegation to John. Though theological rivals, the Pharisees and the Sadducees found a common cause in their concerns about what John was preaching about the coming of the kingdom of God.

Together they go to the Jordan River under the pretense of wanting to be baptized by him. John suspects their repentance, which is required for receiving his Baptism, lacks sincere regret for sin. The promise of a Messiah (Christ), who will actualize the kingdom of God, whom John identifies as Jesus (John 1:29, 1:36), would undermine their positions in Jewish life. Since the Pharisees and the Sadducees are placed together in their coming to the Jordan for Baptism, it is most likely that they had already shared their concerns with each other about John as soon as reports of his preaching had reached them in Jerusalem. This was enough reason for them to agree to a joint course of action to travel to the Jordan to hear for themselves what he had to say and to take further action, if necessary. The best John can say of them is that they want to avert the impending wrath of God—that is, if John should prove to be the prophet that his hearers thought he was. By calling them a brood of vipers who are about to face the judgment of God (Matt 3:7), John references Genesis 3, in which Satan appears as a serpent in tempting Eve. They are snakes, offspring of the

[5] E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penguin, 1993), 52. "The Sadducean party was aristocratic, and few if any would be found in the Galilean villages."

devil. (Similarly, Jesus speaks of Satan as the father of the Pharisees, who from the beginning—that is, Genesis—was a murderer [John 8:44].)

Judgment was the theme of what John the Baptist preached: "The mightier one coming after [him] has his winnowing fork in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire" (Matt 3:11–12). Judgment had to be on the minds of those who came to hear John preach. Judgment belonged to Jesus as the Son of Man who was coming with great power (Matt 25:21–46, 26:64).

At the heart of the collaboration of the Pharisees and the Sadducees was the preservation of their privileged positions in the religious and political establishment of Jerusalem. Should Jesus be identified as the Christ, as the voice from heaven said (Matt 3:16–17) and as John proclaimed (John 1:36), each group would lose its standing in Jewish society and the financial benefits that came with it (Matt 16:6–12). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus would say that the pursuit of money stands in opposition to faith in God (Matt 6:24), and in the acquisition of wealth the Sadducees and Pharisees found good reason to set aside their differences.

Pharisees and Sadducees shared a common belief that acquiring wealth was the chief benefit of religion. The Sadducees were aristocrats in regard to their wealth and their adoption of the Greco-Roman lifestyle. Although the Pharisees intended to live religiously regulated lives, for them religion was also all about money. This is at the heart of Jesus' admonition to the disciples to be wary of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Though at first Jesus' disciples thought he was speaking about actual bread (Matt 16:6, 16:11–12), he explains that leaven is a metaphor for their teaching. Leaven is used in a positive sense in showing how the kingdom of God will expand (Luke 13:21). It can also have the opposite connotation in that a little evil can pollute what is otherwise good (1 Cor 5:8). In warning the disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, Jesus was saying what he had said in the Sermon on the Mount: that his followers are not to be anxious about their lives, what they shall eat and drink (Matt 6:25). Jesus' admonishment to be wary of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees did not have to do with any particular doctrine or, in the case of the Sadducees, lack of doctrine, but with their shared attitude that religion is about acquiring things that make existence in this life possible. The money given to the tomb guards bribing them to be silent about the events at the tomb of Jesus on the third day provides an example of how the Pharisees and Sadducees could, in spite of their differences, come together to use money to advance their own purposes. Financial benefits in keeping the resurrection of Jesus under cover outweighed the negative effects that its proclamation would have on them.

Warning the disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees follows after miraculous feedings of the five and four thousand, in which the disciples were

more focused on the miraculous multiplication of the loaves and the fish than on Jesus, who had performed the miracles. If they truly believed that Jesus was the Son of God, they would have not been concerned about not having brought any food with them for their trip on the road (Matt 16:6–12). Mark and Luke do not mention the Sadducees in the discourse on avoiding the leaven. In Luke, Jesus speaks of the leaven of the Pharisees and not of the Sadducees (Luke 12:1) and in Mark of the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod (Mark 8:15). For the Herodians, who worked to keep the family of Herod the Great in a position of power, religion was more about politics and less about particular beliefs.

Close to the beginning of his Gospel, John records a discourse in which Jesus asserts that his authority to raise the dead was given to him by the Father, who had appointed him the judge (John 5:26–29). Resurrection involves an inevitable moral accountability to God and his judgment. Resurrection is not a mere resuscitation of dead bodies but is followed by appearing before God in judgment. Jesus said, "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28–29). The Sadducees are not mentioned as taking part in this discourse, but since this discourse had to do with a teaching they were known to deny, it is likely that what Jesus had said about the resurrection did come to their attention.

Following Jesus' raising Lazarus from the dead, the Sadducees had become aware that if the movement of those following Jesus was not quelled, it would lead to their Roman overlords destroying Jerusalem and taking the people into exile (John 11:48–51). While John recognizes that what Caiaphas said was an apt description of the vicarious satisfaction by which Jesus would save the world, according to the evangelist, the high priest intended to state that the execution of Jesus was necessary to avoid the destruction of Jerusalem. What would happen with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 was seen about forty years before as inevitable unless something was done to avert it.

The adulation of the people for Jesus in his Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem moved the two groups to put their dislike for him into action in what would be the last week of his life. Each group would have been content to avoid bringing him to trial, if they could dispose of him by showing that his teaching compromised what the Jews believed. The Sadducees tried to do this with the doctrine of the resurrection and the Pharisees by asking him which is the most important commandment.

Matthew records three theological confrontations in Holy Week, formal enough as presented in the Gospels to be considered disputations. The first was instigated by the Pharisees, the second by the Sadducees, and the third by Jesus. Dogmatic implications can be recognized in Matthew's and Mark's sequence in

presenting these three disputations, beginning with that on the resurrection. This doctrine became the gateway doctrine for everything that the early church believed about Jesus. At first, one might not fully grasp who Jesus is, but without belief in his resurrection the discussion of whether he is the Son of God, a prophet, or an impostor cannot continue. Without the conviction that Jesus was raised from the dead, debate over other doctrines is inconsequential.

Questions posed by the Sadducees and the Pharisees reflect what each saw as essential to how religion is to be understood. This was also the case with Jesus, who saw recognition of himself as God as the climax of faith. Sadducee adherence to only the five books of Moses provided a framework for the response of Jesus to their question about the resurrection.

In these confrontations in the three synoptic Gospels, the Sadducees take the lead in asking Jesus whose wife a woman would be in the resurrection. They posed a scenario in which, after the death of her first husband, she had been married in succession to his six remaining brothers, each of whom died without fathering a child (Matt 22:23–33; Mark 12:18–27; Luke 20:27–39). Jesus might have responded to the Sadducees with an explicit reference to Ezekiel 37, in which the Spirit of God brings the dead back to life. However, to accommodate his opponents, he cites a passage from the Pentateuch, Exodus 3:6. Rather than interpreting Deuteronomy 25:5–6 or citing references to the resurrection in Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, books the Sadducees did not accept, Jesus refers to the Genesis account of creation, in which God creates the heavens—that is, the angels, whom mankind will resemble in the resurrection in being neither male nor female. Jesus then modulates his response to an even higher level by showing that the resurrection of the dead is not incidental to who God is, but belongs to who he is as the Creator. The God who brought Adam into existence from the dust of the ground to which he returned later made himself known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and showed thereby he was a God of the living and not of the dead (Matt 22:32; Mark 12:27; Luke 20:38).

As N. T. Wright notes, in this controversy, neither party believed that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had already been raised from the dead. But they believed that if they were alive in the presence of God, they would be raised in the future.[6] At the time, the majority Jewish population believed in the resurrection, as would the earliest Christians. It would be hard to show that the recording of these three accounts was intended to address the denial of the resurrection in the apostolic churches—for example, Corinth (1 Cor 15)—but the first of the synoptic evangelists had the precognition that this doctrine was foundational for the church as no other doctrine would be. The denial of the resurrection in these congregations can best be traced to

[6] Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 425.

converts who had not rid themselves of the common Greco-Roman thought that had no place for resurrection or, for that matter, any kind of meaningful afterlife. (Plato was an exception, and his belief in the immortality of the soul should not be confused with what Jesus and the apostles taught about survival after death.[7])

Putting the best construction on the question, the Sadducees could be seen as asking a question with practical consequences about how Deuteronomy 25:5 might be applied to a particular situation in which a man dies without issue, a situation that required his younger brothers in the order of their births to marry the widow of the previously deceased brothers. The firstborn sons of the six subsequent marriages would, according to Levitical law, receive a share of the inheritance twice the size of their younger brothers'. In the case presented to Jesus, the double inheritance of the first brother to die would go eventually to the oldest son of the seventh brother. Should there be other brothers from the final marriage, each would receive half of what that older brother would receive.

As ridiculous, or should we say amusing, as the question of whose wife the woman would be in the resurrection is, all three synoptic evangelists thought it important enough to record the episode of how intent the Sadducees were to undermine belief in Jesus' resurrection. The Sadducees had everything to gain for themselves in getting Jesus to raise doubts about the resurrection. Should there be no resurrection, the Sadducees would be spared at the judgment of giving an account of how they lived.

Since the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, they were not asking for clarity on what they believed. For them "people ceased to exist after death."[8] Therefore, their question borders on sophistry. Any answer to their question Jesus proposed would have been of no consequence. Posing the question to Jesus about whose wife a woman would be in the resurrection was intended to force Jesus to concede that it would better to say there is no resurrection than to agree with the absurdity that any woman had seven brothers as husbands. Their intent was to entrap Jesus in a dilemma from which he could not extricate himself, and so demonstrate that he was not the prophet of God that he said he was and that some people believed him to be. Caught in this dilemma, Jesus would have taken himself off the stage and the position of the Sadducees in Jewish civil and religious life would have remained secure. No drastic action like calling for his crucifixion would be necessary. But the Sadducees came up short in getting Jesus to deny the resurrection. Jesus had placed

[7] Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 49.

[8] Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 424. "The sect [the Sadducees], which had its beginning sometime after the Maccabean revolt, died out in A.D. 70, and we must construct its convictions from secondary sources." W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 3 vols., International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988–1997), 1:302.

his Sadducee interrogators in a corner, and for their own survival as religious and civil authorities in Judea, they had to take him out of the public square.

Among the evangelists, Luke alone reports that some scribes, who were tasked with preserving and interpreting the written Scriptures, commended Jesus for refuting the Sadducees (Luke 20:39). There is good reason to think that they were Pharisees. Obviously, they were not Sadducees. While Luke has no room for the self-justification of the Pharisees (Luke 18:10–18), because of their belief in the resurrection he is not totally negative toward them. No such latitude is shown to the Sadducees. For Luke, the Sadducees were without redeeming qualities.

In Matthew and Mark, the question of the Sadducees is followed by one posed by the Pharisees about which commandment in the Old Testament is the greatest—that is, the most important (Matt 22:34–40; Mark 12:28–34). In a third confrontation in the temple, in the earshot of the Sadducees, Jesus took the initiative and on the basis of Psalm 110:1 asked how David could call his son Lord: "The Lord says to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.'" How could David's son also be his Lord (Matt 22:41–46; Mark 12:35–37; Luke 20:41–44)? The question goes unanswered by the Pharisees; however, Jesus would soon provide an answer in his response to the high priest Caiaphas that he is the Christ, the Son of God—that is, he is David's son and Lord (Matt 26:63–64; Mark 14:61–62; Luke 22:66–71).

John's Gospel does not record this or other encounters in which the disputants are specified as Sadducees; however, Jesus was tried by the high priests Annas and Caiaphas, who were Sadducees.[9] These were trials and not disputations in which each party could set forth its position. Jesus' trial before these high priests was accusation by interrogation (John 18:13). The question of the high priest to Jesus whether he was the Christ, the Son of God, required a yes or no answer. It was not asked as an opportunity for discussion, though in Luke Jesus adds to his answer, saying that his interrogators will face judgment when they see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the power of God (Matt 26:63–64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:66–71). While John has a definite interest in the resurrection, by the time he wrote his Gospel, most likely at the end of the first century, the Sadducees had fallen off the political and theological radar screen, and this may have been reason enough for the evangelist not to mention them by name.

After Jesus responded to the high priest's question positively, he was sent to Pilate to impose the sentence of death by crucifixion for the crime of insurrection

[9] The high priests played crucial roles in the arrest and trial of Jesus. They were the ones to whom Judas went to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (Matt 26:14–16) and who authorized the soldiers to arrest Jesus in the garden and bring him to trial, for which they found witnesses to testify against him (Matt 26:47).

against the Roman government in claiming to be the king of the Jews, an accusation that Pilate did not take seriously (Matt 27:11, 27:23).[10] Then the Sadducee high priests led the chorus at the cross, saying that since Jesus said he was the Son of God, he should of his own accord come down from the cross. Since he said that God was his Father, his Father should come to his aid (Matt 27:41, 27:43).

On the day after Jesus expired, the Sabbath, the Sadducee high priests went with the Pharisees to ask Pilate to place a guard at his tomb to prevent the disciples from removing his body and proclaiming that he had risen from the dead (Matt 27:62–66). Conspiracy was in the air. While the Sadducees may have been lax in following Sabbath regulations, the Pharisees were not. In going into the residence of a Gentile, ruler or not, they were breaking Sabbath regulations, which the followers of Jesus avoided by postponing the completion of his burial until the first day of the week, two days later, on the third day. All three synoptic evangelists make the decisive point that the Pharisees were intent on showing that Jesus and his followers were breaking the Sabbath regulations (Matt 12:1–15; Mark 2:23–3:7; Luke 6:6–11). Yet going to Pilate on the Sabbath was, according to their own standards, a flagrant violation.

The Sadducees were involved from Jesus' arrest to his resurrection, events that would constitute the gospel, which his disciples would later proclaim. At the very dawn of Christianity, the Sadducees had to be reckoned with. "And as they [the apostles] were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (Acts 4:1). Jesus' resurrection more than any other event in his life would provide the foundation for the veracity of the claims that he made for himself and would constitute the content of apostolic proclamation. "And with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:33).

After the resurrection, the apostles preached in the synagogues and won many Jews over to Christianity. A shared belief in the resurrection with the Pharisees was a bridge for some of them to find their way into the church. But some, perhaps only a minority, insisted that Gentile converts had to be circumcised (Acts 15:5). Circumcision remained an option in identifying with Jews in the synagogues where Paul worked to win them over to the gospel. Paul circumcised Timothy (Acts 16:3) but resisted that Titus be circumcised (Gal 2:3). We can only presuppose that the majority of these former Pharisees joined the rank-and-file converts without raising

[10] It is generally understood that the "chief priests" and those of lower rank stirred up people to call for the crucifixion of Jesus: "Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the people to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus" (Matt 27:20). It is more likely that the high priests who arranged for the trial of Jesus were careful enough to make sure that crowds were on their side.

questions about circumcision. But some were not able to divest themselves of their adherence to circumcision, which identified them as descendants of Abraham and hence as the people of God (Gen 17:10), a sign that had been replaced by Baptism (Col 2:11), which makes no distinction between Jew and Gentile, male or female. Adherence to the ceremonial laws imposed by the Pharisees presented the greater problem (Rev 2:9, 3:9). Some claimed that these practices had been authorized by James, the brother of Jesus, who had taken over the leadership of the church in Jerusalem following Peter. They came to be known as the party of the circumcision (Gal 2:12), and at the council of Jerusalem they failed in persuading others that Gentile converts would be required to follow Jewish regulations (Acts 15:5).

Some rabbis, in repudiating Jesus as the Christ, succeeded in providing Judaism with an anti-Christian bias that has lasted into the present.

It would be hard to show that any Sadducees could find common ground with the Christians, simply because their denial of the resurrection stood at odds with the crucial Christian doctrine that Jesus had risen from the dead. One noticeable exception might be Ananias, who is sent to relieve Saul of his blindness and baptize him. This Ananias could have been named for Annas, maybe his grandfather, and would have been a Sadducee, though this can hardly be proved. He had the kind of information that a close family member would have: that the high priests had sent Saul to arrest believers in Damascus and to bring them to trial in Jerusalem (Acts 9:10–15). With the success of the apostles in Jerusalem, the high priestly family must have discussed among themselves how to prevent what they considered the scourge of Christian heresy from spreading to Damascus, with its Jewish population large enough that there was more than one synagogue.

That said, the Roman authorities were not able in every case to prevent their Jewish subjects from forming lynch mobs, as in the case of the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:57–59) or, in AD 62, when James, the brother of the Lord, was thrown down from a tower while the governor was out of town. This was one reason among many for Roman general Titus laying siege to Jerusalem in AD 66. At the arrest and trial of Peter for preaching the resurrection of Jesus, Annas had resumed the position of high priest (Acts 4:6). John and Alexander, presumably sons of Annas, and Caiaphas may have also participated in the deliberations on the fate of Peter, who had healed a forty-year-old lame man. No reason is given for Annas to refrain from imprisoning the apostles (Acts 4:21). It is likely that through their preaching of Jesus' resurrection, the apostles had gained so many adherents in Jerusalem that the high priests could no longer have the confidence that they had with the people on their side, as they had in calling for the crucifixion of Jesus. The three thousand that were added to the church by Peter preaching the resurrection of Jesus was not an insignificant number in a city with a population of about twenty-five thousand (Acts 2:41). Add

to this number the five thousand who later believed (Acts 4:4). The high priests who had been successful in having Jesus crucified were aware that in imprisoning the apostles, they might bring the wrath of the people upon themselves. In that case, the governor might have exercised his option of depriving the family of Annas of its privileged position in Jewish society.

Even if the imprisonment of the apostles was not the best option open to the high priests in stifling the Christian movement, there were other ways to keep the Christian movement at bay. Another option was intimidating believers not only in Jerusalem but also in Damascus. This task was assigned to a Pharisee by the name of Saul: to search out and arrest believers in the synagogues in Damascus and to bring them to Jerusalem for trial (Acts 9:1–2). This also was done under the authority of the Sanhedrin, who had authority over Jews outside of Jerusalem. Saul was well qualified for the assignment, since he had located the houses where the Christians were worshipping in Jerusalem and was dragging them off to court (Acts 8:3). These houses may have served as synagogues in which some Christians may have continued to congregate with family and friends. Paul knew of the events at the tomb accompanying the resurrection of Jesus either from the members of the Sanhedrin or from the synagogues where these matters were discussed or where the Christians themselves were members.

In being taken to court, Christians were probably asked the same question addressed to Jesus: whether they believed that he was the Christ, the Son of God. How could it have been otherwise? A positive response was enough for an arrest. Though improbable, it was not impossible that Saul was a member of the Sanhedrin. Either way, he certainly was at home with both its Sadducee and Pharisee members. It cannot be overlooked that he had access to the one who acceded to his request for authorization to arrest believers in Damascus and to provide him with a military detail to transport believers, most likely in chains, back from Damascus to Jerusalem for trial (Acts 9:1–2). When Paul wrote to the Philippians that he been a Pharisee who had persecuted the church (Phil 3:5), he must have had in mind that he was the one who asked for authorization from the Sadducee high priest to carry out the persecution of the believers in Damascus. His pride in being a Pharisee did not prevent him from making common cause with the Sadducees. He not only persecuted the church but also expanded persecution outside of Jerusalem.

In the salutation in his epistle to the Romans, Saint Paul identifies himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ, who by the resurrection was designated as the Son of God (Rom 1:1–4). Christ's resurrection is the irrefutable sign that Jesus is the Son of God.[11] Matthew makes seven references to the Sadducees, who, unlike the Pharisees,

[11] Thus, Wright titled his book *The Resurrection of the Son of God*.

did not allow for a resurrection of the dead of any kind. On this issue both the Sadducees, in denying a resurrection of any kind, and the Christians, in making Jesus' resurrection the evidence that he is the Son of God, had something to lose that would challenge the very heart of what each believed.

Luke finds a place for presenting the doctrine of the resurrection in Paul's three trials that follow his return to Jerusalem at the completion of his third missionary journey. In his trial in Jerusalem before the Sanhedrin, he found allies for his doctrine of resurrection among the Pharisees (Acts 23:6–9). Ananias, the high priest, before whom the trial was held (Acts 23:1–10), was most likely the son or grandson of Annas, for whom he might have been named and who had presided at the first trial of Jesus and had been present when Peter and the other apostles were called before the Sanhedrin for preaching the resurrection (Acts 4:6). Though the apostles preached that the resurrection is accomplished in Jesus, Paul preached about the resurrection as a doctrine that is true in and of itself. On this point the Pharisees could agree with him.[12] The God who returns man to the dust of the ground from which he was created would bring man back to life from the dust of the ground by the resurrection.[13]

With Titus beginning his siege of Jerusalem, the Sadducees found themselves without a hook on which to hang their political ambitions. Since they believed in close to nothing, they had no beliefs to preserve and were left without religious offspring. To their Roman benefactors they were expendable, as were the Pharisees who managed to gather themselves into synagogues wherever they found themselves. Anyone who survived the Roman slaughter and remained had to work in a desolate land ravaged by the conqueror's armies. Whether in the ravaged land of Judea or the more welcoming diaspora, the Sadducees were without patrons and lost their places of honor and authority. Their denials of the resurrection and the afterlife would hardly have earned the sympathy of their erstwhile competitors, the Pharisees. Wright says it well: "After AD 70 there were no Sadducees left to answer back or put the record straight."[14]

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[12] See Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 453. Wright lists the passages in his own translation: "I am on trial here concerning the hope, and the resurrection of the dead [ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν]" (Acts 23:6). ". . . having a hope toward God which these men themselves are awaiting, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous" (Acts 24:15). "I am on trial before you today concerning the resurrection of the dead [ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν]" (Acts 24:21). "Why should it be judged incredible by you that God should raise the dead [εἰ ὁ θεὸς νεκροὺς ἐγείρει]?" (Acts 26:8). ". . . that the Messiah would suffer, and that he would be the first out of the resurrection of the dead [πρῶτος ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν]" (Acts 26:23).

[13] In colloquial Lutheran terms, the resurrection is also a First Article matter in the Creator restoring what he had created.

[14] Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 131.

With the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, about forty years after Jesus stood trial before Annas and then Caiaphas, the Sadducees would literally disappear from the face of the earth, leaving behind no noticeable legacy, or, as N. T. Wright says, only an odd gravestone.[15]

Pharisees, most of whom were in exile after the fall of Jerusalem, had to survive what was for them a religiously catastrophic event. Now they had to constitute a religion without a temple and its sacrifices. Without sacrifices, there was no need for priests, and with the passing of time, there was less certainty about who could meet the qualification for a priest as a descendant of Aaron. With the exile to Babylon, they had created a Judaism that centered around the synagogue, whose worship services centered on the reading of Moses and the prophets. Thus, the destruction of the temple in AD 70 presented an experience that was not entirely new.

Whereas the Sadducees are prominent in Matthew, there is no trace of their influence in the epistles or hardly any even among the Jews after AD 70.[16] Whatever Platonic influence, with its exclusive attention to the soul and its degradation of the body, entered the church did not come by way of the Sadducees but through a Hellenism that was already morphing into Gnosticism, in which the soul was said to progress through different phases.[17] With the Roman siege of Jerusalem, the Sadducees had no place to go. As aristocrats, they had not identified with the general population, who under the influence of Pharisees observed their rituals and, for all their shortcomings, looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, as the Orthodox Jews do now. Had this not been so, Jesus' question to them concerning how David's son could be his Lord would have unintelligible (Matt 22:42–45; Mark 12:35–37; Luke 20:41–44).) The Sadducees had been at home in the social and intellectual world of the Roman occupiers, with whom they shared a common attitude to life and death.

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[15] Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 139.

[16] Wright notes that 1 Maccabees and Tobit show no concern for afterlife and that many Jews up to AD 70 also held to this view. The *Resurrection of the Son of God*, 139.

[17] Like the Greek philosophers before and after him and the ancient world in general, Plato did not hold to the resurrection of the body but was an exception in holding that the soul survived death. He also held that the soul existed before it was placed in the body and that at death it was released from this imprisonment, a belief that would resonate with some Christians. Furthermore, quite contrary to a view popular in the mid-twentieth century that an early Jewish Christianity had, in copying the Greek gods, morphed at the end of the first century into a more hellenized form with miracles, Jerusalem under Herod during the time of Jesus could already be regarded as a hellenized city. A Roman eagle was placed on the side portico of the temple, and it was not unlikely that the people knew it stood for Jupiter, king of the Roman gods. It is arguable that during the time of Jesus, the Jews were more at home with the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Old Testament, than they were with the Hebrew texts.

II. On an Early Date for Matthew

A date for the composition of Matthew even as late the 60s is unconvincing, since by that time the Jews were in rebellion against their Roman oppressors and the account of the disciples stealing the body of Jesus would have been of less importance among the inhabitants of Jerusalem than the turmoil that was in store for them. From the siege of Jerusalem until the city's destruction, the fate of the body of Jesus as a topic of conversation would have paled in comparison to the impending loss of Jewish national identity. Jesus predicted the destruction of the Jerusalem temple that was at the center of Jewish worship (Matt 24:2; Mark 13:2; Luke 21:6). By including four references in the genealogy of Jesus to the Babylonian Captivity, Matthew was reflecting on the signs that it could happen again (Matt 1:11–12, 1:17).

Since Mark and Luke do not include the accounts of the high priests covering up the events at the tomb of Jesus, it is unlikely that the story of the disciples stealing the body of Jesus gained traction anywhere outside of Jerusalem. It was the kind of story that, along with other accounts that took place at the tomb of Jesus, invited those who heard it to check out its veracity. This could be done by a visit to the place where Jesus was buried and to the field of blood, which had been bought by the money given to Judas by the high priests to betray Jesus and which Judas returned to them (Matt 27:3–8). These were places in the center of Jerusalem with which the inhabitants of Jerusalem were familiar.

Matthew wrote at a time when the places associated with the resurrection were still intact. With Titus laying siege to Jerusalem in 66 and reducing it to rubble in 70, a date for the composition of Matthew even in the 60s is unlikely, since in this decade its inhabitants were consumed in setting up a rival government to Rome. Survival and victory over the Romans had to be on their minds. Because their past influence with the conquerors had compromised them in the eyes of the people, the Sadducees would be rejected by those who were intent on establishing a government in opposition to their oppressors.

This presents a problem for dating the composition of Matthew anytime after 70, let alone 100. No allusion to the Sadducees is found in Paul's classic defense of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15, indicating that outside the reach of Jerusalem, the Sadducees, unlike the Pharisees, did not seek followers in the congregations Paul established, or at least they were unsuccessful. Unlike the Pharisees, they were not mission minded. Paul's defense of the resurrection in his trial before Agrippa, in which the Pharisees sided with him against the Sadducees on the doctrine of the

resurrection, took place in Jerusalem (Acts 23:6–8), where it remained at that time a hotly contested issue between the two groups.[18]

Another factor in coming to terms with when Matthew was written is the council of Jerusalem in 49. It met about fifteen to twenty years after the resurrection and at a time when, in spite of prior persecution, the early Christians were finding a place for themselves in the ordinary life of the city. Oddly, Matthew lacks a reference to the circumcision controversy or even an allusion to the topic that consumed the council in deciding whether it would be required of Gentile converts. These circumstances point to Matthew having been written before 49, when the church, whose members were predominantly Jewish, had not yet faced the issue.[19]

Supporting an early date for Matthew is not only the prominence of the Sadducees but also the absence of any reference in Matthew, either positive or negative, to Paul's doctrine of justification that comes through faith and not works of the law (Gal 2:16). If a doctrine of justification were to be drawn out of Matthew, it would be one in which the eschatological dimension would be prominent, according to which Jesus as the Son of Man returns to reward those who have done good to his disciples and to bring judgment on those who have not (Matt 25:31–46). Justification is understood from the perspective of the judgment, when God vindicates himself in rewarding the followers of Jesus for what they have done. In Christ's acknowledging those who have done good to his brothers and rejecting those who have not, he shows that he is righteous in doing the just thing.

This is a difference of perspective and not substance. Paul speaks of justification in terms of how the believer understands himself as acceptable to God, and he challenges any idea of self-justification in which one's confidence for salvation depends on his having kept the law. Luke's parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector in the temple is best understood within the terms of Paul's perspective of justification, according to which one is justified with a self-awareness of sin but without self-

[18] Herod Agrippa came close to being convinced in the argument that Paul made for Christianity, which would have included belief in the resurrection. "'King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.' And Agrippa said to Paul, 'In a short time you think to make me a Christian!'" (Acts 26:27–28). It is likely that in order to bolster his credentials as a Jewish king, Herod had his children brought up by teachers who were likely Pharisees, who represented prevailing Jewish thought at the time. Paul's question assumed that Agrippa knew and believed the prophets.

[19] The debate over the necessity of circumcising converts was an issue for the apostles in the Gentile churches and remained so into the second century, but not a hint of this controversy found its way into the pages of Matthew, the most Jewish of the Gospels. Absence of a reference to circumcision is hard to explain, unless Matthew was written before Paul's first missionary journey to Galatia, his epistle to that church, and the council of Jerusalem. It is understandable that the practice of circumcision remained a rallying point for Jews, since it had been commanded by the God of Abraham and identified them as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1 Pet 2:9).

confidence in one's accomplishments (Luke 8:10–14). Paul sees justification existentially in that the believer, wanting to know that he is acceptable to God, looks not within himself but to Christ's atonement for sin and his resurrection: Christ, who "was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Rom 4:25). Jesus typically speaks of justification as that event bringing time to an end, at which he will raise all the dead and welcome into his Father's kingdom those who in his name have shown mercy to others. The resurrection is the occasion for that justification, when he will show to all men and angels that he did the right thing in saving believers. This was a justification the Sadducees worked to avoid by denying the resurrection.

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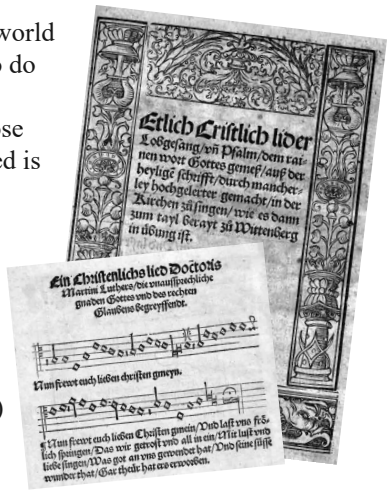

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CTQ 88 (2024): 161–184

Dissension in the Making of *The Lutheran Hymnal*

Paul J. Grime

Anyone who has made any inquiry at all into the development of *The Lutheran Hymnal* (hereafter *TLH*) knows that those who worked diligently on the project were, for the most part, concerned with the hymn choices for that significant book.[1] The extensive collection of committee minutes, later compiled and corrected by the committee secretary, Bernhard Schumacher, report at length on such matters and only occasionally make reference to any discussion on other aspects of the project.[2] This is particularly the case with regard to the services in *TLH*. The official minutes contain barely a dozen references to any consideration of liturgical matters, with the topics under discussion usually reported with just a few sentences.[3] By all accounts, the development of the non-hymnic portion of *TLH* was but a blip on the radar of those charged with producing the second English-language hymnal of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Such a paucity of information might lead one to conclude that the liturgical section in *TLH* was mostly an afterthought in the minds of those who were entrusted to prepare the book. That, however, is not an accurate picture. The compilers of *TLH* did, in fact, give more than passing attention to the services, especially the chief service. What is more, there was not unanimity concerning the content and even the musical form of what eventually became known as the "Page 15" service in *TLH*.

The evidence for these assertions begins with some intriguing marginalia in a copy of *TLH* that belonged to Gervasius Fischer, a pastor in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), who served on the Sub-committee for Liturgics that

[1] The Intersynodical Committee on Hymnology and Liturgics for the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America, *The Lutheran Hymnal* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941).

[2] Minutes of the Committee on Hymnology and Liturgics, 1929–1955—Schumacher Set [including the minutes of the Synodical Conference Hymn Book Committee]; box 1; Minutes, 1929–2009; LCMS Commission on Worship Records; Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis; (hereafter cited as Syn. Conf. Hymn Book Committee minutes).

[3] See Jeffrey J. Zetto, "Aspects of Theology in the Liturgical Movement in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod 1930–1960" (ThD diss., Christ Seminary—Seminex, 1982), 613–621, for a listing in the official minutes of any reports and actions concerning the services in *TLH*.

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assisted in the preparation of *TLH*.[4] On the inside front cover of this hymnal, Fischer noted the following.

> This Souvenir Copy was received June 21, 1941 as a gift from the Concordia Publishing House. Members of Subcommittee on Liturgics:
>
> Rev. O. Schmidt, chairman
> G. W. Fischer, sec.
> Rev. Dr. A. Wismar
> Rev. Carl Bergen
> Rev. A. Harstadt [read: Harstad]
> Dr. P. E. Kretzmann
>
> The music of Liturgy herein is not that which we recommended. Committee favored Gregorian tones to English chants, also that music be not printed with the Liturgy to allow for greater variety of melodies to be used. Music for liturgy was to be printed in a special section of book. Committee favored some form of Eucharistic Prayer.

In that short concluding paragraph Fischer enunciated three aims of the subcommittee that were not realized in the final publication: (1) a preference for a Gregorian setting of the services rather than Anglican chant, (2) a text-only version of the service so that it could be easily sung to more than one melody, and (3) some form of a Eucharistic Prayer.

Having previously carried out some cursory research on the milieu in which *TLH* was prepared, I found Fischer's inscription to be of more than a little interest.[5] Here was evidence that the Sub-committee for Liturgics had made specific proposals that were not implemented. For all our assumptions of *TLH* being a beloved and universally accepted hymnal, which it was, there apparently were disagreements when it came to certain aspects of its development, and disagreements that seem to have lingered beyond the publication of the hymnal.

Over the past few years Gervasius Fischer's inscription has taken me on a search. First it was off to Concordia Historical Institute to rifle through the papers of William Polack, a professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis who served as chairman of the synod's Committee on Hymnology and Liturgics and director of the *TLH* project. While his papers provide some useful tidbits of information, they are sorely

[4] It was James Tiefel, longtime professor of worship and choir director at the WELS seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin, who, during a casual conversation, tipped me off to Fischer's personal hymnal and provided a scan of Fischer's marginalia.

[5] Paul J. Grime, "The Common Service in *Lutheran Service Book*: The Enduring Influence of *The Lutheran Hymnal*," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 89, no. 3 (Fall 2016): 9–23, and "*The Lutheran Hymnal* and Its Role in the Shaping of *Lutheran Service Book*," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 79, no. 3–4 (July/October 2015): 195–219.

lacking in material prior to the 1940s—most significantly, the crucial decade of the '30s, when *TLH* was developed. Further searches at the institute turned up little else that is of much help concerning the development of *TLH*.

One of the other members of that subcommittee, Adolph Wismar, caught my eye in that his grandson, Gregory Wismar, is a retired pastor in Connecticut who served on the Commission on Worship during my last six years with the commission. Knowing of Greg's deep interest in his family's history, I wondered whether he perhaps would have access to helpful materials from his grandfather's collection. But, alas, all of his grandfather's papers were destroyed in a basement flood in the 1960s.

There was yet another member of that subcommittee who held out some hope: Carl Bergen.[6] Through some fortuitous connections I was able to obtain some of his personal papers. Included in those papers were not only a number of file folders containing records of the Liturgical Society of Saint James, but also a folder of materials related to the *TLH* Sub-committee for Liturgics, including minutes of several of their meetings—minutes that to the best of my knowledge exist nowhere else.

More recently, I made another advance by visiting the WELS Archives in Waukesha, Wisconsin. Fortunately, Gervasius Fischer apparently did not like throwing things away. Of his voluminous holdings, five boxes of materials held out some hope. Over the course of a day, I was able to scan over one hundred documents that pertained one way or another to the topic at hand.[7] Very quickly, it became evident to me that a fair amount of corroborating evidence exists that sheds light on Fischer's comments in his souvenir copy of *TLH* and more generally on the development of the liturgical section of *TLH*. With any luck, what we learn on those counts will also shed some light on liturgical developments in the LCMS over the past eighty-plus years.

To proceed, I will first provide a little background to a few significant individuals who were key players in this story. Next, I will briefly review the process by which *TLH* was developed. Then I will dive into a few of the issues that animated the work of the liturgy subcommittee.[8]

---

[6] I actually met Carl Bergen briefly a quarter century ago when his nephew, then Ohio District president Ronald Bergen, introduced me to his very aged uncle while I was in the district for a presentation. Had I known then what I know now, I would have peppered Carl with questions. But I did not. Nephew Ronald put me in contact with Carl's son, Daniel, who graciously sent me the papers, which, after my research is complete, will be deposited in the archives of Concordia Historical Institute.

[7] Thanks go to my son Nathan, who assisted me that day.

[8] While I have far more material than I can reasonably cover in a single article, there are still gaps in the data currently at hand that I can only hope to fill in one day through additional archival discoveries.

The People

Though to the best of my knowledge he did not actually figure prominently in the development of *TLH*, any investigation of liturgical activity in the LCMS in the 1930s must begin with Berthold von Schenk (1895–1974). To say that "Sam," as he usually signed his letters, was a colorful character is an understatement. Based on his posthumously published autobiography, one could reasonably conclude that he viewed himself as somewhat larger than life.[9] Here was a man who routinely thought outside the box. He was not afraid, for example, to preach on the street corners of St. Louis during and immediately after his studies at Concordia Seminary. When the Spanish flu epidemic of 1918—the start of his ministry—shut down the churches, he sensed an opportunity, sending out postcards around the neighborhood with biblical passages and words of encouragement, resulting in people flocking to his congregation when the churches were allowed to reopen. Recognizing that it was a long shot, he accepted a call to Hoboken, New Jersey, where a church near the slums and docks had but a handful of people still attending services. Von Schenk's vision was to bring beauty to the people who inhabited these slums, which meant services that were richly endowed with the ornamentation of ornately colored paraments and vestments as well as "a well-regulated church music"—to use the language of J. S. Bach—that featured multiple choirs singing Gregorian chant.

It was von Schenk's interest in introducing beauty into the service that led in short order to the establishment of the Liturgical Society of Saint James (hereafter LSSJ). By natural attraction, several other pastors in the greater New York City area began collaborating with him as together they encouraged each other toward a richer liturgical practice in their congregations. Von Schenk served the last two decades of his ministry at Our Saviour Lutheran in the Bronx, where he cultivated a vibrant church life that boasted not only a large elementary but also a high school. Here, too, a rich liturgical life was fostered with weekly Communion becoming the norm.

It was at the Hoboken congregation that von Schenk met up with another player in our story, namely, Carl Bergen (1903–2000), who served his vicarage under von Schenk in 1925 and 1926. Following graduation from the seminary, he returned there to serve as von Schenk's assistant for a year (1928–1929).[10] Bergen's particular contribution to this story was his musical training, especially his study of liturgical chant. In fact, such was his knowledge of the subject that he taught in New York City at Union Theological Seminary's School of Sacred Music. Bergen was a key member

[9] Berthold von Schenk, *Lively Stone: The Autobiography of Berthold von Schenk*, ed. C. George Fry and Joel R. Kurz (Delhi, NY: American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, 2006).

[10] Von Schenk, *Lively Stone*, 43n61.

of the inner circle that animated the LSSJ. He served his entire ministry in New Jersey congregations along the western bank of the Hudson River, with the two decades before his retirement as pastor in von Schenk's previous parish in Hoboken.

Beyond the strong influence he had in matters of music, perhaps Carl Bergen's most significant legacy in regard to this present study is the small trove of documents that he saved for posterity. For example, he carefully kept a separate file of the yearly activities of the LSSJ from 1929 until 1947, by which point the society had moved to Valparaiso University and would soon be absorbed into the latter's Institute of Liturgical Studies. During the crucial years of the LSSJ, Bergen's file folders are fairly thick, while in other years he saved only an item or two. In all likelihood, however, a number of those artifacts exist nowhere else. Bergen's meticulous filing has proven of great benefit in establishing a reliable timeline.

A close associate of Carl Bergen both in the LSSJ and in the work on *TLH* was Adolph Wismar (1884–1977), pastor during the 1930s of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Matthew in New York City, the oldest Lutheran church in America, as the congregation's letterhead proudly asserted. With an earned doctorate in Oriental languages from Columbia University, Wismar was the bona fide scholar in what might be called the nascent liturgical movement in the LCMS.[11] He would eventually take the reins of leadership of the LSSJ from von Schenk—not without some drama—and would rather late in his life spend twelve years as a professor of religion at Valparaiso University. He would be a key player on the *TLH* Sub-committee for Liturgics and take a particularly active role in trying to shape the final product.

Lastly, we step outside of the LCMS to give attention to Gervasius Fischer, the WELS pastor. It is important to remember that *TLH* was not solely a product of the LCMS but was a jointly developed hymnal of the Synodical Conference. Next to the LCMS, which dwarfed the other participating church bodies in both size and influence, it was the WELS that provided the most significant manpower to aid in its development. Fischer was a pastor of various parishes in Wisconsin during the development of *TLH*. He served as secretary for the *TLH* Sub-committee for Liturgics and, like a good secretary, saved a fair amount of his correspondence.

Fischer's attitude toward the church's historic rites and ceremonies was probably quite uncharacteristic from what one would have found in the majority of WELS congregations in the 1930s, not to mention from the LCMS. Within his own church body his greatest contribution was undoubtedly his persistent encouragement that congregations grow in their understanding of how the church has worshipped over

[11] His obituary asserted his knowledge of eighteen languages. "Adolph P. L. Wismar," obituary, *New York Times*, January 20, 1977.

the centuries and, furthermore, develop a richer practice at the local level. His most significant effort toward that goal was the publication of a two-part essay in the *Theologische Quartalschrift* titled "What Benefits May Be Derived from More Emphasis on the Study of Liturgics,"[12] and then, in anticipation of the release of *TLH*, a series of ten articles in *The Northwestern Lutheran* that were written for the laity.[13] There can be little doubt that his efforts contributed toward the fairly strong embrace of *TLH* within the WELS, especially given the fact that the services that appeared in *TLH* were considerably more complete than anything the WELS had had prior to 1941.[14]

The Beginnings

The LCMS Committee on Hymnology and Liturgics, appointed by LCMS President Friedrich Pfotenhauer shortly after the 1929 synod convention, first convened near the end of November of the same year, with William G. Polack, a professor at Concordia Seminary, serving as the chairman. Already by the second meeting in January 1930, plans to bring other church bodies in the Synodical Conference into the development of a new hymnal were coming to fruition as representatives of the other church bodies joined the Missouri contingent. Henceforth, the chief committee tasked with work on *TLH* was known as the Synodical Conference Hymn Book Committee (referenced hereafter as the plenary committee).

And that is exactly what it was: a committee working on a book of hymns. For the next four years, this plenary committee focused almost exclusively on matters of hymn texts and tunes. They appointed subcommittees to focus on various categories of hymns, such as German-language hymns, English and Australian hymns, Scandinavian hymns, and hymns of ancient and medieval origin. The committee also worked from the premise that hymns contained in a core group of existing hymnals should be addressed early on for inclusion in the new book. They established a music committee to address the ever-thorny issue of tune choice as well as variants in tunes that existed in different traditions.

It was not until April 19, 1934, that the plenary committee established a subcommittee that would give exclusive attention to the services in the forthcoming hymnal. To this Sub-Committee for Liturgics the plenary committee appointed the

[12] Pts. 1 and 2, *Theologische Quartalschrift* 35, no. 2 (April 1938): 109–130; 36, no. 2 (April 1939): 97–118.

[13] Published over ten consecutive issues from September 1940 through June 1941.

[14] The first English-language hymnal in the WELS, *The Church Hymnal* (1910), contained 115 hymns and just four pages of service materials. This was soon replaced by an expanded hymnal, *Book of Hymns* (1920). Containing 320 hymns, it also had two orders (forms) of service, with the Communion service following the second. By all accounts, the liturgical chaos that reigned in much of the LCMS prior to the publication of *TLH* was also present in the WELS.

following: O. Geisemann (or W. Moll, should Geisemann decline the appointment), O. H. Schmidt (in case Geisemann declined), P. E. Kretzmann, P. Sauer, A. Wismar, C. Bergen, G. W. Fischer of the WELS, and A. Harstad of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (then the Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church). As it turned out, neither Pastors Moll nor Geisemann ever served on the subcommittee. Likewise, Sauer's name never appeared in any of the extant minutes of the subcommittee.

It would be two years before this Sub-committee for Liturgics received any mention in the official minutes of the plenary committee. What transpired in the meantime? What is clearly evident is that the members of the subcommittee wasted little time in beginning their work. Within six weeks of their appointment they were already meeting. The date: June 1, 1934. The location: Grace Lutheran Church in Cleveland. The impetus for such a hastily planned meeting seems clear, for it was on the last two days of May that the third conference of the LSSJ met at the very same church. Two members of the Sub-committee for Liturgics happened to be board members of the LSSJ—namely, Adolph Wismar and Carl Bergen. What better time to convene the first meeting than when several members of the subcommittee were already going to be meeting with other pastors who shared similar interests in liturgics?

We need to step back, however, and ponder the significance—one might say, surprise—of the plenary committee appointing Wismar and Bergen to the Subcommittee for Liturgics in the first place. Just seven months earlier, the LSSJ had sponsored their second liturgical conference, this one at Trinity Lutheran Church in Detroit. Though similar to the society's first ever conference in Hoboken in May 1933, the September 1933 conference in Detroit brought the LSSJ into the limelight in a way they were likely not expecting. A few months after that fall conference several pieces of correspondence passed between a few concerned laymen in the Detroit area and Polack. A letter from Walter Dreyer, written on February 11, 1934, thanks Polack for his previous reply (which is not included in Polack's papers). Dreyer explained that he was not attempting to stir up trouble but simply wanted to defend "our dear Lutheran Church and . . . preserve it from becoming tainted with Catholicism."[15] Expressing his wonderment that after seven years of existence the LSSJ had never been investigated by the synod, he offered his assistance in providing information about "local conditions."[16]

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[15] Walter H. Dreyer to W. G. Polack, February 11, 1934, William Gustave Polack (1890–1950) Papers, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

[16] Writing on his business letterhead, Dreyer closed his letter with a postscript in which he apologized for the handwritten letter, explaining that he did "not wish to let [his] Presbyterian stenographer know about this controversy"!

In his reply just a few days later, Polack fell back on a typically Missourian stance—namely, that like any other organization in the synod—he gave the Lutheran Laymen's League and the Walther League as examples—the LSSJ had a right to exist so long as it did not promote false doctrine. And since, in his view, "liturgics belongs to the so-called 'adiaphora,' things indifferent," they were within their rights to teach and promote as they pleased. He did add that he was personally interested in reactions of the laity vis-à-vis the movement and that, in general, he did not believe the heaping up of ceremonies would appeal to the majority of church members. In a subtle fanning of the flames, Polack indicated that he would like to know whether Dreyer's opinions were reflected in the opinions of others and then concluded, "I can imagine no quicker way of discouraging our pastors from promoting the work of the St. James' Society than to find the lay-people solidly against it."[17]

It appears that Walter Dreyer did attempt to raise up the laity against the LSSJ, at least to some degree. A month later, two separate pieces of correspondence were sent to Polack on the same day. One was a brief reply from Dreyer, thanking Polack for "investigating" the LSSJ.[18] The second came from C. H. Willits, who concluded his letter with the self-description "a protesting Lutheran!" With no reference to Walter Dreyer, he asked how the LSSJ could be allowed to exist, being the "menace" that they were to "true Lutheranism," while at heart they were obviously Roman Catholics. He pointed in particular to the LSSJ's "abominable" publication *Pro Ecclesia Lutherana* and their clear attempt to dig up "pagen [*sic*] ideas from the 16th century which we fought so hard to get rid of."

Willits was not done. In an example of why archival research can sometimes be so much fun, he fulminated, "The idea of Lutheran ministers to dress themselves up in petticoats, shawls, quilts, scarfs, dunce-caps, bowing, and crossing themselves, chanting, and mumbling to themselves, smokeing [*sic*] incense, carrying the Crucifix on a stick, ahead of the parade, Oh! It is horrible! such Idolatry! In conclusion, he issued a call to arms: "'Ye men of God arise'! stamp out this evil with the help of God."[19]

Another piece of correspondence arrived yet a week later from Nellie Dreyer (Mrs. O. H. Dreyer).[20] She too had read *Pro Ecclesia Lutherana*. Her accusation, however, centered on the notoriety the LSSJ had gained because of their Detroit conference, citing the March 10 issue of *Literary Digest*. Though she provided no detail, her conclusion drew no punches: "We Lutherans must hang our heads in

[17] W. G. Polack to Walter H. Dreyer, February 14, 1934, William Gustave Polack (1890–1950) Papers.

[18] Walter H. Dreyer to W. G. Polack, March 12, 1934, William Gustave Polack (1890–1950) Papers.

[19] C. H. Willits to W. G. Polack, March 12, 1934, William Gustave Polack (1890–1950) Papers.

[20] It is impossible to ascertain what relationship she may have had to Walter Dreyer.

shame, while Rome is silently watching the out-come. I hope I am writing to one who sees the danger of this movement and [will] take action against this society."[21]

The reason these local reactions to the 1933 LSSJ conference in Detroit are pertinent to this study is the surprising move of the plenary committee just four weeks after Polack received that last letter. For on April 19, 1934, the plenary committee that Polack chaired—and, by all appearances, with a fairly firm hand—appointed Wismar and Bergen, two of the more prominent members of the LSSJ, to the Sub-committee for Liturgics for the forthcoming hymnal. It is somewhat puzzling what one should make of this action. Was Polack toying with Walter Dreyer in the middle of February when he voiced his doubts about the value of such an emphasis on the heaping of ceremonies, given that two months later he would give his approval to the inclusion of these "romanizing" influencers in the LSSJ on the very committee that would shape the services in the new hymnal? Or were his sympathies congruent with his comments to Dreyer (which leads one to ask whether the appointment of Wismar and Bergen was merely to appease the small but vocal liturgical wing in the LCMS, perhaps assuming that the other members of the committee, particularly the WELS representative, would moderate or blunt their views)?

There is another member of the Sub-committee for Liturgics who requires our attention—namely, Paul Edward Kretzmann. "P. E.," as he is better known, is probably remembered most for his four-volume popular commentary on the Bible. He was, however, a jack-of-many-trades. He taught science and math, for example, at Concordia College, St. Paul, and for a time served as managing editor at Concordia Publishing House. For over two decades he was a professor at the St. Louis seminary. He published on a wide variety of topics, including a rather comprehensive book on Christian art and its use in worship.[22] It is not surprising, therefore, that Kretzmann would be appointed to some committee working on the forthcoming hymnal.

Shortly before his appointment to the Sub-committee for Liturgics, Kretzmann wrote a set of nine "Aphorisms on the 'Liturgical Movement'" that comprised a single legal-size sheet of paper.[23] The handwritten date on the archive copy reads "Feb. 1934." While it is impossible to confirm this date, there is no reason to doubt its accuracy. The first aphorism strongly suggests that Kretzmann wrote the aphorisms

[21] Nellie (Mrs. O. H.) Dreyer to W. G. Polack, March 20, 1934, William Gustave Polack (1890–1950) Papers.

[22] Paul E. Kretzmann, *Christian Art in the Place and in the Form of Lutheran Worship* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921). While the first words of the title suggest a book primarily about art, Kretzmann is rather comprehensive in his treatment of worship, including an extensive historical overview as well as a discussion on hymnody and other topics. For more on Kretzmann, who apparently never taught liturgics at the seminary, see Zetto, "Aspects of Theology in the Liturgical Movement," 10, 468n37.

[23] Folder 3, box 1, supplement 1, Paul Edward Kretzmann (1883–1965) Papers, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis.

in reaction to some recent event: "According to recent official developments and declarations, including the modified statement of objectives and policies; the 'Liturgical Movement' has excellent possibilities for good (provided it remains within the boundaries of Biblical and Lutheran principles and succeeds in restraining such men affiliated with it as are going off on a tangent and thereby threatening to bring discredit on laudable objectives)." What exactly were these "recent official developments and declarations"? The likely candidate is an essay that von Schenk, then leader of the LSSJ, presented at that infamous Detroit conference in September 1933—an essay that was published shortly thereafter in the first issue of the society's journal, *Pro Ecclesia Lutherana*.[24] The tone of von Schenk's address was rather general and, on the whole, somewhat defensive. Repeatedly he emphasized that the society was not promoting anything new but only recovering what had been lost since the Reformation.[25]

In response not only to von Schenk's appeal to the liturgical practices of early Lutheranism but also to similar attitudes of all the authors in that first volume of *Pro Ecclesia Lutherana*, Kretzmann issued a direct challenge in his second aphorism: "It is inadvisable to base arguments for an extensive liturgical program on the survival of certain pre-Reformation features in certain parts of the Lutheran Church; not only because exceptions are inconclusive in themselves, but also because such features may have been carried along more by conservatism and inertia than by a proper appreciation of the Biblical position and by the example of the early Christian Church." In another aphorism he cautioned against any undue focus on externals, noting how in the history of the church this often led to "doctrinal indifference and deterioration in spiritual life." And in yet another aphorism, he cautioned strongly against the danger of clericalism: "The form of church polity in the Lutheran Church, like that of the Apostolic Church; after which it is modeled, is strictly democratic, with no recognition of the distinction between 'clergy' and 'laity,' especially not that of a priestly or clerical order or station, and all rites and usages whose symbolish [*sic*] points in that direction are contrary to Lutheran principles resting upon the Word of God."[26]

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[24] Berthold von Schenk, "Policies of the Society," *Pro Ecclesia Lutherana* 1, no. 1 (1933): 1–6. Given that the laypeople referenced earlier had read this issue by March, the editors must have moved quickly following the late September 1933 conference.

[25] "We are bringing nothing new, nothing which is not our own possession. We are promulgating no new doctrines, nor are we denying any of them. Therefore, the work of the Society of St. James cannot be called un-Lutheran, nor can charges be made that the Society in its work and services is aping the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England, nor can the charge be made of Romanizing tendencies." Von Schenk, "Policies of the Society," 1.

[26] Kretzmann, "Aphorisms."

One almost gets the sense that Kretzmann was auditioning for an appointment to the Sub-committee for Liturgics! Given that he and Polack were colleagues on the St. Louis seminary faculty, it is quite possible that they conversed about the correspondence arriving from Detroit early in 1934, exactly the time when Kretzmann apparently drew up his aphorisms. There is little doubt that Kretzmann would have read the first issue of *Pro Ecclesia Lutherana*, given that the following year he published a brief review of the second issue in the seminary's journal, *Concordia Theological Monthly*.[27]

Without further evidence, one can only speculate on the reasons why these six men were appointed to the Sub-committee for Liturgics. At their first meeting on June 1, 1934, the committee gave assignments to each of the members. Among the topics Kretzmann was to address were "Guiding principles in the whole question of liturgics in the Lutheran Church according to the accepted confessions of the church."[28] The very brief minutes from the meeting the following June in River Forest indicate that Kretzmann was not in attendance for what appears in any case to have been a very short meeting.[29]

There is, however, evidence suggesting that Kretzmann may have shared his aphorisms with members of the subcommittee. That evidence consists of a two-page paper in Carl Bergen's files, specifically in the LSSJ folder marked "1934," with the heading "Concerning the Liturgical Movement." It is neither signed nor dated, though there is no reason to doubt that Bergen's filing of the paper in the 1934 folder is accurate. What makes this brief document so intriguing is how it appears to rebut a number of Kretzmann's aphorisms. While my initial consideration of this document had led me to assume that von Schenk had authored it, I am more inclined at this point to ascribe the authorship to Adolph Wismar, one of the two LSSJ members who had recently been appointed to serve on the Sub-committee for Liturgics. Perhaps Kretzmann shared his aphorisms with the other subcommittee members sometime after their June 1934 meeting, to which Wismar then responded.[30]

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[27] Paul E. Kretzmann, review of *Pro Ecclesia Lutherana* vol. 2, *Concordia Theological Monthly* 6, no. 4 (April 1935): 318.

[28] Minutes of the Sub-committee for Liturgics, June 1, 1934, papers of Carl Bergen, in the author's possession. Interestingly, Kretzmann was not in attendance at the morning session but was listed as present in the afternoon session when the assignments were made.

[29] These minutes, only a half-page in length, are missing from Carl Bergen's papers but are included in Fischer's files. Minutes of the Sub-committee for Liturgics, June 6, 1935, The Gervasius William Fischer Collection, WELS Archives, Waukesha, WI.

[30] Again, this is purely speculative. That Bergen filed the unsigned document in his LSSJ files would suggest that the document was LSSJ business and not related to the work on the Subcommittee for Liturgics. But perhaps Wismar, who at some point in the second half of 1934 had assumed leadership of the LSSJ after von Schenk's withdrawal, shared his thoughts with fellow members of the LSSJ, and thus Bergen filed the papers there. Either way, the similarities between the two documents cannot be denied.

There is yet one more curious piece of correspondence—namely, a letter that Kretzmann wrote to Gervasius Fischer a few weeks after that first meeting of the Sub-committee for Liturgics. In the letter, Kretzmann thanks Fischer for sending the minutes from their meeting. He then moves on to their shared interest: "You are right in stating that one must make a very careful study of the whole field of liturgics, in order not to be led astray by some enthusiastic utterances which have *recently been made*."[31] He goes on to offer helpful suggestions regarding various studies in liturgics that Fischer might want to examine. Very quickly he wraps up his short note with this advice: "One really requires a very wide background for studies of this type, otherwise there is danger of going off on a tangent."

The letter has the feel of a seminary professor offering friendly advice to a parish pastor. In all likelihood, the two had never met before the subcommittee meeting earlier that summer, coming as they did from different synods. But at the risk of reading too much into one little letter, I have to ask whether Kretzmann was perhaps gently feeling out his new acquaintance in the hope of steering him away from what he would undoubtedly have considered to be the excesses of the LSSJ and the two members of that organization on the subcommittee.

While the archival record provides more that we might consider regarding the beginnings of the work of the Sub-committee for Liturgics, it is necessary to move on, focusing specifically on the three issues that Gervasius Fischer identified in his souvenir copy of *TLH*—namely, (1) a Gregorian setting of the Ordinary, (2) a text-only version of the service, and (3) the inclusion of a Eucharistic Prayer.

What Might Have Been

It was the third meeting of the Sub-committee for Liturgics, which took place on October 22–23, 1936, back in Cleveland, when the intentions of the committee members began to become apparent as three of the issues came into clear view. Taking the second point first, the minutes clearly state that the subcommittee's preference was for a single version of the service without any music to "avoid the tendency to sing only one melody, even though others are given in other parts of the hymnal."[32] A clear example of what they meant by that can be found in the predecessor hymnal, the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* of 1912 (hereafter *ELHB*). The last section of hymns in that book, under the heading "Chants," included Johann

[31] P. E. Kretzmann to Gervasius W. Fischer, July 25, 1934, The Gervasius William Fischer Collection; emphasis added.

[32] "Minutes of Third Meeting of Committee on Liturgics," October 22–23, 1936, p. 3, papers of Carl Bergen.

Spangenberg's 1545 setting of the Gloria in Excelsis.[33] It seems evident that most congregations simply sang the Anglican chant setting of the Gloria as it appeared in the printed service and seldom, if ever, turned to the back of the hymnal to sing this alternate setting.

Included in the minutes of that third meeting of the subcommittee is a detailed listing of different musical settings for most every part of the Divine Service. For example, for the Kyrie they proposed the following settings.

> The music in *ELHB*, but revised
> Kyrie No. 16 (Ferias) Mode 3
> Kyrie X (Orbis Factor)
> Farced Kyrie (Gott Vater in, No. 7)

For the Gloria in Excelsis, the minutes gave the following settings.

> Gloria No. 568 (the Spangenberg setting, with meter changes to be suggested by Bergen)
> Gloria in Excelsis XII (Per Cuneta)
> Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr
> All Ehr und Lob soll Gottes sein

And so it went with every other part of the service. In addition to the musical settings that appeared in the Common Service in *ELHB*, the sub-committee proposed other settings, mostly Gregorian in style, as alternates: a setting of the Creed from the St. Dunstan edition, the Sanctus in both Gregorian Modes 3 and 5, and the Agnus Dei in Modes 5 and 6.[34] Anyone familiar with the Liturgical Music section in *Lutheran Service Book* will quickly recognize what the subcommittee members were proposing: alternate settings of the Ordinary.[35] The only difference that the subcommittee members envisioned was that the actual order of service in the front of the new hymnal would have had no music at all, just texts that could be sung to any number of settings.

A month later, the chairman of the subcommittee, the Reverend Otto Schmidt of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Valparaiso, gave the first report of the subcommittee's work to the plenary committee. Included in that report was their recommendation to print no music within the orders of service and to include a variety of

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[33] *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, [1912]), 482–485 (no. 568).

[34] "Minutes of Third Meeting of Committee on Liturgics," 3–4. Several Gregorian settings of the liturgy were published in the series The Saint Dunstan Edition, such as Charles Winfried Douglas, *Missa Marialis: A Festival Service for the Holy Eucharist Adapted to the American Liturgy and Harmonized for Accompaniment*, The Saint Dunstan Edition (New York: H. W. Gray, 1915).

[35] The Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, ed., *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 942–963.

musical options, including Gregorian chant tones, elsewhere in the hymnal.[36] Schmidt apparently wrote to Fischer shortly after that meeting, because in a December 11, 1936, letter from Fischer to Kretzmann, he recounted Schmidt's description of a "lively discussion" concerning their proposal of a text-only service.[37]

The subcommittee continued to maintain that preference at their 1938 meeting.[38] In 1939 the subcommittee met again, this time joined by the Music Sub-committee for the hymnal,[39] during which time they apparently had a significant discussion on this preference of the Liturgics Sub-committee. The minutes list the following reasons that were given.

1. The music currently used (Anglican chant) was "far from being good."
2. "To print a strange setting would be confusing."
3. Including the music makes it impossible for the service to be clear (*übersichtlich*).
4. Vespers and Matins are often spoken throughout. It is difficult to read the text of a canticle when it is interspersed with the music.
5. The service music is usually sung by rote. "Congregations shouldn't be discouraged from singing various melodies—simpler ones in the country, more elaborate settings where the people have more musical training. Uniformity to the extent that all sing the same melodies is nowhere found, nor desirable."[40]

What follows in those 1939 minutes is truly fascinating. While the Music Subcommittee did not want to "go on record" as supporting the recommendations of the Sub-committee for Liturgics, they did give general approval to several proposals. First, they agreed that no music would be included in the Preparatory Service—that is, the Confession and Absolution. Second, there would be two settings of the chief service, the first using the extant music—the Anglican chant—from *ELHB*, and the second an entirely new setting. The minutes go on to identify the musical chants—primarily Gregorian—that they intended to include in that second setting.

That is the extent of any official deliberations of the Sub-committee for Liturgics on the matter of a text-only setting of the chief service. Undoubtedly

[36] Syn. Conf. Hymn Book Committee minutes, November 13, 1936, 99.

[37] Gervasius Fischer to Paul E. Kretzmann, December 11, 1936, The Gervasius William Fischer Collection.

[38] Minutes of the Subcommittee on the Liturgy, October 18, 1938, p. 1, papers of Carl Bergen. There is no indication whether this was the fourth meeting or an intervening meeting occurred in 1937.

[39] Members of the Music Sub-committee present were Emil Backer, M. Lochner, W. Buszin, H. Haase, and [B.] Schumacher. Minutes of the Subcommittee on Liturgics, October 17–18, 1939, p. 2, papers of Carl Bergen.

[40] Minutes of the Sub-committee on Liturgics, October 17–18, 1939, 3.

conversations took place between members, though I have to date found no such correspondence. Various members of the subcommittee would meet with the plenary committee in the coming years.[41] There are references here and there to the possibility of including several settings, though it is unclear how detailed the discussions were. What is striking, however, is how late in the development of *TLH* the plenary committee continued discussing these ideas. At the beginning of June 1939 the final report for the proposed hymnal was issued. That was less than two years before CPH would release the first printing. Yet as late as November 1939 they were still discussing matters as fundamental as whether there would be one or two settings of the chief service. While the contents of the hundreds of hymns and their tunes had essentially been settled—though plenty of minor details still remained—fundamental decisions regarding the services lingered quite late in the process.

The plenary committee's action at that November 1939 meeting was to include the familiar Anglican chant setting in the front of the hymnal and a Gregorian setting in the back.[42] At the June 1940 meeting, Professor Polack reported on the most recent meeting of the Music Sub-committee. Now less than a year before the publication of *TLH*, it was the Music Sub-committee that apparently pulled the trigger and opted not to include a Gregorian setting of the chief service anywhere in the hymnal.[43] Of some significance is the notation in the plenary committee's minutes that Polack had attended that meeting of the Music Sub-committee. Equally significant, there is no indication that any member of the Sub-committee for Liturgics attended either of these meetings.

This background begins to shed some light on the comments that Gervasius Fischer recorded in the front of his souvenir copy of *TLH*. Up until the very last minute, the Sub-committee for Liturgics was continuing to work—one could say "negotiate"—in good faith with the plenary committee regarding a text-only order of service, only to have their work undone at the eleventh hour by another sub-committee. There certainly were tensions in the air during the half-decade of development. In a letter dated July 13, 1937, for example, Wismar wrote to Fischer after learning, apparently belatedly, that the plenary committee was planning on reviewing the work of the Sub-committee for Liturgics again. In a rather candid moment, he began, "Didn't even know the High Mightinesses were going to meet and give our contributions the once over. After all, one cannot expect much from men who make the fatal mistake . . . [of] this stupid assumption of absolute conformity to

[41] Syn. Conf. Hymn Book Committee minutes, June 23, 1937, 104–105; August 26, 1937, 107; November 11, 1937, 111; January 18, 1939, 125; and November 15, 1939, 135. Between these January and November 1939 meetings the minutes report multiple discussions—with no details—on the liturgical portion of the hymnal at which no members of the subcommittee were present.

[42] Syn. Conf. Hymn Book Committee minutes, November 15, 1939, 135.

[43] Syn. Conf. Hymn Book Committee minutes, November 15, 1939, 141.

Luther." With no little hint of irony, Wismar asserted, "Not even the great Martin could save the rubric on the sign of the cross. Probably the gents don't believe that Martin put that rubric into the Small Catechism." He is rather honest in admitting that the pushback they were receiving from the plenary committee should not be that surprising: "For the present one need not get unduly exercised over what one could pretty well have prophesied." Instead, he urges Fischer to press forward.[44]

This honest assessment of Wismar leads us, finally, to the third comment in Gervasius Fischer's hymnal—namely, the recommendation of the Sub-committee for Liturgics to include a Eucharistic Prayer in the forthcoming hymnal. When that topic is mentioned in our circles, we usually think back to the mid-1970s when a proposed Eucharistic Prayer for *Lutheran Book of Worship* raised some concerns. That the committee charged with preparing the services for *TLH* was seriously advocating for a Eucharistic Prayer forty years earlier is quite surprising. While the minutes of the plenary committee make a number of references to work on the "communion liturgy," those minutes never provide enough specificity to give anyone a hint as to how extensive the subcommittee's proposal actually was.

In the case of the Eucharistic Prayer, it is evident that both the impetus behind the proposal and the driving force to carry it forward rested with one man: Adolph Wismar. The minutes of the subcommittee's first meeting make no reference to a Eucharistic Prayer. The only comment that may have hinted at the possibility was in one of the assignments given to Wismar and Carl Bergen—namely, that they consider what additional materials might be included in the hymnal. The minutes from what must have been a brief meeting in 1935 make no mention of any proposed change in the service, but the October 1936 minutes report a discussion on the inclusion of a Eucharistic Prayer that would "include the Sanctus, Benedictus [qui venit], and Pater Noster," and that "it was decided that Dr. Wismar prepare and [*sic*] article to appear in the *Quartal Schrift* and *Concordia Theological Monthly* explaining the change and giving reasons for, and justification of the proposed change."[45]

It is clearly evident that Wismar expended a considerable amount of energy over the next eighteen months on promoting a Eucharistic Prayer for *TLH*. In the waning months of 1936 he wrote his short essay "Versuche zu einer Abendmahlsliturgie," an "attempt at a communion liturgy." Published sometime in 1937 in volume 5 in the LSSJ's journal, *Pro Ecclesia Lutherana*, the article consisted of twelve pages of historical and theological analysis, followed by his "attempt" at both a long and short form of a Eucharistic Prayer. At the very outset, he referenced Friedrich

[44] Adolph Wismar to Gervasius Fischer, June 13, 1937, The Gervasius William Fischer Collection.

[45] "Minutes of Third Meeting of Committee on Liturgics," October 22–23, 1936, p. 1, papers of Carl Bergen.

Lochner's *Der Hauptgottesdienst* in order to promote the regular Sunday celebration of the Eucharist in the congregation.[46] Clearly, Wismar's promotion of an expanded form of eucharistic praying was not merely the desire to repristinate some ancient practice but was born out of a desire to deepen an appreciation of the Sacrament of the Altar.

Even a cursory review of Wismar's proposed Eucharistic Prayer reveals just how radical it was.[47] As evidence, consider the proposed fixed Preface in place of the Western church's longstanding use of Proper Prefaces. One can hear echoes from, among others, the early church anaphoras of Basil and the Liturgy of St. James:

> It is truly meet, right, becoming and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God. Wherefore unto Thee, almighty Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible, we render now this offering of thanksgiving (or: sacrifice of praise). For Thou in the beginning didst create our nature in the image of Thy holiness and righteousness and thereafter, when through sin we had lost Thy divine likeness and through our disobedience had brought upon ourselves everlasting death, Thou didst mercifully restore us unto Thy favor and didst quicken us with the strong (glad) hope of everlasting life through Thine only begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, through Whom the angels praise, the archangels adore, the heavens and all its powers together with the blessed seraphim and all the spirits of just men made perfect in unanimous exultation laud Thy divine majesty. With them permit us now to lift up our voices and to extol and magnify Thy glorious Name, evermore praising Thee and saying. . . .[48]

Unique features of Wismar's proposal include (1) the inclusion of the Words of Our Lord, the Verba, within the prayer that recites the saving work of Christ; (2) the placing of the sign of the cross not at the words "body" and "blood" in the Verba but instead at what he calls the Prayer of Consecration; (3) dividing the Sanctus into two parts, with the *Benedictus qui venit* coming after the consecration; and (4) placing the Pax Domini prior to the Agnus Dei. Concerning that second point, the Prayer of Consecration, Wismar shows a clear affinity for the Eastern church's ancient

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[46] Adolph Wismar, "The Communion Liturgy," *Pro Ecclesia Lutherana* 5, no. 1 (1937): 1. See Friedrich Lochner, *The Chief Divine Service of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church*, trans. Matthew Carver, ed. Jon D. Vieker, Kevin J. Hildebrand, and Nathaniel S. Jensen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2020), 5.

[47] A thorough analysis of Wismar's proposal and the subsequent workings of the Sub-committee for Liturgics as they attempted to "sell" it to the plenary committee is beyond the scope of this present investigation.

[48] Wismar, "The Communion Liturgy," 14.

anaphoras and offers four different options. As an example, consider his second option, remembering that this follows at some length after the Verba:

> Doing this, therefore, in remembrance of Him, we beseech Thee to look with favor upon these Thy gifts of bread and wine, which we set before Thee according to the command of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and pray Thee, through Thy Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, to bless † this bread and this cup, and, according to the word of our Lord Jesus Christ, make this bread and this cup the means whereby we receive the Body and the Blood of our Lord, even that Body which was given for us, even that Blood which was shed for us. . . .[49]

In his prefatory comments to the proposed rite, Wismar goes to some length to defend his proposal. He cites everyone from Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Chrysostom to Martin Luther and David Hollaz in support of what he acknowledges to be a far different approach from what anyone in the LCMS had ever experienced. He exhibits a dismissive attitude when he says that "no reputable liturgy that has come to our notice undertakes to omit" the Prayer of Consecration.[50] From that statement, one could conclude that he did not view the Common Service currently in use in the LCMS as being all too reputable.

During 1937, Wismar and the subcommittee worked to promote his proposal. In November 1937, he, Bergen, and Kretzmann met with the plenary committee, at which meeting they discussed the proposed rite. In response to the proposal, the committee resolved to include Wismar's "Short Form" in the report that they would include in an upcoming issue of *The Lutheran Witness*. The minutes indicate, however, that their proposal was "to be submitted by mail to the members of the committee, and if the majority object, then it is not to be printed."[51] Presumably some of the committee members were not in attendance. The proposal was not included in that published report, so a reasonable conclusion one might draw is that someone did, in fact, object.

That, however, did not end the matter, because negotiations continued. In addition to Wismar's original proposal that he published in *Pro Ecclesia Lutherana*, I have discovered four other versions of the long form of the rite that various parties issued in 1938. It is clear that the subcommittee members made the subsequent revisions in an attempt to make it more palatable to the powers that be. After some initial revisions made by the subcommittee in October 1938, Wismar made further adjustments, which he then sent out to all the members of the LSSJ. In his cover

[49] Wismar, "The Communion Liturgy," 14–15.
[50] Wismar, "The Communion Liturgy," 7.
[51] Syn. Conf. Hymn Book Committee minutes, November 22, 1937, 111.

letter, dated December 9, 1938, Wismar revealed just how dear this cause was to him: "If we are ever going to get anything like a fuller communion Liturgy into our hymnal, we must get it NOW. *Ergo and summa summarum*, if you think the enclosed meets the needs of the case, write Prof. Polack that you think this arrangement will do."[52]

The lobbying effort was on. Wismar knew that he was fighting an uphill battle. Earlier in the process he had written to Fischer, "Unfortunately too many men have for years thought of the Sacrament in only one way. Hence, as soon as they come upon ideas that, albeit warranted in themselves, are new to them, they make a face as though their mother-in-law had walked unexpectedly in on them."[53] Later, he would write even more cynically,

> Isn't it just what one expected? The joke is that, if the illustrious leaders of liturgical development in the Synod[ical] conference wanted to "bleib[t] beim alten" [stay with the old], there was not the slightest need whatever of having a committee sit on the slack of its pants to suggest this or that. I don't see that our meeting these boys will do a partoile [*sic*] of good. They can outvote us on any given proposition. As it looks to me, they will. So the thing stacks up into a waste of good money and valuable time. What ought to be done is to fire that committee and begin all over again. True, that would take a few years more, but in the end it would pay.[54]

In January 1939, the plenary committee kept the negotiations going by asking Wismar to condense his proposed rite before their next meeting.[55] In February, Otto Schmidt, the chairman of the Sub-committee for Liturgics, wrote to Fischer, indicating that the plenary committee would soon be meeting again, which it did February 8–10, and that he expected a final decision regarding the proposed Eucharist Prayer. While the minutes of that meeting indicate that the services were discussed at several sessions, they provide no details.[56] Toward the end of February, Schmidt, who had attended that meeting, wrote to Fischer with his assessment of the status of the Eucharistic Prayer proposal:

> As to Wismar's order, what you felt seems to be the sentiment also of others. Mainly, however, the idea now seems to be that it would not be wise to print, even if there were not other objections, since the printing of another order

[52] Adolph Wismar to William G. Polack, December 9, 1938, papers of Carl Bergen.

[53] Adolph Wismar to Gervasius Fischer, August 24, 1937, The Gervasius William Fischer Collection.

[54] Adolph Wismar to Gervasius Fischer, August 31, 1937, The Gervasius William Fischer Collection.

[55] Syn. Conf. Hymn Book Committee minutes, January 20, 1939, 125.

[56] Syn. Conf. Hymn Book Committee minutes, February 8–10, 1939, 125.

> might break down this plan of having uniformity and that it would make for more confusion. That's not quite consistent, of course, because the hymn book is to offer additional and optional material on other fields. However, also this matter is to come up at the next meeting. I think Wismar's order is much improved now over what was first presented, and since 95% of the people would never even take the trouble to read it in their books there might be very little danger of confusion and variation of usages invited by printing this as an alternate order on page 197 or wherever it would be.[57]

With that phrase "the sentiment also of others" one can only assume that Schmidt was reflecting the sense of the conversation at the previous meeting. The die was cast. The minutes of the plenary committee's next meeting on March 9 drove a stake in the proposal in a single sentence: "After another discussion of the Preface (Holy Communion) presented by Rev. A. Wismar, it was resolved not to include it in the provisional copy of the next hymn book."[58]

There is, however, still more to the story. Just a few days before that fateful decision, Fischer made one last attempt to rescue Wismar's proposal by redacting it yet again. At the top of his revisions he wrote, "retaining original sequence of thought, dignity of style, but eliminating all unnecessary phrases (redundance), and simplifying and clarifying thoughts expressed."[59] Thus, it was the WELS representative who made one last attempt to salvage the grand dream of Wismar and others, particularly in the LSSJ. Following the meeting, Fischer went a step further with a rather honest assessment of the process that was being followed in the development of *TLH*. He began, "I sincerely hope, Prof. Polack, that I have made myself clear. The various fields represented in a hymn book like ours are too great in scope to be mastered by a committee with your present set up, especially for the wind up of the job. And under such an arrangement our new book simply cannot be the product of scholarly work." With great tact he expressed his admiration for the work that Polack and the various subcommittees had done for an entire decade on the hymns: "In the field of hymnology you have done the hardest work and I give you all the confidence, especially since that is also your personal field, that this will be as good a job possible under present day conditions." It was, however, in the matter of the services that Fischer became most blunt:

> However, judging from what I heard at the last meeting, I fear that there is still much too [*sic*] be done[,] and liturgically and musically our hymn book will

[57] Otto Schmidt to Gervasius Fischer, February 21, 1939, The Gervasius William Fischer Collection.

[58] Syn. Conf. Hymn Book Committee minutes, March 9, 1939, 127.

[59] "Proposed Revision of Wismar's Preface—GWF," March 4, 1939, The Gervasius William Fischer Collection.

> not come up to the high standard that it might. My complaint is not in regard to your committees [*sic*] decision in some of the matters of our committee, but the way you passed on them. Every statement you read with reference to Preface (as we have it!) was debatable, and it could have easily been shown just for that reason Wismar's suggestion [*sic*] were quite logical.

Fischer continued with the suggestion that there would be wisdom in not rushing to complete the project but in taking another year in order to do it correctly. He expressed his firm belief that frankness "among brethren" was vitally important. Curiously, however, he closed with the request that his comments not be shared beyond the plenary committee, perhaps in order to protect himself from those within his own church body who might disagree.[60]

In the margins of his letter to Polack, Fischer indicated that he was sending a copy to Wismar. Shortly after receiving that copy, Wismar wrote to Fischer in a tone that leaves no doubt as to his level of frustration:

> I fully expected the committee to turn that order down. From the very outset that illustrious college of cardinals appeared to be extremely suspicious of anything that came from us. Why[?] I don't know. Rather peculiar in view of the fact that we at no time said anything that savored of unorthodoxy. But then, they're the doctors. We had to go in with the understanding that the final decision rests with your large committee. Furthermore, we had to go in with the understanding that we would not sit in with the large committee at its final decision.
>
> Above all I am very grateful to you for repudiating any implication of heresy. Of course, the man is entitled to his opinion. But one cannot raise the charge of heresy without being able to make it stick. In that item one must either put up or shut up. *Also, meinen allerbesten Dank, mein lieber Fischer, fuer deine Bruederlichkeit in dieser Sache.* [So, my very best thanks, my dear Fischer, for your brotherliness in this matter.] After all, as you point out, the liturgy contains not a single statement that we do not imply in our ideas of

[60] Gervasius Fischer to William G. Polack, [March 13, 1939], Gervasius William Fischer Collection. Only the third page of Fischer's letter is extant. It is only because he mentioned Polack's name at the top of the third page that one can identify the recipient. And the date can be ascertained from a letter that Arthur Voss, one of the WELS members of the main hymnal committee, wrote to Fischer, in which he referenced the latter's letter to Polack on March 13. Arthur Voss to Gervasius Fischer, March 21, 1939, The Gervasius William Fischer Collection. In Voss' comments on the liturgy, he expressed his opinion that Wismar's proposed rite did not appeal and that the generally accepted orders, presumably the Common Service, were best. He certainly did not see it as a reason to hold up publication any longer, commenting that the Wisconsin Synod needed a new hymnal much more than Missouri or the Norwegian Synod did.

> consecration. More, it fully agrees with the official teaching of our Church. And if that be heresy, well, that's a new brand of the stuff.

He concludes with a note of resignation:

> So my advice is just to forget the whole business. I fully expect that we shall find we are through anyway as far as the new hymnal is concerned. I mean this. Our ideas and those of the large committee quite evidently will not mix. They have the final say. Ergo, we have really nothing to say, no matter what we say. Ergo, furthermore, we are finished. There will be no further need to ask us about anything except, perhaps, what we think of the weather. And what we think of the weather will not affect anyone or anything.[61]

That is the extent of the evidence I have been able to gather to date concerning the demise of Wismar's proposed rite. He would make an attempt at delaying the publication of *TLH*, but to what specific aim it is not clear.[62] Though there were issues still awaiting decisions, the topic of Eucharistic Prayer was not one of them.

Conclusions

No one can dispute that several members of the Sub-committee for Liturgics had some far-reaching ideas that were never going to be included in *TLH*. That the proposals I have examined received as much consideration as they did is actually quite astonishing. In particular, the more realistic of the proposals—that the hymnal include a collection of settings of the Ordinary that could be used depending on a congregation's musical predilections and capabilities—remained on the table until nearly the end. It is unfortunate that when the Gregorian setting slated for the back of the book was dropped, the proposed section of Ordinary settings also seems to have vanished, with just a few metrical paraphrases scattered in among the hymns.[63]

The concept of including more than one setting of the chief service was obviously not realized in *TLH*. Two decades later, as work began toward its revision, the Commission on Worship, under the leadership of Walter Buszin, commissioned several new musical settings of the Ordinary by Healey Willan and Jan Bender. In

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[61] Adolph Wismar to Gervasius Fischer, March 15, 1939, The Gervasius William Fischer Collection.

[62] Adolph Wismar to members of the LSSJ, June 27, 1939, papers of Carl Bergen. "We talked the matter over at the meeting of our study club in Brooklyn and the men there felt that if only someone will start the ball rolling, we can perhaps stop the hymnal for the time being. Let's be prepared to get out a protest and broadcast it."

[63] Examples include "All Glory Be to God on High" (*TLH*, 237), "All Glory Be to God Alone" (*TLH*, 238), "We All Believe in One True God" (*TLH*, 251, 252), and "Isaiah, Mighty Seer, in Days of Old" (*TLH*, 249). Curiously, the editors of *TLH* placed all of those alternate settings of the Ordinary in the Trinity section of the hymns.

the introduction to those settings, Buszin wrote, "It is in keeping with the best traditions of the Lutheran Church to vary the musical settings of the Service and to provide settings which fit the season." By way of example, he asked, "Why should the same musical setting be used on Advent Sunday, on Christmas Day, on Good Friday, on Easter Sunday, and on a Day of Humiliation and Prayer, when in each case the spirit and character of the day varies so greatly?"[64] I cannot help but hear echoes of that joint meeting between the Liturgics and Music Sub-committees, a meeting Buszin attended.

Given that the Sub-committee for Liturgics was formed more than four years after the plenary committee and the four hymn subcommittees, one gets the clear sense that the services in the forthcoming hymnal were not a top priority. This may be partially due to Polack's expertise in hymnody. Still, he was the liturgics professor at the St. Louis seminary, so the subject matter would hardly have been foreign to him. Nor should the need for careful attention to such matters have been. After all, the state of liturgical practice in the LCMS was nothing to brag about. Especially with the transition from German to English, many congregations apparently failed to make use of the services in *ELHB*, opting for all sorts of homegrown variations. Various articles and letters to the editor of *The Lutheran Witness* in the early 1930s complaining about a lack of liturgical uniformity culminated with the attention-grabbing essay "Our Liturgical Chaos" by Theodore Graebner, another of Polack's seminary colleagues.[65] One could perhaps speculate that it was the growing concern over such matters that led the plenary committee to appoint a special committee to prepare the services for *TLH*.

Absent additional correspondence from some of the key players, like Polack and Kretzmann, it is difficult to draw any further conclusions. Because these two players were on the same faculty in St. Louis, I have to assume that they had frequent conversations on these matters, which in effect deprives us of knowing their opinions on them. Because of this lack of source material, Polack is rather difficult to figure out. He could at one point write to Gervasius Fischer, "Personally, as you know from the meetings I had with your committee, I favor most of the suggestions

[64] Healey Willan, *The Order of Holy Communion* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 2. While the Willan and Bender settings were published in 1959, the Commission on Worship also envisioned at that time a third setting. This setting, using plainsong chants, was prepared by none other than Carl Bergen and did not appear until 1967. Carl Bergen, *The Order of Holy Communion* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967).

[65] Theodore Graebner, "Our Liturgical Chaos," in *The Problem of Lutheran Union and Other Essays* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1935), 135–166. A few years earlier, an unsigned letter to the editor complained of the liturgical confusion experienced when visiting other Missouri Synod churches. *The Lutheran Witness*, June 9, 1931, 206. Later, another letter spoke in favor of the journal's efforts to advocate greater liturgical uniformity. *The Lutheran Witness*, February 14, 1933, 57. See also Zetto, "Aspects of Theology in the Liturgical Movement," 5–8.

that you have made."[66] Yet, it appears that at critical points Polack was working behind the scenes to blunt the more radical proposals. That may have been what he intended all along. In an undated, typewritten manuscript titled "The Historical Background of *The Lutheran Hymnal*," Polack sums up the plenary committee's views on the liturgical portion of *TLH* in this way: "As to the liturgical section of *The Lutheran Hymnal*, *the committee held it to be within the scope of its work to make no changes in the liturgies as such* but to simplify the rubrics as much as possible, to correct any discrepancies, to supply the most necessary general rubrics, to add the graduals for the Sundays, feasts, and festivals in the church year, to provide the introits, graduals, collects, etc., for the minor festivals, etc."[67]

Whatever the motives, there can be no doubt that *TLH* was a smashing success. I cannot help but think that some of that success was due to the times, especially the United States' entry into World War II just months after the hymnal's release. The time had come for the nation to come together in unity, and no doubt the church did also. But once the war had ended and times began to change again, it probably should not have come as a surprise that calls for a revision of *TLH* would begin to bubble up from the congregations. And so the work would start all over again.

[66] William G. Polack to Gervasius Fischer, September 6, 1937, The Gervasius William Fischer Collection. The meeting referenced was likely that of the plenary committee that Fischer attended to bring the subcommittee's report.

[67] William G. Polack, "The Historical Background of *The Lutheran Hymnal*," 8 (emphasis added), William Gustav Polack (1890–1950) Papers.

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Beginning with Christ: An Old Testament Theology of Marriage

Geoffrey R. Boyle

Even as marriage falls within the natural law, being given to Christian and pagan alike, nothing can be said of marriage apart from the flesh of Jesus Christ. As Saint Paul says, "He is the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15), and "In him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Col 2:9).[1] He is the beginning—the ἐν ἀρχῇ, the בְּרֵאשִׁית—in whom Genesis 1:1 attributes all of creation and whom Proverbs 8:22 identifies as Wisdom.[2] He is also the end—the τέλος and תֻּמָּם—the very perfection toward which his creation is promised and the reality in which all things find their summation and substance.[3]

The flesh of Jesus is everything. Saint Paul writes, "For *in him* all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and *through him* to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled *in his body of flesh* by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him" (Col 1:19–22). Similarly, Luther once said, "No, comrade, wherever you place God for me, you must also place the humanity for me. They simply will not let themselves be separated and divided from each other. He has become one person and does not separate the humanity from himself as Master Jack takes off his coat and lays it aside when he goes to bed."[4] Norman Nagel emphasized this reformer's high Christology: "Luther will have no God apart from Christ, no

[1] Unless otherwise noted, all Bible translations are my own.

[2] Prov 8:22: κύριος ἔκτισέν με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ. יְהוָה קָנָנִי רֵאשִׁית קֶדֶם דַּרְכּוֹ מֵאָז מִפְעָלָיו. See Christopher Seitz, *The Elder Testament: Canon, Theology, Trinity* (Waco: Baylor Univ. Press, 2018), 201–219; C. F. Burney, "Christ as the APXH of Creation (Prov. viii 22, Col. i 15–18, Rev. iii 14)," *Journal of Theological Studies* 27, no. 106 (January 1926): 160–177; and Don Collett, "Reading Forward: The Old Testament and Retrospective Stance," *Pro Ecclesia* 24, no. 2 (May 2015): 178–196.

[3] Cf. Telford Work, *Jesus—the End and the Beginning: Tracing the Christ-Shaped Nature of Everything* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019).

[4] Martin Luther, *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* (1528), in *Luther's Works, American Edition*, vols. 1–30, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1976), vols. 31–55, ed. Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–1986), vols. 56–82, ed. Christopher Boyd Brown and Benjamin T. G. Mayes (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009–), 37:218–219 (hereafter cited as AE).

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gap between God and Christ, no gap between his two natures, no gap between his body and the bread, no gap between Christ and us, or a part of us, and no gap between any of these and God's words."[5] All of this because "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

God is no abstraction; neither is theology. He gives himself to be located and found, circumscribed for us and our salvation. He has taken to himself "a body prepared for him" (Heb 10:5; Ps 40:6) and refuses to leave it behind. So, any theology of marriage—whether New Testament or Old Testament—must begin with the flesh of Jesus Christ. In this way, we might say, all theology is theology of the body, which simply means Christology, *his* body.

Almost forty years after Pope John Paul II offered his lectures on the theology of the body, we find them even more timely than ever.[6] Consider the centrality of the body to the conversation in our culture: sexuality, gender, transgenderism, marriage, mental and physical disability, pornography, care for the elderly and the infirm, abortion, and so-called "death with dignity." The body stands at the center of it all. And apart from the flesh of Christ, one finds no answer to the psalmist's cry "What is man that you are mindful of him?" (Ps 8:4).

The incarnation sets the tone for all our thinking about the body—male *and* female. It is all in the flesh of Jesus. Count the times Saint Paul says "in him"—incredible! God creates man in the image of Jesus. But note well: Jesus *is* the image of God (ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ); we are created *in* the image (בְּצַלְמֵנוּ/κατ' εἰκόνα). That is, male and female are created *in Christ*, who is the image of the invisible God.

The beginning comes in Christ—for man and mankind. "Have you not read," Jesus says, "that he who created them from the beginning [ἀπ' ἀρχῆς] made them male and female?" (Matt 19:4). It is this "from the beginning"—a beginning enacted in the incarnation and known only from the resurrection—that launches us into what it means to be created male and female, and thus to marry and be given in marriage.[7]

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[5] Norman E. Nagel, "The Presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the Altar According to Luther," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 39, no. 4 (1968): 237.

[6] John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, trans. Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline, 2006).

[7] Saint John the Baptizer recognized this abrupt upturning of time as Jesus approached for baptism: "This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes [ὀπίσω μου ἔρχεται] a man who ranks before me [ὃς ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν], because he was before me [ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν]" (John 1:30). Bonhoeffer reflects on this theologically ordered time and existence: "But the God of the creation and of the real beginning is, at the same time, the God of the resurrection. From the beginning the world is placed in the sign of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Indeed it is because we know of the resurrection that we know of God's creation in the beginning, of God's creation out of nothing" (*Creation and Fall: A Theological Interpretation of Genesis 1–3*, trans. John C. Fletcher, in *Creation and Fall: A Theological Interpretation of Genesis 1–3[;] Temptation* [New York: Macmillan, 1978], 19).

Of course, the fall into sin brought bodily and spiritual corruption. Our bodies (and thus our marriages and families) need redemption. "Wretched man that I am!" Saint Paul exclaims. "Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God *through* Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom 7:24–25). Like the creation of our bodies, so also our redemption comes only *in* the body of Jesus. "By sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin," Saint Paul concludes, "he condemned sin *in [his] flesh*" (Rom 8:3).[8] Similarly, to the Colossians Saint Paul says, "And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled *in his body of flesh* by his death" (Col 1:20). He thereby locates our atonement in the crucified flesh of Jesus.

This crucified body of Jesus rises again on the third day. "Put your finger here," he says to Thomas, "and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe" (John 20:27). And who is it that John sees in the revelation ascending to the throne to open the sealed scroll? The Lamb who was slain (Rev 5:6). The bodily resurrection of Jesus means our bodily resurrection. If not, Saint Paul argues, our faith is futile and our preaching is in vain (1 Cor 15:12–21).

Then—and, perhaps, most strikingly—with his body Jesus ascends into heaven, where he ever sits for us at the right hand of the Father. "And truly great and unspeakable was [the Apostles'] cause for joy," Saint Leo proclaimed at the ascension, "when in the sight of the holy multitude, above the dignity of all heavenly creatures, the Nature of mankind went up. . . . Christ's Ascension is our uplifting."[9] Whatever we make of this body (and what goes with it: marriage, children, family) must be grounded in the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.[10]

Now, back to our title: "Beginning with Christ: An Old Testament Theology of Marriage." Thus far, we have begun with Christ but without yet mentioning *how* or

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[8] See Jonathan F. Grothe, *The Justification of the Ungodly: An Interpretation of Romans*, vol. 1, *Romans 1–8* (n.p., 2005), 405: "This third use of sarx in this sentence refers to the flesh of the incarnate Christ, the place and means by which God won the victory over Sin and condemned it to its end." Also, see C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 1:382: "It tells us where God's 'condemnation' of sin took place. It took place in the flesh, i.e., in Christ's flesh, Christ's human nature."

[9] Leo the Great, Sermon 73.4, trans. Charles Lett Feltoe, in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, 14 vols., ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952–1957), 12:187 (hereafter cited as NPNF^2).

[10] He partook of our nature in the incarnation so that we might *partake of the divine nature* (cf. 2 Pet 1:4). Saint Athanasius put it this way: "He, indeed, assumed humanity that we might become God" (*On the Incarnation*, trans. A Religious of C.S.M.V. [Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996], 93). And Saint Gregory of Nazianzus said, "For that which He has not assumed He has not healed; but that which is united to His Godhead is also saved" ("Epistle 101, To Cledonius the Priest Against Apollinarius," in NPNF^2, 7:440.)

why this is fitting for "an Old Testament theology." To do so, let us begin a bit obliquely and then hit it head on. In *For the Time Being*, W. H. Auden says, "By the event of this birth the true significance of all other events is defined, for of every other occasion it can be said that it could have been different, but of this birth it is the case that it could in no way be other than it is. And by the existence of this Child, the proper value of all other existences is given, for of every other creature it can be said that it has extrinsic importance but of this Child it is the case that He is in no sense a symbol."[11] Another: In a chorus from *The Rock,* T. S. Eliot puts it this way:

> Then came, at a predetermined moment, a moment in time and of time,
> A moment not out of time, but in time, in what we call history: transecting, bisecting the world of time, a moment in time but not like a moment of time,
> A moment in time but time was made through that moment: for without the meaning there is no time, and that moment of time gave the meaning.[12]

Finally, and most pointedly, Dorothy Sayers simply asserts, "The resurrection is the only thing that has ever really happened."[13]

Ironically, we do not have *time* to get into a metaphysical discussion of time.[14] Nor is that really the point. For now, let us simply say that we have been so swept up by Enlightenment assumptions of time—the sort of historicism that leads one to stand *over* the Scriptures, rather than *under* them—that we have missed what they hold most centrally: the person and work of Jesus Christ (John 5:46).[15]

Jesus is the eternal Word made flesh. The church confesses against the Arians just as strongly today as in the fourth century: there never was a time when the Son was not (Ps 2:7; Acts 13:33; Heb 1:5, 5:5).[16] Less clear, however, is what this Son has to do with the Old Testament. Is he external to it, ahead of it, and an object toward which it points? *Or*, is he somehow inside of it, inspiring it, taking it into his use and revealing himself within it? We are now well familiar with instantiations of the "pre-

[11] W. H. Auden, *For the Time Being: A Christmas Oratorio*, in *Collected Poems*, ed. Edward Mendelson (New York: Vintage International, 1991), 388.

[12] T. S. Eliot, *The Rock*, chorus VII, "In the beginning GOD created the world," *in Collected Poems*, 1909–1962 (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963), 163.

[13] Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Man Born to Be King: A Play-Cycle on the Life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (1943; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 22.

[14] For that sort of reflection in the context of biblical exegesis, see Ephraim Radner, *Time and the Word: Figural Reading of the Christian Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016).

[15] Cf. Hans Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1974), 212–217.

[16] See Athanasius, *Against the Arians*, in NPNF^2 4:339.

incarnate Christ."[17] But where is he the rest of the time—locked away in heaven for future revelation, just waiting for his time? *Or*—and this is where it gets a bit tricky—is there a way to speak of his time (καιρός) actually *preceding* the Old Testament, giving voice and substance to the prophetic word? To say it another way, are Auden and Eliot and Sayers onto something, who poetically put their fingers on a deep theological reality?

If we believe that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God who, in dying on the cross under Pontius Pilate, takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29), and that *this* Jesus is *that* slain Lamb, whose Book of Life contains all the names written "from the foundation of the world" (Rev 13:8),[18] then what is so difficult about seeing all of

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[17] See Charles Gieschen, *Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

[18] As Martin Luther argues in his *Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and Sacraments* (1525), "When we consider the application of the forgiveness, we are not dealing with a particular time, but find that it has taken place from the beginning of the world. So Saint John in the Book of Revelation [13:8] says that the Lamb of God was slain before the foundation of the world" (AE 40:215).

Whether one translates Rev 13:8 according to the ESV ("everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain") or the KJV ("whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"), the substantive meaning remains the same: what happens before the foundation of the world occurs on account of the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross in time. Wading into this requires an excursive footnote for clarification.

At first glance, the Greek of Rev 13:8 appears to tie "from the foundation of the world" to the slain Lamb: ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου. However, a parallel passage in Rev 17:8, following a similar construction (but without mention of the slain Lamb), suggests "written in the Book of Life" as the antecedent to the adverbial phrase "from the foundation of the world": ἐπὶ τὸ βιβλίον τῆς ζωῆς ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου. Then, in Rev 21:27, we again have the Lamb—no mention of being slain—with a slightly different construction, again tying the Lamb to the Book of Life: ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου. Thus, this question arises: Does "from the foundation of the world" refer to the Book, the providential writing, or to the slain Lamb? Translations vary. KJV, NKJV, and NIV all favor "*the Lamb slain* from the foundation of the world." ESV, NASB, and RSV favor the names being written before the foundation of the world.

The Greek syntax of Rev 13:8 alone remains indeterminate. Recourse to parallel or similar passages is instructive. Saint Peter employs similar vocabulary and affirms the theological assertion: "Knowing that you were ransomed [ἐλυτρώθητε] from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot [ἀλλὰ τιμίῳ αἵματι ὡς ἀμνοῦ ἀμώμου καὶ ἀσπίλου Χριστοῦ]. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world [προεγνωσμένου μὲν πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου] but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you" (1 Pet 1:18–20).

Jesus also testifies of the Father's love for him "from the foundation of the world": ὅτι ἠγάπησάς με πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου (John 17:24). Again, Saint Paul locates our election *in Christ* "from before the foundation of the world [ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτῷ πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου]" (Eph 1:4). Finally, there is the "eternal covenant" (perhaps better translated "testament") mentioned in the letter to the Hebrews, located in the blood of Christ: "Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant [ἐν αἵματι διαθήκης αἰωνίου]" (Heb 13:20). Cf. Vincent Skemp, "Participial Aspect and the Lamb's Paradigmatic Witness in Revelation 13:8," in *Studies in the Greek Bible: Essays in Honor of*

Scripture—Old Testament and New Testament—as witnesses to this profound reality in the flesh of Jesus Christ? That is, while the incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus certainly occur *in* time, they also affect all of time—before and after. In time, God comes down to man, as man. In time, man ascends to God and sits at his right hand. In time, God unites to man and man to God, the infinite to the finite, mortal to the immortal. The Athanasian Creed beautifully confesses this union of natures in Christ as "one, however, not by the conversion of the divinity into flesh, but by the assumption of the humanity into God." This Jesus, the crucified, now sits at the right hand of the Father as "alpha and omega, the beginning and end" (Rev 1:8). And from this ascension of the incarnate God, we may speak of the historical flesh of Jesus Christ standing outside of time, over time, and shaping the very fabric of time. Thus, both before and after the cross, he delivers the atoning work of the cross to his people.[19] Luther makes this very point while discussing the delivery of the benefits of Christ:

> We treat of the forgiveness of sins in two ways. First, how it is achieved and won. Second, how it is distributed and given to us. Christ has achieved it on the cross, it is true. But he has not distributed or given it on the cross. He has not won it in the supper or sacrament. There he has distributed and given it through the Word, as also in the gospel, where it is preached. He has won it once for all on the cross. But the distribution takes place continuously, *before and after, from the beginning to the end of the world.* For inasmuch as he had

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Francis T. Gignac, S.J., ed. Jeremy Corley and Vincent Skemp (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2008), 186–214.

Louis Brighton sees Rev 13:8 speaking proleptically of the cross, supporting the KJV tradition (*Revelation*, Concordia Commentary [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999], 346). R. C. H. Lenski argues strongly for the "permanent effect" and "efficacy of [God's] Son's death extend[ing] backward as also it extends forward from that day on Calvary" (*The Interpretation of St. John's Revelation* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998], 400). Presuming that our eternal election (names written in Christ, the Book of Life) derives from the atonement accomplished by the blood of Christ on the cross (FC SD XI 13–15), consider Lenski's deduction: "How could there be the *Lamb's* book of Life so that the name of any of the blessed might be written therein 'from the foundation of the world,' if the Lamb and his having been slain did not extend back before and 'from the foundation of the world'?" (*Interpretation*, 400). Cf. George Caird, *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 168.

Thus, whether Saint John intends his readers to consider the Lamb slain "from the foundation of the world" or the divinely written names in the Book of Life "from the foundation of the world," in both cases, we perceive our Lord's gracious delivery of the atoning benefits of the cross of Christ to all—whether before or after the event itself.

[19] Lest there be any confusion, this does not suggest that this eternal Christ somehow brought his flesh down from heaven at the incarnation (as though it were already and always his apart from the incarnation in time). Nor does it suggest that he somehow suffered before or apart from the cross, as if in some eternal cruciform life. Rather, the argument rests on the foundational reality of these historical events and the theological reasoning that permits them to be prophetically given, revealed, and distributed to the people of God—both before and after the cross.

> determined once to achieve it, *it made no difference to him whether he distributed it before or after*, through his Word, as can easily be proved from Scripture.[20]

This is what Saint Paul is after in Ephesians 5:31–33, which *must* be the starting point. In his instructions regarding marriage—how husbands should love their wives and wives be subject to their husbands—he does not begin with marriage and liken it to Christ and the church, nor does he begin with Adam and Eve, as though *that* were the first and exemplar marriage; instead, he runs it all the other way around. He says, "'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church [τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο μέγα ἐστίν ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν]. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband" (Eph 5:31–33).

What is the "mystery" to which Saint Paul refers? Indeed, what is a mystery? In short, a mystery is something present, albeit hidden, then revealed, drawing one ever deeper into it.[21] In the Pauline corpus, μυστήριον refers to the hidden things of God (his will and work), now revealed and delivered through the apostolic preaching of Christ. Regarding the mystery here in Ephesians, Thomas Winger offers a definition: "a μυστήριον is something that was once *hidden* in the mind of God, yet has now been *disclosed* through the revelation of Jesus Christ to his apostolic messengers. As the content of the mystery in Paul's usage is always Jesus Christ, the application of the term to holy marriage implies also that *Christ* was once hidden in marriage and is now visible."[22] So, the mystery that is great or profound here in Ephesians is that the "institution" found in Genesis *actually follows* the reality of

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[20] Luther, *Against the Heavenly Prophets*, in AE 40:213–214, emphasis my own.

[21] The English "sacrament" transliterates the Latin *sacramentum,* which derives from the Greek μυστήριον. As it comes into the LXX, μυστήριον means "the secret thoughts, plans, and dispensations of God, which are hidden from human reason, as well as from all other comprehension below the divine level, and await either fulfillment or revelation to those for whom they are intended" (Frederick W. Danker et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. [Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000], s.v. μυστήριον, 662).

Raymond Brown has uncovered the Semitic background of μυστήριον in the divine council (סוֹד יְהוָה). The semantic shift within סוֹד—from the assembly to the verdict revealed (i.e., from council to counsel)—is where μυστήριον originates ("The Pre-Christian Semitic Concept of 'Mystery,'" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 20, no. 4 [1958]: 417–443, 421).

Appearing only once in the synoptics—"unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God" (Mark 4:11; Matt 13:11; Luke 8:10)—the term gains theological weight by way of Saint Paul. Cf. Rom 11:25, 16:25; 1 Cor 2:7, 4:1, 13:2, 14:2, 15:51; Eph 1:9, 3:3–4, 3:9, 5:32, 6:19; Col 1:26–27, 2:2, 4:3; 2 Thess 2:7; and 1 Tim 3:9, 3:16. The only remaining references within the New Testament are Rev 1:20, 10:7, 17:5, and 17:7.

[22] Thomas M. Winger, *Ephesians*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2015), 620.

Christ and his church.[23] He calls it a "mystery" because the reality has always been there, *hidden* to be sure, from the foundation of the world. James Voelz attempts an explanation for how this might be in terms of a proleptic invasion: "We may say, then, that *what happened in the OT*, either 'ordinarily' or in the special historical 'visitations' of God, *happened because of the future*. That is to say, *what happened in Israel's history was determined by the future*, by what would happen in the Age to Come/ὁ μέλλων αἰών. . . . *[T]hings happened in Israel's history, OT people experience what they experienced, because of what God would do in the Age to Come*—which age invaded history proleptically, and manifested its shape and form, in the Christ-event."[24]

Because of this, Saint Paul cannot help but tie together the present and lived reality of marriage with the marriage of Adam and Eve in the garden, both of which derive from and point toward the true—or, like Dorothy Sayers might say, the only *real*—marriage.[25] That is, when the side of Christ split open by the spear, and water and blood poured forth, marriage found its *institution*.[26] From *that*—the cross—Adam and Eve were made one flesh, just as the church with Christ. Again, Winger supports all of this:

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[23] "One could even say more precisely that the *first marriage* (that of Adam and Eve) refers to Christ and the church" (Winger, *Ephesians*, 623). "Even all that is said of Adam and Eve is to be interpreted with reference to Christ and the church" (Jerome, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, 3.5.32, in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, New Testament, vol. 8, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians*, ed. Mark J. Edwards, 189).

[24] James W. Voelz, *What Does This Mean? Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Post-Modern World*, 2nd ed. rev. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2013), 259–260.

[25] William Weinrich attests to this, saying,

> In Ephesians 5 Paul's point is not that Christ's love for his Bride, the Church, is patterned after what was to be the case between Adam and Eve in the Garden. Rather, it is in view of Christ's love for his Bride, the Church, that husbands are to love their wives and that wives are to be subject to their husbands as to their head. The true marriage was not that marriage in the Garden. The true marriage is that between Christ and the Church. All other marriages (including that first one in the Garden)—and this is true the more marriages are blessed by love—are faint images and icons of that Marriage of the Lamb with his Bride, the Church. (*"It Is Not Given to Women to Teach": A* Lex *in Search of a* Ratio [Fort Wayne, IN: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1993], 23).

[26] Saint Augustine says, "And since the Lord has enlightened us through the apostle, to show us what we were in search of, by this one sentence, 'The two shall be one flesh; a great mystery concerning Christ and the Church;' we are now permitted to seek Christ everywhere, and to drink wine from all the water-pots. Adam sleeps, that Eve may be formed. When Adam sleeps, Eve is formed from his side; when Christ is dead, the spear pierces His side, that the mysteries may flow forth whereby the Church is formed" ("Tractate on the Gospel of John 9.10," in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, First Series, ed. Philip Schaff, 14 vols. (Repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 7:66 [cf. Jacques-Paul Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina*, 221 vols. (Paris: Migne, 1841–1865), 35:1463]).

> The full meaning of Gen 2:24 was not clear until Christ came. Now, by the revelation of the mystery, we see that it was never just about marriage; its deeper meaning was always about Christ's leaving the Father and cleaving to the church. The referent of "the mystery" is therefore Gen 2:24 itself, a mysterious passage that has now been made clear. The meaning of Paul's words, then, is this: "but I say [that Gen 2:24 refers] to Christ and to the church" or "but I disclose the mystery of Gen 2:24 as being Christ and the church." The staggering import of Paul's words is a thoroughgoing reversal of the manner in which the symbolism of marriage is typically expressed. Paul does not simply say that the relationship of Christ to the church is *like* marriage. Rather, the apostle teaches that God *first* had Christ in mind and *then* instituted marriage to reflect what he would ultimately do. In other words, earthly marriage reflects Christ and the church, not the other way around.[27]

If Winger is right, and Genesis 2:24 theologically *follows* the crucifixion of Jesus, then the whole picture of marriage in the Old Testament derives from and extols this reality found in the flesh of Jesus. Every narrative, every law, every poetic and prophetic utterance regarding husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, children, and those sharing in the household—it all comes from and leads to the union of Christ with his church (which also explains why foreigners and resident aliens are also included, for the church of God includes even Gentiles).

Of course, we have not time or space to run through everything the Old Testament says of marriage. Attention to the genealogical framework undergirding the Old Testament requires further unpacking.[28] We could track the family dynamics of the patriarchs—what might such a theological portrayal of Judah and Tamar reveal?[29] Then there is the mandated divorce of foreign wives in Ezra 9–10. Familial inheritance rights, tribal identity, and the familial character of kings and priests—the list of possibilities is too great to exhaust.

For now, let us briefly address three theological aspects of the Old Testament portrayal of marriage: first, the patriarchal hierarchy of gift-giving; second, the association of idolatry and adultery; and third, eschatological love.

Hierarchy—that is a bad word today. So is "patriarchal." The Old Testament nevertheless confesses an order within marriage and family along just such lines. Husbands are over their wives—hence, Sarah calls Abraham "lord" (Gen 18:12; 1 Pet 3:6). Fathers and mothers are over their children—hence the fourth

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[27] Winger, *Ephesians*, 624–625.

[28] Cf. Jean-Paul Audet, "Love and Marriage in the Old Testament," *Scripture: The Quarterly of the Catholic Biblical Association*, vol. 10, no.11 (July 1958): 65–83.

[29] Cf. Jeffrey Pulse's treatment of this in his *Figuring Resurrection: Joseph as a Death and Resurrection Figure in the Old Testament and Second Temple Judaism* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021), 80–89.

commandment's obedience and blessing. Genealogies tend to track only fathers and sons, and even Moses required a revelation to sort out the inheritance for Zelophehad's daughters (Num 27:1–11).

Of course, hierarchies are ordered top-down. Those higher up bear the greater responsibility. They give; the other receives. That is how God created Adam and Eve. She came from him, not the other way around. But the one on top—the one who comes first—is put there specifically for gift-giving. Husbands are above their wives—parents above their children, teachers above their students, pastors above their people, prophets, priests, and kings above those ordered under them. But in no case does the Old Testament ever speak of a higher value, worth, or preference for the one above. That is not what the hierarchy—much less the patriarchy—was given for. Neither does it make sense, anyhow. A teacher is no more important than the student. Without students, there is no teacher. The same goes for pastors and people, parents and children, and so forth. You cannot be husband without wife. Order and hierarchy say nothing about value or importance. If anything, the more important and greater is the one below. As our Lord said, "For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves" (Luke 22:27). In this way, he who is above all and over all humbles himself *under* all.

Husbands are given to serve wives—protection, provision, procreation. Parents are given to serve children—house and home, education and faith, training up in the way they should go (Prov 22:6). The hierarchical and patriarchal ordering in the Old Testament assumes such service (gift-giving)—for it is precisely the promised seed that bears the substance of their faith. Thus the shock when the Lord tells Abraham, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you" (Gen 22:2). Thus the horror as Israel joins in Molech's child sacrifices (Lev 20:1–5; Jer 7:31) and at the slaughtering of the holy innocents in Moses' day (Exod 1:15–22). Parents are to protect and prosper their children, blessing them in old age—not offering them up to the demonic abortion clinics, or the many dehumanizing institutions on offer in this world. Husbands and fathers, by virtue of their vocations, stand in the stead and by the command of the heavenly Father and the heavenly bridegroom. The patriarchal hierarchy derives from and images forth the heavenly hierarchy. While none is greater than another—coequal in majesty, coequal in divinity—nevertheless, the Son, who comes *from* the Father, obeys the Father, and the Spirit is sent by both.

This Trinitarian *order* types itself into the familial fabric of the Old Testament. Isaac obeys father Abraham's sacrificial command to lay himself down on the wood, though, as tradition has it, he was plenty old enough to defend himself from such an

atrocity (the Talmud and Mishnah put him at thirty-seven years old!).[30] What the father wills, the son—rightly ordered—obeys. Of course, the father's will to sacrifice the son betrays no arbitrary abuse of power or position but reveals the means by which gifts are to be given. The Father gives all authority in heaven and on earth to his Son (Matt 28:18). The Son discloses his very life—body and soul—through the Spirit. And we, having received the Spirit of Sonship, are ordered *in* the Son, *before* the face of the Father. Thus, the Old Testament hierarchical order in marriage and family holds the mystery of Trinitarian gift-giving. The higher serves the lower in order to raise the lower into itself. And where the order is rightly established, there comes the blessing: fruitfulness and multiplicity.

Sin disorders the hierarchy established by God. Eve's curse suggests as much. What should have been a joyful submission to her husband and a pleasant fruitfulness from the womb became "*pain in childbearing*" and a false desire "*contrary to [her] husband*" (Gen 3:16). This plays out in Ham's disclosure of Noah's nakedness (Gen 9:18–27), Absalom's usurpation of David's authority (2 Sam 15), and the near-unparalleled wickedness of Jezebel (1 Kgs 18–21). Examples abound for this disordered hierarchy within the Old Testament families—divorce, polygamy, fornication, barrenness, disobedience, and incest, to name a few. Oddly enough, it takes a Moabitess-foreigner, Ruth, to reset the order. The point of all this suggests that the family dynamics within the Old Testament do not merely incite sociological inquiry or progressive comparison but relate a Trinitarian form of gift-giving, which longs to be reordered.

The chief descriptor of this disorder in the Old Testament ties to the language of adultery (נָאַף/μοιχεύω) and whoredom (זָנָה/πορνεύω). Within the prophets, the marital imagery of this disorder becomes overwhelming. But already in Moses we find the elision of adultery and whoredom with idolatry and false worship:

> And [God] said, "Behold, I am making a covenant. . . . Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst. You shall tear down their altars and break their pillars and cut down their Asherim (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice, and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters whore after their gods and make your sons whore after their gods." (Exod 34:10, 34:12–16)

Again, at the end of their wilderness wandering, we hear "And the LORD said to Moses, 'Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers. Then this people will

[30] Cf. Genesis Rabbah 55.4; and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on Genesis.

rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them'" (Deut 31:16).

In this way, the sixth commandment only *secondarily* refers to our marital life. The primary concern—as for *all* the commandments—is with the first: you shall not have any other gods. Of course, that is exactly what they did. "Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they whored after other gods and bowed down to them. They soon turned aside from the way in which their fathers had walked, who had obeyed the commandments of the LORD, and they did not do so" (Judg 2:17). The story of Israel's fall finds graphic prophetic portrayal in Ezekiel 16 and 23; and Hosea and Gomer live it out. It grounds the rationale for Yahweh's divorce of Israel in Jeremiah 2–3 and requires that he establish his covenant *and new covenant* with this adulterous people.

The entire Old Testament is the story of this marriage and family, and the putting back together thereof. God calls a people to himself from nothing, names them, weds them, joins himself to them, and makes them his own (Jer 24:7; 1 Pet 2:9–10). The covenantal promise ringing throughout the Old Testament is a wedding vow: "I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians" (Exod 6:7). Again, "And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people" (Lev 26:12). It rings throughout Jeremiah (7:23, 11:4, 30:22). Ezekiel heralds it from Babylon (36:28). It bookends the Book of the Twelve Prophets, being the foundational grammar in Hosea and climaxing in Zechariah (Hos 1:10, 2:21–23; Zech 2:11, 13:7–9). Ruth recognizes this marital vow and will not be found apart from it: "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God" (Ruth 1:16).

This promise—that he will be our God and we shall be his people—is the covenantal vow of marriage. Though we (and all Israel before us) were faithless, he remains faithful (2 Tim 2:13). The marriage of Hosea powerfully depicts this—taking to himself a "wife of whoredom" (זְנוּנִים אֵשֶׁת), bearing children of whoredom—because the Land (Israel) has committed great whoredom. Each child, in his or her own way, symbolizes the broken covenant, divorce. Jezreel is the Valley of Slaughter.[31] Lo-Ruhamma requires God to not be who he is and has promised to be—that

[31] Jezreel has both positive and negative connotations, which is why his name does not change when the day of great reversals comes (Hos 1:10–11, 2:22–23). "Jezreel" first appears in Josh 15:56 as one of the cities listed in Judah's inheritance of the land. Though many important political figures come *from Jezreel*, what gives meaning to its usage here is the blood shed when the prophet Elisha sends one of the "sons of the prophets" to ordain Jehu as king of Israel (2 Kgs 9:1–13). Once Jehu is heralded as king of Israel, the massacre begins. Jehu's revolution concludes, "So Jehu struck

is, merciful. Lo-Ammi denies that he is their God and they are his people. This judgment sits also at the root of Ezekiel's lengthy oracles.

> But you trusted in your beauty and played the whore because of your renown and lavished your whorings on any passerby; your beauty became his. You took some of your garments and made for yourself colorful shrines, and on them played the whore. The like has never been, nor ever shall be. You also took your beautiful jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself images of men, and with them played the whore. And you took your embroidered garments to cover them, and set my oil and my incense before them. Also my bread that I gave you—I fed you with fine flour and oil and honey—you set before them for a pleasing aroma; and so it was, declares the Lord GOD. And you took your sons and your daughters, whom you had borne to me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. Were your whorings so small a matter that you slaughtered my children and delivered them up as an offering by fire to them? And in all your abominations and your whorings you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, wallowing in your blood. (Ezek 16:15–22)

This whoring of Israel violated their marital covenant with Yahweh. They rejected and despised his promise. They despised his חֶסֶד—his steadfast marital love (Hos 4:1). Though he had redeemed them with a mighty hand and outstretched arm, and though he made them his own through signs and wonders, nevertheless, they left him for another—for many others. "Therefore, O prostitute," Ezekiel cries out, "hear the word of the LORD: I will make you stop playing the whore, and you shall also give payment no more. . . . So will I satisfy my wrath on you, and my jealousy shall depart from you. I will be calm and will no more be angry" (Ezek 16:35, 16:41–42).

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down all who remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, all his great men and his close friends and his priests, until he left him none remaining" (2 Kgs 10:11). All of this occurs in Jezreel. Blood, judgment, it all comes to mind with the birth and naming of Hosea's first child. That is his judgment—or, better yet, Israel's judgment lived out prophetically by Hosea's eldest son. But what about the reversal? How does this "Valley of Judgment" and blood turn into a blessing, as the other children do? What does Hosea mean "great shall be the day of Jezreel" (Hos 1:11)? Or when he says,

> And in that day I will answer, declares the LORD,
> I will answer the heavens,
> and they shall answer the earth,
> and the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the oil,
> and they shall answer Jezreel,
> and I will sow her for myself in the land. (Hos 2:21–23a)

Notice the agricultural language: rain speaks to land, and land to grain, wine, and oil. These then answer Jezreel. Jezreel is Hebrew for "God sows." The Valley of Jezreel was known for its fertility. The area is a fault basin, receiving an abundance of water. The day of great reversals brings for Jezreel a reinstatement of what his name intends for him to be: *sown by God*.

Exile—a casting out from his presence—became Israel's lot for her whoredom. Cast out from Eden, cast into Egypt, kept in wilderness wandering, cast into Assyria (1 Kgs 17:6–8) and then, climactically, into Babylon. Exile is separation. In Jeremiah, he calls it "*divorce*": "If a man divorces his wife and she goes from him and becomes another man's wife, will he return to her? Would not that land be greatly polluted? You have played the whore with many lovers; and would you return to me? declares the LORD" (Jer 3:1). Therefore, "I had sent her away with a decree of divorce" (Jer 3:8).

We may not be capable of fully grasping the judgment and the wrath of God in this decree. Divorce has become so commonplace, so acceptable—even among Christians—that we seem to forget what it is: *death*. Moses permits divorce on account of the hardness of their hearts (Deut 24:1–4), but from the beginning it was not so (Matt 19:8). And, as we hear in Malachi 2:16, God hates divorce (כִּי־שָׂנֵא יְהוָה אֱמַר שַׁלַּח). Divorce and exile separate what God has joined together. The two having become *one flesh* now dies in its splitting apart. Israel's unfaithfulness—her *whoredom*—calls forth the wrath of God.

Saint Athanasius frames this brokenness in terms of a divine dilemma: "It would, of course, have been unthinkable that God should go back upon His word and that man, having transgressed, should not die; but it was equally monstrous that beings which once had shared the nature of the Word should perish and turn back again into non-existence through corruption."[32] He will not and cannot be apart from his people. He cannot be *unfaithful*, even when they are. "What then was God, being Good, to do?" The solution requires God himself to act. And thus he does. Within Jeremiah's "Little Book of Hope" (chapters 30–33), God promises a *new covenant*:

> Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make *a new covenant* with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, *though I was their husband, declares the LORD*. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. *And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. *For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more*. (Jer 31:31–34, emphasis added)

[32] Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 32.

The new covenant is a new marital vow—a new *testament* between God and his people. Our bridegroom Lord does not leave us nor forsake us, but through the forgiveness of sins, he rejoins us to himself in a new vow and promise, new life—resurrection. So goes the story of Hosea and Gomer. Though the marriage began with great infidelity—a wife of whoredom who was given to whoredom—nevertheless, with the day of the Lord comes the great reversal: "And in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' it shall be said to them, 'Children of the living God.' And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head. And they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel" (Hos 1:10b–11). That eschatological "day" is the day of Christ. His incarnation is his "allurement" of his bride to himself. Hosea 2 draws together the great reversal, the eschatological day, and the new betrothal:

> Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. And there I will give her her vineyards and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth, as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt. And *in that day*, declares the LORD, *you will call me "My Husband," and no longer will you call me "My Baal."* For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be remembered by name no more. And *I will make for them a covenant* on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. *And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD.* And in that day I will answer, declares the LORD, I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth, and the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the oil, and they shall answer Jezreel, and I will sow her for myself in the land. And I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People, "You are my people"; and he shall say, "You are my God." (Hos 2:14–23, emphasis added)

Though unbelief drives Israel into exile, divorcing and splitting apart the one-flesh union of God with his people, our Lord will not let it remain so. His covenant is a promise of love through the forgiveness of sins. But this covenant requires his testament, his death, his entering into the exile of sin and death and separation. Hosea prefigures this through his *buying back* Gomer from a house of prostitution (Hos 3). The suffering servant of Isaiah perhaps most clearly brings this to light. The blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah cries out for justice. And now a blood speaking a better word than the blood of Abel establishes this new marital covenant (Heb 12:24).

The Lord hears and answers: "Sing, O barren woman" (Isa 54:1). "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion!" (Zech 9:9). The bride is redeemed by the bridegroom. The two—again—become one flesh. The dead are raised and the poor have good news preached to them (Matt 11:5). This is the marriage feast of the Lamb (Rev 19:7).

This brings us to the culmination of the Old Testament witness regarding marriage and family. It sets us before the face of the bridegroom—no longer naked and ashamed but fully clothed with the wedding garments of salvation: "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels" (Isa 61:10). This is the Song of Songs, the highest song, the *only* song. The Psalter, as it moves from left to right, traverses a great deal of woe and lamentation but climaxes in overwhelming praise. Even the Hebrew title, *Tehillim*, suggests that despite the overwhelming majority of laments, this is the book of *praises*.

Standing with Christ our groom before the gracious face of the heavenly Father, bound together in and by the Holy Spirit, the church—even we, ourselves—are addressed as *his loved one*: "Behold, you are beautiful, my love [רַעְיָתִי]; behold, you are beautiful; your eyes are doves" (Song 1:15). He calls us "His Sister, His Bride" (Song 5:1). He crowns us with steadfast love and faithfulness (Ps 103:4). He gives us to share in the Promised Land, an inheritance in heaven passed down by birth into his family—marked by circumcision of old, baptism now. In him the exile gives way to return, divorce is overcome by his faithfulness, and death is trampled down by his death, that life be bestowed upon all those in the tombs.

As the Old Testament contains within it the work of Christ, hidden as a mystery, written and formed in marriage and family, it orders everything toward *love*. That is the first and greatest commandment: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God [אֱלֹהֶיךָ יְהוָה אֵת וְאָהַבְתָּ] with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deut 6:4–5). Love alone remains when faith gives way to sight, and hope to the attainment of the reality fulfilled. These three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

The Song of Songs does not merely offer an example of love, or an otherwise secular love letter co-opted by the faithful, but bespeaks a prophetic utterance flowing forth from the heavenly council. Solomon gives us to listen in on an antiphonal song in which we also take part. Like Moses' Song of the Sea, this song follows the great deliverance worked by God for his people. And once that deliverance is bestowed upon the beloved of God, who can help but to sing his praise? Psalm 45 embodies such a song:

My heart overflows with a pleasing theme;
I address my verses to the king;
my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe.

You are the most handsome of the sons of men;
grace is poured upon your lips;
therefore God has blessed you forever. . . .

Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear:
forget your people and your father's house,
and the king will desire your beauty.

Since he is your lord, bow to him. . . .
All glorious is the princess in her chamber, with robes interwoven with gold.
In many-colored robes she is led to the king,
with her virgin companions following behind her.

With joy and gladness they are led along
as they enter the palace of the king.

In place of your fathers shall be your sons;
you will make them princes in all the earth.

I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations;
therefore nations will praise you forever and ever. (Ps 45:1–2, 45:10–11, 45:13–17)

We long for this marital reality to be for us now and forever—that what God has joined together, no man may set asunder. But as we long and wait and look for this fulfillment to come, we pray: "Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices" (Song 8:14). "Make haste, O God, to deliver me! O Lord, make haste to help me!" (Ps 70:1).

"Thus," based on the Old Testament testimony to marriage and family, Christopher Mitchell concludes, "marriage cannot be confined to the order of creation or civil order, since it serves a vital role in the accomplishment of God's redemption, preservation, and extension of His Church."[33] Yes, we speak of marriage being instituted in the garden before man's fall into sin. And because of that, marriage rightly belongs to all people—pagans and Christians alike. We are no *more* married than a Jewish or Hindu husband and wife. And Luther well advised that marriage be enacted at the courthouse and then sanctified by the word of God and prayer in the

[33] Christopher Mitchell, "What Is Marriage?," in *Ethics of Sex: From Taboo to Delight*, ed. Gifford A. Grobien (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), 42.

church. Nevertheless, from the Old Testament we see that marriage is never *merely* marriage. Husbands are icons of Christ. Wives depict the church (even unawares). "Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth" (Ps 127:3–4). Marital fidelity typifies the faithfulness that flows from union of God with man. Marriage begins on the cross, and in the resurrection the wedding hall is opened wide.

To desire other husbands, other lovers, is to desire other gods and lords (adultery equals idolatry). Do not do that, says the Old Testament. One Lord, one love, one marriage and faith and church and life. Yes, this is the reality of marriage and family—whether we fully see and comprehend it or not. This is the mystery that Saint Paul reveals to us and the Ephesians.

Not only does the marriage of Adam and Eve—their *becoming one flesh*—serve as a type of the reality, the substance of Christ and his church, but so also do our marriages. Husbands are icons of Christ. So, let them love their wives with that sort of self-sacrificial love. Wives are icons of the church. So, let them be subject to their husbands, receiving from them with thanksgiving just as the church does from her Lord. Children are like olive shoots around our table, bringing joy and vibrancy, receiving from their parents as we, in faith, from the Father in heaven.

Just as Adam and Eve in faith looked at the birth of Cain as the fulfillment of the promised seed, at first sight calling Him *Yahweh* (אֶת־יְהוָה),[34] so also do we look at every birth as another miraculous fulfillment of the promise, sharing in and figuring the incarnation of the Son of God (1 Tim 2:15). As the world rages around and against us, seeking to utterly destroy marriage and family, let us cling to what these are—not in and of themselves, but what they are in and of Christ Jesus. He is the beginning and the end. In him and his flesh alone, we find our life and joy, our hope and the fulfillment of our longing.

> The LORD bless you from Zion!
> May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem
> all the days of your life!
>
> May you see your children's children!
> Peace be upon Israel! (Ps 128:5–6)

[34] Cf. Martin Luther, *Treatise on the Last Words of David* (1543), in AE 15:320–323.

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Seminex Fallout: Doing and Undoing Church Fellowship with the ALC

Cameron A. MacKenzie

All men may be created equal, but not all Lutherans are. They come not only in different shapes and sizes but also with different definitions. What *is* a Lutheran? A lot of our history has focused on answering that question—just what are we? What does it mean to be Lutheran? Although it was Luther's opponents who first devised the label in order to dismiss the reformer and his followers, Luther himself embraced it—or at least allowed it—since his Romanist opponents were using it to dismiss the doctrine of Christ.[1] "The person [Luther] you can forget," he wrote, "but the teaching you must confess."[2] And with this, Luther pointed to the principal way that Lutherans still committed to historic Lutheranism want to use the term "Lutheran"—that is, as a reference to the *doctrine* that Luther taught or, even more precisely, to

[1] According to Alfred Goetze, "Lutherisch," in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Wortforschung* 3, no. 3 (1902): 183–184, John Eck first employed "Luderisch" in September 1520 and "Lutherani" in October 1519. In *Decet Romanum Pontificem*, the bull that excommunicated Luther (January 3, 1520), Leo X also declared that Luther's followers would "share his punishments and his name, by bearing with them everywhere the title 'Lutheran' and the punishments it incurs." "Decet Romanum Pontificem: Papal Bull of Excommunication of Martin Luther and His Followers," Papal Encyclicals Online, accessed July 4, 2020, https://www.papalencyclicals.net/leo10/l10decet.htm. For the original Latin, see *Concilia Germaniae / quae celsissimi principis Joannis Mauritii, Archi-episcopi Pragensis . . . magna ex parte primum collegit* (Coloniae Augustae Agrippinensium: Typo viduae Joan. Wilhelmi Krakamp, et haeredum Christiani Simonis, bibliopolarum, 1759–1790), 179–182, 180.

According to the *Frühneuhochdeutsches Wörterbuch*, how "Lutherisch" was employed depended on the religious position of those using it. For some (presumably Catholics), it was used right along with other dismissive labels: "bösewicht, ketzer, unchristen, schelme, wiedertäufer, wölfe, zertrenner, zerstreuer; gängige Charakterisierungen sind ärgerlich, böse (Adj.); falsch, giftig, ketzerisch, teuflisch, verfürerisch, unchristlich, calvinisch, schwenkfeldisch, zwinglisch, in Reihungen auch jüdisch, türkisch." *Frühneuhochdeutsche Wörterbuch*, s.v. "lutherisch," accessed December 8, 2023, https://fwb-online.de/lemma/lutherisch.s.4adj.

[2] Martin Luther, *Receiving Both Kinds in the Sacrament* (1522), in *Luther's Works, American Edition*, vols. 1–30, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1976), vols. 31–55, ed. Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–1986), vols. 56–82, ed. Christopher Boyd Brown and Benjamin T. G. Mayes (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009–), 36:265–266 (hereafter cited as AE); *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* [*Schriften*], 73 vols. (Weimar: Böhlau, 1883–2009), 10/2:40 (hereafter cited as WA). Luther's first reaction was to reject "Lutheran" entirely. See *A Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to All Christians to Guard Against Insurrection and Rebellion* (1522), in AE 45:70–71 (WA 8:685) and his *Letter of Consolation to the People of Miltenberg* (1522), in AE 43:112 (WA 5:78).

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the doctrine that is confessed in the Book of Concord. Others often use it phenomenologically—that is, for anyone who calls himself "Lutheran"—but most readers of this journal use it doctrinally, shorthand for a commitment to the Book of Concord. In The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), at least, we call ourselves "Lutheran" because we adhere to the doctrine of the *Lutheran* Confessions.

When the Missouri Synod began in 1847, it called itself "Lutheran" (i.e., *Lutherisch*) and restricted membership to those who subscribed to the Book of Concord.[3] For the new synod, the Lutheran label meant a *doctrinal* commitment. But not everyone who called himself Lutheran at that time shared Missouri's definition. As the term was then used, "Lutheran" also included Samuel Simon Schmucker, leading theologian of the Evangelical Lutheran General Synod, who maintained that adherence to the fundamental articles of the Augsburg Confession was good enough, even though, for him, "fundamental" included neither baptismal regeneration nor the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament.[4] So, right from the start of Missouri's history, there were significant differences on what it meant to be Lutheran in America.

There were others, besides the Missouri Synod, who took the Lutheran Confessions more seriously than Schmucker, and much of Missouri's history in the first generation involved talking and meeting with these Lutherans in other synods to see whether they all understood confessional and biblical adherence in the same way. Sometimes they did, sometimes they did not; and when they did not, there were controversy and conflict.[5]

But things changed in the twentieth century. Among other factors, the move to English, celebrating the four hundredth anniversary of the Reformation, and antagonism from nativists during World War I and afterward all led to concerted efforts to undo nineteenth-century divisions.[6] One result was that by 1918, all the major Lutheran church bodies were committed to the Lutheran Confessions, including the institutional descendants of Schmucker's General Synod. Of course, that did not mean that all the churches understood confessional subscription in the same way.

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[3] *Die Deutsche Evangelisch*-Lutherische *Synode von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten* was the original name. For confessional subscription, see Article II.2 of the first constitution, available in English translation in "Our First Synodical Constitution," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (April 1943): 1–18.

[4] See, for example, his suggested revisions to the Augsburg Confession in the *Definite Synodical Platform* of 1855, in *Documents of Lutheran Unity*, ed. Richard C. Wolf (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 100–104. For Schmucker's theology in general, see E. Clifford Nelson, ed., *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 128–131.

[5] Peter M. Prange has published three volumes on the doctrine and practice of fellowship in the Missouri Synod from before its founding until 1882: *Wielding the Sword of the Spirit*, 3 vols. (Wauwatosa, WI: Koehler, 2021–2022).

[6] Nelson, *Lutherans in North America*, 333–334, 375–376, 391–404, 443–447.

They did not. Furthermore, Missouri had always insisted that Lutherans had to address the issues dividing them, first and foremost, *biblically* as well as confessionally.[7] This became especially evident in the twentieth century when the churches began to confront a new issue in the church—and one that threatened not just Lutheranism but Christianity in America—namely, higher critical views of the Bible that undermined, for example, the doctrine of creation.[8] Some American Lutherans started accommodating themselves to modernist views of the Scriptures; others did not.[9] Through much of the century, therefore, the doctrine of the Scriptures was a central issue in determining relations between American Lutheran church bodies.

Initially, the Missouri Synod did not embrace higher criticism; but neither did some of synod's old foes from the nineteenth century like the Ohio Synod. So, when the Ohio, Iowa, and Buffalo Synods decided to merge in 1930 and become the American Lutheran Church (ALC), after agreeing to the Minneapolis Theses of 1925 with its ringing endorsement of "the divinely inspired, revealed and inerrant Word of God," it was possible to imagine fellowship between the new church and Missouri.[10]

And it almost happened in 1938, but not quite.[11] So, the two synods—Missouri and the ALC—kept working at it through the '30s, the '40s, and the '50s, even though those efforts resulted first in alienating and then in ruining Missouri's fellowship with both the Wisconsin and Evangelical Lutheran Synods, sister synods in the Synodical Conference.[12] Ironically, what finally facilitated fellowship between the Missouri Synod and The American Lutheran Church (basically a merger of the first ALC and the big Norwegian Lutheran church in 1960) in 1969 was a growing capitulation

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[7] Prange, *Wielding the Sword*, 1:4–6.

[8] To many Americans, the Scopes Monkey Trial of 1925 made this evident for the first time. Edward J. Larson, *Summer of the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

[9] According to Nelson, *Lutherans in North America*, 306, 383, Milton Valentine, president of Gettysburg College (then Pennsylvanian College) (1868–1884), tried hard to reconcile Christianity with Darwinism.

[10] Nelson, *Lutherans in North America*, 381–385, 443–447, 462–471. For the history of the merger and the part played by the inerrancy question, see Fred W. Meuser, *The Formation of the American Lutheran Church* (Columbus, OH: Wartburg, 1958), especially 177–230.

[11] *Proceedings of the Thirty-Seventh Regular Convention of the Ev. Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938). See also Wolf, *Documents*, 379–407.

[12] See my "Church Fellowship," in *Rediscovering the Issues Surrounding the 1974 Concordia Seminary Walkout*, ed. Ken Schurb (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2023), 145–168. For the Synodical Conference specifically, see Armin W. Schuetze, *The Synodical Conference: Ecumenical Endeavor* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 2000), 293–395. The definitive work on the break between the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods is Mark E. Braun, *A Tale of Two Synods: Events That Led to the Split between Wisconsin and Missouri* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 2003). For the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Missouri, see Theodore A. Aaberg, *A City Set on a Hill* (Mankato, MN: Board of Publications, Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1968), 134–242.

in both church bodies to higher criticism.[13] After all, it is hard to insist on absolute doctrinal unity if you no longer believe in the reliability of what the Scriptures teach in the first place.

So, in 1955, when the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) suspended fellowship with the Missouri Synod, the principal concern was not the Bible but fellowship practices. "The time has come," said the convention resolution, "when we must testify by action against the unionism which has become so common in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in recent years." But by 1963, when the ELS left the Synodical Conference, it added to its concerns about fellowship practices in Missouri the latter's "vacillating position on the doctrine of the Holy Scripture."[14]

This was the year after Missouri's synodical convention in Cleveland.[15] At that meeting, the synod's most public advocate of higher criticism, Martin Scharlemann, St. Louis faculty member, withdrew certain controversial essays, apologized for contributing to the unrest in the synod, and stated that the Scriptures were the "Word of God" and "utterly truthful, infallible, and completely without error." That same convention also reaffirmed the synod's "belief in the plenary, verbal inspiration of Scripture, the inerrancy of Scripture, and that Scripture is in all its words and parts the very Word of God."[16]

Nonetheless—and this really is the main point for our purposes—that same convention resolved that it was unconstitutional to insist that its members abide by the doctrinal resolutions of the synod. The synod had said just the opposite in 1959, but the Committee on Constitutional Matters ruled that such resolutions amounted

[13] From a somewhat different point of view, but with a similar assessment of the evidence for changing positions within the LCMS, see Norman J. Threinen, "Approaches to Fellowship," *Consensus* 1, no. 1 (January 1984): 17–28. What Threinen sees as most significant is the shift in rhetoric from agreement in doctrine and practice to agreement in the gospel, evident, he maintains, in the *Common Confession*, part 2, agreed upon by the LCMS and ALC fellowship committees in 1953. True, the document does highlight the importance of agreement in the gospel, but it connects it immediately to agreement in *all* that the Scriptures teach: "A denial of any teaching of the Scriptures involves a mutilation of, and departure from, the complete Gospel, and it is for this reason that a full and common obedience to the Holy Scriptures is an indispensable requisite for church fellowship." Moreover, the Scriptures, not the gospel, remain the standard by which all teachings are to be judged. See part 2 of *The Common Confession: Parts I and II* (n.p., [1953]), 22–25.

[14] Both resolutions are available in Aaberg, *A City Set on a Hill*, 283–289.

[15] For a description of synodical proceedings at Cleveland concerning higher criticism and the Bible, see Paul A. Zimmerman, *A Seminary in Crisis* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2007), 16–20.

[16] *Proceedings of the Forty-Fifth Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, [1962]), 106–107, 104 (hereafter cited as 1962 LCMS Convention Proceedings).

to amending the constitution, and the 1962 convention agreed.[17] Through the years there had been a host of resolutions that defined Missouri's understanding of what it meant to pledge faithfulness to the Bible and the Confessions—everything from *Theses on Church and Ministry* (1851) to the *Brief Statement* (1932) and even to that very resolution approved at that same convention regarding the Scriptures. None of them had been brought forward as constitutional amendments. So, none of them were binding on members of the synod. In 1962, therefore, the synod was reduced to "beseech[ing] all its members . . . to honor and uphold the doctrinal content of these synodically adopted statements."[18] The wheels were now off the bus, and the synod began sliding ever more rapidly toward the crisis of New Orleans (1973) and Seminex.[19]

Not insignificantly, the 1962 position that doctrinal resolutions amounted to changes or additions to members' commitment to the Bible and Confessions was similar to an approach to fellowship that the Lutheran Church in America employed[20] and that some in the Missouri Synod were also advocating. Kurt Marquart called this the "rabbit's foot" approach: "If one holds to the Confessions outwardly,

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[17] *Proceedings of the Forty-Fourth Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 191–192; *1962 LCMS Convention Proceedings*, 122–123, 187.

[18] 1962 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 106. For the history of this issue and aftermath of Cleveland, see Raymond L. Hartwig, "Excursus: Doctrinal Resolutions and Statements," in Schurb, *Rediscovering the Issues*, 99–104.

[19] At its convention at New Orleans in July 1973, the LCMS adopted *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* as an official statement that addressed the doctrinal issues troubling the synod and a resolution that identified the doctrinal position of the faculty majority at St. Louis as contrary to the Lutheran Confessions and the Bible. When the seminary's Board of Control suspended the seminary's president, John Tietjen, in January 1974, a majority of the students and faculty went on strike and then "walked out" in February. They created an alternative seminary, quickly nicknamed "Seminex" (Seminary in Exile). See Zimmerman, *Seminary in Crisis*, 99–128.

[20] See E. Clifford Nelson, "A Case Study in Lutheran Unity Efforts: ULCA Conversations with Missouri and the ALC, 1936–1940," in *The Maturing of American Lutheranism*, ed. Herbert T. Neve and Benjamin A. Johnson (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1968), 202–204. As early as 1920, the LCA's predecessor body, the United Lutheran Church in America, had stated, "The ULCA recognizes no doctrinal reasons against complete co-operation and organic union with such bodies [that subscribe to the Lutheran Confessions]." "Washington Declaration," in Wolf, *Documents*, 350. Similarly, the "Savannah Declaration" of 1934, in Wolf, *Documents*, 356. The LCA carried forward the same position. So, when the Synodical Conference was dissolving and, in 1965, Missouri invited the LCA to participate in theological discussions leading to fellowship (*Proceedings of the Forty-Sixth Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, [1965]], 106 [hereafter cited as 1965 LCMS Convention Proceedings]), the next year, the LCA declined and said, "we extend our arms and our hearts to you as one with us . . . in faith and doctrine," and added that the pastors and lay members of these churches (Missouri et al.) "are always welcome in our pulpits and at our altars." Erik W. Modean, press release from LCUSA, June 17, 1968, box 2, folder 6, part 2, TALC 4/2/9, Archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Elk Grove Village, IL.

one is free to interpret them . . . more or less as one pleases."[21] Saying you were committed to the Confessions was enough even if you disagreed as to what that commitment meant. John Tietjen advocated this position in his 1966 book *Which Way to Lutheran Unity?,* and in 1969 he became president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.[22] That was the same year in which Missouri declared fellowship with the ALC.

However, the debate and discussion that preceded Missouri's 1969 declaration of fellowship showed that the Tietjen approach was not quite enough for many Missourians.[23] For them, there ought to be doctrinal agreement that was real, not nominal. Missouri's decision was based not on the ALC's formal adherence to the Confessions but on something more than that. The convention resolution establishing fellowship in 1969 referred to a 1967 convention resolution that asserted that "the Scriptural and confessional basis for altar and pulpit fellowship between LCMS and TALC exists."[24] For proof of this, the 1967 resolution referred to the *Joint Statement and Declaration* of the representatives of the ALC and the LCMS, asserting that there was "consensus" between the two churches "in the preaching of the Gospel 'in conformity with a pure understanding of it' and in the administration of the sacraments

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[21] Kurt E. Marquart, *Anatomy of an Explosion: A Theological Analysis of the Missouri Synod Conflict* (1977; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 38.

[22] "The Bible as the norm and standard of teaching" and "the Lutheran Confessions as the correct exposition of the Scriptures—*that much and nothing more.*" John H. Tietjen, *Which Way to Lutheran Unity?* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966), 151 (italics added). Contrast Kurt Marquart, *Anatomy*, 72–82.

[23] Although it was for at least some of the synod's members, as evidenced by a couple of overtures to the synod's 1969 convention, including 3–246, submitted by the Campus Pastors Conference. *Proceedings of the Forty-Eighth Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (n.p., [1969]), 190 (hereafter cited as 1969 LCMS Convention Proceedings). However, in May 1966, President Oliver Harms of the LCMS had invited the LCA to participate in conversations with Missouri and the ALC designed to establish church fellowship "on a formal and clear statement of some issues which are not treated explicitly in the historic Lutheran Confessions" Nelson, "A Case Study," 222–223.

However, it is also true that Missouri had adopted a new approach to fellowship questions in 1967 by formally approving a Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) document, *Theology of Fellowship* ([St. Louis]: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, [1965]), that used the "gospel" as the ultimate test for fellowship and raised significant questions about whether the Scriptures themselves forbade fellowship with heterodox churches. See my "Church Fellowship" in Schurb, *Rediscovering the Issues*, 145–168.

[24] 1969 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 98. According to the minutes of the 1967 convention, that resolution passed "with fewer than 10 dissenting votes." *Proceedings of the Forty-Seventh Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (n.p., [1967]), 31, 102–103 (hereafter cited as 1967 LCMS Convention Proceedings). To distinguish the new ALC (1960) from the old ALC (1930), many documents used "TALC" for the 1960 church body and "ALC" for the 1930 church body. In the body of this paper, I have used "ALC" for both except when quoting documents that employ uppercase "T" for "The" ALC, the 1960 version.

'in accordance with the divine Word' (A.C. VII)."[25] In support of their claim of unity, the *Joint Statement* referred to three essays—one each on soteriology, Scripture, and ecclesiology—that were jointly prepared and agreed upon by representatives of the two church bodies. Then they had been submitted to each church for study and discussion. Neither side had raised official objections to any of the essays—hence the claim that consensus now existed.[26]

Perhaps that was true at the "official" level (whatever that means), but certainly there was no consensus within the LCMS regarding that fellowship, given the almost two hundred overtures submitted to the synod that opposed it in 1969.[27] Nor would one use "consensus" to describe the actual vote. The 1969 LCMS convention approved ALC fellowship by a vote of 522 to 438.[28]

How different from the ALC, which already had voted for fellowship with Missouri the year before (1968) and had done so unanimously. But whatever enthusiasm for reciprocal action on Missouri's part such a vote engendered was perhaps

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[25] 1967 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 102. *Joint Statement and Declaration of the Representatives of The American Lutheran Church, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches to Their Respective Church Bodies* (n.p., 1967).

According to the minutes of a meeting between representatives of the ALC, LCMS, and SELC on January 23, 1967, in Schiller Park, Illinois, the *Joint Statement* was approved by the following representatives. For the ALC: Fredrik Schiotz, Charles S. Anderson, George Aus, E. C. Fendt, E. O. Gilbertson, William Larsen, Orlando W. Qualley, Alvin N. Rogness, W. H. Weiblen, Lester F. Heins, Gordon S. Huffman, Fred W. McLean, Fred Meuser, Lawrence Siersbeck, and Robert W. Pfennig. For the LCMS: Oliver R. Harms, Robert W. Bertram, Herbert J. A. Bouman, Alfred O. Fuerbringer, Carl A. Gaertner, Oswald C. J. Hoffmann, Richard P. Jungkuntz, Fred Kramer, Theodore F. Nickel, Jacob A. O. Preus, Ernst H. Stahlke, and Henry J. Eggold. For the SELC: John Kovac, John Daniel, Kenneth Ballas, John Kucera, Albert Marcis, Stephen G. Mazak, Samuel P. Mozolak, and Andrew Babchak. The minutes also say that the statement was accepted "unanimously." Minutes of representatives of the ALC, LCMS, and SELC, January 23, 1967, box 2, folder 6, part 2, TALC 4/2/9.

[26] *Essays Adopted by the Commissioners of The American Lutheran Church and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* ([St. Louis]: [Concordia Publishing House], n.d.). See 1969 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 98, and 1967 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 102–103. *The Joint Statement and Declaration* and the three essays were reprinted in *Convention Workbook: Reports and Overtures; 47th Regular Convention [of] The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, [1967]), 421–422, 405–419 (hereafter cited as 1967 LCMS Convention Workbook). The authors of "What Commitment to the 'Sola Gratia' in the Lutheran Confessions Involves" were Richard R. Caemmerer, Edward C. Fendt, Martin H. Franzmann, and William H. Weiblen. The authors of "The Doctrine of the Church in the Lutheran Confessions" were Alvin Rogness, Fred Meuser, Fred Kramer, Stephen Mazak Sr., and Lorman Petersen.

[27] *Convention Workbook (Reports and Overtures): 48th Regular Convention [of] The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, [1969]), 109–189, includes 199 resolutions to decline, postpone, or make it more difficult to pass—e.g., subjecting ALC fellowship to a congregational referendum. There were twenty-two resolutions in favor of it (pp. 99–107) and two that advocated "selective fellowship" (p. 107).

[28] 1969 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 32–33, 96–99.

tempered by the ALC's action at the same convention, also by a unanimous vote, to declare fellowship with the Lutheran Church in America (LCA).[29]

By this time it was clear that both the LCA and the ALC were operating with the Tietjen "Confessions only" approach to fellowship. In the LCA, this had been the case for a *long* time. Its predecessor body had adopted it officially in 1920. In the 1960s, it became characteristic of the ALC as well. At its constituting convention in 1960, the ALC seemed to affirm the traditional approach by expressing its "willingness to enter into discussions looking toward altar and pulpit fellowship with any and all Lutheran Churches" that were committed to the Bible and the Confessions. "Discussions" could mean looking for doctrinal agreement. However, that same convention added a new twist to fellowship concerns by encouraging "selective" fellowship when it urged its congregations to act on their own, apart from any official declaration: "wherever congregations of The American Lutheran Church are mutually agreed in confession and practice with congregations of other Lutheran Churches, they are encouraged to practice fellowship both in worship and work."[30]

Furthermore, in 1964 when discussions with Missouri were about to begin, ALC president Fredrik Schiotz made yet another move away from complete agreement in doctrine and practice by reducing the confessional commitment itself to the Augsburg Confession, Article VII (agreement in the gospel and sacraments).[31] Discussions with Missouri were not designed to exhibit doctrinal agreement. Instead, he explained to his constituency that while the ALC accepted the LCA's position regarding fellowship "in principle," they had entered into meetings with Missouri in order to dissipate "fears." "The American Lutheran Church," he said, "holds fast to the principle of Article VII of the Augsburg Confession [agreement in gospel and sacraments], but it seeks to be understanding of the problems of a sister church. And if discussions will help to remove the fears that prevent an investment of the principle of Article VII, then the discussions with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod become an instrument of the Holy Spirit's leading." Schiotz also pointed out that in spite of there being no official declaration of fellowship with the LCA at that time (1964), in practice that fellowship already existed. "We have *de facto* pulpit and altar

[29] *The Lutheran Standard*, October 29, 1968, 21.

[30] Quoted in Resolution J64.6.73 (adopted by Resolution GC64.23.34 of the ALC 1964 convention), in *Reports and Actions of the Second General Convention of The American Lutheran Church*, ed. William Larsen (Minneapolis: Office of the Secretary, The American Lutheran Church, [1964]), 659–660.

[31] Significantly, even in its 1967 *Theology of Fellowship*, 18, Missouri applied the language of FC SD X 31, "in the doctrine and all its articles," to AC VII by explaining agreement in the gospel this way: "The doctrine of the Gospel is not here to be understood as one doctrine among many, or as a bare recital of John 3:16, but rather as a doctrine composed of a number of articles of faith."

fellowship with the LCA," he asserted. "There remains only the thin line of an official declaration."[32]

In the Missouri Synod, persistent approaches to fellowship with the old ALC had led to polarization, but fellowship issues did not precipitate the Seminex crisis. Instead, it was the battle for the Bible. By the time he became synodical president, J. A. O. Preus realized that higher criticism was the chief threat to Missouri's brand of Lutheranism. In fact, during the debate over ALC fellowship at the 1969 convention, then President-elect Preus asked the synod to postpone a declaration of fellowship because of "a concern for the doctrine of the Word of God." That question should be resolved first.[33]

A few years later, in his report to the synod regarding the St. Louis seminary, President Preus did list "Fellowship and Intercommunion" as a topic about which his "Fact Finding Committee" had discovered faculty positions at variance with the synod's.[34] He summarized the aberrant views of some faculty members this way: "Complete agreement in doctrine is not necessary for the practice of church fellowship, so long as there is agreement in the essential aspects of the Gospel. Because the Eucharist is a means for the achievement of the unity of faith, non-Lutherans may be communed at our altars if they profess faith in Christ and recognize His presence in the Lord's Supper."[35]

Nevertheless, when Preus prepared *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* to help the seminary board deal with false doctrine in the faculty, he did not include a section on fellowship. As the title itself indicates, *A Statement* took Missouri back to its origins as a fellowship of those committed to the Bible and the Confessions. In adopting *A Statement* at its 1973 New Orleans convention, the synod was once again maintaining that "Lutheran" meant adherence to Lutheran doctrine because it was taught in the Scriptures, but it did not speak to the consequences of that commitment for fellowship with the ALC.

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[32] Fredrik A. Schiotz, Report of the President, in *Reports and Actions of the Second General Convention of The American Lutheran Church*, 80–81.

[33] 1969 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 32. The quoted remarks are the secretary's summary of Preus' statement. A copy of the Preus statement is in box 2, folder 6, part 2, TALC 4/2/9.

[34] *Report of the Synodical President to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (n.p., 1972). See Zimmerman, *Seminary in Crisis*, 81–90. In May 1970, Preus appointed a Fact Finding Committee to conduct an investigation of what was being taught at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis about the Bible and confessional subscription along with other issues. The findings of this committee became the basis for the synod's subsequent actions at the 1973 New Orleans convention and the decisions of the seminary's Board of Control that led to the Seminex walkout in February 1974. For the importance of the Fact Finding Committee, see Zimmerman's *Seminary in Crisis*, subtitled *The Inside Story of the Preus Fact Finding Committee*.

[35] *Report of the Synodical President to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, 30–31.

Of course, while the New Orleans convention was the climax of efforts to reclaim the Missouri Synod for the Lutheranism of its past, it was hardly the completion. Much more had to be done or undone, as the case may be. There were all kinds of cooperative relationships with other Lutherans that had to be considered—for example, the Lutheran Council in the United States of America (LCUSA)[36] and the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship (ILCW)—and they were indeed considered.[37] But what about church fellowship? Did Missouri have to end fellowship with the ALC?[38] What about healing the breach with Wisconsin and the ELS? To this day, of course, the latter has proved extremely difficult, perhaps not impossible but quite

[36] In 1966, Missouri participated in the founding of LCUSA, an inter-synodical body consisting of the LCA, ALC, LCMS, and the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (formerly the Slovak Synod, it merged with the LCMS in 1970). LCUSA coordinated work in mission planning, campus ministry, and military chaplains. It also facilitated theological discussions, studies, and dialogues. *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, s.v. "Lutheran Council in the United States of America," accessed November 21, 2021, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Lutheran-Council-in-the-United-States-of-America. See also Social Networks and Archival Context, s.v. "Lutheran Council in the USA," accessed November 21, 2021, http://n2t.net/ark:/99166/w65q9m9h.

The 1977 report of the CTCR includes a lengthy report on LCUSA in response to synodical directives in 1975 that all boards and commissions evaluate Missouri's participation in LCUSA's various programs on the basis of the synod's doctrinal position and fellowship principles along with other criteria. The CTCR report also recorded action of the synodical Board of Directors in 1975, stating that for the LCMS, LCUSA's prime purpose was theological discussion, and insisting that the synod's doctrinal position not be compromised. *Convention Workbook (Reports and Overtures): 52nd Regular Convention [of] The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, [1977]), 63–69 (hereafter cited as 1977 LCMS Convention Workbook). The 1977 convention voted to continue Missouri's "selective" participation in LCUSA. *Convention Proceedings: 52nd Regular Convention [of] The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (n.p., [1977]), 126–127 (hereafter cited as 1977 LCMS Convention Proceedings).

[37] The ILCW consisted of the LCMS, the ALC, the LCA, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada (ELCC). The LCMS entered into fellowship with the ALC and the ELCC in 1969 but not with the LCA. Nonetheless, together the four church bodies produced the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978). "Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship," Concordia University Chicago, accessed November 21, 2021, https://www.cuchicago.edu/academics/centers-of-excellence/center-for-church-music/hymnal-collection-index/inter-lutheran-commission-on-worship/.

Citing theological concerns about the still unpublished *Lutheran Book of Worship* (*LBW*), the Missouri Synod appointed a "blue ribbon" committee to review *LBW*. 1977 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 127. In the wake of that review, changes were made to *LBW*, and the 1979 convention adopted the edited version as an official synodical hymnal. *Convention Proceedings: 53rd Regular Convention [of] The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (n.p., [1979]), 113–117 (hereafter cited as 1979 LCMS Convention Proceedings). In 1982, it was published as *Lutheran Worship*.

[38] Already at the New Orleans convention (1973), Floor Committee 2 (Church Relations) brought to the floor Resolution 2–40 to "suspend fellowship" with the ALC, but instead of voting on it, the convention tabled it. *Proceedings of the Fiftieth Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (n.p., [1973]), 122–123 (hereafter cited as 1973 LCMS Convention Proceedings). Missouri's President Preus reported to the ALC's President Preus that the motion failed because it lacked "official" (his?) support. See David Preus, "recollections" of the September 12, 1973, meeting of the Intersynodical Fellowship Committee, box 1, folder 5, TALC 4/4/1.

unlikely. But reassessing its relationship with the ALC proved to be slightly less problematic, and fellowship was terminated in 1981. But why was that?

For one thing, about a year and a half after Missouri's decision *for* fellowship, the ALC did something that proved to Missouri's conservatives what they had been saying all along—that fellowship was a big mistake. On December 22, 1970, the ALC ordained its first female pastor.[39] Of course, in 1970 it was not at all clear that the Missouri Synod would not follow the ALC precedent. However, even though Missouri had granted women the franchise the year before at its 1969 convention, it was on record twice in the '60s as opposed to female pastors—once in 1965 (the convention that some still think of today as the high point of modernism in Missouri) and then again in 1969, the same convention that had declared ALC fellowship.[40] In the resolution that affirmed women's suffrage, the synod had also declared that "Those statements of Scripture which direct women to keep silent in the church and which prohibit them to teach and to exercise authority over men, we understand to mean that women ought not to hold the pastoral office or serve in any other capacity involving the distinctive functions of this office."[41]

Even so, this was hardly the end of the matter, and, for more than a decade thereafter, subsequent conventions fielded overtures both for and against women's ordination as well as calls just to study the issue,[42] while the ALC responded that the

[39] "Barbara Andrews," Fifty Years On: A Half Century of Ordaining Lutheran Women, accessed December 22, 2023, https://pages.stolaf.edu/lutheranwomensordination/barbara-andrews-2/.

[40] 1965 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 103.

[41] 1969 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 88.

[42] *Convention Workbook (Reports and Overtures): 49th Regular Convention [of] The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, [1971]), 92–94 (hereafter cited as 1971 LCMS Convention Workbook); *Convention Workbook (Reports and Overtures): 50th Regular Convention [of] The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, [1973]), 60–65 (hereafter cited as 1973 LCMS Convention Workbook); *Convention Workbook (Reports and Overtures): 51st Regular Convention [of] The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, [1975]), 106–107 (hereafter cited as 1975 LCMS Convention Workbook); and 1977 LCMS Convention Workbook, 91–93. In the 1979 LCMS convention workbook, there were only two overtures on this topic, and both of them opposed ordaining women. *Convention Workbook (Reports and Overtures): 53rd Regular Convention [of] The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, [1979]), 99 (hereafter cited as 1979 LCMS Convention Workbook). In the 1981 LCMS convention workbook, a resolution from the English District called for additional study since, in the "whereases," they stated there were both those opposed and those not opposed to the ordination of women. *Convention Workbook: Reports and Overtures; 54th Regular Convention [of] The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, [1981]), 168 (hereafter cited as 1981 LCMS Convention Workbook). Of course, in all these convention workbooks there were other overtures dealing with women's suffrage and women's service in the church.

New Testament did not at all preclude women from the pastoral office.[43] Nonetheless, during the twelve years of ALC fellowship (1969–1981), Missouri officially rejected women's ordination twice more—in 1971 and 1977[44]—and routinely raised it in ongoing discussions with the ALC.[45] By 1981, it had firmly become a nail in the coffin of ALC fellowship.

The resolution that had declared fellowship in 1969 also called for "the creation of an intersynodical commission to assist in the proper understanding and practice of fellowship."[46] This commission met regularly in the years of fellowship, and Missouri's representatives reported to the synod at each convention. In every synodical report from 1971 to 1981 they mentioned women's ordination as a problem for the relationship between the churches.[47] Already then in its 1971 convention, Missouri expressed "strong regret" over the ALC's decision, asked them to reconsider and to delay implementation of that decision, and counseled its own members to "defer new implementation" of fellowship with the ALC.[48]

The ALC took Missouri's 1971 resolution seriously. By way of reconsidering their action, ALC president Kent Knutson requested each of the three ALC seminaries to answer two questions: (1) Do you find that the Scriptures forbid the ordination or service of women in the ministry of word and sacrament? And (2) Do you find in the Scriptures orders of creation that enunciate a principle of women being subordinate to men, which then pertains directly to the role women should serve in the ministry? All three responded no to each question and supported their answers with documentation and analysis that extended over twenty-two pages in the

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[43] Resolution GC72.9.122, in *1972 Reports and Actions: Sixth General Convention of The American Lutheran Church, Part 3*, ed. Arnold R. Mickelson (Minneapolis: Office of the General Secretary, The American Lutheran Church, [1972]), 928.

[44] *Proceedings of the Forty-Ninth Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (n.p., [1971]), 114–115 (hereafter cited as 1971 LCMS Convention Proceedings) (by a vote of 674 to 194); and 1977 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 134.

[45] In his first convention report to the synod (1971), Preus described the synod's efforts *prior* to the ALC's decision to keep them from an action that would place "a heavy strain" on fellowship between the two churches. 1971 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 58–59.

[46] In a memo (dated October 2, 1969) from Fredrik A. Schiotz to those whom he was asking to serve—viz., Drs. E. C. Fendt, Kent Knutson, William Larsen, C. K. Preus, and John Stensvaag—the ALC president reported on his conversation with President Preus about the nature and personnel of the fellowship committee and indicated the names of the Missouri men: "The representatives from LC-MS will be Drs. Ralph Bohlmann of St. Louis, W. Harry Krieger of Los Angeles, Rev. Philip Lochaas of Manchester, Missouri, Dr. Theodore F. Nickel of Chicago, and Professor Richard J. Schultz of Springfield, Illinois. The two presidents will serve ex officio." Box 2, folder 6, part 1, TALC 4/2/9.

[47] 1971 LCMS Convention Workbook, 147; 1973 LCMS Convention Workbook, 48; 1975 LCMS Convention Workbook, 66; 1977 LCMS Convention Workbook, 70; 1979 LCMS Convention Workbook, 83; 1979 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 192; and 1981 LCMS Convention Workbook, 160.

[48] 1971 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 136–138.

Convention Report of the Standing Committee on Inter-church Relations.[49] Moreover, the ALC continued to insist that the differences regarding this issue were not divisive of fellowship. Over the next decade, the ALC did not change its mind,[50] but neither did Missouri.[51]

In 1977, when the LCMS declared itself to be in "a state of 'fellowship in protest'" with the ALC, the ordination of women to the pastoral office was listed as one of the points of doctrinal difference.[52] The synod repeated this charge in 1979.[53] Finally, in 1981, when the synod ended its fellowship with the ALC, the ordination of women once more made the list of issues and problems that divided the two church bodies.[54]

Not surprisingly, however, in their first report to the synod (1971), Missouri's representatives subsumed women's ordination under the biblical question. "We believe," they wrote, "that the authority of Holy Scripture is involved in this serious theological difference."[55] What each church body taught about the nature and authority of the Bible was really at the center of their disagreements, and that too was mentioned in every synodical report. But, of course, that was true only because of the change of leadership in the LCMS in 1969, for J. A. O. (Jacob Aall Ottesen) Preus II and his associates were now representing the Missouri Synod in fellowship discussions.[56]

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[49] Report of the Standing Committee on Inter-church Relations, exhibits B–F, in *1972 Reports and Actions: Sixth General Convention of The American Lutheran Church, Part 2*, ed. Arnold R. Mickelson (Minneapolis: Office of the General Secretary, The American Lutheran Church, [1972]), 465–486.

[50] Report of the Standing Committee on Inter-church Relations, 460. Resolution GC72.9.122, 927–928. David W. Preus, Report of the General President, in *1980 Reports and Actions: Tenth General Convention of The American Lutheran Church, Part 3*, ed. Arnold R. Mickelson (Minneapolis: Office of the General Secretary, The American Lutheran Church, [1980]), 918.

[51] Interestingly, the former St. Louis faculty who staffed Seminex quickly joined their voices to others already supporting women's ordination with their document "For the Ordination of Women," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 6 (June 1979): 132–143.

[52] 1977 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 126.

[53] 1979 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 118.

[54] *Convention Proceedings: 54th Regular Convention [of] The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (n.p., [1981]), 153 (hereafter cited as 1981 LCMS Convention Proceedings). The vote to terminate fellowship in 1981 was 590 to 494.

[55] 1971 LCMS Convention Workbook, 147.

[56] President Preus appointed Ralph Bohlmann, W. Harry Krieger, Theodore Nickel, and Richard J. Schultz. 1971 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 147. By 1981, when the LCMS broke fellowship, its representatives on the Commission on Fellowship—besides Preus—were Ralph Bohlmann, Kurt Marquart, Samuel Nafzger, Karl Barth, and Lloyd Behnken. 1981 LCMS Convention Workbook, 159.

In terms of personnel, it is also important to note that Preus engineered the departure of Richard Jungkuntz as executive secretary in January 1970. See James C. Burkee, *Power, Politics, and the Missouri Synod: A Conflict that Changed American Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 110–111. Ralph Bohlmann then supervised the work of the commission on a part-time basis. On

Perhaps the issue of women's ordination made it easier to convince laypeople in Missouri that ALC fellowship was a mistake, but it was not the most important point of contention between the two church bodies. During the twelve years of ALC fellowship, the Missouri Synod was battling internally for its soul. Would it remain Lutheran as defined by its founders 125 years earlier, or would it surrender its traditional adherence to the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions to become more like Lutherans in the ALC and LCA and, eventually, participate with them in creating the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 1988? From that perspective, the issue of ALC fellowship was simply a second front in Missouri's civil war.

From the outset, the ALC seminaries made it clear that their sympathies were with the St. Louis seminary faculty majority and their supporters in the synod. So, for example, the presidents and deans of the ALC seminaries sent a letter in January 1974 to the St. Louis Board of Control, in which they not only encouraged the faculty and administration but also responded to the charges against them by the Preus administration and the synod itself in convention at New Orleans (1973).[57] The "scholarly methods" employed at the St. Louis seminary to study the Bible, said the ALC men, did not result in "any infidelity to the God of the Scriptures." Those methods had their "origin in the Reformation revival of the listening approach to God's written Word." The St. Louis faculty was also correct in rejecting any extra-confessional standard of orthodoxy, since this was the position of the Confessions themselves. Unwarranted accusations had resulted in the "persecution of faithful men."[58]

Initially, however, David Preus, at that time president of the ALC, and his executive team urged ALC entities not to involve themselves in Missouri's internal battles, but later that year after the "walkout" and the formation of Seminex, Preus published an open letter in the ALC's *The Lutheran Standard* (April 16, 1974) to the members of the LCMS. While denying any intention on the part of the ALC to become "partisans" in Missouri's internal controversy, Preus maintained that "differences in theological approach" did not require "divisiveness or new tests of orthodoxy." In fact, he was "distressed" at Missouri's use of *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* as "the only valid interpretation" of the doctrinal issues. Doing this, he argued, narrowed legitimate Lutheran teaching and threatened the basis

leave from Concordia Seminary, he became full-time executive secretary of the CTCR in March 1972. See Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, in 1973 LCMS Convention Workbook, 29.

[57] 1973 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 133–139.

[58] William H. Weiblen (chairman, Seminary Presidents and Deans) to Board of Control, Concordia Seminary, January 14, 1974, repr. in Report of the Church Council, in *1974 Reports and Actions: Seventh General Convention of The American Lutheran Church, Part 2*, ed. Arnold R. Mickelson (Minneapolis: Office of the General Secretary, The American Lutheran Church, [1974]), 537–538.

upon which the two church bodies enjoyed fellowship.[59] Later when Seminex formed and congregations that left Missouri organized the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC), the ALC continued to express its support for the dissidents.[60]

As was the case within the Missouri Synod, so it was also true between Missouri and the ALC in these twelve years that the principal doctrinal issue was the nature of the Bible. Prior to the Preus presidency, in 1967, Missouri had signed off on an essay regarding the Scriptures, "The Lutheran Confessions and 'Sola Scriptura,'" as an important witness to "consensus" between the two church bodies on this crucial issue.[61] A committee of four—two from each church—had prepared it. The Missouri Synod men were Robert Bertram and Herbert Bouman.[62]

Bouman joined the St. Louis faculty in 1954, walked out in 1974, taught for a year at Seminex, and then retired.[63] Bertram taught at Valparaiso University for fifteen years before joining the St. Louis faculty in 1963. He too walked out and taught for Seminex until 1983. Then when the Seminex faculty was deployed to other schools, Bertram taught for another eight years at the Lutheran School of Theology

[59] "A Letter to Missouri," *The Lutheran Standard*, April 16, 1974, 13.

[60] In 1976, the executive committee of the Church Council suggested forming a district in the ALC for congregations that wanted to leave Missouri. Report of the Church Council, in *1976 Reports and Actions: Eighth General Convention of The American Lutheran Church, Part 2*, ed. Arnold R. Mickelson (Minneapolis: Office of the General Secretary, The American Lutheran Church, [1976]), 561. In that same year, ALC President Preus indicated that the ALC would establish fellowship with the AELC and "offer appropriate assistance" but remain in fellowship with the LCMS. David W. Preus, Report of the General President, in *1976 Reports and Actions: Eighth General Convention of The American Lutheran Church, Part 3*, ed. Arnold R. Mickelson (Minneapolis: Office of the General Secretary, The American Lutheran Church, [1976]), 895. In 1978, ALC President Preus renewed the suggestion that the AELC join the ALC as a non-geographical district and intimated that Missouri's "state of protest" was not supported by a majority of Missouri's members. David W. Preus, Report of the General President, in *1978 Reports and Actions: Ninth General Convention of The American Lutheran Church, Part 3*, ed. Arnold R. Mickelson (Minneapolis: Office of the General Secretary, The American Lutheran Church, [1978]), 996. By 1980, the ALC, AELC, and LCA all belonged to a Committee on Lutheran Unity and were considering possible organizational forms for the three church bodies. See Edgar R. Trexler, *Anatomy of a Merger: People, Dynamics, and Decisions that Shaped the ELCA* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 7–25.

[61] Charles S. Anderson, George Aus, Robert W. Bertram, and Herbert J. A. Bouman, "The Lutheran Confessions and 'Sola Scriptura,'" in *Essays Adopted by the Commissioners*, 3.

[62] The ALC men were Charles S. Anderson (church history professor at Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, at that time and later president of Augsburg College) and George Aus (professor of systematics also at Luther Theological Seminary). Not insignificantly, ALC president Fredrik A. Schiotz in his autobiography, *One Man's Story* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980), 149, includes an anecdote from the late 1950s about George Aus' announcement to a joint meeting of Evangelical Lutheran Church district presidents and Luther Theological Seminary faculty in which Aus explained how he had given up the textual inerrancy of the Bible while studying in Norway.

[63] "Rev. Herbert Bouman Funeral in Milwaukee," *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, December 1, 1981, https://www.newspapers.com/article/st-louis-post-dispatch-obituary-for-her/72785652/.

at Chicago.[64] Both men endorsed *Faithful to Our Calling[,] Faithful to Our Lord*, *Part I*,[65] the faculty majority response to *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, and then submitted personal confessions in *Part II*.[66] So, what about their consensus-demonstrating essay of 1964–1965?

It is difficult to say precisely how a typical Missouri Synod clergyman would have understood "The Lutheran Confessions and 'Sola Scriptura'" when it first appeared, but today we can readily see a new approach to the Bible at work. At least some saw it already at that time. In January 1969, Concordia Theological Seminary (at that time still in Springfield, Illinois) dedicated the first issue of *The Springfielder* that year to the three essays being used to promote fellowship. These included the one on the Scriptures. Eugene Klug's review was very critical.[67]

Not insignificantly, in another essay—this one unpublished—Klug described a "consultation" of ALC and LCMS seminary professors several months before.[68] This one was assembled in Chicago, March 22–23, 1968, for the purpose of discussing the topics treated in the three unifying essays. Klug was assigned "sola Scriptura." As in the article published later, he pointed to what he considered defects in the essay. But when it came time for discussion, he later wrote, only the St. Louis men pushed back against him while the ALC men "fell into virtually total silence."[69]

So, how did the essay on "The Lutheran Confessions and 'Sola Scriptura'" depart from Missouri's traditional approach? Most obvious today is the essay's failure to address the questions that were roiling the synod regarding verbal inspiration and inerrancy or even the facticity of biblical narratives in either the Old or New Testaments. Did Israel really walk through the Red Sea? Did Jesus really walk on the

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[64] Ed Schroeder, "The Reverend Dr. Robert W. Bertram International Lutheran Theologian, Interpreter of Seminex," *Crossings*, March 20, 2003, https://crossings.org/the-reverend-dr-robert-w-bertram-international-lutheran-theologian-interpreter-of-seminex-by-ed-schroeder/.

[65] Faculty of Concordia Seminary, *Faithful to Our Calling[,] Faithful to Our Lord, Part I: A Witness to Our Faith; A Joint Statement and Discussion of Issues* (n.p., [1973]), 10. In March 1973, Missouri's CTCR issued a statement regarding *Faithful*, *Part I* that found it in error regarding inspiration, inerrancy, and biblical authority. 1973 LCMS Convention Workbook, 39–40. See Zimmerman, *Seminary in Crisis*, 92–98.

[66] Faculty of Concordia Seminary, *Faithful to Our Calling[,] Faithful to Our Lord, Part II: I Believe; Personal Confessions of Faith and Discussion of Issues* (n.p., [1973]), 19–22, 22–25.

[67] Eugene F. Klug, "Comment on 'The Lutheran Confessions and '*Sola Scriptura*,'" *The Springfielder* 33, no. 1 (Spring 1969): 12–22.

[68] The Schiotz papers include a list of participants as well as a schedule for both days of meetings of faculty members from ALC seminaries (Wartburg Theological in Dubuque, Iowa, Luther Theological in St. Paul, Minnesota, and Evangelical Lutheran Theological in Columbus, Ohio) and from the LCMS (St. Louis and Springfield, including one from the SELC). Box 2, folder 6, part 2, TALC 4/2/9.

[69] [Eugene F. A. Klug], "What Price Fellowship," file 263, Wayne and Barbara Kroemer Library, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. The library catalog describes it as "Address presented at the Shawano, Wis., Pastoral Conference, Feb. 11, 1969, by Eugene F. Klug."

water? The essay in question did not address these issues, but Klug cited several ALC theologians who questioned or denied the historical accuracy of the Bible and even of the Gospels.[70]

There was also ambiguity in the essay about calling the Bible "the Word of God." "The Scriptures are the Word or address of God," the document stated, "to sinful man for the purpose of revealing His grace in His Son, Jesus Christ."[71] So, the Scriptures have a divine purpose. That is true, but what about their origin? Did God inspire the exact words and phrases—and if he did, did he include any errors of fact?

Notice too this particular phrasing: "The Scriptures *as the Word of God* are the sole authority in the Church."[72] Note well: They are not authoritative *because* they are the word of God but *as* they are.[73] That takes the reader back to the previous statement that identified the Scriptures with the word of God in its purpose to save sinners. One way of reading this is to say that *in their purpose* the Scriptures are the source and norm of the church's message—that is, the church that is faithful to the word of God must be about the *task* of making disciples through word and sacraments—but the statement leaves open the question of whether the Scriptures are authoritative in their content. Consider this statement too from the essay: "the Scriptures as the Word of God provide the church with the adequate, reliable, and efficacious means for her work among her members and for her mission to the world."[74] Once again the emphasis is on what the Scriptures *as* the word of God do and not on what they say.[75]

So, the church can preach the word with confidence that it will do its job, but can Christians be confident that what it says about God's actions in space and time, preeminently in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, really took place? Of course, one might object that no one was raising questions about the resurrection of Jesus in the ALC or LCMS in 1969. Maybe not—but they certainly were less than a decade later at the time of the Seminex walkout.[76]

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[70] Klug, "Comment," 17–18. Starting with Schiotz himself, Klug goes on to cite Harris Kaasa, Gerhard Forde, Ronald Hals, Wilfred Bunge, Warren Quanbeck, and Philip Quanbeck.

[71] Anderson et al., "The Lutheran Confessions and 'Sola Scriptura,'" in *Essays Adopted by the Commissioners*, 5, repr. in 1967 LCMS Convention Workbook, 409.

[72] Anderson et al., "The Lutheran Confessions and 'Sola Scriptura,'" in *Essays Adopted by the Commissioners*, 6, repr. in 1967 LCMS Convention Workbook, 410.

[73] That is Klug's first point. "Comment," 13. "Lutherans need to restate for our times that the Holy Scriptures *are* the Word of God, not merely in a manner of speaking, but in fact."

[74] Anderson et al., "The Lutheran Confessions and 'Sola Scriptura,'" in *Essays Adopted by the Commissioners*, 7, repr. in 1967 LCMS Convention Workbook, 411.

[75] Klug, "Comment," 15.

[76] See the *Report of the Synodical President to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, sec. 5f,5, "Permissiveness: The Physical Resurrection," 105–112, and Timothy Maschke, Richard Noack, Gary Boye, Bruce Linderman, and Ted Mayes, in "Memories of the Walkout from Concordia Seminary St. Louis, MO., February 1974," ed. Ted Mayes (unpublished manuscript, 2021), 30, 41–42,

Whatever its deficiencies in Klug's mind or anyone else's, however, in 1969, "The Lutheran Confessions and 'Sola Scriptura'" proved useful in demonstrating "consensus" between Missouri and the ALC. But what happened after the election of J. A. O. Preus in that same year? The consensus disappeared. As Preus himself suggested it would at the 1969 convention in his caveat concerning fellowship,[77] the doctrine of the word became a central issue in the doctrinal discussions of the Intersynodical Commission on Fellowship. At the beginning, even before the commission had met for the first time, President Preus wrote to President Schiotz about his expectation that the commission would consider theological issues, "such as the Doctrine of Scripture."[78] Then at the end of fellowship, in the preamble to the 1981 LCMS resolution that declared the two church bodies *not* in fellowship, the first doctrinal difference mentioned was "the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of Holy Scriptures."[79]

During the first four years of fellowship (1969–1973), the Missouri Synod was dealing internally with the doctrine of the word—what it was and whether the St. Louis faculty was teaching it faithfully. The LCMS settled that issue at the New Orleans convention (1973) with the adoption of *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*.[80] This then was also the position that Missouri's men on the Fellowship Commission had advocated for twelve years. Gone was any ambiguity in Missouri's position, or in that of the ALC, for that matter. Even though the latter continually contended that differences regarding the word ought not to affect fellowship, they did not deny the differences.[81]

What was especially poignant about these conversations regarding inerrancy in particular was that this was an issue that had brought the two groups together in the 1920s, but by the 1960s it had begun to divide them. In the ALC, not only had "inerrancy" found a place in the founding documents of the first ALC (1930), but also it was still a part of the constitution of the new ALC of 1960. In fact, its first article,

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62, 84, 89, Wayne and Barbara Kroemer Library, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

[77] 1969 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 32. A copy of the entire Preus statement is in box 2, folder 6, part 2, TALC 4/2/9.

[78] J. A. O. Preus to Fredrik Schiotz, November 25, 1969, box 2, folder 6, part 1, TALC 4/2/9.

[79] 1981 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 153.

[80] 1973 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 127–128.

[81] Even in their last appeal to Missouri before the latter ended fellowship, on June 24, 1981, the ALC Church Council wrote to President Preus of the Missouri Synod that confessional subscription "does not require uniformity in all matters. . . . The disagreements [between the two church bodies] come in areas not directly addressed by the Confessions and . . . take on the character of added requirements imposed by LCMS. . . . Agreement on matters directly addressed in the common Confessional documents is sufficient to support altar and pulpit fellowship." "Resolution of The American Lutheran Church Council," in 1981 LCMS Convention Workbook, 81.

"Confession of Faith," committed the church to the Bible "as the divinely inspired, revealed, and *inerrant* Word of God."[82]

However, by the time of the fellowship talks in the 1960s and then fellowship itself in the 1970s, the two churches were using the term "inerrancy" very differently. The first president of the new ALC, Fredrik Schiotz, was already qualifying the term in 1966 when he wrote that "The ALC holds that the inerrancy referred to [in the constitution] does not apply to the text but to the truths revealed for our faith, doctrine and life."[83] Meanwhile, just days after his election to the synodical presidency in 1969, J. A. O. Preus explained inerrancy as "the essential truthfulness and reliability of Scripture. . . . The inerrancy of Scripture pertains to all of Scripture, not only those portions which deal with theological matters but also those portions that touch upon history or the things of nature."[84] By 1979, Harold Ditmanson could observe that "It is generally agreed within the ALC that the term *inerrant* [in the constitution] means 'truthful' and the term *infallible* means 'reliable.' The terms refer to the message and power of Scripture, not to its text."[85] As the years of fellowship passed, the differences regarding inerrancy became clearer and others emerged as well.

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[82] Constitution [of the American Lutheran Church], in Wolf, *Documents*, 532–533 (my emphasis). See p. 492 for background. It is also worth noting that the "Articles of Agreement" (in Wolf, *Documents*, 527–530) between the three churches that came together in 1960 likewise affirmed inerrancy as well as recommitting themselves to the Minneapolis Theses (1925) (in Wolf, *Documents*, 340–342) and *United Testimony on Faith and Life* (1952) (in Wolf, *Documents*, 498–511), both of which also affirmed inerrancy.

According to Nelson, *Lutherans in North America*, 461–462, 468–470, through the '30s and '40s, inerrancy had been a roadblock to fellowship between the ALC and the ULCA. It was no accident, therefore, that it appeared in the constitution of the 1960 ALC.

Although acknowledging that for many in the ALC, "inerrancy" meant the Bible was an errorless book, David W. Preus, *Two Trajectories: J. A. O. Preus and David W. Preus* (Minneapolis: Lutheran Univ. Press, 2015), 57, contends that already early in the twentieth century, some Norwegian Lutherans used "inerrant" in a qualified sense that excluded historical and scientific information.

[83] Schiotz includes a chapter "On Interpreting Scripture" in *One Man's Story*, 143–54, in which he maintains that ALC members are "free from fear of historical criticism" basically because inerrancy in the ALC documents means only that the Bible is "a dependable source for Christian doctrine and life," and not that the biblical text is free from errors. In his autobiography, he is repeating the argument of his 1966 address to two district conventions, "The Church's Confessional Stand Relative to the Scriptures" (published by the Church Council of the ALC and distributed to its pastors). He argues on behalf of a doctrine of the Scriptures that accommodates modern "science" and finds errors of fact in the historical narratives.

What Schiotz did not acknowledge, however, in 1966 or his autobiography was that in an earlier period, the 1920s through 1940s, the ALC was using the term to insist that the text of the Bible was without error or contradiction just as Missouri did. See Nelson, "A Case Study," 207–223.

[84] Statement by Dr. J. A. O. Preus, re: Inerrancy of Scripture, July 15, 1969, box 2, folder 6, part 2, TALC 4/2/9.

[85] Harold H. Ditmanson, "Perspectives on the Hermeneutics Debate," in *Studies in Lutheran Hermeneutics*, ed. John Reumann (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 82. The book itself was a project

So, in preparation for the 1981 synodical convention, which would declare the two churches no longer in fellowship, Missouri's members on the Intersynodical Commission prepared a summary statement of doctrinal differences between the two churches in three areas. First came the authority and interpretation of the Bible, followed by confessional subscription, and then church fellowship. Descriptions of the differences were set forth by means of quotations from an earlier study, basically a neutral source, *The Function of Doctrine and Theology in Light of the Unity of the Church*, published in 1978 by LCUSA.[86]

Regarding the Scriptures, the central issue was the legitimacy of the historical-critical method. The ALC defended using the method even if it resulted in positing different theologies and apparent contradictions in the Bible. The LCMS rejected it because any attempt to read the Bible like other ancient literature diminished its "revelatory" character as the word of God and frequently resulted in challenging the authority, truthfulness, and unity of the Scriptures.

Regarding confessional subscription, the ALC, while insisting on its commitment to the gospel as witnessed to by the Confessions, was open to dissenting from confessional positions not directly related to the gospel, such as the fall into sin and the nature and interpretation of the Bible. The LCMS insisted that the entire doctrinal content of the Confessions was binding because it was a faithful exposition of the Scriptures, the word of God. That included the implications of confessional statements regarding the nature and interpretation of the Scriptures.

Finally, regarding fellowship, both sides agreed with Article VII of the Augsburg Confession that unity was based on agreement in the gospel but disagreed about what agreement in the gospel meant. For the ALC, it was the gospel in the narrow sense, the promise of forgiveness for the sake of Jesus. For the LCMS, while the gospel in the narrow sense was fundamental and was the "chief article," it was not the only article. For fellowship, it was necessary to establish agreement in the doctrine and in all its articles.

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of the Division of Theological Studies of LCUSA, designed to exhibit both differences and similarities regarding hermeneutics in connection with ongoing efforts to achieve theological consensus. Ditmanson was an ALC professor of religion at St. Olaf College.

Alvin N. Rogness, writing in *The Lutheran Standard* ("One Chapter in a Peculiar History," October 28, 1980, 5), stated that interpreting "inerrant" has caused problems for all the churches that use it and that in the ALC interpretations ranged from taking the Bible "literally" to treating Gen 1 as "a great poem" and Job as "a drama" while limiting inerrancy to the Scriptures as a "guide" for all matters of faith and life.

[86] *The Function of Doctrine and Theology in Light of the Unity of the Church: A Report Plus 15 Papers from an Official Study Conducted by the Division of Theological Studies, Lutheran Council in the USA During 1972–77* (n.p.: Lutheran Council in the USA, 1978). This is an excellent—thorough and honest—treatment of the theological similarities and differences characterizing the three main Lutheran churches at that time: LCA, ALC, and LCMS.

Furthermore, for the LCMS an insufficient commitment to the Scriptures—any uncertainty regarding their truthfulness, any hesitancy or disagreement about some of their contents—would put at risk the gospel by raising the question of whether we are confessing the Christ of the Bible or another Christ constructed according to some human standard.[87]

In this summary of the differences, the LCMS commissioners also included as an appendix a statement by the ALC members of the commission regarding the differences, as they saw them, that kept the two churches apart.[88] Theirs were not exactly the same as the Missouri men's, but like Missouri they did recognize significant differences in the areas of authority, Scriptures, gospel, and hermeneutics. Interestingly, the ALC commissioners included two additional points on why there were differences. The first was the observation that the LCMS men represented a much more homogeneous church than their own, in that the Missouri Synod had developed a strong synodical consciousness over 125 years. The ALC was a merger of churches from different ethnicities and with different ecclesiastical and confessional backgrounds. "Synodical loyalties," they said, "are seen in light of wider ecumenical possibilities."[89]

The last difference in the ALC list had to do with the ministry. From their perspective, Missouri drew a more rigid distinction between clergy and laity and accordingly manifested more of a "priestly caste, concern, and mentality" than one would find in the ALC.[90] But they did not explain very clearly how such clericalism resulted in doctrinal differences.

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[87] The previous paragraphs are a paraphrase of statements in *The American Lutheran Church and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod: A Statement of Doctrinal Differences* (n.p., 1980), repr. in 1981 LCMS Convention Workbook, 397–401, prepared by the LCMS members of the "intersynodical commission"—viz., J. A. O. Preus, Ralph Bohlmann, Kurt Marquart, Samuel Nafzger, Karl Barth, and Lloyd Behnken.

[88] Besides appearing in the 1981 LCMS Convention Workbook, the ALC commissioners' analysis was reprinted in Craig L. Nessan, ed., *"The Air I Breathe is Wartburg Air": The Legacy of William H. Weiblen* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2003), 172–181. Its inclusion among "theological articles and papers" from Weiblen's career suggests that he was the principal author of this statement, summarizing the differences as the ALC commissioners saw them in 1980. Weiblen was president of Wartburg Theological Seminary from 1971 to 1983. See "William Weiblen, Former President of Lutheran Seminary, Dies," Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, April 20, 2004, https://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/5179.

Also included in the same volume was Weiblen's "Reflections on the Theological Basis for Church Fellowship" that he presented to the joint Commission on Fellowship in 1972. He was a longtime ALC representative on the commission. According to the 1980 report of the LCMS members of the commission, the ALC members for 1979–1981 were John Halverson, Rolf Hanson, Roy Harrisville, David Preus, William Weiblen, and Walter Wietzke. *Convention Workbook: Reports and Overtures; 54th Regular Convention [of] The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, [1981]), 159 (hereafter cited as 1981 LCMS Convention Workbook).

[89] 1981 LCMS Convention Workbook, 401.

[90] 1981 LCMS Convention Workbook, 402.

However, just weeks before Missouri's 1981 convention, the ALC Church Council wrote to express their "dismay" at the proposed ending of fellowship. Furthermore, recommendations regarding fellowship deserved "more direct participation from people in the congregations." In the Fellowship Commission there were no laity and only one parish pastor. So, the ALC Church Council suggested that the two church bodies encourage regional and local consultations to discuss the matter before Missouri took any action to end fellowship.

In that same appeal, the ALC Church Council repeated its basic argument that confessional subscription "does not require uniformity in all matters. . . . The disagreements [between the two church bodies] come in areas not directly addressed by the Confessions and . . . take on the character of added requirements imposed by LCMS. . . . Agreement on matters directly addressed in the common Confessional documents is sufficient to support altar and pulpit fellowship."[91]

But why were the ALC men so insistent on rejecting the binding character of such statements, ostensibly drawn from the Scriptures themselves? Perhaps this explains it: In their summary of the differences with Missouri, the ALC representatives to the Fellowship Commission maintained that Missouri's root problem was a failure of will or capacity to be self-critical and warned that even Christian doctrine could become "the occasion for idolatry. Our trust is in God," they said, "not in human formulations about Him." Then they added the following: "ALC people are not seeking . . . to destroy the truth, they only want to say that all human formulations have a tentativeness within them."[92]

But with that word "tentativeness," applied to "all human formulations," they were placing a big question mark not only over Missouri's *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* but also over Lutheranism's Augsburg Confession, Christendom's Nicene Creed, and maybe even the Bible itself—which is what the whole Seminex controversy was about in the first place.[93] Has God really revealed

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[91] "Resolution of The American Lutheran Church Council," adopted by the ALC Church Council, June 24, 1981, repr. as appendix A to J. A. O. Preus, President's Report, in 1981 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 81.

[92] "Toward Understanding One Another" (1980), repr. in *Statement of Doctrinal Differences*, 22, repr. in 1981 LCMS Convention Workbook, 402. Of course, this was nothing new in the ALC. According to Schiotz, *One Man's Story*, 151–153, already at its 1966 convention, the ALC had passed *A Statement on Doctrinal Concerns* in which it had declared that because a believer still lives "with the limitations of the Old Adam," "his best efforts to formulate a theology in terms of propositions and statements will fall short. To assure that the Church can arrive at human concepts or expressions that are in every respect correct is . . . an expression of pride."

[93] Especially since earlier in that same report, the ALC commissioners had stressed the human side of the Bible: "The A.L.C. looks upon the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God of divine origin, but likewise the Scriptures are human documents. . . . [They] are to be studied, translated, and interpreted as divinely inspired, as well as historically written records and testimony of God's living,

himself truthfully—propositionally—in the words of Holy Writ, and can we ever be sure about it?

Of course, this 1980 *Statement of Doctrinal Differences*, including the ALC appendix, developed and documented these positions in greater detail than is presented in this brief summary. Of course, too, we cannot know today whether delegates to Missouri's 1981 convention even read it, but when the vote was finally taken to declare ALC fellowship at an end, it passed, but not by much—590 to 494 (54 percent to 46 percent)—just about the same as the vote in 1969 that established fellowship in the first place.[94]

A couple of days after the vote, David Preus, now "presiding bishop" of the ALC, had an opportunity to greet the convention, and in his remarks, he addressed the fellowship issue.[95] For him, Missouri's decision was a "denial of the God-pleasing unity that God has given us . . . and a step backward." Once again, he insisted that sharing a commitment to the Lutheran Confessions ought to be enough and that Missouri's insistence on agreement in the "Gospel and all its articles" was simply Missouri's method of demanding agreement on its formulation of whatever doctrine was being discussed. Preus insisted, however, that when new issues arose that "require serious, open theological debate" they should be debated, but he also maintained that "history . . . indicates that such controversial articles gradually find solutions." Given enough time, he believed, Lutherans would arrive at a consensus regarding inerrancy, women's ordination, and membership in ecumenical organizations.[96] In a sense, a consensus on these issues was already emerging in two-thirds of American Lutherans, but, as it turned out, it did not include the Missouri Synod.

So, in 1981, ALC fellowship was over—or was it? Maybe not, since the resolution supposedly ending it made many concessions to those in favor of maintaining the relationship. The first resolve, for example, declared the end of fellowship between the two church bodies, but the second and third resolves addressed "joint

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revealed Word." "Toward Understanding One Another," repr. in *Statement of Doctrinal Differences*, repr. in 1981 LCMS Convention Workbook, 401–402.

[94] 1981 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 153–155.

[95] The 1980 convention of the ALC changed the nomenclature of its general president and district presidents to "bishop." "With a New Song: Go and Tell the Story," *The Lutheran Standard*, October 12, 1980, 14.

[96] For Bishop Preus' remarks, see 1981 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 118–119. Bishop Preus spoke during the morning session of July 8; the ALC fellowship vote had occurred in the afternoon session of July 5. 1981 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 28, 42. In his *Two Trajectories*, written more than thirty years later, Preus devoted an entire chapter to Missouri's reasons for withdrawing from ALC fellowship. His position had not changed. He still thought it wrong to break fellowship over matters not addressed explicitly in the Augsburg Confession. However, he did include an interesting explanation for why J. A. O. Preus did not agree with him and their multiple Preus relatives in the ALC—and that was J. A. O.'s Missouri Synod pastor (pp. 15–16)!

fellowship efforts" at the local level between pastors and congregations. These resolves did not call explicitly for ending such relationships but rather to "reexamine" them and to pledge both to LCMS and to ALC members "their mutual trust and understanding in resolving such cases with both patience and love." Then, in a third section, the resolution called upon the synod "to recognize that its congregations and pastors, as circumstances warrant, may provide pastoral care [including Holy Communion] to individuals of the ALC." In fact, O. H. Cloeter, chairman of the floor committee responsible for formulating this resolution, had included in his introduction to putting it on the convention floor the statement that it did not refer to "grandpa and grandma from the ALC who come to visit their children and wish to commune with them."[97] Finally, the resolution called for further "doctrinal discussions . . . to enable both church bodies to reach agreement in doctrine and practice" as a precondition for "God-pleasing" church fellowship.[98]

Clearly, the 1981 resolution left a lot of room for discussion and disagreement in the LCMS about just what it meant practically that the two churches were not in fellowship. Indicative of the uncertainty that remained was the statement by President-elect Ralph Bohlmann about a need for "new types of inter-Christian relationships that correspond to [whatever level of] agreement we have and that frankly recognize greater flexibility of application at the local level."[99] It is no surprise, therefore, that fellowship with other Lutherans in America continued to be a matter of concern, interest, and sometimes controversy in the Missouri Synod.

Subsequent conventions of the Missouri Synod in the '80s considered memorials favorable to resuming ALC fellowship and then to cooperating with the new Lutheran church that was coming into existence, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.[100] The synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations issued

[97] 1981 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 122. President J. A. O. Preus had used similar language in his report to the synod when raising questions about what constituted "church fellowship" in the synod's current context (66).

[98] 1981 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 153–155. President J. A. O. Preus had attached a set of guidelines for implementing the suspension of fellowship with the ALC to his convention report, but these were not acted on by the convention. 1981 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 82–83. In January 1982, three representatives from each church body met as an ALC/LCMS Coordinating Committee to plan doctrinal discussions. *Convention Workbook: Reports and Overtures; 55th Regular Convention [of] The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, [1983]), 97–98 (hereafter cited as 1983 LCMS Convention Workbook).

[99] Quoted in "Missouri Synod Breaks Fellowship; Bohlmann Calls Decision 'Action of Love,'" *The Lutheran Standard*, August 7, 1981, 16. Moreover, in expressing these sentiments, Bohlmann was echoing what LCMS President Preus had said in his president's report to the synod. 1981 LCMS Convention Proceedings, 65–66.

[100] Memorials supporting the resumption of fellowship with the ALC are present in 1983 LCMS Convention Workbook, 114–115; subsequently, there were resolutions favorable to the "new" Lutheran church (the ELCA) and working with other Lutherans generally in 1986 (*Convention Workbook: Reports and Overtures; 56th Regular Convention [of] The Lutheran Church—*

documents and reports on fellowship in 1981, 1991, 2000, and 2004.[101] Since 1981, Missouri has entered into church fellowship with one American church and numerous overseas churches[102] and has terminated fellowship with one of the latter.[103] And in 2001, there was a major controversy in the synod regarding fellowship on account of the participation of a district president in an ecumenical "Prayer for America" in the wake of the 2001 terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, DC.[104] So, clearly, the 1981 fellowship decision regarding the ALC did not bring fellowship questions to an end in the Missouri Synod.

Nevertheless, it turned out that David Preus was correct at least about the ALC fellowship issue. History did provide the solution. For that question finally disappeared from Missouri's agenda in 1988 when the ALC itself disappeared. It merged with the LCA and the AELC to form the ELCA. Then, as the ELCA continued to move away from traditional Lutheranism and into the American Protestant mainstream, it became even easier for the LCMS to stay apart.[105] Finally, the ELCA's full embrace of the homosexual movement demonstrated quite clearly that the LCMS

Missouri Synod [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, [1986]], 113–116) and 1989 (*Convention Workbook: Reports and Overtures; 57th Regular Convention [of] The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, [1989]], 180–181).

[101] Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *The Nature and Implications of the Concept of Fellowship* (n.p., 1981); Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Inter-Christian Relationships: An Instrument for Study* (n.p., 1991); Office of the President and Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *The Lutheran Understanding of Church Fellowship: Study Materials* (n.p., 2000); and Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Guidelines for Participation in Civic Events* (n.p., 2004).

[102] In 2007 with the American Association of Lutheran Churches (*Convention Proceedings 2007: 63rd Regular Convention [of] The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* [n.p., [2007]], 120); in 2016 with confessional Lutheran churches in Norway and Uruguay (*Convention Proceedings 2016: 66th Regular Convention [of] The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* [n.p., [2016]], 150–153); in 2019 with churches in Belgium, Portugal, South Africa, and Denmark (*Convention Proceedings 2019: 67th Regular Convention [of] The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* [n.p., [2019]], 144–152); and in 2023 with churches in Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda, Sri Lanka, and Finland (*Convention Proceedings 2023: 68th Regular Convention [of] The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* [n.p., [2023]], 141–149).

[103] With the Japan Lutheran Church. *Convention Proceedings 2023*, 150–152.

[104] *Convention Proceedings 2004: 62nd Regular Convention [of] The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (n.p., [2004]), 57–58, 64–66, 76–78.

[105] According to Trexler, *Anatomy of a Merger*, 240, the ELCA joined both the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches at its first convention (1988). According to its website, the ELCA entered into full fellowship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ in 1997, with The Episcopal Church and the Moravian Church in 1999, and with The United Methodist Church in 2009. "History," Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, accessed August 28, 2021, https://www.elca.org/Faith/Ecumenical-and-Inter-Religious-Relations/Full-Communion/History.

represented a very different kind of Lutheranism—indeed, a very different kind of Christianity.[106]

Since early in the twentieth century, therefore, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod had been working its way through fellowship questions, especially regarding its relations with other American Lutherans. For many years, it was focused especially on relations with the American Lutheran Church in an attempt to undo divisions that developed in the nineteenth century; but eventually those efforts collided with twentieth-century issues like women's ordination and biblical authority and interpretation. Missouri went one way, the ALC another, and fellowship was the casualty.

In a sense, therefore, we have come full circle. The issues are certainly different. But just as it was in 1847, there are still two kinds of Lutheranism in America—traditional and exclusive confessionalism in the Missouri Synod on one hand, and in the ELCA, on the other, a new version of "American" Lutheranism, allied closely with mainstream Protestantism. It turns out once again that fellowship issues have been an important way in which the church defines what it means by "Lutheran." Synodical discussions, resolutions, and debates about fellowship bring to the fore those issues that are current and deemed important at that time. In the '60s, '70s, and '80s, the central issue was the Bible. Does it tell us the truth about what God really did to save sinners? ALC–LCMS fellowship showed us that only when we answer that question can we figure out what it truly means to be Lutheran.[107]

[106] In 2009, the ELCA adopted *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* and recognized full acceptance of homosexual couples and clergy as a legitimate Christian position. It provides wedding liturgies for homosexual couples and ordains homosexual clergy. See "Resources for the LGBTQIA+ Community," Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, accessed January 3, 2024, https://www.elca.org/lgbtq.

[107] I am indebted for access to ALC resources to the ELCA archives, and especially to archivist Catherine Lundeen, who assisted me so graciously by fulfilling my numerous requests for documents related to fellowship between the ALC and the LCMS.

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Research Notes

The Hymns of David Henkel's 1827 Small Catechism Translation

Hymns have been used to help teach the Small Catechism since the Reformation. Martin Luther's catechism hymns are prominent among such aids. But Luther was not the only one to encourage hymns for catechesis. Such encouragement comes also from early nineteenth-century American Lutheranism, particularly from David Henkel (1795–1831), the gifted theologian from the early confessional, English-speaking Tennessee Synod.

In 1827 Henkel translated and published an edition of the Small Catechism that included an assortment of hymns.[1] While not dealing with the six Chief Parts themselves, the hymns in this catechism are intended for edification of faith and life. For all but one, no author is named.[2]

This essay, on the example of Henkel, serves as encouragement to pastors, catechists, teachers, and parents to use Lutheran hymns in their catechesis. The essay begins with a brief history of the 1827 Henkel catechism. A closer look at a few hymns and a general overview of the rest follow, along with an attempt to identify the hymns' authors.

1. A Brief History of the 1827 Henkel Catechism

Teaching the Lutheran faith in the early 1800s on the American frontier was an uphill battle. Confessional Lutheranism had few supporters in America, especially among Lutherans. Unionism, rationalism, Pietism, and an Americanizing elevation of the country's founding fathers to the level of modern prophets ruled the day.[3] The birth of the Tennessee Synod on July 17, 1820, is thus a proud milestone for confessional Lutheran history in America. Intent on upholding the pure Lutheran teaching of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Tennessee Synod was born in bold, vocal confession of the historical Lutheran faith.[4]

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[1] David Henkel, trans., *Doctor Martin Luther's Smaller Catechism [. . .] to Which Are Added Sundry Hymns and Prayers*, 3rd ed. (New Market, VA: Henkel, 1841), in David Henkel, *The Works of David Henkel*, ed. Mark M. Taylor (Fort Wayne, IN: Lutheran Legacy, 2006), 341–390.

[2] Ambrose Henkel wrote in an introduction to the catechism translation, "In the German American edition of this catechism, there are sundry prayers and verses, intended for the use of families. Those prayers belong to the original catechism of Luther. But as for the verses, I do not know their author." Ambrose Henkel, advertisement, in Henkel, *Works*, 344.

[3] See Paul A. Baglyos, "American Lutherans at the Dawn of the Republic," *Lutheran Quarterly* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 51–74.

[4] According to J. L. Neve, the Tennessee Synod "distinguished itself by being the only synod at that time which stood squarely on the Augsburg Confession" (J. L. Neve, *A Brief History of the*

But resources were lacking. One writer later commented, "We had a weak, indecisive pulpit, feeble catechisms, vague hymns, constitutions which reduced the minister to the position of a hireling talker, and made Synods [i.e., synodical conventions] disorganizations for the purpose of preventing anything from being done."[5] Lutherans in various places may have even been unfamiliar with Luther's Small Catechism. On September 5, 1825, the Tennessee Synod in convention asked that the Small Catechism be introduced to all churches in its fellowship.[6] The following year, the synod's convention requested that the Catechism be translated into English.[7] This was left to David Henkel. His translation was later included in the 1851 Henkel Book of Concord.[8]

In his preliminary comments to the catechism, David Henkel indicates that the German catechism he translated was from the "American German edition, printed in Pennsylvania," that of the Pietistic and unionistic Pennsylvania Ministerium, printed by a variety of publishers since 1785.[9] The wording of the Small Catechism proper in those editions remained relatively consistent.[10] In addition to Luther's

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Lutheran Church in America, 2nd rev. ed. [Burlington, IA: The German Literary Board, 1916], 79). See also Socrates Henkel, *History of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod* (New Market, VA: Henkel, 1890), 1–31. For a detailed account of arguments and conversations that led up to the division between the Tennessee and North Carolina Synods, see also Robert C. Carpenter, "Augsburg Confession War: The Conflicts Concerning Lutheran Confessional Beliefs Arising from the North Carolina Lutheran Synod in the Early 1800's," *The Journal of Backcountry Studies* 5, no. 1 (Summer 2010): 1–26.

[5] Henkel, *History*, 5.

[6] Describing that convention, Socrates Henkel wrote, "All the congregations in connection with Synod were advised more generally to introduce Luther's Catechism" (*History,* 67). That some churches in the synod likely knew about the Small Catechism is suggested by the fact that the Henkel-family-owned press in New Market, Virginia, had in the 1810s published several editions of Paul Henkel's *Christian Catechism,* an edition of the Small Catechism. Not all North Carolina Synod Lutheran churches may have known of this edition or used it. At this time, Paul Henkel was not always in agreement with his son, David. See Carpenter, "Augsburg Confession War," 9, 17–18.

[7] "At this [September 18, 1826] meeting, it was resolved that Luther's *Small Catechism* be translated and printed in an English dress, and that Rev. Ambrose Henkel make arrangements to have the matter receive proper attention" (Henkel, *History*, 70). According to the minutes of the 1827 Tennessee Synod convention, "This was probably the first full, direct translation of said work ever published in this country in English" (Henkel, *History*, 73). However, this claim is inaccurate, since English-translations of the Small Catechism were published in Philadelphia at least as early as 1749. See Arthur C. Repp Sr., *Luther's Catechism Comes to America: Theological Effects on the Issues of the Small Catechism Prepared in or for America Prior to 1850*, ATLA Monograph Series 18 (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1982), 94–95.

[8] *The Christian Book of Concord or Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (New Market, VA: Henkel, 1851), iv. It should also be noted that only the Small Catechism translation was used in the Henkel Book of Concord. David's hymn translations were not used.

[9] Henkel, "Preliminary Observations," in Henkel, *Works,* 345.

[10] The Pennsylvania Ministerium's Small Catechism was printed for seventy-two years, without much revision: "During the long period in which it served as the official catechism, it was

words, many Pennsylvania editions included also the following: (1) "Analysis [*Zergliederung*] of the Catechism," (2) the "Brief Children's Examination of Württemberg," (3) rites of confirmation and confession of sins, (4) Johann Freylinghausen's "Order of Salvation," (5) the "Golden ABC's" for children, and (6) the seven Penitential Psalms. The differences among these catechism editions consist largely of the editors' inclusion or exclusion of various prayers and hymns. Henkel's English catechism includes a translation of the nineteen hymns contained in one of these editions of the Pennsylvania Ministerium along with an original hymn of Henkel's own.

2. The Hymns of the Henkel Catechism

The twenty hymns in Henkel's translation follow the Chief Parts of the Small Catechism and the Table of Duties, occurring in the Daily Prayers section and afterward. Interspersed with prayers on the same subjects, the twenty hymns are divided into the following topics:

1. Morning—3 hymns
2. Evening—5 hymns
3. Before meals—2 hymns
4. After meals—1 hymn
5. Before catechizing—3 hymns
6. After catechizing—3 hymns
7. At confirmation—1 hymn
8. After confirmation—1 hymn
9. Confession of sins—1 hymn

The hymns thus give poetic voice to the daily prayers and the believer's daily life and address catechesis sessions and confirmation. The only hymn that relates to a Chief Part of the Small Catechism is the last, a hymn on confession of sins.

The morning and evening hymns are arranged uniquely. There are two sets of morning and evening hymns. The first set has two morning hymns and four evening hymns followed by a phrase that reads "END OF LUTHER'S CATECHISM."[11] After this comes a second set: one morning hymn and one evening hymn (with prayers). This is then followed by the remaining hymns on the other topics, interspersed with

printed by some 25 different printers in more than 70 editions. In the earlier period, from 1785 to 1826, Leibert and Billmeyer of Germantown and their successors apparently regarded themselves as the 'official' printers. With one minor exception, no changes were made in the text in the 16 printings of this firm, even though the printer numbered them as 11 different editions" (Repp, *Luther's Catechism*, 73).

[11] Henkel, *Works*, 376.

corresponding prayers. One humorously observes that Henkel's catechism unintentionally follows the pattern of realized eschatology. The end is both now and not yet.

Why the morning and evening hymns were split can be surmised. The first nine hymns in the Henkel translation are found in the Pennsylvania Ministerium's 1826 catechism published by Michael Billmeyer of Germantown, Pennsylvania.[12] Arthur Repp states that "in the earlier period, from 1785 to 1826, Leibert and Billmeyer of Germantown and their successors apparently regarded themselves as the 'official' printers of the catechism."[13] These nine hymns may have been seen as more or less official and thus to be printed in all Pennsylvania Ministerium catechisms. The edition Henkel translated from, then, kept these hymns in their assigned places but also added extras.[14] The origin of the remaining hymns is challenging to trace. Henkel does not give authorship credit to any of the hymns except his own, "By Nature Man Is Dark and Blind."[15]

Two of the hymns deserve closer attention. The first is Henkel's original hymn, "By Nature Man Is Dark and Blind," placed at the head of the hymns to be used before catechizing. It is twelve stanzas long. The theme is the doctrine of God's word. For use in the church, it might be perhaps set to the tune DEO GRACIAS.

This hymn exalts the use and blessings of God's word. It weaves together various biblical teachings such as original sin, man's inherent doubt, the gospel, the inspiration of Scripture, justification, righteousness, the means of grace, the Holy Trinity, and eschatology. Some verses are quite good and are worth repeating.

Notably, this hymn does not mention Jesus by name. While the Father and the Holy Ghost are mentioned (both in stanza 6), the Son of God and his work are implied. Stanza 10 contains an oblique reference to the Son of God:

> Sure Word of God, a light divine
> Which in our dark'ned souls does shine,
> 'Til bright the day-dawn shall arise—
> The brilliant Morning-Star likewise.

[12] *Der Kleine Catechismus des sel. D. Martin Luthers [. . .] Zum Gebrauch der Jungen und Alten*, 11th ed. (Germantown, PA: Billmeyer, 1826).

[13] Repp, *Luther's Catechism*, 73.

[14] Another edition of the Pennsylvania Ministerium's catechism shows these same nine hymns but includes others afterward that Henkel's translation does not. See *Der kleine Catechismus des seligen Dr. Martin [. . .] zum Gebrauch der Jungen und Alten* (Pittsburgh: Cremer, Spear and Eichbaum, 1810), 38–41.

[15] Those interested in the authorship and provenance of the remaining hymns may contact the author.

Pastors and seasoned believers can connect the dots and realize that the "Morning-Star" is a specific title for the Lord Jesus in Revelation 22:16. Catechumens may not pick up on this, though.

Despite that, several lines stand out as solid examples of the Lutheran teaching of God's holy word. For example, stanza 3 poetically teaches Matthew 9:12 ("Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick"): "The gospel only is designed / For fallen creatures, poor and blind." Stanza 4 brilliantly captures the futility of finding salvation in the ways of this world:

> Creation wide reveals no plan
> To save the fallen race of man,
> Which could procure a righteousness
> That would restore lost happiness.

Stanza 9 shows the inestimable value of God's holy word:

> O blessed Word, worth more than gold;
> For unto man it does unfold
> Life,—immortality,—and Love
> From God, and joys in worlds above.

One is reminded of Proverb 25:11.

In conclusion, there is much to commend about Henkel's hymn.

The second hymn deserving of closer attention is the evening hymn, "Jesus, Our Heavenly Guide." The text is present in the 1826 German Pennsylvania Ministerium Billmeyer edition as "Ach bleib bei uns, Herr Jesu Christ," the familiar Reformation-era hymn included as hymn 585 in *Lutheran Service Book* (*LSB*), "Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide." Authorship is commonly attributed to Philipp Melanchthon (stanza 1) and Nikolaus Selnecker (stanzas 2–6).[16] Henkel rendered the three stanzas of the hymn in six stanzas, two for each of the German stanzas.

[16] The Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, ed., *Lutheran Service Book* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 585. See the discussion on this hymn's authors in Joseph Herl et al., eds., *Lutheran Service Book: Companion to the Hymns*, 2 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2019), 1:652–655. In an article on the hymn by Cameron A. MacKenzie, it seems doubtful that Melanchthon had anything to do with writing this hymn. There is also the possibility that stanza 2 was written by Nikolaus Herman. MacKenzie rightly says, "The textual background to this hymn is complicated" (Cameron A. MacKenzie, "LSB 585, Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide," in *Lutheran Service Book: Companion to the Hymns*, 1:652).

Henkel's translation	Original (attr. Melanchthon and Selnecker) with literal translations interspersed
1. Jesus, our heav'nly guide, We pray thee with us stay: Do not thy sceptre from us hide, Lest we should go astray.	1. O, remain with us, Lord Jesus Christ, While it has now become evening. Let not your Godly Word, that bright light, Be extinguished for us.
2. Ev'ening of time is come; Direct us in the road That leads to our eternal home, Up to the throne of God.	1. Ach bleib bei uns, Herr Jesu Christ, Weil es nun Abend worden ist. Dein göttlich' Wort, das helle Licht, Laß ja bei uns auslöschen nicht.
3. In these last evil days, Let not thy Word divine, Withdraw its holy lucid rays; But in us brilliant shine.	2. In this last afflicted time, Provide us steadfastness, O Lord, That we hold your Word and Sacrament Pure until our end.
4. Pure, to the end, O Lord, May we always preserve, Thy Holy Sacraments and Word; And them with care observe.	2. In dieser letzten betrübten Zeit Verleih uns, Herr, Beständigkeit, Daß wir dein Wort und Sacrament Rein behalten bis an unser End.
5. That we, in quiet rest, Our future days may spend; May we with godliness be blessed, Our lives in peace to end.	3. That we live in peace and good rest To bring forth the Christian life. And there afterward in eternity, We will praise and laud you at all times.
6. 'Til we thy throne surround In heav'n with shining throngs, Thy praise from golden harps shall sound, In sweet harmonious songs.	3. Daß wir in Fried' und guter Ruh' Das Leben Christlich bringen zu. Und dort hernach in Ewigkeit Dich lob'n und preisen allezeit.

Henkel adds several poetic additions not found in the original (stanzas 1–2, 6). One senses that Henkel does this only to fill out a line so the stanza fits the meter. Ambrose Henkel's assessment is that David "only imitated" the hymn verses, "for it

is impracticable to make a literal translation of poetry, so as also to be poetry in the English language."[17]

Henkel's translation	*LSB* 585
1. Jesus, our heav'nly guide, We pray thee with us stay: Do not thy sceptre from us hide, Lest we should go astray.	1. Lord Jesus Christ, with us abide, For round us falls the eventide. O let Your Word, that saving light, Shine forth undimmed into the night.
2. Ev'ning of time is come; Direct us in the road That leads to our eternal home, Up to the throne of God.	2. In these last days of great distress Grant us, dear Lord, true steadfastness That we keep pure till life is spent Your holy Word and Sacrament.
3. In these last evil days, Let not thy Word divine, Withdraw its holy lucid rays, But in us brilliant shine.	3. To hope grown dim, to hearts turned cold Speak tongues of fire and make us bold To shine Your Word of saving grace Into each dark and loveless place.
4. Pure, to the end, O Lord, May we always preserve, Thy Holy Sacraments and Word; And them with care observe.	4. May glorious truths that we have heard, The bright sword of Your mighty Word, Spurn Satan that Your Church be strong, Bold, unified in act and song.
5. That we, in quiet rest, Our future days may spend; May we with godliness be blessed, Our lives in peace to end.	5. Restrain, O Lord, the human pride That seeks to thrust Your truth aside Or with some man-made thoughts or things Would dim the words Your Spirit sings.
6. 'Til we thy throne surround In heav'n with shining throngs, Thy praise from golden harps shall sound, In sweet harmonious songs.	6. Stay with us, Lord, and keep us true; Preserve our faith our whole life through— Your Word alone our heart's defense, The Church's glorious confidence.

[17] Ambrose Henkel, advertisement, in Henkel, *Works*, 344.

The comparison demonstrates that the translator of stanzas 2–6 of the *LSB* version, F. Samuel Janzow, may have had a greater aptitude for translating since he did not take two stanzas to translate one. Both Henkel and Janzow, however, add to the original. Perhaps Henkel, though gifted as a theologian and a prolific writer, nonetheless was not as gifted in hymn translation.

3. The Theology of the Henkel Catechism Hymns

Morning and Evening Hymns

The Christian's day is to begin and end with God's word and prayer. For only by God's blessing can one's days and works prosper. "What I begin and do / Let it be right and prosper too."[18] Each day a believer should turn to God in prayer and meditation on God's word so he might receive God's daily gifts in the right heart. "For daily he bestows on me / His blessings from above."[19]

The believer is under daily assault by the devil, the world, and sinful nature. "From Satan's wiles our lives defend, / May us no harm molest."[20] Since these enemies want to deceive and mislead God's children into all kinds of harm, Christians need to seek God's help so they might not depart from their Lord or drive out the Holy Spirit. "Incline our hearts to thee, O Lord, / That we may love thy blessed Word / And do thy will."[21] The only way this is possible is by the power of the Holy Spirit.

At night, the believer is called again to prayer and meditation on God's word. While each day brings its own troubles, a believer can entrust all things into God's hands. "Lord, I lie down to take my rest, / Let troubles flee from me."[22] Under God's protection through his holy angels, a believer is invited to be at peace. This is made possible by God's holy word and the Spirit, who works through that word. "My dreams be sweet delights that flow / From thy blessed Word to saints below."[23]

Hymns before and after Meals

"God gives daily bread, indeed without our prayer, also to all the wicked" (SC III 13, Fourth Petition). Not only that, but since God also cares for the animals of the field as lesser beings, so he provides even more for men who are of greater value than animals (Matt 6:26). "Lord! Thou dost give what creatures need, / Do also us,

[18] "O Lord, What I Begin and Do," st. 1, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 371.
[19] "Now I Awake to Praise My Lord," st. 3, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 377.
[20] "O Lord, Thy Holy Angels Send," st. 1, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 375.
[21] "The Sun Now Rises, Shining Bright," st. 3, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 371.
[22] "Lord, I Lie Down to Take My Rest," st. 1, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 375.
[23] "O Jesus, I Will Take Repose," st. 2, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 376.

thy children, feed."[24] As Luther's explanation of the Fourth Petition reminds us, we are also to give thanks and praise to God for what he gives his believers day by day. Henkel's hymn for after meals helps us to do so in a devout frame of mind. "We praise and thank thee for thy care / That did for us these gifts prepare."[25]

God's blessing is likewise needed for the proper use of daily bread. Believers might recall Psalm 78:30–31, when God's wrath came upon the self-righteous Israelites at mealtime while food was still in their mouths. They suffered because they did not have God's blessing through faith in his word. Therefore, God's blessing upon faithfulness is necessary. This blessing is received in the daily eating of normal food by Jesus' visitation and sanctification of the food believers eat. "O blessed Jesus, condescend / To be our guest, thou holy friend! / And sanctify these gifts below."[26] The hymns suggest that Jesus comes as a response to the believer's prayer and invocation to the Lord.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4). Therefore, it is not only daily bread that one needs from God's hand. "The bread of life poor sinners give / On which their hungry souls may live."[27] As the Israelites were fed with the supernatural manna God gave in their wilderness years, so God's word is now sweet manna for believers. "Forever sanctify us, Lord, / With the sweet manna of thy word."[28] (No connection is made between the Sacrament of the Altar and the manna.)

Hymns before and after Catechizing and Confirmation

Catechesis is to teach God's word in a basic yet systematic manner, especially to the unlearned. "Youth is the choicest time we know, / That God affords to men below."[29] Originally this involved asking questions and giving answers. What is needed besides the teaching of the pure word is also zeal in the hearts of those who learn. "Lord, grant us knowledge, zeal and love, / Our little faith increase."[30]

Young believers are taught the ways of faith and life, which they are wise to follow all their lives. A warning is given about those who fall away:

[24] "Lord! Thou Dost Give What Creatures Need," st. 1, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 373.
[25] "These Gifts Which From Thy Bounty Flow," st. 2. in Henkel, *Catechism*, 374.
[26] "O Blessed Jesus, Condescend," st. 1, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 373.
[27] "Lord! Thou Dost Give What Creatures Need," st. 1, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 373.
[28] "These Gifts Which from Thy Bounty Flow," st. 2, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 374.
[29] "Approach Dear Youth unto the Lord," st. 4, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 381.
[30] "The Labors of Our Teachers Bless," st. 2, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 384.

For sinful ways, they lead to hell,
The place of endless pain:
Where wicked men and devils dwell,
And ever shall remain.[31]

Only those who remain in saving faith in Christ and who, by the power of the Holy Spirit, subdue their sins will stand in God's glory at the end.

Like faithful soldiers, act your part,
And never yield to sin;
But seek the Lord with all your heart,
The precious prize to win.

Remember well the covenant,
Which you have here renew'd:
To bear the cross, be ye content,
Your sins must be subdu'd.[32]

God's mercy and blessing is prayed for and given, so the catechumen and confirmand might continue in that way of eternal happiness.

When God's word is taught in catechesis, this does not happen merely in an earthly setting. Catechists and catechumens first enter into God's presence. The lectern or table where the catechesis takes place becomes the very throne of God, for God himself teaches his word to his people (Pss 25:5, 119:12).

Lord! in thy presence we appear;
Here at thy throne we stand,
Make us thy word of truth to hear,
And live to thy command.[33]

In the teaching of his word "worth more than gold,"[34] catechumens are taught to follow "the way unto the Lord, / the way of happiness"[35] that cannot be taught on earth. So, God overlaps heaven to earth, that he might communicate his word and teaching through the catechist's mouth.

[31] "We Praise Thee, Jesus, Gracious Lord," st. 13, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 384.
[32] "The Grace of God Be with You Hence," sts. 2–3, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 386.
[33] "How Precious Is God's Holy Word," st. 3, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 380–381.
[34] "By Nature Man Is Dark and Blind," st. 9, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 380.
[35] "How Precious Is God's Holy Word," st. 1, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 380.

Hymn on Confession of Sins

Sin is unavoidable. One cannot live in a perfect way in this life. The devil, the world, and man's nature easily see to that. "To Satan I have been a slave."[36] But the conscience assesses sin, sometimes either excusing the sinner though he has done wrong or greatly accusing the sinner.

> My conscience testifies to me
> According to thy word,
> That in strict justice I should be
> Accursed from the Lord.[37]

When the conscience goes on self-attack mode, no earthly help avails.

> Not man nor angel can relieve
> My mind with guilt oppress'd:
> Not heav'n itself such comforts give,
> To set my heart at rest.[38]

However, there is one person to whom the accused can flee to find relief for the conscience: Jesus, the crucified and risen Savior. "Thy blood which freely stream'd / For all my sin and guilt atones."[39] Jesus is the only refuge for sinners, and when the conscience accuses, Jesus remains the sinner's friend.

There is no mention of Absolution here. This is perhaps unsurprising, given that the catechism Henkel translated was Pietist-leaning.[40] Instead of teaching the accused to find comfort in the Absolution, the accused is simply directed to faith in Christ's atonement, without reference to any means by which Christ's atoning blood is applied to the sinner. Though Henkel is orthodox, these hymns he translated at times fell short of that bar.

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[36] "Woe unto Me! How Oft I Have," st. 1, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 386.
[37] "Woe unto Me! How Oft I Have," st. 3, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 387.
[38] "Woe unto Me! How Oft I Have," st. 5, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 387.
[39] "Woe unto Me! How Oft I Have," st. 7, in Henkel, *Catechism*, 387.
[40] A standard feature in the Pennsylvania Ministerium editions of the catechism was Freylinghausen's "Order of Salvation" (*Ordnung des Heils*). Freylinghausen, best known for publishing many Pietist hymnbooks, remained true to Pietist form in this inclusion. Repp notes that forty-six different prints of the Pennsylvania Ministerium's catechism that included Freylinghausen's "Order" also followed a certain pattern: a greater emphasis was placed on the subjective element of repentance—individual Christian needs to "feel" the power of atonement. See Repp, *Luther's Catechism*, 74.

4. Conclusion

While David Henkel is remembered more as an outspoken defender of Lutheran confessional theology, his translated hymns show that he was also practical. In a place where Lutheran catechesis was lacking, Henkel stepped forward and helped fill the gap so God's word might be better taught. Henkel's hymn translations did not grace the pages of future Lutheran English hymnbooks except for those his family printed. But his efforts in making such translations and publishing them were notable. He helped pave the way for future hymn-translation efforts. Henkel took an edition of the Small Catechism that was available and did his best to bring this foundational confessional writing to people. Sometimes the best a catechist can do is just make that effort.

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Which Happened from the Foundation of the World According to the Book of Revelation: The Lamb Was Slain or Some Names Were Not Written in the Book of Life?

The Greek text of Revelation 13:8 reads as follows: καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, οὗ οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου. Many Christians over the centuries and in various languages have become quite accustomed to hearing the phrase "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" because the Greek text of Revelation 13:8 has been translated that way by some, such as in the King James Version (1611): "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him [i.e., the beast], whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."[1] This translation was long dominant in English largely because

[1] This understanding of Rev 13:8 was present in the Vulgate translation for centuries: "quorum non sunt scripta nomina in libro vitae agni qui occisus est ab origine mundi." Robert Weber, Roger Gryson, and Bonifatius Fischer, eds., *Biblia sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, editionem quintam emendatam retractatam (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007), at Rev 13:8.

Jon Bruss, a colleague who is a Latinist, shared this observation with me: "The attachment of 'ab origine mundi' to 'occisus est' is clear since the phrase resides in the relative clause (starting with 'qui'). Had Jerome wished to preserve a putative ambiguity regarding which verb the adverbial phrase modifies ('sunt scripta' or 'occisus est') he could have accomplished it like this: 'quorum non sunt scripta nomina in libro vitae Agni occisi ab origine mundi.'"

of its widespread use, including within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) as Lutherans transitioned from German to English, especially in the early decades of the twentieth century.[2] A similar English translation continued to have influence within the LCMS during the latter decades of the twentieth century through the extensive use of the New International Version (1973), which renders this verse as follows: "All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world."

Those who advocate for the translation "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" or a similar translation certainly recognize the logical challenge that it poses: the Lamb was not slain from the foundation of the world, but was sacrificed by crucifixion "under Pontius Pilate" around AD 30. The beneficial effect of the atoning death of Jesus as the Lamb of God is certainly not locked in time, but extends back from—and even before—the foundation of the world and unto eternity. Commentators who follow this translation in English see it as teaching this truth. For example, Louis Brighton, who translated this portion of 13:8 in his commentary as "the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world," goes on to explain, "Since God's plan of election in Christ was conceived in eternity, before the foundation of the world (see 17:8), and because God always brings to completion his plan and promises, 13:8 can speak proleptically of Christ having been slain already before the foundation of the world."[3]

It must be acknowledged that there are two legitimate ways to translate the Greek text based solely on its grammar and syntax. The first option is to understand the prepositional phrase ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου ("from the foundation of the world") as functioning adverbially to modify the perfect passive participle in the phrase τοῦ ἀρνίου τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου ("the Lamb who is in a slain condition").[4] The

[2] It appears Luther followed the Vulgate understanding of Rev 13:8 early in his career because his translation of the New Testament in 1522 translates this verse as follows: "und all die auff erden wonen betten es an, der namen nicht geschrieben sind ynn dem lebendigen buch des lambs, der erwurget ist von anfang der welt." In the last edition of the Bible from Luther's lifetime (1546), which influenced subsequent German-speaking Lutherans, the passage is slightly revised: "und alle die auff Erden wonen, beten es an, der namen nicht geschrieben sind in dem lebendigen buch des Lambs, das erwürget ist, von anfang der Welt." It introduces punctuation that implies that "von anfang der Welt" could modify "geschrieben" instead of "erwürget." For texts, see Martin Luther, *Deutsche Bibel* (1522, 1546), in *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Deutsche Bibel*, 12 vols. in 15 (Weimar: Böhlau, 1906–), 7:452, 453.

[3] Brighton, *Revelation*, 346. This is just one example of the many commentators offering or using this translation that could be cited.

[4] Even though this perfect-tense participle is often translated in the manner of an aorist-tense participle (i.e., "who was slain"), the perfect tense communicates the resulting and ongoing condition of a past action (i.e., "being in a slain condition"). The theological significance communicated with the use of this perfect-tense participle is that the atoning sacrifice of Jesus as the Lamb

translation of 13:8b that results is similar to the KJV translation presented above: "[every one] whose name has not been written in the book of life of the Lamb who is in a slain condition from the foundation of the world." The primary grammatical argument in support of this translation is that it follows the word order. Understood in this way, the prepositional phrase follows immediately after the participle that it modifies. While this word order is typical in Greek, it is also possible that this prepositional phrase could be out of natural word order and modify something else in the sentence. That possibility must be considered.

The second legitimate translation based upon Greek grammar and syntax is to understand the prepositional phrase ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου ("from the foundation of the world") as functioning adverbially to modify the verb οὐ γέγραπται ("has not been written"), even though the prepositional phrase appears some distance after the verb. The translation of 13:8b that results is this: "[every one] whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who is in a slain condition." This is very similar to the translation that is present in several English translations completed since the middle of the twentieth century, such as the RSV, NASB, ASV, CSB, and ESV; the ESV has been widely used in the LCMS during the past two decades.[5] I am convinced this is the correct translation of Revelation 13:8b for two reasons.

First, the same prepositional phrase (ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου) modifies the same verb (οὐ γέγραπται) in Revelation 17:8, which includes phrases that are strikingly parallel to Revelation 13:8 in content and form: οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὧν οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα ἐπὶ τὸ βιβλίον τῆς ζωῆς ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου ("the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world"). If one follows the second legitimate translation presented above, then both of these texts in Revelation are very similar statements. What Revelation 17:8 reveals helps us to translate and interpret properly what Revelation 13:8 reveals (i.e., Scripture interprets Scripture). Then why is the prepositional phrase (i.e., the temporal clause ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου) not closer to the verb that it is modifying in 13:8? Because the seer John, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, gives further definition to the book of life here: the book of life is identified explicitly with the Lamb (the book of life of the Lamb), as also found in Revelation 21:27, εἰ μὴ οἱ γεγραμμένοι ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου ("except the ones who have been written in the book of life of the Lamb"). In fact, 21:27 states positively the same idea about names

continues to be a prominent characteristic of his resurrected state of being enthroned because this sacrifice is the source of his victory (Rev 5:6, 13:8).

[5] The RSV and ESV translate the preposition ἀπό in Rev 13:8b as "before" rather than "from," but one would expect the preposition πρό to be present here in order to translate it as "before." This latter preposition is found elsewhere in the New Testament with καταβολῆς κόσμου (e.g., Matt 25:34; John 17:24; Eph 1:4; and 1 Pet 1:20).

being written in the book of life implied in 13:8 and 17:8, which both refer to names that have not been written in the book of life. Unlike 17:8 and 21:27, why does 13:8 have the adjectivally functioning perfect passive participle τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου ("the one who is in a slain condition")? Because this participle is a major visual characteristic of the "standing as being in a slain condition Lamb" when he first appears in the throne-room scene of Revelation 5:6 (ἀρνίον ἑστηκὸς ὡς ἐσφαγμένον) and is in contrast here to the appearance of the first beast who has a healed wound (Rev 13:3, 13:12).[6]

The second reason supporting this translation is that nowhere in the rest of Revelation or in the New Testament is the phrase "from [or "before"] the foundation of the world" used to speak of Jesus being sacrificed.[7] Peter writes of Jesus—even his sacrifice as a lamb without blemish or spot—being "foreknown before the foundation of the world" (προεγνωσμένου μὲν πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου) in 1 Peter 1:20. Jesus speaks of the blood of the prophets that "has been shed from [i.e., since] the foundation of the world" (Luke 11:50), of revealing in parables "what has been hidden from the foundation of the world" (Matt 13:35; cf. Ps 78:2), of the kingdom prepared for the righteous "before the foundation of the world" (Matt 25:34), and of being loved by the Father "before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24). Paul writes of Christians being chosen/elected in Christ "before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4). The author of Hebrews writes of the works of creation being finished "from the foundation of the world" (Heb 4:3). Later in Hebrews, the author writes of Christ's sacrifice with these striking words using the prepositional phrase ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου in order to stress both Jesus' atoning sacrifice once in time and its effect across all time for all people:

> Nor [did he enter heaven] in order to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places yearly with blood that is not his own, since then he would have had to suffer repeatedly from the foundation of the world [οὐδ' ἵνα πολλάκις προσφέρῃ ἑαυτόν, ὥσπερ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς εἰσέρχεται εἰς τὰ ἅγια κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν ἐν αἵματι ἀλλοτρίῳ, ἐπει ̀ ἔδει αὐτὸν πολλάκις παθεῖν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς

[6] G. K. Beale observes that the characteristic of the Lamb as "the one who was slain" in Rev 13:8 may also be present as a contrast to the description given twice in this same context that the beast—who is a parody of the true Christ—has a "mortal wound that was healed" (13:3, 13:12); see his *The Book of Revelation*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 702.

[7] Revelation testifies to Jesus' death and resurrection in history repeatedly (Rev 1:5, 1:18, 2:8, 5:6, 5:9, 5:12, 7:14, 12:11, 13:8), and even mentions his crucifixion (Rev 11:8), but does not indicate this sacrifice happened "from the foundation of the world," except if one follows the first translation option for Revelation 13:8b, which is argued against above. As Siegbert W. Becker states, "nowhere else in Scripture do we have any statement that says that Christ was slain from the creation of the world"; see *Revelation: The Distant Triumph Song* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1985), 203.

> κόσμου]. But as it is, he has been revealed once at the consummation of the ages for the annulment of sin by his sacrifice. And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that [comes] judgment, so also Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of the many [i.e., the multitudes], will appear a second time, without [a] sin [offering], for the salvation of the ones who are eagerly waiting for him. (Heb 9:25–28)

The "book of life" in Revelation—whether it is referenced as "the book of life" or "the book of life of the Lamb who is in the slain condition" or "the book of life of the Lamb"—is a christological metaphor for election (Rev 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12, 20:15, 21:27).[8] The implication of the testimony in both Revelation 13:8 and 17:8 that the names of the unrighteous were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world is that the names of the righteous have been written in the book of life from creation, which is stated in Revelation 21:27 without reference to when the names were written. This is testimony about the effect of Christ's atoning work for all time: the reason names of the elect can be written in the book of life from the foundation of the world is due to the Lamb being sacrificed in time to "ransom people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev 5:9). The Formula of Concord makes the close identification between Christ and the book of life when it states, "The Word of God, however, leads us to Christ, who is 'the book of life' in which all who are to be eternally saved are inscribed and elected, as it is written, 'He chose us in him before the foundation of the world'" (FC Ep XI 6; see also FC SD XI 13).[9]

In conclusion, although there are two legitimate ways to translate the Greek of Revelation 13:8, this text cannot be stating two different things. Either it is stating that the Lamb is in the slain condition from the foundation of the world, or it is stating that the names of those worshipping the beast were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world. The similar testimony of names not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world in Revelation 17:8, as well as the overall testimony in Revelation and the rest of the Scriptures to the shedding of the Christ's blood at a particular time in history, is significant evidence for the conclusion that the correct translation of Revelation 13:8 is this: "and all who dwell on earth

[8] The most immediate Old Testament background for the book of life imagery in Revelation is Dan 12:1, even though there are references to a book elsewhere (Exod 32:33; Ps 69:28) or mention of names in a register (Pss 9:5, 87:6; Isa 4:3). Although the Gospels do not mention the book of life, Jesus used similar imagery of "names written in heaven" (Luke 10:20).

[9] I thank Joseph Greenmyer, my student, who brought these Formula of Concord references to my attention in his paper for my course on the Book of Revelation, "Christ the True Book of Life: Predestination in the Apocalypse of St. John" (February 17, 2022).

will worship it [the beast], every one whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who is in the slain condition."

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Theological Observer

AI Nannies?

On August 11, 2023, the Wall Street Journal *featured an article titled "The AI Nanny in Your Baby's Future."*[1] *Shortly thereafter, I submitted the following letter to the editor that was unfortunately not printed.*

It was with great interest that I read your recent article on the potential use of artificial intelligence to raise our children. I was particularly intrigued with this statement: "Human infants arrive in the world a bit underdone. A likely evolutionary reason is that if a typical fetus spent any longer developing in utero, its head would simply be too large to deliver safely. So nature had to compromise." No one will dispute that development of the human brain does occur "at a breathtaking pace during the first two years of life" and certainly is part of the reason why humans "are the most intelligent, creative and productive of all species."

But what if this reality isn't the result of evolution but of a higher design? In most religious traditions—certainly the case in the Judeo-Christian—there is no higher calling than the care and nurture of children, a calling that requires sacrifice. Unlike a bird, which is soon pushed out of the nest, or any number of four-legged creatures that quickly learn to fend for themselves, children require sacrifice of self from their caregivers. Is that sometimes a burden? Certainly. But rather than seeing it that way, should parents perhaps instead learn to recognize it as part of God's design by which they learn selfless love?

Maybe we should be worried about AI nannies. But let's not forget the harm they could bring to parents' own development.

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Sasse, Evolution, Mayes

One of the fascinating and most prominent twentieth-century theologians for confessional Lutherans especially in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

[1] Dana Suskind, "The AI Nanny in Your Baby's Future," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 11, 2023, https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-ai-nanny-in-your-babys-future-999d0e50.

(LCMS) was the late Hermann Sasse. When the synod's traditional theology was under siege in the 1950s, he was recognized as representative of what the Lutheran reformers confessed, an honor he still deserves. Since he was anything but a homegrown Missourian, his testimony to the classical Lutheran faith was seen as all the more valuable, especially in the face of what came to be known as the Seminex theology, which found support from prominent Lutheran scholars and church leaders in both Germany and America. His *Here We Stand* had a Luther-like ring to it, and for many Lutherans Sasse was playing the role of the sixteenth-century reformer himself.[1] His story as a wandering theological pilgrim from the University of Erlangen through the United States to its conclusion in Australia belongs to the saga of twentieth-century Lutheran history. Published in 1959, his *This Is My Body,* with its account of Martin Luther's debate with Ulrich Zwingli, was a bright star in an otherwise theologically darkening sky for Lutherans who found themselves in an increasingly compromising situation with the Reformed.[2] From the perspective of the twenty-first century, such debate can be seen largely as a lost cause, since with rare exception, member churches of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) are now presumed to be in full pulpit and altar fellowship with one another and now with major Reformed, Anglican, and Methodist churches. With a woman as general secretary of the LWF, any discussion on overturning the ordination of women is off the table.

As Lutheran and Reformed churches were growing closer to one another in the 1950s and then 1960s, Sasse's *This Is My Body* was a trumpet sound to confessional-minded Lutherans for the battle before them, and in this book he showed that Luther had the better side of the argument with Zwingli in their colloquy at Marburg, which was the first and last attempt to bring the two reformers to an agreement. At the 1959 LCMS convention I acquired a copy and had the great man autograph it. This meeting with Sasse is preserved in a photograph depicting Sasse, my late colleague Kurt Marquart, and myself, taken by the late editor of *Christian News* Herman Otten, which ever so often appeared on its pages. Around 1968 our seminary awarded Sasse, who was on a speaking tour in the United States, an honorary degree of doctor of divinity. J. A. O. Preus, soon to be synod president, was seminary president at the time. Sasse was rightfully recognized by many as the most significant confessional Lutheran theologian of the time, even by non-Lutherans, and half a century after his death he remains a significant figure.[3]

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[1] Hermann Sasse, *Here We Stand: Nature and Character of the Lutheran Faith* (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1966).

[2] Hermann Sasse, *This Is My Body: Luther's Contention for the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1959).

[3] As recently as September 19–20, 2023, at the Theological Symposium of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, John T. Pless delivered an essay, "Hermann Sasse's Confessional Response to Sectarianism."

After World War II he was appointed dean of the theological faculty of the University of Erlangen, whose predecessors were leaders in the nineteenth-century Lutheran renaissance and whose names can be found in Francis Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics*. Among Sasse's colleagues were Werner Elert and Paul Althaus, both of whose writings in English translation have become familiar on this side of the Atlantic. Sasse had opposed the Nazi movement when it was not popular to do so. He corresponded with Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Catholic theologians. He was a confessional Lutheran theologian with ecumenical theological star power. Sasse's German and English bibliography is massive, and what was written in German is still being translated into English. One full section in our seminary's bookstore is devoted to his writings. LCMS presidents consulted him, and theologians from other confessions corresponded with him. In the postwar period Lutheran churches were moving closer to fellowship with the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), the union of Lutheran and Reformed churches, who shared with each other a common confession and liturgy. Noticeably at stake was the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, on which Luther and Zwingli were divided. After the war Sasse left his post at the University of Erlangen and began a journey that ended at Luther Seminary in Australia, perhaps having given up hopes, so it seems, for a call to an LCMS seminary, most likely St. Louis.

As that seminary was trending toward the neoorthodox theologies of Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and Rudolf Bultmann, which Sasse opposed,[4] its members would have seen him as an obstacle as they embraced the new theological approaches. Sasse's journey ended in Australia, where along with Kurt Marquart he was instrumental in uniting the two Lutheran synods, the one in fellowship with the LCMS and the other with the synods now constituting the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), into the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA). Since its founding the LCA has kept its fellowship options open and, at this writing seems intent on ordaining women and joining the LWF. We can only hope that our prophetic vision is wrong.

For many, perhaps most, this introduction is old news, but it is intended to provide a background for expanding on an essay by my colleague Benjamin Mayes that appeared in the April 2023 issue of our journal: "Creation Accommodated to Evolution: Hermann Sasse on Genesis 1–3."[5] If you did not know it before reading Mayes' article, you now know that Sasse, the great confessional scholar, held to

[4] Hermann Sasse, "Flight from Dogma: Remarks on Bultmann's 'Demythologization of the New Testament," trans. Matthew C. Harrison, in *The Lonely Way: Selected Essays and Letters*, vol. 2 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002), 93–116.

[5] Benjamin T. G. Mayes, "Creation Accommodated to Evolution: Hermann Sasse on Genesis 1–3," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 87, no. 2 (April 2023): 123–150.

evolution and saw Genesis 1–11 as a metaphor. In contrast, the LCMS has been consistent in its opposition to evolution, which in most private and public educational institutions is the standard explanation for how things came to be as they are now. Pastors may have to engage in the evolution-versus-creation debate with their high school and college parishioners. It should be kept in mind that there is no one agreed-upon definition of how things evolved or how long it took from its beginning to when it ended. There is no one agreed-upon definition of evolution. Evolution is a collection of theories for how the world came to be as we know it. One theory does not have to agree with another, and so the time that it took from the beginning to the present can differ by eons.

Strictly speaking, evolutionary theories do not address the question of divine participation in how the world came to be. However, with processes that are thought to have taken place over many millions and even billions of years, the question of God's existence becomes irrelevant and hence ignored. Evolution does not require the denial of God or address his participation in the evolutionary process, which is known as theistic evolution. However, Charles Darwin, who is credited with articulating the modern theory of evolution, was a theological student and became an atheist before he developed it. Evolution does not provide a definitive answer of how it all started. The book of Genesis does: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1).

Sasse preferred the evolutionary theory for how human beings were created to the Genesis account, which he understood as a metaphor. So Mayes writes: "Also it is clear here that Sasse accepted the findings of these disciplines, including paleontology, as including facts that necessitate a figurative reading of Genesis 1–3. What controls his exegesis of Scripture in this case lies outside of Scripture."[6] Sasse attributed the LCMS insistence in belief in a historical understanding of Adam to its Midwestern environment, which is a cautionary way of saying that the synod had come under the influence of Fundamentalism.[7] Whether or not Adam really existed as a historical person is not one doctrine among others, but it is the one on which all subsequent doctrines without exception depend and from which they are derived. In Adam's sinning all humanity sinned and consigned all his descendants to sin and death. Without Adam as presented in Genesis, it would be difficult to explain the unity of the human race and its fall into sin or come to any understanding of Christ as the second Adam in and from whom God constitutes a new humanity (1 Cor 15:22). Mayes provides all the necessary theological arguments and so his essay

[6] Mayes, "Creation Accommodated to Evolution," 141.

[7] Mayes, "Creation Accommodated to Evolution," 140n74. Milton L. Rudnick called this widely held hypothesis into question. See his *Fundamentalism and the Missouri Synod: A Historical Study of Their Interaction and Mutual Influence* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966).

deserves close attention, not only in how pastors might have to face this issue among their parishioners but also in understanding the doctrines we believe as a composite whole and not just a collection of disconnected truths.

Sasse does not delve into how an evolutionary definition for the origins of humankind is combined or is at least compatible with the Genesis account of Adam or into how this can be read allegorically. Simply to say this or that section of the Scriptures is parabolic or allegorical does not make it so. Even those sections in the New Testament that are identified as parables make comparison with things and events that exist, which are open to scrutiny. Farmers sow seeds, and merchants buy pearls. Just how does one make the jump from a supposedly figurative or mythological account of Genesis to evolution, or make the jump in the opposite direction from evolution to an allegorical reading of Genesis? There is nothing in Genesis or in any theory of evolution that allows or even suggests for one to be interpreted by the others. As Mayes points out, for Sasse human beings could have existed as *Homo sapiens* for thousands of years (why not millions?) before God spoke to them.[8] Mayes lays out all the relevant arguments and analyzes them. It is a must-read.

American Fundamentalism, which Sasse holds responsible for the LCMS holding to a literal reading of Genesis, was followed and replaced by Evangelicalism, a movement that accepted biblical inspiration. Its proponents have become academically credentialed. This is reason enough to give attention to Houston Christian University and Talbot School of Theology professor William Lane Craig, who, like Sasse, argues that evolution and Genesis are compatible and who takes the next step to show how one might be compatible with the other. He lays out his argument in an article titled "The Historical Adam" in the journal *First Things*, which leans politically and religiously conservative in general.[9] His place in mainline Evangelical Protestantism is confirmed by the publisher's description of a book of his, saying of it that it "upholds the suffering of Christ as a substitutionary, representational, and redemptive act that satisfies divine justice."[10] Craig's motives are known only to himself, but like others holding to theistic evolution, he believes that evolution and the Genesis account of Adam's creation are not necessarily incompatible and so removed are any obstacles for those holding to evolution to adopt the Christian faith.

Craig follows an argument presented already by Sasse that "If Genesis 1–11 functions as mytho-history, then these chapters need not be read literally."[11] At the base of Craig's argument is a distinction between "the *literary Adam* and the

[8] Mayes, "Creation Accommodated to Evolution," 142.

[9] William Lane Craig, "The Historical Adam," *First Things* 316 (October 2021): 41–48.

[10] *Atonement and the Death of Christ: An Exegetical, Historical, and Philosophical Exploration* (Waco, TX: Baylor Univ. Press, 2020), inside front flap of dust jacket.

[11] Craig, "The Historical Adam," 43.

historical Adam . . . [which] implies a further distinction between *truth* and *truth-in-a-story.*"[12] It is hard to avoid seeing that this proposal resembles Karl Barth's distinction between *Historie*, what really happened, and *Geschichte*, the account of what happened without insisting that it had. (Rudolf Bultmann took the more historically agnostic approach and held to the word or the gospel and saw little of real historical value in what the Gospels said about Jesus.) Distinctions by Craig in reinterpreting Genesis 1–11 fit within the framework proposed by Sasse and are familiar to those trained with neoorthodox theologies of the last century.

Problematic in this approach is that references to Adam in the New Testament are disqualified from possessing any historical character and have only theological meaning. Applied equitably across the board, this calls into question the historical character of all the Old Testament events to which the New Testament refers as having really happened—Cain and Abel, the flood, and so on. Dispatched by Craig is Matthew 19:4, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female?" (Gen 2:24). This provides a basis for marriage without requiring belief that God really did this.[13] For Craig, Romans 5:12–21 requires believing no more than "that there was a progenitor of the entire human race through whose disobedience moral evil entered the world."[14]

Genesis does not provide a nice fit for evolution. If Adam evolved from an inferior apelike creature and was not created out of the dust of the ground, it would take some readjustment to see how he would return to the dust. Metaphorical readings of any section of the Scriptures should be demonstrated, and so it has to be proven how the first chapters of Genesis are any more metaphorical than the remainder. Thus, if the account of Adam's creation and his fall into sin are a metaphor, then it can be asked if the account of Abraham, which provides the scheme of the miraculous birth of Jesus and his death as a sacrifice, is also a metaphor. What is a concern here is how such a prominent and productive theologian like Hermann Sasse, who was understood as "Mr. Lutheran," could hold to evolution.

While Sasse was a New Testament scholar, he set forth his theology on the basis of the sixteenth-century Lutheran Reformation, including the Lutheran Confessions, of which he was the foremost scholarly proponent. Here lies the issue of how the Scriptures and the Confessions interface with one another. Subscription to the Lutheran Confessions was never intended to mean that they would regarded as a source of autonomous authority independent of the Scriptures, from which alone they would derive their authority, just as the moon reflects the light of the sun and has no light in itself. Scriptures and the Confessions do not possess side-by-side

[12] Craig, "The Historical Adam," 43.
[13] Craig, "The Historical Adam," 45.
[14] Craig, "The Historical Adam," 45.

authority; the authority of the Confessions is derived from the Scriptures. The conjunctive "and" when we say we accept the Scriptures *and* the Confessions can be understood wrongly, if the Confessions are cited as a source of doctrine without prior reference and argumentation from the Scriptures.

When German and LCMS theologians assembled in the 1940s in three retreats known as the Bad Boll conferences, the LCMS theologians were unaware that German theologians saw things differently than they did. Sasse was not a participant; however, his adherence to evolution was possible for him since, like his erstwhile colleagues and participants in this conference, Paul Althaus Jr. and Werner Elert, he shared the same approach to theology.[15]

That small word "and" in the phrase "Scriptures and the Confessions" has allowed some to give the Confessions a virtually autonomous and independent authority, which was never intended by the formulators of the Confessions, especially Luther himself. This has allowed the development of a kind of theological literature based on Luther that makes no attempt to demonstrate that it agrees with the Scriptures, and if it does so attempt, it reflects one portion of the Scriptures to the exclusion of others. For the German theologians at Bad Boll, the Confessions represented the religious culture in which they were brought up, and so the distinction between accepting the Confessions because (*quia*) they agree with Scripture or only insofar as (*quatenus*) they do was not important to them in approaching these documents. Here they follow Schleiermacher, who taught that theology is definitely not derived from the Old Testament, nor even from the New Testament, and who placed the confessional documents of the sixteenth century as equal to the New Testament as witnesses of Christian faith-consciousness.[16]

Commentators on the Bad Boll conferences have concluded that the German theologians knew that their approach was different from the LCMS representatives',

[15] Since the time of the Reformation, the Lutheran Confessions have had legal status in some European churches as defining what the territorial churches require for belief. Since intercommunion with the Reformed is now accepted (since at least the Leuenberg Concord of 1973), allegiance to them has been so compromised that there is hardly a Lutheran teaching that is required of the preachers. In spite of this a Lutheran culture has remained in place in the German and Nordic churches that includes an appreciation not only for the Confessions but also for Luther and the other reformers. This can be called a cultural Lutheranism or a historic Lutheranism because it belongs to the sixteenth-century life of those nations that were influenced by the Lutheran Confessions and adopted them as documents defining not only church doctrine but also what kings, princes, and territorial councils believed. This has allowed for theologies to be derived from these documents without the requirement that they correspond with the Scriptures. Schleiermacher provided the theological arguments for how this is done.

[16] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, trans. Terrence N. Tice, Catherine Kelsey, and Edwina Lawler, ed. Catherine Kelsey and Terrence N. Tice, vol. 2 (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2016), 112–116. See Ludger Schwienhorst-Schönberger, "Marcion on the Elbe: A Defense of the Old Testament as Christian Scripture," *First Things* 288 (December 2018): 21–26.

but the latter were unaware that the Germans were operating from a different theological foundation.[17] By allowing evolution as an acceptable or even preferred replacement for Genesis regarding the origin of the human race, Sasse was operating from the same principle: that theology is a reflection of the culture in which the church lives. We cannot go into the mind of the great man to determine whether he was aware that, by removing Genesis from the understanding of how the world and mankind came into existence, he removed the foundation on which all of Christian doctrine stood.

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T. S. Eliot—Pilgrim in the Waste Land

It is the fifteenth of December of 2022 as I write this, the centenary of the publication of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* in the United States.

During the height of the pandemic I found myself revisiting T. S. Eliot's poem "The Hollow Men." Reading that iconic poem again, but with pandemic eyes, reminded me of why I remain fascinated by Eliot—he captures both the darkness and the hope:

> Sightless, unless
> The eyes reappear
> As the perpetual star
> Multifoliate rose
> Of death's twilight kingdom
> The hope only
> Of empty men.[18]

So well Eliot captures the interplay of darkness and light. And in the gloom, Eliot has something to say.

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[17] See F. E. Mayer, *The Story of Bad Boll: Building Theological Bridges* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1949); and P[aul] M. B[retscher], "Professor D. Dr. Werner Elert, 1885–1954," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 26 (March 1955): 211–214.

[18] T. S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men," in *English Masterpieces: An Anthology of Imaginative Literature from Chaucer to T. S. Eliot*, vol. 7, *Modern Poetry*, ed. Maynard Mack, Leonard Dean, and William Frost, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1961), 164.

Eliot's Conversion to Christianity

Eliot's conversion to the Christian faith that led to his baptism and confirmation as an Anglo-Catholic on June 29, 1927, at the age of thirty-six (later that year he became a British citizen) is what drew me to him during the pandemic. Perhaps that he grew up in St. Louis from a Boston Brahmin family and later returned to Boston to study at Harvard is another reason for my fondness of him, since Providence, Rhode Island, and Boston are my ancestral roots and St. Louis is the home of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). Since 1969 I have not read Eliot often. His poetry is intentionally difficult, a conscious move away from nineteenth-century meter and rhyme. For many, his early poems are the consummation of modernism, which is why they still haunt me, for I came of age at the height of modernism. Eliot's poems, especially *The Waste Land*, haunted the twentieth century, and even now they haunt our postmodern twenty-first-century world. What strikes one about the historical and cultural context of this famous poem is that it sounds so much like our world today. On a number of occasions I have returned to Eliot's final poems, often ending a sermon with these enigmatic words from Part IV of East Coker in his *Four Quartets*:

> The dripping blood our only drink
> The bloody flesh our only food:
> In spite of which we like to think
> That we are sound, substantial flesh and blood—
> Again, in spite of that, we call this Friday good.[19]

The story of T. S. Eliot as told by Russell Kirk is a conversion story. His conversion to Anglo-Catholicism was remarkable in his day, especially after his earlier poems about hell.[20] As one of the leading intellectuals of his day he watched as many of his literary colleagues were gravitating to communism, socialism, or fascism.[21] But Eliot was not alone in turning to Christianity in his era, for there was something brewing among intellectuals in the early twentieth century, especially in England, that led many to the church:

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[19] T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1943), 16. The copy I use is my father's from his undergraduate years at Yale University after the war, 1946–1949, three plus years after Eliot published his poems in the United States. His comments in pencil reflect a deeply Christian reading of the poem that must have reflected the interpretation of his professor at Yale. He studied this poem right after its publication, when there was still very little critical analysis of this poem.

[20] Russell Kirk, *Eliot and His Age: T. S. Eliot's Moral Imagination in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed. (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2008), 48.

[21] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age,* 209, notes that Eliot would have affirmed Bertrand Russell's definition of an intellectual as "a person who thinks he knows more than he knows."

> Eliot's journey toward Christian faith was no peculiar phenomenon in his time, of course: that pilgrimage had been made, or was being made, by men of letters so diverse as G. K. Chesterton, C. S. Lewis, Roy Campbell, Charles Williams, Edwin Muir, Paul Elmer More, and Evelyn Waugh. Yet no two such seekers followed precisely the same path. In Eliot's instance there is nothing surprising about his recovery of belief (for a recovery it was, rather than a providential fall on the road to Damascus). It would have been strange if a man so much in love with English tradition, and so deeply read in Dryden, Johnson, and Coleridge, had not felt himself drawn toward the living and visible Church of England—and within that Church, toward a piety which was heir to the Oxford Movement.[22]

Eliot grew up as a Unitarian, but through his search for meaning before and after World War I he found himself studying both Eastern religions, Buddhism and Hinduism (he cites the Upanishads in his poems), as well as Christianity. His interests were religious, as is reflected by the writers who most influenced his thinking, especially Dante and Coleridge.[23] He was known to carry around in his pocket some part of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Even in his earlier poems when "he peered into the Abyss,"[24] such as "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1917), "Gerontion" (1920), *The Waste Land* (1922), and "The Hollow Men" (1925), Eliot held out hope that the time would be redeemed.

What separates Eliot from many is that he was not just a poet. For a while he survived as a banker, a job he enjoyed and gave him time to write in the evenings. (As Anthony Lane writes in an article this year commemorating this anniversary, "Eliot . . . dressed like a banker because he was a banker."[25]) As editor of a literary magazine the *Criterion* (where *The Waste Land* was first published) he became deeply involved in politics as his writings often veered off into what was happening in Britain and the world. He was one of the founding editors of Faber and Faber who brought many significant authors to light at the beginning of the twentieth century. He was a prolific writer and critic, engaged in political and cultural observations, and two of his most important essays were about the relationship between church and world: *The Idea of a Christian Society* and *Notes Towards a Definition of Culture.*

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[22] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 115. See also Joseph Pearce, *Literary Converts: Spiritual Inspiration in an Age of Unbelief* (San Fransisco: Ignatius, 1999). His epigraph is from Evelyn Waugh, who is one of the many literary giants who converted to Christianity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Waugh writes, "Conversion is like stepping across the chimney piece out of a Looking-Glass world, where everything is an absurd caricature, into the real world God made; and then begins the delicious process of exploring it limitlessly" (vi).

[23] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 87.

[24] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 108.

[25] Anthony Lane, "The Shock and Aftershocks of 'The Waste Land,'" *The New Yorker*, October 3, 2022.

Eliot was the *First Things* of his day, and his engagement in both literary and political criticism put him in contact with intellectual luminaries in both England and the United States.[26] He traveled widely, gave many lectures, and was as well known and respected as any poet might be in his lifetime. Kirk summarizes the breadth of his impact in the chapter he entitled "The Poet, the Statesman, and the Rock" (the rock being a reference to the church, Saint Peter, and a play that Eliot wrote that is like a church pageant).[27] Eliot was also an accomplished playwright, known by more people for his plays than his poems, such as *Murder in the Cathedral* (about the martyrdom of Thomas Becket), *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, which Andrew Lloyd Webber turned into the musical *Cats,* and *The Cocktail Party*, which brought to light all the major Christian themes in Eliot's life.

Not everyone embraced Eliot for his Christian conversion and witness. In his recent review of Robert Crawford's *Eliot After "The Waste Land"* Micah Mattix notes that "[Eliot's] religious conversion in 1927 'shocked' Virginia Woolf. She wrote to her sister that Eliot 'may be called dead to us all from this day forward. . . . I mean, there's something obscene in a living person sitting by the fire and believing in God.'"[28] But he was loved by the modernists for his earlier poems, and later, after his conversion, he was embraced by the Christian anti-modernists. But many of the themes from his poetry and his other writings witness to our day about the need to restore permanent things to the church and to the world.

Eliot's "recovery" of his Christian identity was marked by his ascent from the desert to the Rose Garden: *The Waste Land* marks his dark journey through the darkness of his soul, *Ash-Wednesday* his turn to the faith through a purgatorial cleansing, and *Four Quartets* his entrance into the Rose Garden where time is redeemed. In some ways, these three poems follow the three parts of a rite of passage: separation (*The Waste Land*), transition (*Ash-Wednesday*), and reincorporation (*Four Quartets*). They also reflect Dante's *Divine* Comedy: *Inferno, Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso.* Again, Mattix offers this insightful observation on how Eliot's world changed after his conversion: "Christianity also gave Eliot what he had longed for since at least his first years in England: hope, order (he received Communion three times a week), meaning in suffering, and a foundation for his art. He told a friend that 'only Christianity helps reconcile me to life, which is otherwise disgusting,' and he began to express in his lectures and his increasingly frequent BBC broadcasts that there could be no civilization without religious belief."[29]

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[26] *First Things* is a journal that addresses the interaction between Christianity and public life (politics and culture).

[27] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 151–189.

[28] Micah Mattix, "Old Possum Ain't Dead," in *First Things*, January 2023, 112.

[29] Micah Mattix, "Old Possum Ain't Dead," 112.

My rumination about Eliot and this centenary of *The Waste Land* will focus on his conversion to the faith and why he thought Christianity and the church are the only hope for fallen humankind.

The Waste Land

The Waste Land in all its complexity is, in some ways, a very simple song of a pilgrim's ascent from the waste land to the peace that passes all understanding—*Shantih, Shantih, Shantih*.[30] This pilgrim in the waste land sees the fragmentation of the world all around him and yearns for wholeness and health from that peace which Eliot believed only the Great Tradition of the Christian faith was able to grant. What *The Waste Land* mourns is the loss of Western civilization, the loss of the classical tradition and its continuum, of the catholic faith with its capacity to make sense of the *Unreal City*.

Eliot is often portrayed as a man of the world who points to a truth that came from his ascent through the waste land. Yet Eliot's conversion was what defined his life. We often think of conversion as an instantaneous moment in which the Holy Spirit moves us from unbelief to faith, like Paul on the road to Damascus. In some ways this is true. At the font we move *instantaneously* from darkness to light, from death to life. But for many adults, to get to the font is a journey, a process. Perhaps we think of conversion as a single moment because we are under the sway of conversions from a decision-theology according to which a person in one dramatic moment answers some sort of altar call. What the early catechumenate teaches us is that *for most people* conversion is a process, a gradual ascent from the waste land to the promised land.

This is the genius of Eliot's poetry and his life, for we see in them a gradual movement from the Waste Land to the Rose Garden. Already in 1910 while studying in Paris at the Sorbonne at the age of twenty-two Eliot was attracted to "the genius of Christianity" as the best way for "cultural continuity."[31] But he had not yet become a Christian. But the germ of conversion was planted and would grow over the next seventeen years until his entrance into the Anglican church in 1927. *The Waste Land* (1922) is written at the midpoint of this ascent to faith, with *Ash-Wednesday* (1930) marking Eliot's literary arrival into the bosom of the Christian church. This movement from *The Waste Land* to *Ash-Wednesday* is his long ascent, and what many

[30] This Sanskrit phrase from the Upanishads ends Eliot's epic poem. Eliot in the first edition of his notes writes, "Shantih. Repeated as here, a formal ending to an Upanishad. 'The Peace which passeth understanding' is a feeble translation of the content of the word." T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1922), 64. See the text of Phil 4:7: "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

[31] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 88.

critics miss in the *The Waste Land* is that this epic poem signals that Eliot's ascent has already begun. For *The Waste Land* is not a place but the human heart, and the human heart Eliot writes about is his own.

Too often Eliot is known, and defined, by *The Waste Land,* for it is the poem that made him famous. Yet so many interpreters miss that this poem is part of Eliot's journey to the Christian faith that Eliot the poet is undergoing at this point in his Christian pilgrimage. They do not see how the poem moves from the waste land to his eventual surrender and reconciliation in that peace that passes all understanding he found in the Christian church.

The Waste Land was a startling poem for its time, and it brought both praise and criticism, with some of its detractors coming from Christians like G. K. Chesterton and C. S. Lewis who scorned its dark themes. Yet everyone knew that this poem was both impossible to ignore and even more impossible to understand.[32] In reading *The Waste Land* we may not be able to discern the meaning of its parts, yet even prep school students recognize what the poem is about—a search for meaning in life,[33] a desire to pass through the desert towards some sort of promised land, a longing for union and communion with God in a life that knows no end. It is about what the Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno described in his book *The Tragic Sense of Life* as a desire for God and a longing for eternity, a book that was so influential on Eliot.[34] *The Waste Land* takes original sin seriously and believes in the presence of evil in the world. It affirms that in Adam's sin we all have sinned (Rom 5:12). And most importantly, Eliot believes that these fundamental biblical truths apply to every generation: "Human nature is a constant; the same vices and the same virtues are at work in every age."[35]

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[32] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 72, puts it this way: "This catacomb, layer upon layer, of evocation and suggestion in *The Waste Land* makes this poem subtle and strange and ambiguous as the Revelation of Saint John. Many lines are puzzling as the characters written by the sibyl on the leaves of the scattered. Yet the general meaning of *The Waste Land* is as clear as its particular lines are dark."

[33] All through the 1960s and 70s this was a common theme—what is the meaning of life—as existentialism was reaching its apex and such questions were all the rage. This may be true of every age, but the Vietnam War generation took this to a new level. At first, I did not understand this as a search for union and communion with Christ. But during those tumultuous years I always found my way to Sunday Eucharist at the local LCMS church, which quietly, and effectively, grounded me in Christ. As I always like to say, going to church is a good thing.

[34] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 257. "The man who does not long passionately, and with a passion that triumphs over all the dictates of reason, for his own immortality, is the man who does not deserve it, and because he does not deserve it he does not long for it. . . . And perhaps the sin against the Holy Ghost—for which, according to the Evangelist, there is no remission—is none other than that of not desiring God, not longing to be made eternal." Miguel de Unamuno, *The Tragic Sense of Life: In Men and In Peoples*, trans. J. E. Crawford Flitch (London: MacMillan, 1921), 248–249.

[35] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 69.

My recollections of our prep school discussions are vague at best, but what I do not recall is any overt Christian interpretation of the poem. Not that it was anti-Christian, but we focused on Eliot's portrayal of the waste land and not on his ascent as pilgrim to that peace that passes all understanding. Perhaps the academy had already determined that Eliot's epic poem must be seen in light of the existential angst of modernism that climaxed in the 1960s. But just as Eliot wanted to redeem the time, many Christian interpreters of this groundbreaking poem have redeemed Eliot's vision of his ascent to the Christian faith. Like secular critics of the New Testament, interpretation depends on where you stand, the baggage you bring to the text, the presuppositions you hold. Eliot's whole life is a conversion story, and a fundamental part of that story is the longing for tradition in the church catholic that is reflected in the movement from "The Burial of the Dead" to "What the Thunder Said," the first and last parts of *The Waste Land.*

The context in which he wrote his poem still speaks to our postmodern, post-pandemic generation. The loss of belief in original sin goes on and has reached chronic proportions. How does one evangelize in a world that does not recognize a need for salvation, when people do not believe there is anything from which to be saved because there is no hell and therefore no life after death, no heaven?[36] It is startling that such a literary luminary as Eliot grounds his first poems in the reality of sin and evil. They are poems about hell, the hell that we have made for ourselves by our conscious separation from God, the hell that is nothing other than the waste land of our hearts. And this poem comes to us from someone who knows that waste land, lives in that waste land, and knows that there is something more than "fear in a handful of dust."

Like our generation, Eliot's generation was turned in on itself. What possessed Eliot and what he struggled against was "the Hell of the solipsist,"[37] first in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1917), his first major poem of renown coming right after the end of World War I, and later in *The Waste Land*. In these first poems Eliot describes the modern narcissist who is centered in his own ego yet whose experience

[36] During the pandemic I was also reading N. T. Wright, whose particular hobby horse seems to be deconstructing the obsession of Evangelicalism that speaks of Christianity as nothing more than obtaining a ticket to heaven. Although I am sympathetic with this impulse, especially in light of what I consider to be central to the Christian vision and the means by which we attain our final heavenly destiny—namely, inaugurated eschatology, heaven on earth, the centrality of the Eucharist. But in reading Eliot you see that in his world, the need to believe in both original sin (*The Waste Land*) and the goal of eternal life in the Rose Garden (*Four Quartets*) were critical issues that for him were essential to what it means to be Christian. In our postmodern world, we would do well to reclaim both original sin and paradise as fundamental to the Christian vision, since they form the bookends of Scripture—Genesis and Revelation. Perhaps the Evangelicals are more right than I would like to admit!

[37] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 48.

of the emptiness and vacuousness of the waste land turns him to search for something outside himself, knowing that the self is not the only thing knowable and verifiable. Although Eliot chose poetry as his way out of solipsism to faith and the moral imagination,[38] his pilgrimage to the Rose Garden was by way of suffering, and he had to pass through poems about hell before he could behold the "Multifoliate rose / Of death's twilight kingdom / The hope only / Of empty men."[39]

The Waste Land was written while Eliot was recovering from a nervous breakdown and needing rest. He was miserable, and his marriage was falling apart. So, while on leave from his bank job, during a time of inner turmoil, he completed *The Waste Land* (which he worked on over a period of years), first in Margate, Kent, while convalescing with his wife Vivienne, and later in Lausanne, Switzerland, while his wife was in a sanatorium in Paris. Eliot's life was reflected in *The Waste Land*. The trajectory of the poem is the trajectory of the poet. Kirk describes Eliot's state of mind as he was writing this monumental poem: "Eliot the Seeker seems to have been experiencing a crisis of the Self about 1921. He perceived that decadent rationalism and liberalism could not sustain a man concerned with ultimate questions. Yet though in 'Gerontion,' and even in 'Prufrock,' he had delineated the Great Refusal, still he could not submit himself to religious doctrine. He thought as much of becoming a Buddhist as of professing Christian belief."[40]

Eliot's crisis of the Self led him to search for some way of explaining what he saw all around him—a land laid waste by a horrific war where hundreds of thousands of people died—French and British and Americans fighting Germans—Christians fighting Christians. The world was also reeling from the flu pandemic of 1918, so Eliot's world was a world that confronted unimaginable death in the eight years that preceded this poem. Then after the war and as the pandemic shook the world, there was the rise of communism in Russia and fascism in Europe. As Kirk notes, for Eliot "the fundamental menace of Fascism and Communism . . . is that these ideologies attempt to supplant religious faith."[41] That his search took him from the Upanishads to Buddhism to Saint John of the Cross shows the breadth of his search. At one point Eliot became convinced that the *via negativa* was the way forward. His disillusionment with humanity led him at one point to "the counsel of Saint John of the Cross that one must divest himself of the love of created beings . . . that John of the Cross meant this 'divesting' for people 'seriously engaged in the Way of Contemplation.'"[42] Eliot was searching for something as he leaned over the abyss hoping

[38] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 37.
[39] Eliot, "The Hollow Men," 164.
[40] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 59.
[41] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 13.
[42] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 144.

to see something else besides what Kurtz saw in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*—that is, "The horror! The horror!"[43]

Kirk describes *The Waste Land* as religious melancholy. How apt a description this is. The first haunting, often-quoted lines of *The Waste Land* confirm this, showing that "regeneration is a cruel process"[44]:

> April is the cruellest month, breeding
> Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
> Memory and desire, stirring
> Dull roots with spring rain.[45]

Eliot begins his poem in April twilight—*madrugada* in Spanish—the "deep dawn" of the first Easter morning as it is described in Luke's Gospel. B. B. Rogers in his commentary on Aristophanes describes the "deep dawn" as "the dim twilight that precedes the dawn . . . the thick dullness of night [that] has not yet yielded to the clear transparency of day' (The Wasps of Aristophanes, 32, n. 216). *The Waste Land* lives in this perpetual twilight, this in betwixt and in between—that liminal space 'between life and death, dreaming and awakening, a need to remember the days and a will to forget, a memory of death and a need to memorialize.'"[46] The women come to the tomb out of the waste land of the past three days—a world turned upside down by the horrific crucifixion, death, and burial of their Lord. This April in Jerusalem was the cruelest of months. For this April the women were at a tomb to anoint a dead body.

In these first lines of "The Burial of the Dead" Eliot describes what John Paul II later called "the culture of death." For Eliot, however, the waste land was pointing beyond itself to another land where there is life. This culture of death needs to be buried as we ascend through the tradition to faith and the unity that a catholic worldview gives to the world. But before we reach the mountain to view, in Christ, the regeneration of all creation we must first behold the "heap of broken images" in the "Unreal City."[47] The world is fragmented into pieces, and this poem of fragments from the literature of the Great Tradition embodies the very world Eliot wishes us to see as *The Waste Land*. It is a desert without the water of faith that only comes from the church that can bring all the fragments together in the flesh of Jesus. Eliot

[43] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 68, notes that "'The horror! The horror!' . . . was the epigraph Eliot first chose for *The Waste Land*; Pound persuaded him to supplant it with Petronius' account of the bored sibyl."

[44] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 70.

[45] T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, in *Modern Poetry,* 142–143.

[46] Carol Pawlowski, "Third Sunday of Easter—The Road to Emmaus: April 18, 2021," April 14, 2021, Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart, https://www.greynun.org/2021/04/third-sunday-of-easter-the-road-to-emmaus-april-18-2021/.

[47] Eliot, *The Waste Land*," in *Modern Poetry,* 145–146.

begins with irony to hint at what is, in fact, "the hope only / Of empty men."[48] April, the season of rebirth and renewal, the season of Pascha and resurrection, is a cruel month. April brings spring and Easter and new birth, even hope, yet for Eliot it is a cruel reminder that we are all like Marie,[49] who "represents Europe's landed classes generally," who represents the "melancholy voice of a 'displaced person'" in whom "we see the modern Waste Land's pathetic multitude of the dispossessed."[50]

This dispossessed person is plunged into loneliness because of the isolation that is marked by separation from God that the "Unreal City" in the waste land brings with its broken images. There is a vacuum in modernity that, for Eliot in 1922, he tried to fill with his poetry, particularly by this remarkable poem. His poetry was necessary to his pilgrimage to conversion, for the only way to that peace which passes all understanding is through resignation and repentance.

His history of lust in "II. The Game of Chess" and "III. The Fire Sermon" is about the abuse of sex that is always the great impediment to faith, culminating in death by abortion in a culture of death that is calling us to repent of the waste land of our hearts. At the end of "The Fire Sermon" Eliot's embodiment of this sexual decadence is Carthage and Augustine and his *Confessions,* and Buddha's "Fire Sermon," from which Eliot took the name for the third part of this poem, with its "Burning, burning, burning, burning."[51] For Augustine said, "To Carthage then I came, where a cauldron of unholy loves sang all about mine ears."[52] But Augustine confesses to these sins in his *Confessions* and turns to God—"O Lord Thou pluckest me out / O Lord Thou pluckest." But it is painful and full of suffering, as the final lines of "The Fire Sermon" testify:

> To Carthage then I came
>
> Burning, burning, burning, burning
> O Lord Thou pluckest me out
> O Lord Thou pluckest
>
> burning[53]

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[48] Eliot, "The Hollow Men," 164.

[49] Marie is Countess Marie Larisch from Austria, who is a character in "The Burial of Dead" with whom Eliot had engaged in conversation at one time.

[50] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 70.

[51] Some have compared Buddha's "Fire Sermon" to the Sermon on the Mount. From *Modern Poetry*, 155n308: "Eliot's note refers to 'the complete text of the Buddha's Fire Sermon (which corresponds in importance to the Sermon on the Mount) from which these words are taken.' In this sermon, Buddha says that all things bodily and sensory are on fire with the fire of desire and passion, with the endless mortal burning from which it is the wish of the Buddhist to be set free."

[52] Quoted in Eliot, *The Waste Land*, in *Modern Poetry,* 155n307.

[53] Eliot, *The Waste Land*, in *Modern Poetry,* 155.

Augustine and Eliot yearned to be plucked out of the waste land by God—and they were. To portray this in a poem, Eliot uses the image of water that a thirsty *The Waste Land* desperately needs in "IV. Death By Water" and "V. What the Thunder Said." Rebirth for *The Waste Land* comes by way of baptism—death by water—for water is better than the fire of lust. *The Waste Land* is dying of thirst because of lack of water—the water of Christ that flows from the rock—"For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ" (1 Cor 10:4).[54] Eliot knows that living water only comes from Christ, but his lament in "What the Thunder Said" comes from a wrenched heart yearning for water where there is only rock, and his final line in this section is jarring in its pronouncement: "But there is no water." Even mountains that are sources of water are now like a waste land.

> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God and him only shall you serve.'" (Matt 4:8–10)

Could Eliot be pointing to a greater water, the water of regeneration by the Holy Spirit—"if there were water. . ."? As he begins with life and death, could Eliot be pointing to the Christian confession that life comes only through death, the death of Christ and our death in him in the waters of baptism, then burial and resurrection, as in Paul's baptismal theology of Romans 6?[55] Listen to Eliot's lament (note how the following is much more accessible than the beginning of his poem—we can almost understand what he is saying!):

> He who was living is now dead
> We who are living are now dying
> With a little patience.
>
> Here is no water but only rock
> Rock and no water and the sandy road
> The road winding above among the mountains
> Which are mountains of rock without water
> If there were water we should stop and drink
> Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think
> Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand

[54] Unless otherwise noted, all Bible quotations are from the ESV.

[55] See Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 74: "Madame Sosostris had predicted death by water. Yet is this 'dying' really annihilation? May it not be rebirth, as by baptism? However that may be, a surrender to the element of water is better than endless torment in the fire of lust."

If there were only water amongst the rock
Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit
Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit
There is not even silence in the mountains
But dry sterile thunder without rain
There is not even solitude in the mountains
But red sullen faces sneer and snarl
From doors of mudcracked houses

If there were water

And no rock
If there were rock
And also water
A spring
A pool among the rock
If there were the sound of water only
Not the cicada
And dry grass singing
But sound of water over a rock
Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees
Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop
But there is no water.[56]

"If there were. . . ." But there is! "For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ." There is water from the Rock. Is this what Eliot hopes for, looks for in these words? But what immediately follows these lines about water and the rock? Emmaus! Could this mysterious third person who walks beside you be Christ, the Rock, who provides living water, who quenches the thirst of the waste land, who opens up Scripture to create burning hearts and then opens eyes in the breaking of the bread—*Opened Eyes in the Breaking of Bread!*

Who is the third who walks always beside you?
When I count, there are only you and I together
But when I look ahead up the white road
There is always another one walking beside you
Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded
I do not know whether a man or a woman
— But who is that on the other side of you?[57]

[56] Eliot, *The Waste Land*, in *Modern Poetry*, 156–157.
[57] Eliot, *The Waste Land*, in *Modern Poetry*, 157.

When I returned to Eliot after fifty years, I did not remember that *The Waste Land* had this remarkable reference to Emmaus. But is it Jesus? Kirk suggests that we cannot be sure. "Someone walks beside him: the Fischer King, perhaps, who once guarded the Grail; and a mysterious third being, hooded. Is this the Christ, or the Tempter of the Wilderness, or some Hollow Man? In this delusory desert, the traveler can be certain of nothing."[58]

"— But who is that on the other side of you?" How could it not be Christ? We are no longer in the twilight—the *madrugada*—but we are at the end of the day, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, and like them, we are not alone. The risen Christ walks beside us in the desert. We may not immediately know who he is, for the waste land still clouds our vision, but if we engage him in conversation, he will open up the Scriptures to us, he will sit at table with us at our invitation, he will open our eyes in the breaking of the bread. Eliot surely knew the Emmaus story, knew who was on the other side of him, and Eliot's heart was burning, burning, burning, burning, but his eyes were not yet open, for he was still on Camino, a pilgrim in the Waste Land still searching, still hoping. He had not yet undergone baptism nor received Christ's flesh in the breaking of the bread. Perhaps like the Emmaus disciples, he was still walking away from Jerusalem sad-faced and gloomy—a pilgrim of the waste land (Luke 24:17).

Eliot knew the problem. His diagnosis was spot-on. The towers of Western civilization were crumbling. These great cities of our history were in Eliot's age and now in ours the unreal ones in which the culture is artificial and fake, not grounded in the reality of the Great Tradition, of the church catholic. Instead, in these cities the culture of death is at home:

> Falling towers
> Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
> Vienna London
> Unreal[59]

Yet Rome is not named here. It is not a "falling tower" because, for Eliot, it is the home of the church catholic. He might have said Canterbury instead of Rome, but even Eliot knew that his Anglo-Catholicism was simply a derivative. We might say Wittenberg, but it is poetry, so we get the point. The only city that remains is the City of God—Zion—the church where Christ dwells as the one who is beside us—

[58] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age,* 74. Eliot himself in his notes suggests this as his source: "The following lines were stimulated by the account of one of the Antarctic expeditions (I forget which, but I think one of Shackleton's): it was related that the party of explorers, at the extremity of their strength, had the constant delusion that there was *one more member* than could actually be counted." *The Waste Land*, in *Modern Poetry*, 157n361.

[59] Eliot, *The Waste Land*, in *Modern Poetry*, 158.

whether that be Rome or Hippo or St. Louis—whether it be in a simple house church, a wind-blown chapel on the prairie, or Saint Peter's in Rome.

"Then spoke the thunder / DA."[60] This reference to Upanishads confuses many Christian readers who cannot understand why Eliot chooses Sanskrit texts from Hinduism to end his poem—"*Shantih, shantih, shantih*." But as was suggested earlier, his Sanskrit references could as easily point to a scriptural text like Philippians 4. Kirk shows us that perhaps here Eliot is pointing us to the book of Exodus: "That the thunder is the voice of revealed wisdom: it is the Indo-European 'DA,' a root from which have sprung up many trunks; it is, if you will, the 'I am that am' from the Burning Bush. And the thunder of DA utters three sounds that are the answers—sibylline indeed—to the Seeker's questions. They are 'datta,' 'dayadhvam,' and 'damyata,' from the Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad. And they signify 'give,' 'sympathize,' and 'control.'"[61]

In the voice from the thunder Eliot is addressing the reader. He wants them to wrestle with these three very Christian precepts—"give," "sympathize," and "control." But Eliot has been addressing his readers from the beginning, from "The Burial of the Dead," the first part of the poem, for he wants the readers to see themselves as "pilgrims in the waste land." As you, the reader, read these following lines, it is your shadow that Eliot is referring to, and he is citing from Isaiah 32:2, a reference to Christ's coming when "a man shall be . . . as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (KJV)[62]:

> Only
>
> There is a shadow under this red rock,
> (Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
> And I will show you something different from either
> Your shadow at morning striding behind you
> Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
> I will show you fear in a handful of dust.[63]

Could the voice in the thunder, the voice from the burning bush, the "I AM Who I AM" be saying to us "be filled with fear for you are a waste land, a handful of dust," or in the words of Ash Wednesday, "for you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Gen 3:19)? The voice of thunder will show us something beyond ourselves, beyond our shadow in the morning and in the evening—he will show us that without

[60] Eliot, *The Waste Land*, in *Modern Poetry*, 159.
[61] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 75.
[62] Eliot, *The Waste Land*, in *Modern Poetry*, 143.
[63] Eliot, *The Waste Land*, in *Modern Poetry*, 143.

the great "I AM" we are nothing but a handful of dust and to dust we shall return. Indeed, O reader, this is the burial of dead.

Yet there is more. Eliot is asking us through this poem to do what most of us are not able to do—to follow the fragmented pieces of his dense poetry and make something whole out of them—to follow the literary references to where they might point us. So let us take just one fragment from Part I, "The Burial of the Dead"—since we find ourselves at the beginning now that we have come to the end—to Eliot's final words in Part I where he points to Baudelaire—Baudelaire!—who in the preface of his poem *Les Fleurs du mal* (*The Flowers of Evil*) entitled "To the Reader" catalogues the vices of the waste land and comes to the final one, "the dainty monster"—"Boredom."

Baudelaire on "Boredom":

> You know him, reader, this dainty monster—
> Hypocrite reader—my double—my brother.[64]

Now Eliot on Baudelaire:

> "Oh keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men,
> "Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!
> You! hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!"[65]

If we are the hypocrite reader to whom Eliot points his finger, if this poem is about us, about the waste land inside of our own hearts, if, like David and Jesus, the dogs of evil, violence, and death are pursuing us, then what are we to do?

"Give!" by surrendering in repentance and faith, now that there is something beyond your shadow in the waste land. Repent and humble yourself to your hypocrisy that your heart without Christ is nothing but a handful of dust! Be swept away by the life-giving waters of your baptism, return to the source of life in the desert of your heart. Open your eyes to Christ, that companion who walks alongside you, in the breaking of the bread. Know that you have in him, in body and blood, a peace that passes all understanding. "Can modern man humble himself enough to

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[64] Quoted in *Modern Poetry,* 146n76.

[65] "Hypocrite reader—my fellow—my brother." Eliot, *The Waste Land*, in *Modern Poetry*, 146. *Modern Poetry,* 146n74, notes another reference to Scripture: "Psalm 22:20: 'Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.'" Jesus cites Psalm 22:1 from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt 27:46; Mark 15:34). He likely recited the entire psalm, including this verse about "the power of the dog," a reference to evil and death, dogs that hound Jesus with their violent intent to the point of despair that ends in his own agonizing death. The expression has become a cultural phenomenon from the highly acclaimed 2021 film by that name, winning an Oscar for its director, Jane Campion.

surrender unconditionally to the thunder from on high?"[66] *The Waste Land* does not provide the answer but simply points the way out for the pilgrim—charity!

"Sympathize!" after surrendering, by giving ear to the voice in the thunder, in the burning bush, and embodying our repentance in mercy. As the collect says, "O God, You declare Your almighty power above all in showing mercy and pity."[67] Do we see this mercy, this charity, in a community of faith, the church? Do we see that only where Christ is present with his mercy are we able to show the mercy we have received? Do we see that this mercy of Christ for us is his love for his neighbor that reaches its telos, its end, on a cross, where Jesus loves his neighbors as himself by giving up his life for them? That we are a community—Christ's body—and that body embodies the fruits of Spirit (Gal 5), fruits that are Christ's, the first fruit of which is love? Love is the road for the pilgrim of the waste land.

"Control!" This is the final fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5. We no longer belong to a community where the lusts of the flesh run wild, but we belong to a community where these lusts are controlled by the Spirit of love. Does Christ constrain us by his love and by our love for our neighbor? Do we have the discipline to control the fire of lust in the waste land?

Conclusion

So, on this centenary of *The Waste Land* what might we learn from this enigmatic poem and this very strange poet? Although his manner and tone may not seem to address our cultural crisis, you cannot help but recognize that "The Waste Land" of the post-World War I, post-Spanish-flu world of Eliot is not that much different from ours. Much of what Eliot experienced and wrote about still resonates with us, even in the prim and proper style of this Anglophile. In *Murder in the Cathedral* Eliot wrote, as he did in a number of other places, that "humankind cannot bear very much reality."[68] That should ring true among his readers even today, for what plagues our world is its refusal not just to face the reality of evil and original sin but to acknowledge that they even exist. When Eliot wrote *The Waste Land* the power of the dog was palpable, with violence and evil and death all around him. These things are still all around us, but today "The Power of the Dog" may be perceived by our secular culture as a dog that has lost its teeth.

Instead of an elite poet calling the world to repentance, we live in a world of scolds who have no idea the depth of the darkness and depravity of the human soul.

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[66] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 75.

[67] Collect for the tenth Sunday after Trinity, in *Lutheran Service Book: Altar Book*, ed. The Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 919.

[68] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 207.

But for Eliot to write about the murder and martyrdom of Thomas Becket means that he understood "we conquer by suffering; and Thomas will repay by his blood the blood that Christ shed."[69] When Eliot writes the *Four Quartets*, his last great poem, he speaks about redeeming the time. He can only do so because first he was a pilgrim in the waste land and that "before a man may be healed, he must recognize his sickness."[70] Eliot recognized his sickness and the world's, and for him the medicine of immortality was found in receiving Holy Communion three times a week. For us to endure the sickness of our present age, we may do well to take this very same medicine.

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[69] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 207.
[70] Kirk, *Eliot and His Age*, 70.

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Book Reviews

***The LORD's Service: A Ritual Analysis of the Order, Function, and Purpose of the Daily Divine Service in the Pentateuch.* By Robert D. Macina. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2019. 278 pages. Paperback. $32.00.**

One of the most unexpectedly delightful courses I took in graduate school in the early 1980s was titled Anthropology of Ritual Behavior. It was part of the liturgy curriculum, taught by an esteemed liturgiologist who opened our minds to how liturgy, Scriptures, and culture could be read through the lens of ritual behavior. We were introduced to some of the eminent anthropologists at that time: Arnold van Gennep, whose book *The Rites of Passage* (1960) influenced the way I taught the liturgy and preaching of weddings and funerals, not to mention Baptism; Victor Turner, whose book *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (1969) led the editors of *Worship* to commission him to write a two-part article titled "Passages, Margins, and Poverty: Religious Symbols of Communitas" to show the intersection between his work and the work that was happening among liturgiologists after Vatican II;[1] and Mary Douglas, a British Roman Catholic social anthropologist whose books *Purity and Danger* (1966) and *Natural Symbols* (1970) connected anthropology, ritual behavior, and Christianity. Her analysis of the Bog Irish shows how a close-knit community lost its cohesion as a group when such prohibitions as that against eating meat on Fridays were abolished. It was in these books that I learned the language of liminality, especially in our Divine Service where heaven is on earth, something I delighted in discussing with my St. Louis colleague Dr. Ronald Feuerhahn, now sainted.

When I first started teaching liturgy at the seminary in the late 1980s, I shared some of this with the students, but after the particularities of the worship wars began to dominate the conversation, I abandoned them. I did include a section in my book *Heaven on Earth* titled "Liturgy and Ritual" to give people a taste of what a study of ritual might do for their understanding of ritual.[2]

So it was with great pleasure that I discovered in Robert Macina's delightful book *The Lord's Service* a spirited engagement of van Gennep, Turner, and Douglas, because Macina's book is about the rituals of the daily divine service in the tabernacle, as his subtitle indicates: *A Ritual Analysis of the Order, Function, and Purpose of the Daily Divine Service in the Pentateuch*. In his prologue, he explains what this

[1] *Worship* 46, no. 7 (Aug.–Sep. 1972): 390–412; no. 8 (Oct. 1972): 432–494.

[2] *Heaven on Earth: The Gifts of Christ in the Divine Service* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2008), 32–39.

means: "My methodology for interpreting the daily divine service in the Pentateuch is ritual analysis . . . yet my specific methodology is a form of *theological* ritual analysis" (19, emphasis Macina). For me, this book is priceless because it applies an anthropology of ritual behavior to the mystifying rituals of the daily divine service and interprets the theological significance of those rituals for us with clarity and vigor.

The extraordinary structure of Macina's unveiling of the daily divine service makes this possible. He limits himself to exactly what his subtitle states—the daily divine service in the Pentateuch. In the final chapter of his book, he acknowledges what is "left unanswered"—the individual offerings such as the peace, sin, guilt, burnt, and grain offerings. This book is *only* about the daily divine service for corporate Israel. So, the reader should not expect anything here about the Solomonic temple or Second Temple Judaism at the time of Jesus. Perhaps Macina has future projects in mind that would include these topics, but his focus is narrow.

What this reader was particularly grateful for was the clarity Macina brings to the daily divine service in the Pentateuch. He shows us that the entire day was shaped by the divine service in the tabernacle, just as later on in the Christian church the day was marked by the liturgy of the hours or the daily prayer office, culminating in the Benedictine hours. Perhaps when Paul said to the Thessalonians "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess 5:17 ESV), he had in mind the daily divine service that he must have attended regularly at the temple as he studied Scripture as a Pharisee in the school of Gamaliel. But unless you are an expert like Macina, the rituals of the tabernacle in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers are mystifying. They are a complex puzzle that needs careful attention to each piece to show how it fits into the whole. (It reminds me of what David Moessner said about Bo Reicke's approach to the Pauline epistles in Reicke's book *Re-examining Paul's Letters*.) Sorting out where each piece of the puzzle fits takes great effort, which, in Macina's most capable hands, is a wonder to observe as he carefully takes each piece to form a picture of what the daily divine service looks like.

Macina accomplishes this by the way he organizes his book in three chapters after a prologue that orients the reader to the daily divine service, literature on this topic, and methodology of his approach. In his three chapters titled "The Practical Order of the Daily Divine Service," "The Ritual Function of the Daily Divine Service," and "The Theological Purpose of the Daily Divine Service," he takes on the maze of rituals in the Pentateuch by breaking them down into three different phases, borrowing from van Gennep's rite of passage (see Macina's charts, 191–193, that accent liminality): the initial rites (the fire and presentation rites), the central rites (the blood, incense, and burning rites), and the concluding rites (the blessing and meal rites). For the undiscerning reader, it may appear as if Macina is repeating himself in each chapter, but he must rehearse elements of each rite as he puts the

puzzle together. The differences in each chapter are subtle and accomplish the very thing he set out to do—provide a *theological* ritual analysis. He must first tell us what the rites are, then analyze their ritual function, and finally interpret them theologically. So, the reader must pay careful attention to these small incremental changes. It is also important to read the footnotes, which are extensive. (If you want to know what the author really believes, it is in the footnotes.) Macina's footnotes are worth the price of the book, and sometimes I wondered whether some of these discussions should be in the main text.

The strength of this book is Macina's theological analysis of the rites. Here are a few takeaways from his theological reflections that will now be incorporated into my classes, many of which are interconnected. These excerpts from Macina's book will show why this book is a must for pastors, even some teachers and laity.

1. The daily divine service is authorized by the Lord, and he is the chief actor in the rituals. For each rite, Macina begins with its "divine institution," showing how the Lord is the giver and his people are the receivers. For example, in the blood rite "the LORD decrees that he himself gives the blood on the altar to make atonement for all the Israelites" (103).
2. The daily divine service is centered in the presence of the Lord, his theophany to the people throughout the day. "The LORD founds the daily divine service so that he may dwell among the Israelites (Exod 29:45–46)" (178).
3. The Lord conveys his presence through rituals that appeal to the senses and not through words. "Instead of the Israelites initiating the meeting with the LORD at the tabernacle, he comes to meet them through the sights, sounds, and scents at the altar" (158). Consider how the senses are engaged in the burning rite. Sight is engaged through seeing the high priest with "the golden crown on the front of his turban with the words 'YHWH's holiness' (Exod 28:36–38)" (154). The people also see "the smoke from the offerings [that] reveals God's presence there" (154). As for hearing, "the Israelites hear the sounding of the bells on the hem of the high priest's robe as he approaches and ministers at the altar (Exod 28:33–35)" (154–155). Perhaps most importantly are the smells: "This powerful incense intermingles with the smoke from the altar and disperses among the congregants and throughout the camp of Israel (Exod 29:41; Num 28:2, 6, 8). The soothing scent of the offerings reveals the favorable presence of the LORD to the Israelites. Through the burning rite in the daily divine service, the LORD meets with his people and reveals his gracious presence among them by the unique things that they see, hear, and smell" (155).

4. The presence of the Lord is in the fire that is foundational for all the other rites. For this reason, it is imperative that the fire not go out. "The theological purpose of the fire rite is to maintain the presence of the LORD in the fire on the altar so that the Israelites can meet with him there" (84). For this reason, "the burning rite is the climax of the morning and evening services. The entire daily divine service centers in this rite, builds up to it, and gains its significance from it" (145). "The LORD dwells among the Israelites not to be served by them but for him to serve them. In this part of the service, the LORD shares his Sabbath-like rest with his people, not merely on one day of the week but every morning and evening" (157).
5. The purity code that distinguishes between what is clean and unclean, what is holy and what is common, is central to the daily divine service. The purifying agents of the holy things that sanctify the people are oil and fire. "Just as the LORD's super holiness consecrates the most holy furniture at the tabernacle by means of the holy anointing oil (Exod 30:22–29), so also the LORD sanctifies the most holy offerings through contact with his holy fire" (187).
6. The blood rite shows the significance of twice-daily atonement for sins. "The LORD decrees that he himself gives the blood on the altar to make atonement for all of the Israelites" (103). "The LORD gives the blood on the altar to make atonement for the lives of the Israelites, because it atones by means of the life in it. When the high priest splashes the blood on the altar, the LORD himself grants atonement for his people" (113). "Atonement expiates the community of Israel at the same time that God is propitiated by the blood of the altar" (115).
7. The incense rite is the center of the central rites and is the most complex. It includes the three locations in the holy place: the incense altar, the table for the bread of presence, and the menorah. "Since the smoke is most holy, it sanctifies every ritually clean person and thing that it contacts. The LORD reveals himself to the Israelites as they smell the fragrant incense emerging from before him in the holy place, and he sanctifies his people as the most holy incense permeates the sanctuary and the camp of Israel" (139).
8. The high priest and his vestments are central to the rites, and he serves as a representative of God to the people. "Not only does the high priest represent the LORD to Israel, he also represents Israel to the LORD (Lev 16:20–22)" (90). "Although the high priest is not God, he functions as an icon or image of God to the people when he conducts the divine service" (154).
9. The centrality of the font next to the altar for the blood and burning rites in the tent of meeting is because the priests must wash themselves before

every rite. For example, "The priests wash their hands and feet before entering the tent of meeting. . . . Since the washing precedes any of the other ritual functions in the fire and presentation rites, the same holds true for burning incense. Washing is most likely the first thing enacted in the incense rite" (47).

10. The rites of the daily divine service differ from all the pagan rites surrounding Israel in this period. For example, "The incense rite is not what a person in the ancient world would expect. In the temples of pagan cultures, their idols would be placed in the area corresponding to the most holy place in the tabernacle. . . . The incense burned inside the tent of meeting hardly penetrates the veil that separates the most holy place from the holy place. All of this seems to turn common conceptions in the ancient religious world upside down" (121).
11. The Aaronic benediction is unique in the daily divine service, for it uses spoken words. Even though all the other rites "involve no prescribed spoken words, the blessing rite does. The performance of these prescribed words sets the blessing rite in a unique category of ritual acts. It is the only spoken ritual enactment" (158–159).

Although *The Lord's Service* does not speculate on the significance of the daily divine service in the tabernacle for the liturgy today, here are my thoughts on the significance of Macina's book for our own liturgical context.

1. The divine institution of the rites provides the Old Testament foundation for a Lutheran theology of worship where Christ gives his gifts, which we receive by faith, and where we then respond to him and our neighbor in love.
2. God uses human agents like priests and high priests in the daily divine service as well as ritual elements like water, vestments, blood, smoke. The daily divine service fully engages the senses of sight, hearing, and smell. In the Divine Service today, pastors stand in the stead and by the command of Christ ("The one who hears you hears me" [Luke 10:16 ESV]), and the Divine Service uses ritual materials like water, bread, and wine as the means by which the Lord comes to us with his bodily presence. Incense may also be a blessing for people who not only hear the Lord's words and see his presence but can smell that the Lord is present with his gifts.
3. With the incarnation and atonement of the Word made flesh, our Divine Service is centered in hearing the Word in the liturgy of the word and the sacrament. The significance of blood for atonement in the daily divine service in the tabernacle is also present in the liturgy of the Lord's Supper,

where the crucified and risen Lord is present bodily in the bread and wine. Today's Divine Service is centered in the reality that the Old Testament rites have been fulfilled with the incarnation and atonement of Jesus Christ. More ceremonies in our church that accent sight, hearing, and smell would be welcomed.

4. The daily divine service in the tabernacle was the equivalent of "corporate pastoral care" today in the Divine Service, where the Lord dwells among his people in word and sacrament. Just as Israel also had offerings for individuals in peace, sin, guilt, burnt, and grain offerings, so also our churches have "individual pastoral care" in private confession and absolution, the Lord's Supper for those who cannot attend the Divine Service, and other rites outside the Divine Service.
5. The places for the ritual acts in the daily divine service in the Pentateuch, especially font and altar with the ritual materials of water and blood, correspond to the central places in our churches with fonts for Baptism with water and altars/tables for bread and wine, body and blood. The only thing missing in our churches is a place for the smoke of incense.
6. Since atonement was so important for the daily divine service in the Pentateuch, it is imperative that the atonement also figure prominently in our theology and liturgies.

Robert Macina has given us a marvelous resource in *The Lord's Service.* Pastors and laity will all benefit from immersion in the daily divine service of the Pentateuch as they now receive the gifts from the Lord in our Divine Service.

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***Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters*. By Abigail Shrier. Washington, DC: Regnery, 2020. 264 pages. Hardcover. $28.99.**

The social landscape is shifting in ways that many could not have imagined, and it is happening at record speed. *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the Supreme Court decision that legalized gay marriage, opened up the floodgates. What was previously a cultural tug-of-war has become a rout, and it is hard to keep up. Thankfully, there have been many excellent books to help us understand.

Christian parents, especially those who have daughters, would do well to read Abigail Shrier's *Irreversible Damage*. In this well-documented work, Shrier

addresses the question of why girls, especially white girls of privilege, seem especially vulnerable to the transgender phenomenon. Anyone who is paying attention to what is happening at the local high school has probably seen this for themselves. Girls are becoming increasingly uncomfortable in their own bodies. Many of us who are older might see this phenomenon as something akin to anorexia.

Shrier emphasizes that the transgender phenomenon is transmitted socially. Girls who never before expressed discomfort in their own bodies hear a "coming out" story or find friendship in a group of influencers on the internet. Many girls, who may have previously thought of themselves as tomboys, are pushed to transition. There is increasingly a social advantage to entering into the so-called transgender community, as it offers a certain status. Public schools actively promote gender ideology. Parents, unsure of their place and scared about losing their children, do not want to be labeled as transphobic.

The irreversible damage is physical to be sure. Hormones soon leave a permanent deepening of the voice, as well as facial and body hair. Plastic surgery can restore the appearance of breasts but not their function. Children are confused, and parents are afraid. Meanwhile, the regiment is pushed by mental health professionals who profit off of gender-affirming therapy. Likewise, surgeons, pharmaceutical companies, and other doctors have found gender transitioning to be a very profitable business indeed.

What to do? Shrier offers valuable tips, including keeping our kids away from smartphones. Remember that our children do not belong to the school system but are given to us by God as their primary guides. Kids need moms and dads who act according to their calling. This may mean courageously stepping in and removing our daughters from dangerous situations.

Shrier is a respected writer for *The Wall Street Journal*, though mainstream publications and venues have largely ignored this work. It should be said that it is not written from a Christian point of view, but that should not dissuade us. To it we can add the truth of Genesis, that God created us male and female, and that is indeed something to celebrate. And while we do this, we can rediscover a biblical view of marriage, in which husband and wife complement each other, and offer motherly nurture and fatherly strength, so much needed when our kids are under attack.

This is no time for the fainthearted. Our children need us now more than ever. Reading Abigail Shrier's *Irreversible Damage* will help arm us for the fight.

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***Christianity and Modern Medicine: Foundations for Bioethics*. By Mark Wesley Foreman and Lindsay C. Leonard. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2022. 400 pages. Paperback. $29.99.**

Theological anthropology is the church's battleground of our time. A disordered view of the body is at the root of many of our problems today. Transgender ideology, genetic engineering, abortion, and feminist philosophy are all depictions of distorted anthropology. Bioethics without a grounded theology of the body and an integrated vision of humanity amounts to policies and preferences.

Foreman and Leonard make a useful contribution to bioethics education with their new text. While not strictly speaking a book of theology, it addresses its subject matter with Christian assumptions about what it means to be human. The book recognizes that ethics flows from ontology. You have to know what a thing is before you can know its meaning, *telos*, and how it should be treated.

Their book has ten chapters. In chapter 1, Foreman and Leonard briefly explain common ethical theories such as consequentialism, deontology, divine-command theory, and virtue ethics. Most bioethics textbooks have chapters about the various ethical theories. This book is no exception. What is exceptional is how well these things are explained for readers without a lot of background in philosophy.

Chapter 2 covers the basic principles of modern bioethics. In 1972, the reprehensible Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment was made public, spurring the effort to codify principles for ethical experimentation using human subjects. The result was the *Belmont Report*, issued in 1978, which identified three central guiding principles: respect for persons (informed consent), beneficence (risks-benefits analysis), and justice. Also in 1978, Tom Beauchamp and James Childress published their book, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, widely considered a standard bioethics textbook. They identified four guiding principles, not just for research but for all of medical ethics. These are similar to those of the *Belmont Report*: respect for autonomy, beneficence (do good), justice (fairness), and non-maleficence (do no harm). The story of much of modern bioethics is the story of the application of these principles.

Chapters 3–8 and 10 address major issues such as abortion, euthanasia, artificial reproductive technologies such as in vitro fertilization, and gene editing. One thing that stands out is devoting a chapter to infanticide instead of lumping it in with euthanasia. The pro-life argument is that there is no moral difference between a fetus and a newborn, and since it would be unthinkable to kill a newborn, then feticide should be prohibited. But we are in an upside-down time when ethicists and physicians agree that there is no moral difference between a fetus and a newborn but then say that since aborting a fetus is permissible, then so should be killing a newborn. Postnatal abortion, they call it.

Chapter 9 is on clinical ethics. This is about the day-to-day experience of health care providers. Topics in this chapter include informed consent, confidentiality, and medical paternalism.

The reader might be tempted to skip the more philosophical chapters at the beginning in order to dive right into the chapters about specific issues. It would be best if one did not do that. It is crucial that Christians and others begin to learn and relearn how to reason, how to make and evaluate moral judgments. This not only gives us tools we need to have discussions with serious people who do not understand or adhere to Christianity, but it also helps us to navigate troubling new questions that do not necessarily fit the bullet points or paradigms of issues we have already considered.

It is insufficient simply to know what we oppose. We also need to be able to explain our moral judgments and justify them with reasons. We need the skills to respond cogently to counterarguments. Without these tools for reasoning, we run a higher risk of caricaturing the views of others, employing logical fallacies in our arguments, and relying on bluster to carry the day.

This book would be a useful textbook for several reasons. In the first place, the chief concepts and issues are examined with a rare economy of words that gets to the point while still providing examples and cases to keep it from being dry. Secondly, it is clearly written, avoiding the convoluted prose sometimes found in college textbooks. The balance beam for every professor is to find proper course texts which are neither too far beyond the abilities of their typical student nor too simplistic to challenge the higher achievers.

But this is not just a book for college students. This is a book for pastors, directors of Christian education, and other church workers. It is a book for medical professionals. And it is a book for anyone seeking to increase one's knowledge or improve one's understanding of this crucial field.

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***Introducing Christian Ethics: Core Convictions for Christians Today*. By David P. Gushee. Canton, Michigan: Front Edge, 2022. 339 pages. Paperback. $24.99.**

Among a number of recent offerings in the category of introductions to Christian ethics, Gushee's volume stands out for its significant strengths with respect to clarity, structure, and power of writing, a pronounced emphasis on Christian virtue,

and a rare ability to highlight key questions in the various topics of applied ethics. However, the volume also presents notable flaws in interpretive methodology, making it a qualified resource for the discerning reader.

Prominent strengths of the book are Gushee's succinct, engaging prose and the superior structuring of the material, both in the overall movement of the volume and in the presentation of each topic in a chapter. Gushee follows what he calls a "lifecycle approach" to the book's presentation: the laying out of material as one would learn and engage it in his lifetime (93). First, the Christian learns terms, sources, and methods of ethics. These methods are filled in with particular Christian virtues, gifts, or fruits, to begin to structure thoughts, passions, habits, and behavior. Finally, he explains specific issues, such as stewardship of creation, sexual ethics, and political ethics, as a Christian—informed by sources and methods and characterized by Christian thinking and behavior—might think about, approach, and engage them. Gushee carefully lays out the fundamental questions in Christian ethics, clearly addresses and defines important concepts, and models the kind of perception, reflection, and character in his writing that he hopes the Christian will learn and mature in.

Introducing Christian Ethics takes advantage of recent integrative practices in publishing, by making available audio and video presentations of each chapter to those who have the book. At the beginning of each chapter, links and QR codes take the reader to an audio and video recording of the chapter being read by the author. In truth, Gushee is not as engaging a reader as he is a writer, and the primary advantage of these links is that one could listen while driving, exercising, etc. The actual power of the presentation, however, resides in its written clarity and structure.

Gushee excels in summarizing foundational material. He clearly presents all the major methods of moral analysis used in the Christian tradition, such as goals, rules, relationships, character, community, and responsibility. Yet he readily points out that biblical ethics are fundamentally theological, not philosophical. Philosophical theories offer insights and intellectual structures for understanding, yet Scripture integrates their insights without "absolutizing" any of them (25). Scriptural commands and principles inform Christian virtues that should be pursued for life together in the church on the way to Christ's fulfillment of the eschatological kingdom. Gushee embraces a narrative methodology, meaning that the Christian moral system needs to be derived and articulated from the biblical narrative, not just theoretically through reason or even practically through current experience (either individual or communal, 55–58). Gushee's extended treatment of specifically Christian virtues, grounded in the Sermon on the Mount and manifesting as fruits of the Spirit, is unique in its prominence for an introductory text, serving to orient the Christian ethicist around an appropriately Christian spirituality. Of particular

interest is his detailed treatment of truthfulness, sacredness, justice, love, and forgiveness (67–153). His emphases on a humble approach to interpretation and the need to recognize moral conflict are valuable critical tools for students (31–33). Gushee's treatment of applied ethics also is very good in his ability to recognize and highlight the central points for consideration and action.

Recognizing these strengths, the discerning reader will be disappointed in Gushee's treatment of sources for Christian ethics. Key is his use of the New Testament. Initially he warns the reader of human fallibility in biblical interpretation, but rather than addressing this fallibility by advocating humility and repentance, he resigns himself to the apparent inevitability that a Christian ethicist will prioritize certain themes and parts of Scripture over others. Repeated moral failure and conflict in his own experience and in the history of the church have convinced him that neither reading Scripture, nor following a particular tradition within Christianity, nor submitting to ecclesiastical institutions or authorities, nor even being led by the Spirit will resolve this conflict and failure. The only way forward is for ethicists and interpreters to be conscious of their biases and the scriptural themes that they favor over others (31–38). Gushee himself admits that he prefers a "prophetic" over a "cultic/legalist" reading of the Scriptures. The latter he finds in the Johannine and Pauline writings, which "elevate . . . the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus but not his teachings or his version of kingdom theology" (34). On the contrary, he favors an ethic of social salvation that he finds in the Synoptics and that he asserts is discontinuous with the Johannine and Pauline traditions. Gushee asserts that such prioritizing of scriptural themes is inevitable for interpreters due to the diversity of Scripture and that ethicists simply need to be aware of this diversity and conscious of the interpretative direction they will follow (35).

But such a method begs the question of the New Testament as an authority for Christian ethics: only those elements that match one's moral stance are de facto authoritative; other passages and themes are set aside (see examples in the following paragraph). Gushee has moved from acknowledging the fallibility of human interpretation and trying to address this challenge to advocating for the prioritization of certain portions of Scripture over others. Rather than offering a solution, he is offering an alternative source to Scripture: one's interpretive tradition or preferences. Gushee certainly recognizes that an ethicist should humbly study Christian sources, be directed and corrected by them, grow in understanding, and mature in his guidance. But rather than finding this study, correction, and maturity in the study of all the Scriptures, he finds it in the preference for certain scriptural themes and interpretive traditions.

Because interpretive traditions, and not, strictly speaking, Scripture, are authoritative for Gushee, his guidance with respect to some areas of applied ethics also

falters. For example, African American literature depicts white Christianity as destructive of virtue, spiritually impotent, and blind to racism and injustice. Rather than seeing that this literature offers cases or narratives to challenge white Christians to self-examination, Gushee asserts that this literature demonstrates that white Christianity simply is racist (183–196). Or, when describing disagreements over the question of male headship, Gushee sees inconsistencies in biblical interpretation as evidence of the impossibility of finding a biblical resolution, and, instead, turns to men's abuses of power against women as justification for a feminist position (172–179). Or, when addressing marriage, he can simultaneously call for marriage to be a lifelong covenant commitment, while also arguing that couples of the same sex can enter into such marriages, because, in a fallen world, the gospel calls for the fullest participation possible of all people in structured, loving relationships (233–237).

In spite of these flaws, *Introducing Christian Ethics* offers some qualified benefits to discerning readers. First, Gushee is highly skilled at highlighting key introductory themes and topics in ethics, both methodological and applied. While readers may not agree with his rationale or conclusions, he does not get sidetracked by more advanced philosophical concepts or by detailed minutiae of a few topics in applied ethics. Furthermore, Gushee's treatment of virtue, which extends over several chapters and explains a specifically Christian understanding of virtue, offers a comprehensive picture of the character of Christian life. Finally, Gushee is an extremely clear and straightforward writer. As a result, readers will come away from this volume with an excellent overview of ethical concepts and methods, as well as familiarity with the foundational issues in contemporary ethics. So long as a reader persists in the humble study of Scripture, he will be able to glean a number of benefits from Gushee, while reaching conclusions more faithful to the whole counsel of Scripture.

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***Ethics beyond Rules: How Christ's Call to Love Informs our Moral Choices.* By Keith D. Stanglin. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Reflective, 2021. 256 pages. Hardcover. $26.99.**

Ethics beyond Rules is a delight to read and ponder, thanks to Stanglin's well-researched, creative, and faithful treatments of ethical issues with concise yet engaging prose. And whatever you do, do not let the title fool you.

Stanglin titles the book *Ethics* beyond *Rules*, for he intends his readers to recognize that Christian ethics is not only about rules but also about the principles behind the rules, biblical methods of moral reasoning, and, most importantly, the cultivation of virtues. Rules do serve to guide the immature into true freedom. But if ethics is seen merely as conforming to rules of behavior, then it can only be legalistic, impersonal, and disconnected from true holiness (chapters 2–3). Ultimately, the Christian lives in freedom to love God and one's neighbor.

What, though, does love mean? Stanglin defines love of neighbor as acting for another's good. This may mean supporting the neighbor in his opinions and pursuits, but it may also mean correcting and rebuking him when his thoughts, passions, or behavior would actually bring harm to him or another. Love, as the pursuit of the good, is a virtue, suggesting possible actions in support of the good, while prohibiting others which are harmful (chapter 4). Love is informed not only by the rules in Scripture but also by the "principles" behind the rules and the "paradigms" of holiness described in biblical accounts. Love also takes shape from the underlying theological teachings of Scripture. Doctrinal concepts and explanations, such as the image of God, creation, fall, incarnation, atonement, and resurrection shape the Christian imagination, and thus also the moral choices Christians make (chapter 5). In this way, Stanglin does not reject rules but wants Christians to recognize that holy virtues are shaped by much more than simple, external rules.

Stanglin truly impresses in part 2, in which he addresses contemporary ethical issues. He treats sex, abortion, consumerism, technology, politics, and race relations with a keen understanding of a variety of sources, a clarity of expression which should be accessible to most readers, and with faithful, unambiguous explanations of good and loving courses of action. Throughout this section he models his method of scriptural interpretation (considering principles, paradigms, and theological worldview) along with ministerial insights from reason, tradition, and experience.

For example, in discussing sexual morality (chapters 6–7), he notes with the tradition that sexual relations have the purposes of procreation and union. He also acknowledges the purpose of "intimacy and enjoyment" (74). While it could be argued that enjoyment serves to incline a person to sexual relations, and that intimacy is included in union, by offering "intimacy and enjoyment" as a third purpose, he effectively highlights what is so wrong with sexually immoral acts. Sexual immorality seeks only intimacy and enjoyment, without procreation and union. Immorality tempts with the false promise of pleasure but leads to hollow emptiness starkly contrary to the healthy, good, blessed, sexual relations of marriage.

Stanglin addresses the "bondage" of modern consumerism, which manifests in favoritism toward the wealthy and in addiction to technology expressed by the consumption of technological improvements and innovations people would not have

known they "needed," were they not enslaved to the marketing of such products (chapter 9). In the same chapter, he adeptly treats the significance of almsgiving: an act of trust in God's provision indicative of one's faith toward God.

Although not a Lutheran, Stanglin's account of political theology (chapter 11) squares well with Scripture's teaching on the two kingdoms. His treatment of race relations is refreshing for its clear condemnation of racism, and for his equally perceptive and straightforward diagnosis of the destructive character of identity politics. "Identities were once shaped primarily by a sense of belonging to a faith community and a state or country, by being a part of a stable nuclear family in proximity to an extended family, and by having a workplace. . . . With the loss of church, family, work, and neighborhood ties, it is no wonder that more people than ever are experiencing an identity crisis. Intersectional identity politics appeals to a culture in an identity crisis" (176–177). Yet, identity politics cannot solve the problem: "Since your intersectional identity is thought to be incommensurate with mine, then mutual understanding becomes impossible, and antagonism results" (176). However, out of this crisis, Stanglin is able to open up a rich section discussing the truly Christian society—that is, the church—called out of the world, cleansed by the blood of Christ, and living in repentance and reconciliation. A restored humanity in Christ recognizes the secondary character of other "identities," and is able appropriately to appreciate them, without entrenching divisions by them (177–183).

Stanglin has, in fact, provided a primer on ethics that does not reject rules. By lucid scriptural reasoning and broad research adeptly distilled, Stanglin offers wisdom in the face of contemporary challenges, and even leaves us a number of rules for action. Stanglin's rules, along with the principles, paradigms, and theological convictions of Scripture, unfailingly shape the Christian's understanding of love and the good. This book could be used to teach Bible classes (each chapter concludes with helpful discussion questions), by pastors in a study group, or even by scholars looking to familiarize themselves with the current state of Christian ethics.

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***After the Revolution: Sex and the Single Evangelical*. By David J. Ayers. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2022. 245 pages. Paperback. $24.99.**

Less than a decade ago, a faithful pastor was installed at a mid-sized Midwest congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. He eventually learned

there were thirty-five unmarried member couples cohabiting. That pastor and congregation are not alone; the disordered sexual practices of our individualistic society have influenced even active congregants.

David Ayers, a conservative evangelical sociologist, has been observing this trend for decades as the sexual revolution bears fruit. Drawing on sociological studies in a clear and conversational tone, this book gives solid evidence of a very disturbing trend: with regard to heterosexual sex, most evangelicals are mimicking the sexual practices of the world. Yet, Ayers is not without hope. Confident in Christ's redeeming and restoring work, he sees a path forward in confession, absolution, faithful teaching of our Lord's word, and the work of pastors and congregations in encouraging youth and adults in the rich and beautiful design of our Lord's gift of sex.

Along with an insightful foreword by Carl R. Trueman and an introduction, the book contains nine chapters. The first chapter delightfully explores "God's Design for Sex and Marriage." Ayers is no prude, nor is he simplistic in his anthropology or theology. Man is an embodied soul. Marriage reflects the Trinity and the union of Christ and the church. Controlling our passions and living according to our Creator's design is a fruit of faith flowing from freedom in the gospel, while anything else is enslavement to sin.

The second chapter describes, from a sociological perspective, what has happened in the worldview and sexual practice of American society since the early twentieth century. Clear-eyed sociologists saw the sexual revolution coming decades before it became popular. Ayers identifies this shift as a movement from an ethic of covenant to an ethic of consent. This chapter matches what we have learned about modernism and postmodernism and the triumph of expressive individualism but views these changes through the lens of sociology.

Based on survey data, chapters 3–5 demonstrate the embrace of the sexual revolution among evangelicals. Ayers was shocked by his early research at a conservative evangelical college. These chapters are a sober reminder of what we are up against in these gray and latter days.

The next two chapters explore how evangelicals got into this mess, both philosophically and socially. The eighth chapter explicates the damage from sex outside of marriage.

The ninth chapter is exceptionally helpful. Here Ayers rejects simplistic emotional pledges of purity but offers concrete guidance on what a congregation might offer to promote chastity in its fullness. He advocates for both faithful teaching and compassionate soul care for those who sin.

There is some language that does not fully resonate with the Lutheran Confessions, but in general this book is a grounded, biblically faithful, and helpful tool for

pastors, church workers, and laity who wish to be more fully equipped to serve souls in these challenging days.

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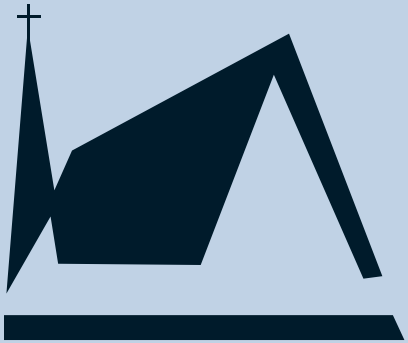

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