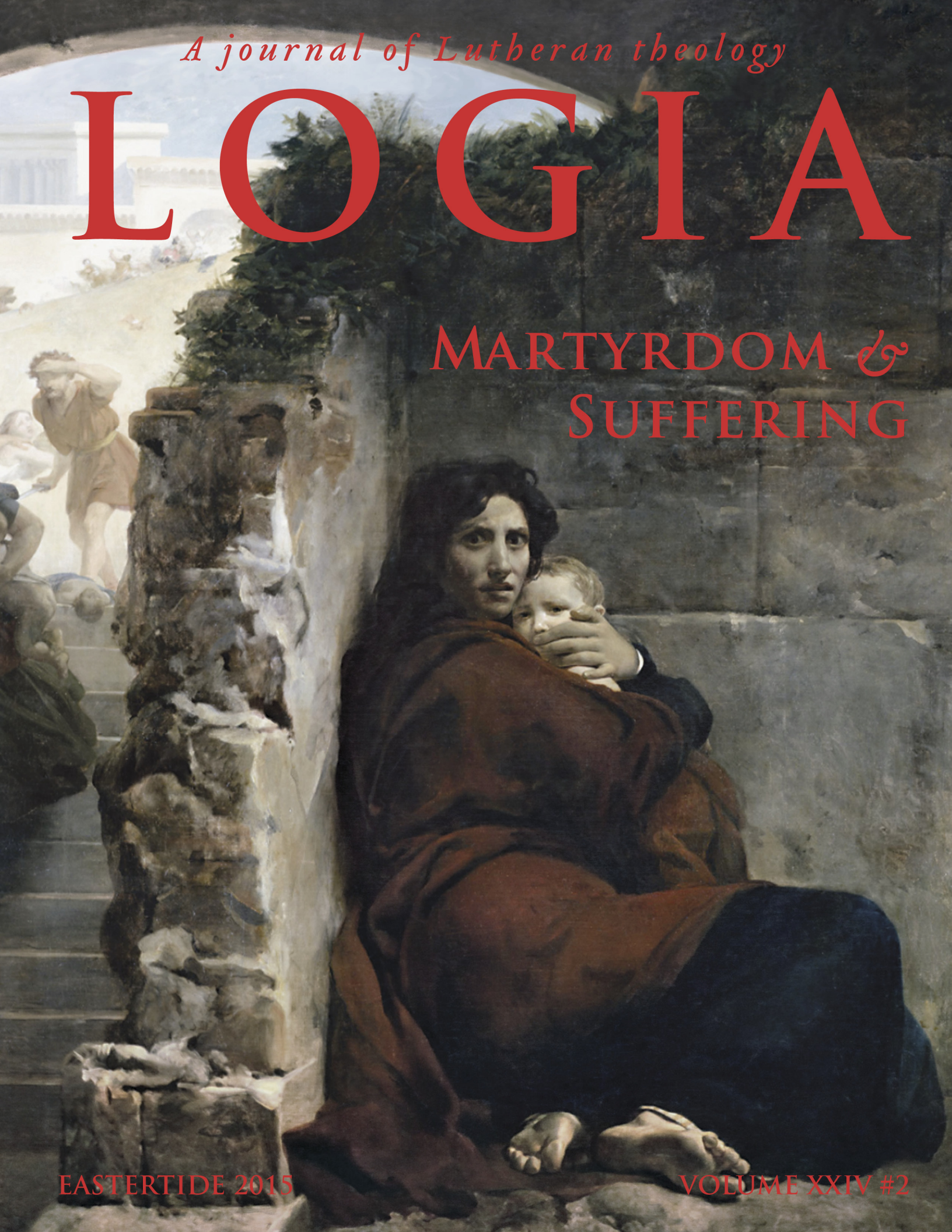


A journal of Lutheran theology

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EASTERTIDE 2015

VOLUME XXIV #2

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

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FREQUENTLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

AC [CA]	Augsburg Confession
ANF	Ante-Nicene Fathers
Ap	Apology of the Augsburg Confession
Ep	Epitome of the Formula of Concord
FC	Formula of Concord
LC	Large Catechism
LSB	<i>Lutheran Service Book</i>
LW	<i>Luther's Works</i> , American Edition
SA	Smalcald Articles
SC	Small Catechism
SD	Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord
SL	St. Louis Edition of Luther's Works
Tappert	<i>The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church</i> . Trans. and ed. Theodore G. Tappert
Triglotta	Concordia Triglotta
TLH	<i>The Lutheran Hymnal</i>
Tr	Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope
WA	<i>Luthers Werke</i> , Weimarer Ausgabe [Weimar Edition]
Kolb-Wengert	Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., <i>The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church</i> (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000).
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LOGIA

A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY

EASTERTIDE 2015

VOLUME XXIV, NUMBER 2

CONTENTS

PREFACE

<i>Wade Johnston</i>	5
----------------------------	---

ARTICLES

<i>Pain, Suffering, Lament</i> Gregory P. Schulz.....	7
<i>Ignatius of Antioch’s Letter to the Romans: The Passionate Confession of Christian Identity</i> James G. Bushur	13
<i>Bearing the Shame of the Cross: Luther’s Theology of the Cross, the Imitation of Christ, and Martyrdom</i> C. Matthew Phillips	21
<i>God’s Time Clock Never Stops: Persecution and Martyrdom in the Lutheran Church of the USSR</i> Matthew Heise	27
<i>Patients in Suffering: What Good is Living for the Dying?</i> Jeffery Warner	33
<i>Apostolic Suffering in 2 Corinthians</i> Adam Koontz	39
<i>Lutheranism: Between Pietism and Orthodoxy?</i> Scott R. Murray	43

REVIEWS..... 53

<i>Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind.</i> By Mark A. Noll. Review by Daniel Burfiend
<i>Should We Live Forever? The Ethical Ambiguities of Aging.</i> By Gilbert Meilaender. Review by Faith Elizabeth Swenson
<i>Bonhoeffer: A Guide for the Perplexed.</i> By Joel Lawrence. Review by John Hoyum
<i>The Collected Sermons of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.</i> Edited and Introduced by Isabel Best. Review by Scott Johnson
<i>Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years.</i> By Diarmaid MacCulloch. Review by Jack Kilcrease
<i>Seven Events That Shaped the New Testament World.</i> By Warren Carter. Review by Michael Manz
<i>Bonhoeffer the Assassin? Challenging the Myth, Recovering His Call to Peacemaking.</i> By Mark Thiessen Nation, Anthony G. Siegrist, and Daniel P. Umbel. Review by Zachary W. Marklevitz
<i>Interpreting Bonhoeffer: Historical Perspectives, Emerging Issues.</i> Edited by Clifford J. Green and Guy C. Carter. Review by John T. Pless
<i>Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Volume 11: Ecumenical, Academic, and Pastoral Work 1931–1932.</i> Edited by Victoria J. Barnett, Mark S. Bocker, and Michael B. Lukens. Review by John T. Pless
<i>Bonhoeffer’s Theological Formation: Berlin, Barth, and Protestant Theology.</i> By Michael P. DeJonge. Review by John T. Pless
<i>The Trial of Jan Hus: Medieval Heresy and Criminal Procedure.</i> By Thomas A. Fudge. Review by Richard J. Serina, Jr.

LOGIA FORUM..... 63

Suffering? Really? • Not A Good Fit!
 Better Words Than the Lord’s? They Aren’t! So Get Over It!
 Oh, For the Days When Inerrancy Wasn’t a Dirty Word!
 Welcome Home! • Bo Giertz on Persecution and Public Education
 Theses on Infant Communion • The Four Classical Theories of Scripture and Tradition

ALSO THIS ISSUE

Call for Manuscripts	52
Editors and Staff	75

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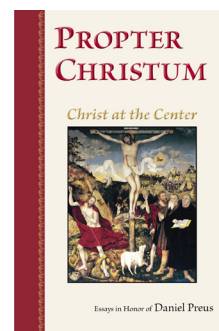


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Preface



GOD TRULY BLESSED THE EDITORS of *LOGIA* with a plethora of fine articles for this issue — more than we could fit within the covers. No doubt, we ought not be too surprised. As Luther so wonderfully put it, *crux sola est nostra theologia*. The cross is indeed never far from Jesus' Christians — his cross and theirs. It brings us great joy, therefore, to publish an insightful and perspicuous assortment of studies on various aspects of the theology of the cross, suffering, and martyrdom.

Gregory Schulz and **Jeffery Warner** both wrestle with suffering in the life of the Christian. Schulz tackles suffering and pain in general and provides counsel and comfort for the afflicted and those who minister to them by laying the groundwork for a theology of lament. Warner's work will surely capture the attention of parish pastors and any who serve the dying, as he sets aside the euphemisms and unbiblical assumptions that so often cloud our view of death and the dying and centers hospital ministry where all theology must find its center: in the cross of Christ and the promises of God.

Three articles shed light upon attitudes toward and teaching about the cross, martyrdom, and suffering from different ages in the history of the church militant. **James Bushur** sets forth in a highly accessible manner the theology of counsel and wisdom of Ignatius of Antioch in his Letter to the Romans. **C. Matthew Phillips** distills and elucidates Luther's theology of suffering and martyrdom while providing a roadmap for those who wish to study the matter further through his careful source work. Finally, **Matthew Heise** uses the open archives of

the former Soviet Union to uncover an account of the life and martyrdom of two faithful Lutheran pastors and the challenges that faced the Lutheran Church of the Soviet Union. These martyrs take their place with all martyrs as an encouragement for those who labor in the Lord's vineyard, particularly those who are threatened by harm of any sort.

Adam Koontz rounds out our exploration of suffering and the cross with an exegetical study. Examining apostolic suffering in 2 Corinthians, he brings to light key elements of Paul's theology of the cross and demonstrates the letter's lasting relevance for Christians enduring suffering in our own day.

Lastly, **Scott Murray** broadens the scope of the issue a bit with a fruitful, timely, and discerning overview of Lutheran Orthodoxy and Pietism. He rightly notes that Pietism is not simply a movement resting securely in the past, but remains a very real and active force within the Lutheran Church — one that neither the Lutheran pastor nor layperson does well to overlook or underestimate. Murray does more than sound a warning, however. He offers valuable instruction on how to avoid the pitfalls of a dead orthodoxy (without the unfortunate caricatures that too often attend such a discussion) or an enthusiastic piety.

The editors of *LOGIA* are pleased to bring these articles to print. It is our prayer that they focus your eyes upon the cross of Christ, buoy weak knees for episodes of suffering and cross-bearing, and deepen our readers' understanding of a truly biblical, Lutheran theology of the cross.

Wade Johnston

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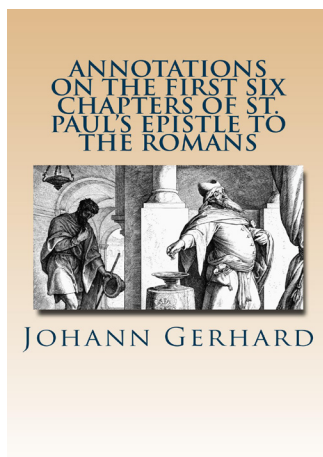
Annotations on the First Six Chapters of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans

by Johann Gerhard

translated by Paul Rydecki

Gerhard's Annotations were incomplete at the time of his death; his son, Johann Ernst Gerhard, published them several years after his death. However, the Annotations are of enduring value and significance to the Church because in these first six chapters, Gerhard gives a clear treatment of the doctrine of Justification, and a model of Lutheran exegesis. Modern students of Holy Scripture will benefit from Gerhard's scholarship.

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by Aegidius Hunnius

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Aegidius Hunnius (1550–1603) has been described as one of the greatest exegetes of the later years of the Lutheran Reformation. He served on the theological faculties of the University of Marburg (1576–1592) and the University of Wittenberg (1592–1603). An articulate defender of the Evangelical Lutheran faith, Hunnius was instrumental in removing the influence of crypto-Calvinism from Saxony, and was the primary author of the Saxon Visitation Articles (1592). The exorcism was restored in Saxony the same year that Hunnius was called to the theological faculty of the University of Wittenberg; as a pivotal figure in the effort to remove the pernicious influences of crypto-Calvinism from Saxony, Hunnius almost certainly supported the restoration of



exorcism. However, at the time of his death, Hunnius had become aware of the effect the practice of exorcism was having on belief in the sufficiency of Baptism. The 128 theses of his *Theses de Abrogando Exorcismo* (*Theses on Repealing Exorcism*) set forth the arguments of supporters of the rite of exorcism and Hunnius' critique of that argument.

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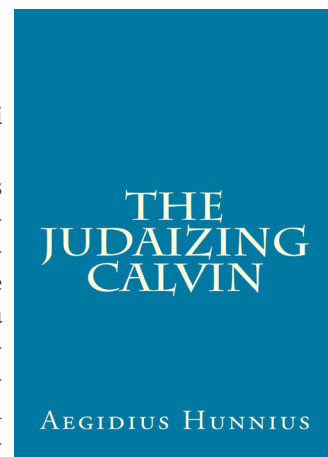
The Judaizing Calvin

by Aegidius Hunnius

translated by Paul Rydecki

In *The Judaizing Calvin*, Aegidius Hunnius (1550–1603) analyzes the writings of John Calvin, the chief teacher of the Reformed, and documents a persistent pattern of Calvinist interpretation which undermines the fundamental teachings of the New Testament concerning Christ Jesus. Hunnius contends that Calvin was a “judaizing” theologian—one who favored a Rabbinic Jewish interpretation of Old Testament prophecies—and that his interpretations undermined the New Testament teachings concerning the Incarnation, the doctrine of the Trinity, and the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Hunnius provides the reader with a passionate and substantial refutation of Calvin's flawed interpretations, and upholds the apostolic understanding of the connection between Old Testament Messianic prophecy and the New Testament fulfillment of those prophecies. As Hunnius wrote in his Introduction: “I shall offer several testimonies that Calvin, that champion of yours (not of mine), has hammered upon in order to blunt them into the treachery of Jewish unbelief and Arian wickedness, and has rendered them useless. And in order to ensure that the most plentiful proof is provided for such a weighty matter, it is necessary to demonstrate those corruptions mentioned above, by which he has enveloped the clearest prophecies of the Prophets regarding the Messiah in Jewish perversions.

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Pain, Suffering, Lament

GREGORY P. SCHULZ



LUTHER ONCE COMMENTED ON Psalm 6:8, “Weeping is preferred to working and suffering exceeds all doing” (LW 14:145). How do you feel about that comment? How do you feel about suffering? My argument is that a biblical and pastoral theological understanding of pain, suffering, and lament needs to be intelligent about the emotional aspect of our human being. While we pastors and professors are reminded day in and day out of the pervasive biblical *aliteracy* of the souls we care for (that is, we contemporary believers are literate and so *can* read Scripture; but too, too often we just *won’t* do it) in regard to the psalms and biblical lament, our efforts at teaching our parishioners or students to pray the psalms of lament are further hampered by a gnostic presumption regarding how God’s word functions as the means of grace that it is: in our studying and in our class work, we tend to discount the affective efficacy of the word.

So, let me recommend a more sanguine manner of *seelsorgering*, beginning with clear definitions of *pain*, of *suffering*, and of *lament* as phenomena of human experience, accompanied by the beginnings of a fine-grained consideration of the emotional aspect of our kind, of our human being, within the lamentation curriculum of the psalms of lament, for which Psalm 22 is the center of gravity.

Recent scholarship has provided us with resources to recover and promulgate our Lutheran heritage in regard to the so-called Problem of Evil and the liturgical leitmotif of lament, resources to do a pastor’s heart and library good. Oswald Bayer has been calling for “a theology of lament”:

To this point, lament does not shape any decisive aspect of dogmatics or Christian ethics and has only slowly gained entrance into the conceptual system at work in some of the main theological handbooks and dictionaries. This is astonishing! The neglect of lament touches upon no less than the innermost secret of the Christian faith: the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.¹

Eva Harasta and Brian Brock have coedited *Evoking Lament*, which they open with a declaration from a Ugandan

priest: “The resurrection of the church begins with lament” and then observe:

The recovery of lament for a contemporary church will demand facing difficult historical and theoretical problems. Though there is a resurgence in practical theologies of lament, this volume [of essays titled *Evoking Lament*] suggests that these theologies ignore crucial theoretical problems. In effect, they commend lament to the church without saying what it is.²

We Lutherans have an apt theology for that in our theology of the cross. Ronald Rittgers has provided substantial historical documentation and interpretation, especially concerning the “Wittenberg Circle,” the group of pastor-theologians who adhered to the theology of Luther and Melancthon, in support of the thesis that “[s]uffering was viewed as the most important litmus test of confessional loyalty, for it was in suffering, as nowhere else, that people’s deepest religious convictions were revealed.”³ So, let us see how we twenty-first-century members of the Wittenberg Circle can participate and how we can contribute.

In our time and place, the failure to define *pain* and *suffering* is having life-and-death ramifications. So I maintain that in order to provide authentic pastoral care, we first need to practice what we call in traditional logic *The First Act of Mind*. That is to say, we need to define our terms so that we all understand what it is that we are talking about.

Here is one example of a failure to define the terms at issue, a logical failure that has spawned a fatal epidemic created and transmitted in large part by medical practitioners. In the

1. Oswald Bayer, “Toward a Theology of Lament,” trans. Matthis Gockel, in *Caritas et Reformatio*, ed. David Whitford (St. Louis: Concordia, 2002), 211. Also available on my CD *The Problem of Suffering: A Companion Study Guide and Resource for Pastors and Christian Caregivers* (CPH, 2011).
2. Emmanuel Katongole as quoted in *Evoking Lament: A Theological Discussion*, ed. Eva Harasta and Brian Brock (New York: T & T Clark International, 2009), 1.
3. Ronald K. Rittgers, *The Reformation of Suffering: Pastoral Theology and Lay Piety in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 5. I recommend beginning your reading with chapter 5, “Suffering and the Theology of the Cross.”

GREGORY P. SCHULZ is Professor of Philosophy at Concordia University Wisconsin and Adjunct Professor of Theology in the Ph.D. in Missiology program at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne.

penultimate paragraph of her article “May Doctors Help You to Die?”⁴ Marcia Angell, Senior Lecturer at Harvard Medical School and former editor-in-chief of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, asserts that “not all suffering can be adequately relieved” and concludes, “Why should anyone—the state, the medical profession, or anyone else—presume to tell someone else how much suffering they must endure as their life is ending?” What has gone wrong here, that a medical doctor, whose vocation is to heal, is campaigning as a physician for a public policy of physician-assisted suicide for anyone whose suffering the medical profession cannot alleviate?

The term suffering announces our concern with pain—ours and the pain of others.

On the one hand, this is an egregious instance of question-begging (in the sense of imposing one’s world-view on the rest of us without warrant or explanation) when clarity of world-view is precisely what is at issue for all of us. Angell presumes a particular anthropology of the human being (a version of materialism in which the termination of life is taken to be the end of the person and his experiences) and assumes a particular ethic (a radical autonomy in which the patient has an unalienable right to death, radical autonomy, and the pursuit of annihilation). On the basis of these presuppositions she recommends that the state and the medical profession ought to help us and our loved ones die whenever we are suffering in ways that medical science cannot alleviate. Angell’s presumption in this regard merits a reply that challenges her epistemological hubris (as if a certain type of materialist scientific knowledge were capable of settling the question of the immortality of the human person!), but that is a topic for another paper.⁵ My concern here is with her carelessness in her use of the terms *pain* and *suffering*.

On the other hand, you see, the problem is with terminology. As it stands, Angell’s position is a hubristic and brutal argument for the clinical termination of suffering persons on the assumption that medical practitioners ought to end the life of a human being who is suffering, notwithstanding that she gives no indication that she comprehends what suffering means as we experience suffering humanly, not to mention millennia of our thoughtful articulations of suffering. Let’s notice that *pain* is a description of what we experience by virtue of our physi-

cal being. Similar to nonhuman animals, we feel pain when we are hurt. We are, after all, body-and-soul beings and not essentially Platonic souls. But we are not merely animals who experience hurt as pain; in addition, we humans are the rational—I would prefer to say “*logos*-formed”—type of being who reflects on our feelings of pain and seeks understanding and justification for what is happening to us and around us. The term *suffering* announces our concern with pain—ours and the pain of others. We experience pain, to be sure. In addition, we also *know*—we want to know, we cannot stand not knowing—what pain means. And pain is by nature not self-interpreting.

Our experience of suffering entails, then, the experience of (physical and psychological) pain, plus our deeply felt recognition that this is not the way things ought to be. Suffering comes upon us as a feeling, a soul-deep worry that pain is, in its essence, meaningless. This is the freight of the apostle Paul’s inspired deployment of ματαιότης in Romans 8:20.

The LXX makes frequent use of it: πλὴν τὰ σύμπαντα ματαιότης, πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ζῶν, [Psalm] 38:6; ἄνθρωπος ματαιότητι ὠμοιώθη, 143:4. The word was given an unexpected turn by [Solomon in Ecclesiastes or] Qoh.: ματαιότης ματαιοτήτων, εἶπεν ὁ Ἐκκλησιαστής, ματαιότης ματαιοτήτων, τὰ πάντα ματαιότης, 1:2; 2:1 etc. [It is t]he stern and irrefutable *vanitas vanitatum*.⁶

As one professor wrote after the sudden death of his son, “Suffering is the shout of ‘No’ by one’s whole existence to that over which one suffers—the shout of ‘No’ by nerves and gut and gland and heart to pain, to death . . . to abandonment.”⁷ I have heard people explain that suffering is in effect the disintegration of one’s self, but I think it is better described as the feeling that things are not the way they ought to be *between persons*, particularly between human persons and the three-personed LORD God in view of God’s actions or inaction toward us. This understanding of suffering as “the shout of ‘No’” *as a shout to God* is in concord with the Scriptures and their gut-wrenching revelations of the Suffering Servant in prophecy in Isaiah, and in historical fulfillment in the New Testament reports of our God’s crucifixion. This understanding of suffering—Jesus’ suffering *pro nobis* and our lamenting *in Christo*—is signed, sealed, and delivered into our lives in this vale of tears in the praying of the premier psalm of lament, Psalm 22. But before moving from pain and suffering to lament, let me adduce a paragraph of lexical study on the Hebrew מַעֲרִיב:

The denominative verb, occurring seventy-five times with meanings ranging from “displeasing, injurious,” to be bad or evil [see above] inherits from its noun a dual meaning of being wrong in regard to God’s original and ongoing

4. Marcia Angell, “May Doctors Help You to Die?” *New York Review of Books*, 11 October 2012, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2012/oct/11/may-doctors-help-you-die/>.

5. For this complementary analysis please see my posting “Physician-Assisted Suicide as a Response to Suffering?” at <http://www.LutheranPhilosopher.com>.

6. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrichs (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1964–1976), 4:523 (electronic ed.).

7. Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Lament for a Son* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), 96.

intention and detrimental in terms of its effects on man. In some instances it may refer only to its injurious effects on man, either as physical or emotional harm to the person or as painfully unpleasant experiences. There are practically no philosophical or metaphysical connotations that bear upon theodicy or cosmology. The verbal forms of the root are basically descriptive of the interrelations between God and man and between man and man.⁸

The conflation of *suffering* and *pain* that we saw in the physician's position on suicide is also present in writings infinitely more congenial to pastoral ministry than articles urging physician-assisted suicide. For example, consider C. S. Lewis's *Problem of Pain*. In the opening paragraphs of chapter 6, "Human Pain," he writes:

But the truth is that the word Pain has two senses which must now be distinguished. *A*. A particular kind of sensation, probably conveyed by specialised nerve fibres, and recognisable by the patient as that kind of sensation whether he dislikes it or not (e.g., the faint ache in my limbs would be recognised as an ache even if I didn't object to it). *B*. Any experience, whether physical or mental, which the patient dislikes. It will be noticed that all Pains in sense *A* become Pains in sense *B* if they are raised above a certain very low level of intensity, but that Pains in the *B* sense need not be Pains in the *A* sense. Pain in the *B* sense, in fact, is synonymous with *suffering*, *anguish*, *tribulation*, *adversity*, or *trouble*, and it is about it that the problem of pain arises. For the rest of this book Pain will be used in the *B* sense and will include all types of suffering; with the *A* sense we have no further concern.⁹

While we can perhaps follow Lewis's intention in saying that pain is synonymous with suffering, this results in confusion for many in our illiterate society, since not everyone can or wants to stick with Lewis's idiosyncratic use of *pain*, as in the title of his book. Most readers (or surfers) of *The Problem of Pain* will see the chapter title "Human Pain" and see no contradiction to Angell's suicidal assumption that human pain is nothing more than animal pain.

In contradistinction to Lewis's notion that *suffering* and *pain* are synonyms, Luther's attentiveness to the psalms of Scripture, in combination perhaps with the German vocabulary emerging from his immersion in the Hebrew of the penitential psalms and the psalms of lament, provide us with the definitional clarity that we need here. Right distinctions make for faithful pastoral care. For example, the German *Gefühl* is not limited to *feeling* as in the sensation of pain, but extends to our feelings

of helplessness or abandonment. Thus, a feeling considered "German-ly" as *Gefühl* is not really instinctual and merely animalistic but human and intentional.

This is one reason why my recommendation has been that we recast the philosophical Problem of Evil, which invites a formal analysis of our feeling or experience that things are not as they ought to be, as The Problem of *Suffering*, which invites us to care for people not merely in terms of the physical and psychological pain that they experience, but as the created and redeemed body-and-soul, emotional/volitional/cognitional human beings that we and they in fact are, existentially.

Right distinctions make for faithful pastoral care.

Granted, the formal analysis of the Problem of Evil as propositions regarding God's goodness and omnipotence in light of the intransigence of our experience of evil in his world is helpful. It is helpful to a point. It is helpful as a diagnosis of where we tend to replace the comfort of Christ with our speculative theodicies. And, a formal logical analysis is helpful for showing why our efforts "to justify the ways of God to man," as Milton puts it, invariably result in sinning against the very people we are called to comfort, the people who are suffering. In a word, to demonstrate what theodicies really are doing and why they inevitably contradict our theology of the cross. But that point is short of where we need to be for Christian pastoral care.

Theologians of the cross "say what a thing is." . . . [T]hey do not believe that we come to a proper knowledge of God by attempting to see through the created world to the "invisible things of God." So theologians of the cross look on all things "through suffering and the cross." They, in other words, are led by the cross to *look at* the trials, the sufferings, the pangs of conscience, the troubles—and joys—of daily life as God's doing and do not try to *see through* them as mere accidental problems to be solved by metaphysical adjustment. They are not driven to simplistic theodicies because with St. Paul they believe that God justifies himself precisely in the cross and resurrection of Jesus.¹⁰

In a word, the aspect of our *theologia crucis* that recommends what I referred to as "a more sanguine manner of *seelsorger-ing*" has to do with the movement from suffering to biblical lament.

Since I am about to argue that *lament*, the biblical response to suffering, is primarily an *affective* or emotional and Chris-

8. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), s.v. "2191 עֲצָרָה" (electronic ed.).

9. C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (1940), in *The Complete C. S. Lewis Signature Classics* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002), 405.

10. Gerhard Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 13.

tological *uptaking* and *cruciforming*, let's consider briefly how integral to our human being the emotional aspect of our consciousness (our *affect*) is.

Our theology of the cross is the antidote to emotional abuse.

First, we need to acquire a robust understanding of the emotional aspect of our human being. This can be done in a sort of educational *via negativa*, such as C. S. Lewis sets out for us in his *Abolition of Man*. Suppose that we teach children in school that their emotions are unimportant, even distractions from life. What then? Well, we contribute either to their sentimentality (the illegitimate or superficial and manipulative use of their emotions) or to the atrophy of their souls' "chests," as Plato envisions emotions in *Republic*. "In a sort of ghastly simplicity we remove the organ and demand the function. We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honour and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful."¹¹ Think of the argument in *Abolition* as an apologetic preamble to clear away our twentieth-century educational and cultural biases against the worth of our emotional judgments. Think too of the educational imperative to educate their emotions as an aspect of their personal being with the words of Yahweh (see Deuteronomy 6).

After this apologetic preamble, we can now return to the authoritative text of the Bible with a heightened appreciation for the worth of the emotional aspect of human nature. As we give ear to the Lord God, incarnate in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, as we submit to the written words of his prophets and apostles we come to realize that *God relates to us lovingly; he does not relate to us gnostically*: "Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another" (John 13:34). "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). "God is love" (1 John 4:16). In point of fact, God does not say, "As I have assessed you intellectually, so you too must assess one another." The Scriptures do not maintain, "We are reasonable because he first calculated that we are worth something." God does not relate to us as the result of an economic calculation. Nor does his apostle assert, "God is rationality." It is inadequate to translate the incarnation of the *Logos* as anything as reductive as "God is characterized by rationality." If someone were to object that God does speak of

knowing Jeremiah in the womb, or that Adam knew his wife Eve, I would simply reply that the Hebrew concept is unitary and holistic where the Greek is analytic. God's knowing and even Adam's knowing in these cases is a *loving knowing*. Luther teaches us as heads of our households to explain the meaning of the Commandments affectively and intentionally: "What does this mean? We ought to fear, love, and trust in God . . ." Yes, there is the possibility of abuse here in regard to our emotions just as there is the possibility of abuse in regard to our intellect or our will; notwithstanding, *abusus non tollit usum*. Indeed, our theology of the cross, when we are practicing Luther's *theologia crucis* and not practicing Christian sentimentalism, is the antidote to emotional abuse.¹²

Second, we ought to be more deliberate in talking about the objective dimension of our emotions. For the last century or so in Continental philosophy we have been attending to the *intentionality* of our cognitions and of our emotions. This is the recognition that, just as our thoughts are invariably *about* someone or something, so too our emotions are *about* someone or something. We never love or hate or rejoice, period; rather, we always love someone or something, and so on. Luther does not counsel us to be fearful, to be loving, to be trusting as if these emotions were an end in themselves (or even as if these emotions could be emotions without being about someone or Someone), but as modes of relating to God immediately, without mediation. *Intentionality* is shorthand for the recognition that a feeling, emotion, or mood is *about* something. That is to say that intentionality highlights our emotions' objectivity. I have written that the "location" of intentionality is best understood as a spatio-temporal field of consciousness and intersubjective experience.¹³

This brief phenomenological account of our emotional being puts us in a (dis-)position to appreciate what Brian Brock means when he observes, "For Augustine, lament, as a form of prayer, is in the first instance an affective attachment."¹⁴ To provide a beginning toward a theology of lament (Bayer), in order to exhibit why suffering is the most important litmus test of confessional loyalty (Rittgers), here are a half dozen or so quotations from Brock's eminently evocative study on lament, "Augustine's Incitement to Lament."

"Lament is a modality of human affect directed to God, and anchored in eschatological hope."¹⁵ Brock's mention of *modality* and *eschatological* in the same sentence makes his insight seem rather abstract, but it is in fact extremely pastoral. The "modality of human affect" being translated tells us that lament is "our emotional directedness to God." In the near context

11. C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man, or, Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 37. For an introduction to and summary of *Abolition*, please see David K. Naugle's posting "Education and The Abolition of Man," <https://www.cslewis.com/blog/education-and-the-abolition-of-man/>.

12. For an elaboration of this please see Forde, *Theologian of the Cross*, vii–xiv (preface).

13. Please see my *Wednesday's Child: From Heidegger to Affective Neuroscience, A Field Theory of Angst* (Eugene, WA: Wipf & Stock, 2011). There is a brief definition of intentionality, *Gefühl*, and related terms in the glossary, 127–30.

14. Brian Brock, "Augustine's Incitement to Lament, from the *Enarrationes in Psalmos*," in *Evoking Lament*, 187.

15. *Ibid.*, 186.

Brock tips his hand that he and Augustine are thinking pastorally by addressing the existential reality that we see in pastoral care, ministering to one person after another during the week and all the members of Christ we can reach on Sundays, genuine believers who experience the hiatus between Holy Baptism and heaven as “pains”—likely a reference to Paul’s labor pains understood as suffering modulated by hope, as the apostle explains in Romans 8. Further, “[l]ament is the expression of the pains of awaiting the eschaton.”¹⁶ In other words, lament has to do with our emotional feelings between the fullness of time and the Lord’s second appearing.

“For Augustine, lament, as a form of prayer, is in the first instance an affective attachment, but one that is already formed by the intellect, memory and will.”¹⁷ As card-carrying members of the Wittenberg Circle we are automatically interested in the pastor-philosopher whose name identified Luther’s own monastic order, namely, Augustine. In regard to our attachment to the Lord and to one another being an affective or emotional attachment, may I recommend Augustine’s signature concern for *ordo amoris*,¹⁸ his concern that his hearers and readers acquire the right ordering of their love, as this is something of a prerequisite for our reading and preaching and liturgical employment of the psalms of lament? With the need for rightly ordering our love in order to fulfill the great commandment in the law in such a way that we love God with all our heart, and with all our soul and with all our mind, and that we accordingly love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt 22:36–40), we have to ask how exactly the Lord’s imperative can affect our rebellious emotions. By what means does he alter our emotional nature?

This is not a natural process for human beings who have been blind, deaf, and engaged in insurgency against God ever since the Great Rebellion in Eden. The Lord’s effective strategy is his affective strategy of conversion by lament. And the Lord’s “force multiplier” is the psalms of lament. “Affect moves all things. . . . The *subject* of lament is the realization of our attachment to earthly things, or of our temptations and fears about them.”¹⁹ The subject of lament is the ordering of our love. Whereas we do use the term *lament* in a loose sense to mean the emotional shouts and eruptions of *No* that are squeezed out of our chests in the midst of suffering, the psalms of lament usher us into the deep grammar of lament. “*The affective eruption is not itself lament, and can be criticized by the lament-forms provided in scripture.*”²⁰ This is because genuine lament is not a cry into the void, a type of catharsis under the pressure of suffering—our own or the suffering of

loved ones and of our neighbors. Nor is it ultimately a sort of plastic piety that we can shape to fit our psychologies, theologies, or personalities. On the contrary, lament as we learn it in the praying of the psalms of lament is the way that God, after forcing us to be the passive recipients of suffering, redeems and re-creates us emotionally.

Genuine lament is not a cry into the void, a type of catharsis under the pressure of suffering; it is the way that God, after forcing us to be the passive recipients of suffering, redeems and re-creates us emotionally.

This is a good juncture to commend to you the psalm classifications of Claus Westermann. He identifies about six psalms with congregational lament motifs, and also Lamentations 5, and Psalms 44, 74, 79, 80, 83, 89, and 93 as *The Communal Psalms of Lament*; about fifty psalms, including Psalms 13, 6, 22, 51, 77, 102, and 130 as *The Individual Psalms of Lament*.²¹ Through our praying of these chapters of God’s verbal and verbatim means of grace he *uptakes* us into his love and thus reorders our pre-lament loves, polarizing our love so that we feel and exhibit the everlasting love with which he loved us, with which we love him and with which we love our neighbors as ourselves. As Brock induces from Augustine’s sermons on these psalms of lament, “For Augustine, *lament is the Christian form that shapes the affective eruption engendered by suffering.*”²² From this realization that God shapes us via the psalms of lament—in other words, that the psalms simultaneously display God’s love for us and reshapes our loves—and thus does his affective and effective work, we are ready to consider what working toward a theology of lament means, pastorally and theologically. From what I have been saying, it ought to be clear that a theology of lament does not originate in our need to fill in a gap in our dogmatics or our pastoral theology. Nor is it a concoction of the clergy to fulfill a need for greater sympathy in pastoral care; rather, a theology of lament is a *sola scriptura* and *solī Christo* project.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., 187.

18. Please see “The Definition of Love,” “The Central Place of Love,” and “Love as a Gift of God” under the entry “Love” by Tarsicius J. van Bavel, in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 509–16.

19. Brock, “Incitement to Lament,” 187.

20. Ibid., 189.

21. For this lament taxonomy and a structural study of the psalms of lament see Claus Westermann, *The Living Psalms*, trans. J. R. Porter (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1989), 21–41 and 65–122.

22. Brock, “Incitement to Lament,” 188.

The premier psalm of lament is Psalm 22.²³ As food for thought for our formal theology, I would pose this question: If you were to edit a Lutheran dogmatics textbook, would you have it begin with First Article or with Second Article matters? As food for thought for our consideration of pain, suffering, and lament, I will ask my dogmatics question this way: If you were to edit a Lutheran systematics textbook, would its first chapter begin with Philippians 2, the *sedes doctrinae* of the two natures in Christ, or with Psalm 22 and Christ's cry, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?"

In biblical lament we come to know and to feel that God loves us.

A theology of lament must be shaped or informed from the outset by the psalms of lament, inasmuch as these psalms shape the emotional eruption—the shout of *No* characteristic of human suffering—the emotional eruption that is antecedent to the other work that we do in our normally didactic dogmatic theology. First, we suffer. In pain and suffering we are passive. In his preliminary contemplation of Heidelberg Disputation, Thesis 27, Forde explains why a theology of the cross is not sentimentalism. In doing so, he explains why pain, suffering, and lament are done indeed without our asking or willing:

[I]n a theology of the cross it is soon apparent that suffering comes about because we are at odds with God and are trying to rush headlong into some sort of cozy identification with him. God and his Christ, Luther will be concerned to point out, are the *operators* in the matter, not the ones operated upon. . . . In the end, Jesus suffers and dies because *nobody* identified with him. . . . Now we in turn *suffer* the absolute and unconditional working of God upon us. It is a suffering because as old beings we cannot abide such working. We are rendered *passive* by divine activity. *Passive*, it should be remembered here, comes from the same root as *passion*, which is, of course, *to suffer*.²⁴

As I explained in my elaboration of pain and suffering, pain is the physically felt experience of the physical or animal aspect of our human being, whereas suffering is the more fully human experience—primarily an emotionally felt experience of meaninglessness, although we go on to consider its meaning intellectually—that things are not as they ought to be. Since suffering comes upon us without our wanting and willing it, but by God's imposition²⁵ we are passive sufferers.²⁶

In lament—and I mean "lament as God himself tutors us in lament in the psalms of lament," chiefly Psalm 22²⁷—we are also passive, passive in a *sola gratia* and in Christ alone sense. And so, "[f]aith must undergo the pedagogy of lament."²⁸ As Luther puts it in commenting on Psalm 6 (a psalm of individual lament, according to Westermann),

These words refer to a soul that is poor in spirit and has nothing left but crying, imploring, and praying in firm faith, strong hope, and steadfast love. The life and behavior of every Christian should be so constituted that he does not know or have anything but God, and in no other way than in faith (*LW* 14:145–46).

In my experience, we sufferers are also aggressive, intellectually and willfully, but primarily emotionally aggressive, until our Lord Jesus Christ takes us up into himself by virtue of his incarnation and his suffering *pro nobis*—up into his cry, "My God, my God, why?" which becomes our cry, but now cruciformed; into his exultation, "You have rescued me!" which becomes our exultation of faith; into his mission, "It shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation . . . that he has done it," which becomes our commission. In biblical lament we come to know and to *feel* that God loves us.

That is, God is so disposed that He gladly hears those who cry and lament, but not those who feel smug and independent. Therefore the good life does not consist in outward works and appearances but in a lamenting and sorrowful spirit, as we read in the fourth of these psalms (51:17): "The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." And again (Ps 34:18): "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted." Therefore weeping is preferred to working, and suffering exceeds all doing (*LW* 14:145). LOGIA

23. Since Augustine's commentaries are less accessible than Luther's, I recommend beginning with Augustine's commentary on Psalm 22 in part 3, v. 15 of the scintillating *Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*: "Exposition 2 of Psalm 21," in *Expositions of the Psalms 1–32*, trans. Maria Boulding (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2000), 227–43, esp. to Augustine's admonition, "Let us listen to a song sung as a lament; and, I tell you, there is all the more matter for lament when it is sung to the deaf" (228).

24. Forde, *Theologian of the Cross*, viii–ix.

25. See God's pronouncement ("the Curse") following his announcement of the *protoevangelium* in light of Romans 8:20.

26. For God's agency in causing our suffering, see especially Luther's commentary on Psalm 6 (*LW* 14:140). The complete commentary is also in my CD *The Problem of Suffering*. See as well my *Problem of Suffering: A Father's Hope*, 2nd ed. (CPH, 2011), 32–39 ("The Cause of Suffering").

27. For notes regarding Psalm 22 see my "Christ's Crucifixion Canticule Notes for Praying, Preaching, and Teaching"; and for notes on a sermon series see my "*Simul dolens et laudantium*: Preaching the Great Sufferer, Jesus, in the Mode of Lament." Both are available at <http://www.lutheranphilosopher.com>.

28. Brock, "Incitement to Lament," 191.

Ignatius of Antioch's Letter to the Romans

The Passionate Confession of Christian Identity

JAMES G. BUSHUR



THE WORDS OF THE PROCONSUL TO the famed martyr Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, “I have wild beasts; I will throw you to them unless you repent [ἐὰν μὴ μετανοήσῃς]” (Mart. Pol. 11:1),¹ reveal in a concrete way the imperial policy toward Christians. Pliny the Younger—in his correspondence with the emperor Trajan (AD 110)—suggests a policy of imperial forgiveness toward those who repent of association with Christian brotherhoods (*haeteria*). For Rome, Christianity was simply another dangerous club that threatened the harmony of its cities. In the ancient world, such clubs were popular and, perhaps, resembled the labor unions of today.² These clubs allowed individuals to pool their resources and become part of something bigger than themselves with more public influence and power. These ancient clubs were often grounded in loyalty oaths made to other members of the association—vows to help one another when need would arise. From the perspective of the Roman government, such clubs threatened the unity of Roman cities. If these associations became too powerful, they might undermine the ability of city leaders to maintain proper order. In the second century, Christian churches were becoming significant enough that Pliny perceived them to be a threat to the cities under his supervision.

In response to the presence of Christian assemblies, Pliny sought to use Trajan's general censure of public associations in service of a policy that promoted repentance. Pliny was not interested in killing everyone who bore the Christian name. Rather, he followed a moderate and reasonable course that, in his judgment, would strengthen Roman cities. For Pliny, clubs or brotherhoods typically consisted in a voluntary agreement among individuals. Thus, Pliny testified to a common imperial perspective that understood Christianity to be a voluntary association grounded in individual choice. For Pliny, the easiest and most effective way to challenge the capricious choices of individuals was with the passions, especially the passion of fear.

ROMAN STRATEGY: A TRIAL OF THE PASSIONS

The ancient world understood well that the passions subsist at a deeper level than individual choice. The passions—hun-

ger, thirst, fear, and so forth—move at the depth of human nature and, therefore, are common to all men. An individual may choose not to eat, but in the course of time his nature will demand food to such an extent that his choice will be compromised. For Rome, persecuting Christians was not intended to be a policy of racial cleansing; Rome did not understand Christianity to be anything as substantial as a race or ethnicity. Rather, Pliny sought to use the law and its threats to bring his subjects to their senses; fear was an effective tool Pliny sought to employ against the voluntary character of Christian assemblies and to promote repentance. Thus, the threat of martyrdom was not intended to be the clinically efficient policy of extermination, but a rhetorical display that publicly challenged the social unity of the church and sought to persuade Christians to choose a different path.

Therefore, second-century martyrdom was not an attack on Christianity as a racial group or ethnicity, nor was it an attack on the private intellectual convictions of individual Christians. Rather, it was an attack directed at the church's corporate gathering; it was designed to subvert the social bonds of loyalty that supported its public fellowship. In other words, the primary target of Roman persecution was the eucharistic gathering of the baptized around a bishop and his altar. The easiest way to escape martyrdom was to avoid the eucharistic gathering. Indeed, Pliny's aim was precisely the fragmentation of Christian associations, and a policy of persecution simply for bearing the Christian name was proving effective. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews finds it necessary to exhort his hearers to “not neglect to meet together as is the habit of some” (Heb 10:25). In a similar way, Ignatius of Antioch warns the Christians of Asia Minor, “if anyone is not within the place of atonement [ἐντος τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου], he lacks the bread of God. . . . Therefore, whoever does not meet together with the congregation, thereby demonstrates his arrogance”

JAMES G. BUSHUR is Director of Deaconess Studies and Assistant Professor of Church History at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

1. All translations of the Apostolic Fathers are from *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations of Their Writings*, ed. and trans. J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992).
2. Concerning Pliny's correspondence with Trajan and the significance of clubs in the ancient Roman world, see Robert Wilken, *Christians as the Romans Saw Them*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 1–47.

(Ign. *Eph.* 5:2–3).³ Yet while Christian leaders were lamenting the apostasy of some members, Pliny expressed gratification that his policy was resulting in the revival of the pagan cults at the heart of his cities. He concludes his correspondence with Trajan on a note of optimism:

The contagion of that superstition has penetrated not the cities only, but the villages and the country; yet it seems possible to stop it and set it right. At any rate it is certain enough that the almost deserted temples begin to be resorted to, that long disused ceremonies of religion are restored, and that fodder for victims finds a market, whereas buyers till now were very few. From this it may easily be supposed, what a multitude of men can be reclaimed, if there be a place for repentance.⁴

In this context, Christians were forced to confront fundamental questions concerning their corporate identity and the essential foundation for their public association. Civic policy toward Christian associations sought to promote chaos and disharmony. Roman persecution effectively challenged corporate loyalty and created profound instability in Christian assemblies. Martyrdom, therefore, was not merely a test of the individual Christian's will or the private faith of his heart; rather, perhaps most fundamentally, it challenged the bishop's ability to maintain the public unity of the church around one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one altar. In response to the challenge of martyrdom, the church's bishops, presbyters, and catechists were compelled to root the Christian identity of their people in something deeper than individual choice. How does one say, "I am a Christian," when such an admission brings death in the succeeding moment? To withstand such an existential challenge demands more than a voluntary, intellectual conviction. In the passionate moment of martyrdom, the Christian needs something more real and more substantial than death itself. Thus, the church's bishops sought to arm the church with a solid anchor that would stabilize the passions as the church endured the storms of a painful death. Christians needed catechetical training that prepared them for the passionate struggle associated with their natural human desire for self-preservation.

IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH Fighting the Forces of Fragmentation

Martyrdom as a trial of the passions is certainly evident in the letters of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch (AD 110). While little is known about Ignatius's life and work as a bishop, the letters he wrote on the road to martyrdom make him a significant witness to the life and theological perspective of second-century Christianity. Following his condemnation in Antioch, Ignatius

was escorted by ten soldiers to Rome, where he was to fight with the wild beasts in the coliseum. While on his journey, Ignatius wrote letters to congregations that had come to his aid. These letters are a true treasure, offering a glimpse of the faith and life of early Christians enduring public hostility and the real threat of martyrdom.

Martyrdom challenged the bishop's ability to maintain the public unity of the church around one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one altar.

The actual historical account of Ignatius's ordeal is not known; however, in his letters the church possesses something even more valuable: a view of the intimate, passionate struggle taking place in his own heart. Ignatius's overriding concern was the unity of the church. As a bishop, he was well aware that the intent of the devil and the purpose of Roman persecution was the division of the church from Christ and the fragmentation of her members from one another. These forces of division had the church's eucharistic gathering as their primary target. Trajan's policy that forbade Christian associations was understood by Ignatius to be an attack on the assembly of the baptized around the flesh and blood of Christ. It is for this reason that Ignatius consistently exhorts Christian congregations "to do nothing without the bishop" (Ign. *Trall.* 2:2). These exhortations are not self-serving pleas designed to increase episcopal authority, but express a practical concern for the survival of the Christian assembly. The bishop's theological significance derives from his place at the altar and his essential role within the concrete act of the Lord's Supper:

... how much more do I congratulate you who are united to your bishop as the church is with Jesus Christ and as Jesus Christ is with the Father, that all things might be harmonious in unity. Let no one be misled: if anyone is not within the place of atonement [ἁγιασθηρίου], he lacks the bread of God. For if the prayer of one or two has such power, how much more that of the bishop together with the whole church. (Ign. *Eph.* 5:1–2)

Ignatius's words are not those of political calculation, but theological confession; his rhetoric is not aimed at social manipulation, but expresses the passionate heart of a spiritual father.

However, this unity around the bishop and his altar is by no means merely a formal or institutional unity. It is a unity rooted in the very flesh and blood of Jesus himself and, even more fundamentally, a unity that derives from God's own being. In his letter to the Trallians, Ignatius begins with an exhor-

3. Here Lightfoot and Harmer translate ἁγιασθηρίου as "sanctuary." I have translated it as "place of atonement" because I think it better expresses Ignatius's emphasis on the theological significance of the eucharistic altar.

4. Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 557–58.

tation to the congregation to “do nothing without the bishop” and to live in godly submission to the presbyters and deacons. For, as Ignatius puts it, they are ministers of “the mysteries of Jesus Christ” and not merely “servants of food and drink” (Ign. *Trall.* 2:2–3). This exhortation to eucharistic harmony leads to a warning against heresies that are sprouting from within the Christian community.

I urge you, therefore—yet not I, but the love of Jesus Christ—partake only of Christian food, and keep away from every strange plant, which is heresy. These people, while pretending to be trustworthy, mix Jesus Christ with poison—like those who administer a deadly drug with honeyed wine, which the unsuspecting victim accepts without fear, and so with fatal pleasure drinks down death (Ign. *Trall.* 6:1–2).

The imperial policy forbidding Christian assemblies was causing some Christians to meet in smaller groups apart from the bishop and the whole church. These schismatic gatherings were less noticeable and would, no doubt, escape the attention of governing authorities. However, for Ignatius, these groups are deadly because they surrender to the demonic forces of division and corruption.⁵

For Ignatius, by assembling independently from the eucharistic gathering, the heretics are claiming to be Christians apart from the body of Jesus. “The one who is within the place of atonement [ὁ ἐντὸς θυσιαστηρίου] is clean [καθαρός], but the one outside the place of atonement is not clean” (Ign. *Trall.* 7:2). For Ignatius, the place of atonement is nothing other than the flesh and blood of Jesus. “You, therefore, must arm yourselves with gentleness and be yourselves renewed in faith, which is the flesh of the Lord, and in love, which is the blood of Jesus Christ” (Ign. *Trall.* 8:1). According to the bishop of Antioch, faith and love, which bind the church into a harmonious social community, derive from the flesh and blood of Jesus. The implication is clear; severed from the flesh and blood of Christ, the church’s fellowship loses its connection to God and must crumble from the pressure of the devil’s lies and the corrupting power of death. Thus, Ignatius offers this concluding exhortation to the Trallians:

Flee, therefore, from these wicked offshoots that bear deadly fruit; if anyone even tastes it, he dies on the spot. These people are not the Father’s planting. For if they were, they would appear as branches of the cross [κλάδοι τοῦ σταυροῦ], and their fruit would be imperishable—the same cross by which he, through his suffering [ἐν τῷ πάθει], calls you who are his members [μέλη]. The head, therefore, cannot be born without members, since God promises unity [ἔνωσιν], which he himself is [ὅς ἐστιν αὐτός].” (Ign. *Trall.* 11:1–2)

5. The struggle against division in the eucharistic assembly permeates Ignatius’s letters. See Ign. *Eph.* 13; Ign. *Magn.* 4, 7; Ign. *Phld.* 3–4; Ign. *Smyrn.* 8.

In Ignatius’s letters, the theme of unity is expressed from various perspectives with a diversity of images. Yet Ignatius’s theological understanding of unity is abundantly clear. The very oneness of God himself is concretely present in the holistic unity of Jesus’ body stretched out on the cross and raised on the third day. This divine unity now defines the church’s life as she derives her very being from Jesus’ flesh and blood proclaimed from the Scriptures and administered at the altar.

A unity that derives from the depth of God’s own being must also reach the depth of his own humanity.

In his exposition of divine unity, Ignatius is certainly interested in grounding the church’s fellowship in something deeper than individual choice. He seems acutely aware that Rome’s policy targets the eucharistic assembly and uses the passions to undermine the voluntary choice of individuals to gather as a community. Likewise, Ignatius finds the schismatic gatherings of Christians promoted by heretics reprehensible because they promote the idea that Christian assemblies are simply grounded in the human will. By definition, heresies appeal to one’s personal choice or opinion, and therefore surrender to the general assumption that undergirds Roman policy. In response, Ignatius preaches a unity or fellowship that is rooted in God’s own being, manifested in Jesus’ crucified and risen flesh, and made the very source and foundation of the church’s fellowship at the eucharistic altar. Yet what does such a unity actually mean? For Ignatius, this divine unity is much more than merely an intellectual assumption or a principle employed to support the formal authority of bishops; it is a deeply passionate unity that he experiences at the depth of his heart. A unity that derives from the depth of God’s own being must also reach the depth of his own humanity. Indeed, it is precisely the passionate character of his union with Christ that defines his struggle as one destined for martyrdom in the Roman coliseum.

IGNATIUS’S LETTER TO THE ROMANS Love Casts Out Fear

Clearly the most passionate of Ignatius’s letters is his epistle to the Romans. Ignatius’s other letters are written to churches that had sent delegations and brought him aid. The bishop of Antioch responds with letters thanking them for their hospitality and exhorting them to remain faithful to Christ and to the fellowship of his body. However, Ignatius’s letter to the Romans is not a letter of thanksgiving, but one of petition. As he writes, Ignatius is compelled to confront his destiny as a martyr. Rome is the city of destination, the geographical site where his struggle will reach its providential end. Thus, in this extraordinary

epistle, Ignatius unveils his own heart and gives the reader an intimate portrayal of the passionate conflict that rages at the depth of his own being.

Ignatius begins his letter with a passionate plea that the Christians of Rome “spare” him. However, in a clever rhetorical turn, Ignatius maintains that to “spare” him means to allow his martyrdom to run its course without their interference:

Since by praying to God I have succeeded in seeing your godly faces, so that I have received more than I asked—for I hope to greet you in chains for Jesus Christ, if it is his will [θέλημα] for me to be reckoned worthy to reach the goal [τέλος]. For the beginning is well ordered [εὐοικονόμητός], provided that I attain the grace to receive my destiny [κλήρῳ] without interference. For I am afraid of your love, in that it may do me wrong; for it is easy for you to do what you desire [ὃ θέλετε], but it is difficult for me to reach God, unless you spare [φείσησθέ] me. (Ign. *Rom.* 1:1–2)⁶

It is very likely that Ignatius uses the language of “sparing [φείσησθέ]” to recall the story of Isaac. In this dramatic account, the angel interrupts the liturgy of sacrifice at the last moment because Abraham’s faithfulness is demonstrated in the fact that he “did not spare” his beloved son, Isaac. This very language is used by Paul in his letter to the Romans as a description of the gospel. God demonstrates his love for us by “not sparing” his own Son (Rom 8:32). While in Isaac’s case the liturgy of sacrifice is interrupted at the last moment, there is no interruption of Jesus’ crucifixion. Indeed, the liturgy of sacrifice reaches its true fulfillment in the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus into the presence of the Father.

Ignatius’s use of this language puts the Roman church in the place of Abraham; he pleads with them to allow the liturgy of his martyrdom to reach its providential end.

Grant me nothing more than to be poured out as an offering to God while there is still an altar ready, so that in love you may form a chorus and sing to the Father in Jesus Christ, because God has judged the bishop of Syria worthy to be found in the West, having summoned him from the East. It is good to be setting from the world to God, in order that I may rise to him (Ign. *Rom.* 2:1–2).

For the bishop of Syria, the Roman church should imitate Abraham and his faithful intent to follow through with the sacrifice of his son. If it is God’s will to interrupt the course of Ignatius’s martyrdom, he can, as Jesus himself said, send legions of angels to protect his child (Matt 26:53). Instead of directing their love (ἀγάπη) for him toward political interference, Ignatius exhorts

the Roman Christians to direct their love toward the forming of a choir so that the Father is praised in Jesus Christ.

The bishop of Antioch’s rhetoric is more than clever and aesthetically pleasing, for it establishes the setting in which Ignatius can reveal the visceral passions and raw emotions that move in his heart. By inviting the Roman Christians to become participants in the drama of his own martyrdom, Ignatius has established a framework that will lead his readers toward an attitude of sympathy. It is precisely this fellowship of suffering (*sympatheia*) that Ignatius seeks to promote and confirm. “Just pray,” pleads the bishop of Antioch,

that I will have the strength [δύναμιν] both outwardly and inwardly [ἔσωθέν τε καὶ ἔσωθέν] so that I may not just talk about it [λέγω], but desire it [θέλω], that I might not merely be called a Christian, but actually be found to be one [εὐρεθῶ].⁷ For if I am found to be one, I can also be called one, and then I will be faithful [πιστός] when I am no longer visible to the world (Ign. *Rom.* 3:1–2).

In these words, the reader cannot help but hear the profound existential or ontological challenge that Ignatius is facing. He seeks a power or strength that runs deeper than external actions or individual choice. He is fully aware that the conflict is raging on the battleground of his passions; Christianity is not merely a matter of words, but of the desires (θέλω) of his heart. He prays that he might not merely say he is a Christian, but truly be one at the depth of his nature.

The name *Christian* as used by Ignatius should not be overlooked.⁸ By the time of Ignatius, this name already had a long and significant history in Antioch. In Acts 11, the followers of Christ were for the first time called *Christians* at Antioch. In that context, the Christian name connoted an identity that was even more profound than the Jewish or Hellenistic identities of those catechized by Paul. The Christian name consisted in a divine identity that provided an ecclesial unity that could overcome racial and familial divisions as fundamental as Jew and Gentile lineages. Thus, the Christian name was understood to be deeply real and substantial. Ignatius of Antioch gives evidence of how the Christian name functioned in the age of martyrdom. While Rome assumed that the Christian name was merely grounded in the capricious choice of individuals, Ignatius reveals that this name was rooted in something more profound and more real than his earthly citizenship, ethnicity, or even family. Indeed, for Ignatius, the name *Christian* derived from his living union with Jesus’ own flesh.

The sacramental dimensions of this Christian identity become apparent in the succeeding paragraphs. Ignatius identifies himself with the wheat that through the grinding teeth

6. I have amended the translation of Lightfoot and Harmer in two places. First, I think “well ordered” better communicates the Greek word εὐοικονόμητός. Second, Lightfoot and Harmer translate the Greek word κλήρῳ as “fate,” which has the connotation of chance. I think the word “destiny” better expresses Ignatius’s emphasis on divine providence.

7. Lightfoot and Harmer translate εὐρεθῶ as “prove to be one.” I have chosen to translate simply as “found to be one.” This translation puts the emphasis on God’s judgment, not on Ignatius’s own merit.

8. Concerning the name *Christian* as used by Ignatius, see Ign. *Magn.* 4, 10.

of the wild beasts is becoming “clean bread [καθαρός ἄρτος]” (Ign. *Rom.* 4:1). Here the liturgical setting that Ignatius introduced at the beginning of his letter with his reference to the sacrifice of Isaac returns to prominence. In the course of the eucharistic liturgy, the bread offered by the people is carried to the altar where Christ takes it into his own hands, blesses it, breaks it, and identifies it with his own body. Ignatius presents his own martyrdom as the fulfillment of his own eucharistic identity. He himself is the wheat that, if the liturgy should reach its end without interference, Christ will identify with his own flesh and offer it with himself to the Father. It is this end or goal of the eucharistic liturgy—the ascension of Jesus into the kingdom of the Father—that fuels Ignatius’s desire. For while presently he is still a slave, Ignatius believes that in the course of his passionate suffering, he will be made “a freedman of Jesus Christ and will rise up free in him [ἀναστήσομαι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐλεύθερος]” (Ign. *Rom.* 4:3). The resurrected body of Jesus is the ultimate ground of Ignatius’s Christian identity and renders him truly free. Yet this freedom is not merely the self-serving liberty to choose or to act with political power; rather it is a freedom of the passions, a freedom to die and to follow the martyr’s path; it is a freedom to offer his own body as a “living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God,” as the apostle had expressed it in his own letter to the Romans (Rom 12:1). Ignatius’s words are a little more raw, passionate, and graphic: “Fire and cross and battles with wild beasts, mutilations, mangling, wrenching of bones, the hacking of limbs, the crushing of my whole body, cruel tortures of the devil—let these come upon me, only let me reach Jesus Christ” (Ign. *Rom.* 5:3).

The resurrected body of Jesus is the ultimate ground of Ignatius’s Christian identity and renders him truly free.

However, Ignatius not only employs eucharistic language, but also baptismal imagery to express his passionate struggle with martyrdom. Just as he portrays the course of martyrdom as a eucharistic liturgy, so also he identifies it with the birthing process. “The pains of birth are upon me. Bear with me, brothers: do not keep me from living, do not desire my death” (Ign. *Rom.* 6:1–2). Ignatius pictures himself as an infant still in the womb of his mother; if the Roman Church stops his martyrdom, it will be like a mother ending her pregnancy before it reaches the fullness of its course. Again, Ignatius’s rhetoric is passionate and powerful. Just as he had placed the Roman Christians in the role of Abraham, so now he places them in the position of a pregnant mother. Instead of aborting her child out of the fear of pain, Ignatius exhorts them to bear the pain with him. “Allow me to be an imitator of the suffering of

my God [του πάθους τοῦ θεοῦ μου]. If anyone has him within himself, let him understand what I long for [θέλω] and sympathize with me [συμπαθεῖτω μοι], knowing what constrains me” (Ign. *Rom.* 6:3).

Ignatius’s passionate plea to the Roman Christians reaches its crescendo in the next paragraph (Ign. *Rom.* 7) with what is perhaps the most intriguing passage in the whole Ignatian corpus. Ignatius makes a final appeal to the Roman congregation to believe what he is writing; indeed, they should believe it to such an extent that they should even discount Ignatius’s own personal pleas when he arrives, should these pleas contradict his letter. This remarkable appeal opens up to Ignatius’s most intimate and personal expression of his passionate struggle with death.

For though I am still alive, I am passionately in love [ἐρῶν] with death as I write to you. My passionate love has been crucified [ὁ ἐμὸς ἔρωσ ἐσταύρωται] and there is no fire of material longing [πῦρ φιλοῦλον] within me, but only water living and speaking [ὔδωρ δὲ ζῶν καὶ λαοῦν] in me, saying within me, “Come to the Father.” I take no pleasure in corruptible food or the pleasures of this life. I desire [θέλω] the bread of God, which is the flesh of Christ who is of the seed of David; and for drink I desire [θέλω] his blood, which is incorruptible love [ἀγάπη ἀφθαρτος]. (Ign. *Rom.* 7:2–3)

This passage is a bit obscure to be sure, yet its basic meaning seems evident.⁹ Ignatius is fighting fear with love. Fear consists in the natural desire for self-preservation; this passion may be good, but can lead to a sinful cowardice and selfishness if it becomes dominant. Thus, fear must be challenged with love that disregards its own self-preservation in order to lay down its life for its beloved. “Perfect love,” says the apostle John, “casts out fear” (1 John 4:18). From this perspective, Ignatius may be referring to Jesus himself as his “Love [ἔρωσ].” The passion that is now consuming Ignatius is his desire for Christ, for his flesh and his blood. For Ignatius, as for other early Christians, *eros* is understood to be love in motion, love that stretches out ecstatically for the one he loves. When this passionate love (*eros*) reaches its fulfillment in the beloved, its motion rests and it becomes *agape*. Thus, *eros* and *agape* represent the beginning and end of the lover’s passionate movement toward his beloved. These two aspects seem to undergird this magnificent passage. Ignatius sees himself being stretched out in love for Christ, a love he longs to be brought to completion in full communion with his beloved. Again, Ignatius is exhorting the Roman Christians to allow his passionate love to come to its long desired fulfillment in the reality of Christ and his Father.

9. For early Christian interpretation of this passage from Ignatius’s letter see Origen, *Origen: An Exhortation to Martyrdom, Prayer, and Selected Works*, trans. Rowan A. Greer, *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1979), 228; and Pseudo-Dionysius, *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, trans. Paul Rorem, *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1987), 81.

CONCLUSION

With the words, “Farewell to the end [τέλος], in the patient endurance [ἐν ὑπομονῇ] of Jesus Christ” (Ign. *Rom.* 10:3), Ignatius concludes his letter to the Romans. For Ignatius, the endurance of Jesus embodied on the cross is by no means a distant memory of the past. Rather, Christ’s passion is the ever-present setting in which Ignatius resides and by which his very being is defined; it is the soil in which his own life is planted and nourished; it is the breath by which he speaks and the food by which he lives. Thus, Ignatius does not see his martyrdom as an historical event belonging to himself as an independent individual; rather, it is a true participation in the one true martyrdom of Jesus himself. The passions raging in his own heart as he journeys to Rome have their substance and origin in Jesus’ own passionate conflict as he struggled toward Jerusalem and the hill of Golgotha. For Ignatius, the path of martyrdom is the path of self-denial; it is a journey in which his own identity is changing in the most fundamental way. Instead of an isolated individual, a mere fragment of humanity, Ignatius is being incorporated into the unity of Christ’s body; indeed, the path of martyrdom is a journey that leads into God himself. For Ignatius, it is only in God—the *telos* of his journey—that the Christian’s true identity will be unveiled.

For the bishop of Antioch, martyrdom is the fulfillment of his baptismal journey out of the demonic, pagan world into the fellowship of Christ’s body: “Now at last I am beginning to be a disciple [μαθητής]” (Ign. *Rom.* 5:3). Jesus describes his own death in John’s Gospel as “going to the Father.” In a similar way, Ignatius, as a disciple of Jesus, understands his martyrdom to consist in following the directive of the baptismal waters, which preach within his heart exhorting him to “come, to the Father” (Ign. *Rom.* 7:2). It is this “reaching God” that compels Ignatius to identify martyrdom with the Eucharist; indeed, it seems that martyrdom is the perfect eucharistic liturgy, in which his own body and life are being identified with Christ himself. Ignatius understands himself as Isaac, whose true identity is being unveiled as he journeys up the moun-

tain of sacrifice. He is the wheat being ground into bread, the full significance of which is not known until Christ takes it up and identifies it with himself. He is the infant in the womb, whose full stature is not known until he leaves the womb and grows to mature manhood. He is the lover, whose passion is not quenched until it reaches the object of his desire, whose being cannot rest until it rests in his beloved.

For Ignatius, the path of martyrdom is a journey that leads into God himself.

With all of these images, Ignatius presents a confession of Christ that is not merely intellectual, but passionate. A father cannot speak truly of his son without involving the passions of his own heart and revealing the depth of his own paternal identity. In the same way, for Ignatius to confess Christ is to confess his own identity in and with his body. This passionate confession acted as an effective defense against imperial policy. For Rome, Christian assemblies were viewed as being grounded merely in individual choice, which could be effectively challenged by threats of punishment and the passion of fear. Against fear, Ignatius places the passion of love; a love that has its origin in God’s own being; a love embodied in Christ’s crucified and risen flesh; a love that lives and moves in the baptized, defining their eschatological identity in Christ. Thus, it is fitting to conclude with Ignatius’s own words, “I am the very last of them [the Christians of Antioch] and an abnormality [ἔκτρομα]. But I have been granted the mercy to be someone, if I reach God [θεοῦ ἐπι τύχω]. . . . Farewell to the end in the patient endurance of Jesus Christ” (Ign. *Rom.* 9–10). **LOGIA**

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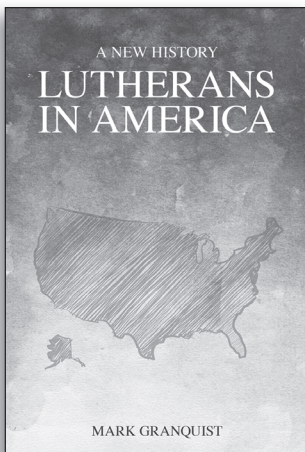
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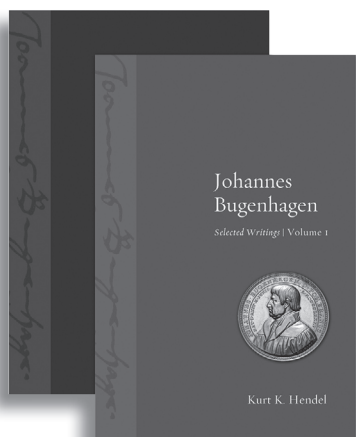
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DURING THE FESTIVAL OF THE Reformation most Lutheran congregations sing Martin Luther's most well known song, "Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott." Written around 1528, this hymn expresses most clearly Luther's view of the world and God's work of salvation. He portrayed the world as a battlefield on which the Word of God, Jesus Christ, must conquer the devil in order to save the true believers from the evil one's vile cunning and deceitful power. However, in the last stanza Luther wrote, "If they take our life, wealth, name, child and wife—Let everything go: They have no profit so: the kingdom ours remaineth." While Christians would ultimately triumph on the last day, Luther believed they may lose everything for the sake of Christ in this world (WA 35:455–57; LW 53:284–85).¹

Martin Luther placed the Christian's victory in Christ's final conquest over sin, death, hell, and the devil on the cross. Communicated to the faithful through preaching and the sacraments, Luther believed this victory would be consummated in the return of Jesus Christ to judge the living and the dead. However, in this life, Luther taught that Christians would suffer temptation of sin from the flesh and attacks of the devil and his worldly minions outwardly. For this reason, he taught that wherever the word of God bore fruit, "the holy and precious cross will not be far behind." This meant that Christians should bear the loss of all property, family members, and their lives with steadfast patience (LC III, 65; Kolb-Wengert, 448–49).²

Believing that a battle played out in the world between God and the devil over orthodox doctrine, Luther taught that the preaching of the truth could save sinners. Therefore, he asserted that the devil opposed the preaching of true doctrine through counterfeit teachings, persecution, and murder. Luther needed only to examine the New Testament for examples (Matt 5:10; 10:28, 32–33; 24:4–14; John 15:18, 20; Acts 5:41; Jas 1:2–3; 1 Pet 2:20–21; Rev 2:10).³ He explained that Cain always persecuted Abel, because God recognized the latter's faith but rejected the former's false works. Luther asserted that his preaching of the gospel had reestablished this pattern of history through the emergence of evangelical martyrdoms.⁴

In this article I will examine how Luther's theology of the cross related to his idea of martyrdom. Particularly, I will em-

phasize how he understood martyrdom as a form of the *imitatio Christi*. Luther certainly rejected the late medieval notion that an individual's suffering merited forgiveness or satisfied the penalty of sin. However, he did not reject the notion that believers should imitate Christ. Coupled with a new understanding of meditation on Christ's passion, Luther distinguished between Christ as a gift and Christ as an example. While Luther relied on Augustine of Hippo as a source for this distinction, he expanded its use in connection with his own theological emphasis on justification by faith in Christ. The sinner must first receive Christ as a gift by faith before he or she may participate in his sufferings. Having done so, however, the Christian imitates Christ throughout his or her life, especially through suffering. Luther's teaching on this subject represented a pivotal shift away from the late medieval piety's emphasis on human merit.⁵

In April 1518 at Heidelberg Martin Luther presented his theses that explained his theology of the cross, which he had developed in the previous five years as a biblical scholar and professor (WA 1:353–74; LW 31:39–70). This theology formed the basis for his understanding of justification by faith alone. Scholars have identified five central themes in Luther's theol-

1. This article began as a paper in Professor Hal Parker's course on martyrdom in sixteenth-century Europe many years ago. I presented an earlier version at the First Annual Medieval and Renaissance Symposium, Saint Louis University, June 2013.
2. Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 201–23; Robert Kolb, *For All the Saints* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 19–20.
3. Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 108–9, where he states that these verses formed a "biblical blueprint for martyrdom" for early modern Christians.
4. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 139–49; Gerhard Ebeling, *Luther: An Introduction to His Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 230; John M. Headley, *Luther's View of Church History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 65–66; Kolb, *For All the Saints*, 20–22.
5. Ronald K. Rittgers, *The Reformation of Suffering: Pastoral Theology and Lay Piety in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 113–15; Graham S. Tomlin, "The Medieval Origins of Luther's Theology of the Cross," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 89 (1998): 23–30. Luther explained this distinction in numerous places beginning around 1517. Two significant examples are *Lectures on Galatians* (1519), WA 2:501–2; LW 27: 237–38; and *Sermons on the First Epistle of St Peter*, WA 12:307–8; LW 30:117–18.

C. MATTHEW PHILLIPS is an Associate Professor of History at Concordia University, Nebraska.

ogy of the cross. First, this theology is a theology of revelation placed in opposition to rational speculation about the majesty of God as perceived through creation. However, the second feature emphasizes the indirect nature of this revelation as God hides himself in certain places. Third, the believer recognizes God in suffering and the cross of Christ after completely failing to discover God through rational speculation or moral activity. Fourth, God has hidden himself in the suffering Christ and can only be seen by faith. Finally, God particularly makes himself known through suffering, most notably through Christ's passion.⁶

God particularly makes himself known through suffering, most notably through Christ's passion.

While this suffering refers primarily to Christ's passion, Luther indicated that God makes himself known to individuals through their own suffering. God performs his alien work of exposing the sinner by working through physical suffering and inner temptations. Following this action, God then performs his proper work of making the sinner righteous through the gracious gift of faith. For Luther, God may even use the devil to accomplish his handiwork. However, this suffering can never be self-inflicted in order to provoke God to act on one's behalf. According to Luther, these temptations and suffering must be imposed from an outside force—God, the devil, or their human agents—and must compel the believer to return continuously to Christ's cross and the knowledge therein.⁷

Three central concepts appear in Luther's writings concerning the relationship of the theology of the cross to martyrdom as a form of the *imitatio Christi*. First, the cross of Christ and the Christian's cross are bound together. That is, as God worked redemption through the suffering of Christ, in similar manner, God works in the Christian's life through spiritual and physical suffering. However, a believer must not inflict sufferings or punishment upon himself or herself. Similarly, a true martyr must not seek death, but God may allow the devil and his followers to persecute or kill Christians. Second, unbelievers, who seek God through human reason and works, persecute those believers in the crucified Christ. God works through the persecution and martyrdom of Christians to bring about the conver-

sion or condemnation of the wicked and a victory over death and the devil. Third, in order to suffer for Christ or be a martyr, one must die for the right doctrine, that is, the rediscovered gospel of God's forgiveness through the cross.⁸

While Luther embraced suffering and persecution as a part of the believer's life, he did not think individuals could choose their own suffering or martyrdom. In sermons on Peter's First Epistle, published in the early 1520s, Luther stated that God did not want Christians to choose misfortune for themselves. However, they should simply live in faith and love, while accepting the cross if it came. Luther identified the sin of choosing misfortune or death for oneself with the schismatic Donatists, whom Augustine opposed in the fourth or fifth centuries. Luther taught that God placed the cross on the believer's back to strengthen faith. The word of life can only work when it must overcome death and sin. He commended the holy martyrs, who went joyfully to their deaths, and the apostles who rejoiced to suffer for Christ's sake (1 Pet 3:17–18; 4:12–13; WA 12:363–65, 381–82; LW 30:109–10, 126–27).⁹

In Luther's 1527 letter to the evangelicals at Halle after the martyrdom of their pastor, George Winkler, he emphasized the divine origin of his suffering. Luther stated that Christians must suffer with Christ but not through any self-inflicted pain. He wrote that Christ had found Pastor Winkler worthy to give his life for God's word and truth. Although the devil's anger inspired his murderers, God had ordered the events to bring about his martyrdom. Luther supposed that God had saved George from possibly falling into error or from some terrible disaster that would soon befall the land. Pastor Winkler had not sought this painful martyr's death, but he embraced it when God arranged the opportunity for him to suffer for Christ (WA 23:423–31; LW 43:160–65).

According to Luther's theology of the cross, not only does the believer struggle and suffer, he or she invites the hatred of the world by receiving salvation through the cross of Christ alone.¹⁰ Luther stressed this notion throughout his earlier works. In a sermon given on 24 February 1517, he contrasted the foolish and the wise of the world. The fool recognizes his or her helplessness before God and receives grace. The wise seek God by their self-chosen works or speculation and thereby only increase the disquiet in their souls. On account of this hidden knowledge of God in Christ given to the fools, Luther taught that the "wise

6. Tomlin, "Medieval Origins," 23; Walther von Loewenich, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, trans. Herbert J. A. Bouman (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976), 19–24; Alister McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 148–50.

7. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, 150–52, 169–71; Rittgers, *Reformation of Suffering*, 110–12.

8. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 141, 149–50; Von Loewenich, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, 20–21, 112–43; McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, 150–52, 170–75; David Bagchi, "Luther and the Problem of Martyrdom," in *Martyrs and Martyrologies*, ed. Diana Woods, Studies in Church History, vol. 30 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 214–15; Robert Kolb, "God's Gift of Martyrdom: The Early Reformation Understanding of Dying for the Faith," *Church History* 64 (1995): 400–407.

9. Luther cited Augustine, *De correctione Donastistarum* 3.12. PL 33:798; NPNF1, 4:637. Luther (and others) later associated the Anabaptists and other sects with the Donatists. See Bagchi, "Problem of Martyrdom," 214n28, 215; Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 332, 335–36; Rittgers, *Reformation of Suffering*, 120.

10. Von Loewenich, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, 122–23.

and holy” would attack the foolish babes of Christ (Matt 11:25–30; John 16:3; WA 1:138–41; LW 51:26–31). Twice in his exposition of the seven penitential psalms, originally published in 1517, Luther wrote that the worldly wise and self-righteous would persecute those who embraced the cross of Christ (WA 1:164.8–24, 183.25–35). In his lectures on Galatians, published in 1519, he asserted that the spiritual fruit of love for God is demonstrated in times of affliction. Two examples included Christ’s suffering and the deaths of martyrs (Gal 5:22; WA 2:593.13–16; LW 27:374). Later in these same lectures, Luther concluded:

To me it is certain the Word of God cannot rightly be treated without incurring hatred and danger of death, and that if it gives offense—especially to the rulers and aristocrats of the people—this is the one sign that it has been treated rightly. (WA 2:601.25–29; LW 27:387)

In his explanations of the first twenty-two psalms, written from 1519 to 1521, Luther elucidated his theology of the cross in reference to this phenomenon of the persecution of the word and its adherents. He asserted that the ungodly, who cannot bear God’s word, send many martyrs to heaven under the pretense of obedience to God (WA 5:30.33–36).¹¹ According to Luther, the devil fomented hatred of those who believe the word and teach it to the world (WA 5:41.29–31).¹² The things written about Christ’s suffering provide an example to all Christians. Therefore, Luther warned that all who desired to be a Christian must have their own Herod, Pilate, and world rulers to rise angrily against them as they did against Christ (WA 5:53.15–19).¹³ In a later section of this same work, Luther wrote that those who sought God through moral philosophy and human law would persecute what they do not understand and reject the cross of Christ. As Luther preached in 1517, he stated that the worldly wise persecute the believers, because they do not know the Father or the Son (WA 5:107–8).¹⁴ In another passage he announced that the teacher of God’s word attracted persecution and hatred. The wise of the world would react violently with a false religious zeal against the preachers of truth. Luther proclaimed, “The word of the cross is a scandal; if it does not mortify or offend, it ceases to be the word of the cross” (WA 5:262–63; quotation at WA 5:263.16–18).¹⁵

Martin Luther’s sermons in the early 1520s reflected similar ideas. At Erfurt in 1522 Luther delivered a sermon on the Christian’s cross and suffering. In this sermon he contrasted believers in the gospel with those who taught salvation by works. He identified “dream preachers” who taught that one becomes righteous through his or her religious activity, such as fasting,

prayer, or joining a monastery. While Christians obey God’s commands and serve their neighbors in love, they are not obligated to perform self-chosen religious works to merit God’s righteousness. However, the worldly wise reject the word of the cross (1 Cor 1:18) and actively resist the gospel. Here Luther’s sermon shifts toward an explanation of this word of the cross. Monks and priests cannot comprehend it and become full of bitterness. This cross does not consist of the wood on which Christ died, but rather it is the shame and disgrace that Christ suffered innocently. Christians carry the cross when they suffer disgrace and persecution for the sake of righteousness. For this reason, Luther stated that true Christians will be condemned as heretics and evildoers. He concluded this sermon by contrasting the worldly veneration of the relics of the cross with the Christian’s authentic bearing of the cross of shame for the sake of the gospel (WA 10, III:364–71).

Luther asserted that the ungodly, who cannot bear God’s word, send many martyrs to heaven under the pretense of obedience to God.

In a sermon on the Invention of the Holy Cross in 1522, Luther followed a similar theme. Here he explicitly identified the Christian’s cross with persecution and martyrdom. After a section against the veneration of supposed relics of the cross, Luther expounded on the true nature of the cross that Christ commanded the believer to take up (Matt 16:24). The Reformer explained that the Gospel text identified a cross as suffering that takes place with shame and disgrace. Someone suffered this cross openly through persecution for the sake of the gospel and faith. For example, Luther identified John Hus and others the pope condemned to be burned as martyrs. Similarly the apostles and saints suffered persecution and were martyred. Although only Christ’s suffering provided salvation, the believer should follow Christ’s example. For Luther, the Christian discovered the true cross when he or she trusted in Christ’s promises inwardly and willingly suffered persecution and martyrdom outwardly (WA 10, III:113–19).¹⁶

As persecution of the new evangelicals began in the 1520s, Luther equated the worldly wise and self-righteous, who always fought against God’s word, explicitly with the papists.

11. Luther, *Luther’s Commentary on the First Twenty-two Psalms*, trans. John Nicholas Lenker (Sunbury, Penn: Lutherans In All Lands, 1903), 1:31–32.

12. *Ibid.*, 1:47.

13. *Ibid.*, 1:67.

14. *Ibid.*, 1:62–65.

15. *Ibid.*, 1:444–46. Lenker’s translation ends before the quotation above. It is my translation of the Latin text.

16. Martin Luther, “On the Invention of the Cross of Christ,” in *Festival Sermons of Martin Luther: The Church Postils, Summer Section*, trans. Joel R. Baseley (Dearborn, MI: Mark v, 2005), 35–39. This translation is very similar to the text in WA 10, III:113–19, but it does have some differences.

In a letter, written in 1522, he warned Hartmut von Cronberg that the divine word would always receive persecution. Since Hartmut preached the truth, Christ's enemies, Judas, Pilate, Herod, and Caiaphas, would appear to oppose the preacher and the gospel. These enemies represented the religious and worldly leaders that conspired to crucify Jesus. Obviously, Luther viewed this new persecution of the evangelicals, such as Hartmut, as a repetition of the persecution of Christ in his people (WA 10, 11:54–55; LW 43:62–63). In 1524 Luther also compared the Catholic authorities, who persecuted the evangelicals at Miltenberg, to the Jewish persecutors of the apostles (WA 15:70; LW 43:104).

This concept of the repetition of Christ's persecution played a significant role throughout Luther's descriptions of martyrs' suffering and deaths.

This concept of the repetition of Christ's persecution played a significant role throughout Luther's descriptions of martyrs' suffering and deaths. He understood this endurance of the shame of the cross as a return of the true Christian life (WA 18:224; LW 32:265). For this reason Luther praised God for the return of the true saints and martyrs with the deaths of the first evangelical martyrs, Heinrich Voes and Johann von Essen, in the Netherlands in 1523 (WA 12:78).¹⁷ Although Luther lamented the fact that he had not suffered martyrdom, he rejoiced that the gospel was beginning to bear fruit.¹⁸

In his description of the martyrdom of Henry of Zütphen on 24 December 1524, Luther portrayed Henry as a true imitator of Christ and the apostles as described in the Gospels and Acts. Henry bore the shame of the cross through his disgraceful death. As Christ had died for the unrighteous and interceded for killers, similarly Henry interceded for his persecutors. In fact, God sought to convert many to eternal life, as Luther wrote: "God overpowers and converts the world, not by force but through the blood and death of his saints. He overcomes the living through the dying and the dead. This is an amazing victory" (WA 18:224–26; quotation at WA 18:226.26–28;

LW 32:265–68; quotation at LW 32:268). Luther then described the alliance of religious and political powers against Henry at Dithmarschen near Bremen. Henry traveled to Dithmarschen to preach to a small congregation for a few months. The Dominican prior allied with Franciscan friars and with the approval of the civil authorities condemned Henry without a fair trial. However, Henry continued to preach and asked his accusers to convince him with scriptural arguments (WA 18:233–37; LW 32:278–82).

The Dominicans and civil authorities incited a drunken mob of peasants to seize Henry. They took him to a house where peasants tortured him through the night. A few priests visited him there to question him regarding his teaching. As the local authorities led Henry to the fire and a woman wept for him, Henry told her not to cry for him. A former local magistrate, whom the accusers bribed, pronounced Henry guilty of heresy. Henry resigned himself to God's will, forgave his killers, and asked God to forgive them too. The crowd then stabbed and beat Henry, because they could not light the fire quickly enough. When the martyr began to recite the Creed someone struck him and told him to burn. After brutally strapping him to a ladder, the mob sought to lower Henry into the fire. The halberd with which the crowd had hoisted the ladder pierced Henry's side when it fell. Finally, another man beat Henry to death with a mace, and then placed him in burning coals (WA 18:337–40; LW 32:282–86).

Luther's portrayal of Henry's death has definite similarities to Jesus' death as described in the Gospels. A woman wept for the martyr as women had wept for Christ, and both instructed the women not to cry for them (Luke 23:27–28). As Christ prayed that the Father's will would be done before his passion and forgave those who crucified him, Henry accepted God's will and forgave his attackers (Luke 22:42; 23:34). Finally, in a veiled similarity with Christ, Henry was pierced in his side with the halberd attached to the ladder (John 19:34). Through this biblical imagery, Luther depicted Henry's martyrdom as the bearing of the true cross of shame and disgrace for the sake of Christ's gospel.¹⁹

Christ's passion and the suffering of the Christian played an integral role in Luther's theology of the cross, and Luther expected the physical persecution of true believers. However, another integral part of Luther's understanding of authentic martyrdom focuses on the battle over true doctrine. He believed that the worldly wise and self-righteous persecute believers so that they may hold on to the false teaching of salvation by works. The right teaching of God's word was Luther's central concern.²⁰

17. Martin Luther, *Letters of Spiritual Counsel*, ed. and trans. Theodore G. Tappert, The Library of Christian Classics, vol. 18 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1955), 193.

18. Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil*, trans. Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 265; Bagchi, "Problem of Martyrdom," 211–12.

19. Kolb, "God's Gift of Martyrdom," 405. Kolb emphasizes the significance of doctrine for Luther's understanding of martyrdom.

20. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, 19–20; Kolb, "God's Gift of Martyrdom," 405–6; Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 139–49, where the author explains the significance of orthodox doctrine for Luther and other evangelical writers in relation to martyrdom.

Luther revealed the significance of true doctrine in the letter to Christians in the Low Countries on the first evangelical martyrdoms in 1523. He began this letter by thanking God for the wonderful light that had now dawned against Antichrist's darkness. Luther attached the articles of faith for which the young men had died to the end of the letter. The three questions revolved around the basic tenets of the emerging evangelical faith. When the persecutors asked about their beliefs, the martyrs answered that they believed in the Bible, the Gospels, and the holy Christian church, but not in the church of the inquisitor. They proclaimed that no council or writings of the fathers could supersede the Holy Scriptures. Luther concluded that though these men suffered death, the inquisitor could not harm divine doctrine (WA 12:77–80).²¹

In the song Luther composed in honor of these early martyrs, he focused on their confession of God's word in the face of the sophists from the university in Louvain. This statement fits the pattern that Luther had established early in his career in regard to the distinction between the fools of Christ and the worldly wise. These young martyrs confounded their questioners with their solid confession of the divine word. Therefore, the sophists became enraged, stripped the young men of their monastic garments, and led them to the fire (WA 35:411–15; LW 53:214–16).

Luther's letter on Henry of Zütphen's martyrdom emphasized the importance of evangelical doctrine in opposition to both the papists and the new false prophets who were spreading everywhere (WA 18:224–25; LW 32:266). In early 1525 the most prominent false teachers were Luther's former colleague, Andreas Karlstadt, and Thomas Müntzer, who led a group of peasants during the Peasants' War.²² Luther stated that Henry and the earlier martyrs had confirmed the gospel with their blood. While the evangelical martyrs would drown the papacy and devil in their blood, the same martyrs would protect the word of God against the new false prophets.²³ Similar to the ancient martyrs, who had sealed and certified the gospel in the past, these new evangelical martyrs authenticated the right doctrine for which they had died. Luther then contrasted these evangelical martyrs with those who taught the doctrines of works, human righteousness, and free will. Those who teach such things gain wealth, honor, and power thereby. If these people died, they would only be martyrs for worldly things or the devil. While Luther believed dying for the gospel was noble, to perish for the doctrines either of the papacy or the false prophets only makes one a martyr for the devil's teachings. Luther applied

the concept of the devil's martyr to the papists and to the early radicals here (WA 18:225; LW 32:266–67).²⁴

Luther's emphasis on doctrine also played a prominent role in his descriptions of the deaths of George Winkler and Leonhard Keiser in 1527. In Winkler's case, his administration of the Lord's Supper under the bread and wine especially roused the anger of his attackers. Therefore, Luther included a rather lengthy statement defending the evangelical practice of communion under both elements (WA 23:413–23; LW 43:151–60). He introduced Keiser's story by stating that the martyr had shown a great example of faith through his death for the teaching of God's word (WA 23:452). This history of Keiser's martyrdom in Bavaria contained large sections of the questions posed to Keiser by the inquisitor and his evangelical answers. These reports made it clear that Keiser suffered for his faith in Christ and biblical doctrine (WA 23:455–59).

This evidence indicates that Luther distinguished true from false martyrs based on the doctrine for which the martyr died.

This evidence indicates that Luther distinguished true from false martyrs based on the doctrine for which the martyr died. As discussed above, he cited Augustine to demonstrate that self-imposed suffering served no purpose before God. Additionally, Luther adopted Augustine's argument against the Donatists that the cause of suffering determines whether an act is truly martyrdom. According to Luther, the preaching of God's word or true doctrine was the only reason for martyrdom. He understood the followers of Thomas Müntzer and the emerging Anabaptist sects in the 1520s to be the return of the Donatists (WA 20:644; LW 30:239). While he continued to understand the Anabaptists in this manner, in 1540 Luther applied the same argument against the portrayal of Ulrich Zwingli's death as martyrdom (WA 49:27–28).²⁵

On Easter Eve of 1530, Martin Luther preached a sermon in Coburg to Elector John the Steadfast and his entourage of legal and religious officials. Luther knew they would soon face significant choices regarding their public confession of Christ

21. Luther, *Letters of Spiritual Counsel*, 192–94.

22. On these men and the Peasants' War see Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation, 1521–1532*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 146–94.

23. Luther used a similar imagery in a sermon for the Twenty-Third Sunday after Trinity, WA 10, 1, 2:421–22; translation in *The Precious and Sacred Writings of Martin Luther*, vol. 14, *Luther's Church Postil, Gospels: Thirteenth to Twenty-Sixth Sunday after Trinity*, trans. John Nicholas Lenker (Minneapolis: Lutherans in All Lands, 1905), 298–300.

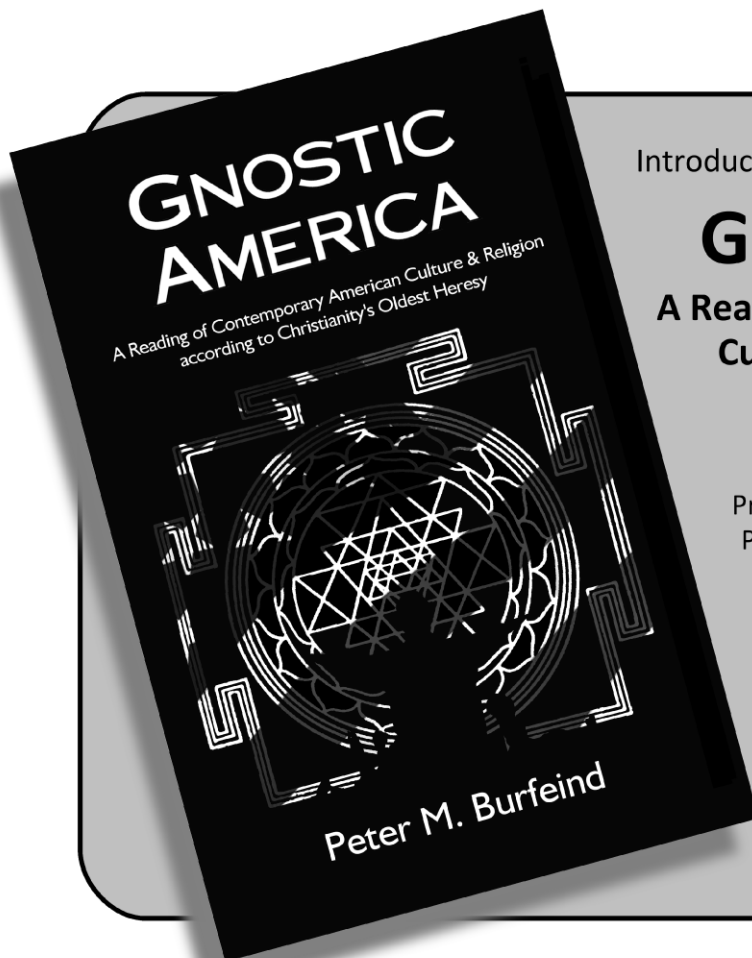
24. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 323–24; Bagchi, "Problem of Martyrdom," 215n32. As early as 1519 Luther described self-righteous hypocrites as devil's martyrs in his exposition of the Lord's Prayer, WA 2:90; LW 42:31.

25. Bagchi, "Luther and Martyrdom," 214; see Augustine, *De correctione Donatarum* 2.9. PL 33:796; NPNF1, 4:636. See note 9 above. On the use of Augustine's famous dictum, "not the punishment, but the cause, makes a martyr," among competing groups in the Reformation see Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 329–39.

at the Diet of Augsburg. Ultimately, if they disagreed with Emperor Charles v, they could lose their land, titles, home, and even lives for their confession. While he acknowledged Christ's act of redemption on the cross as the most significant teaching, Luther focused on Christ's passion as an example for believers in bearing the cross and suffering. The sermon contained the elements of Luther's teaching on bearing the shame of the cross. He reminded his hearers that their potential loss of everything, including their lives, could not compare with Christ's suffering on their behalf. Luther stated that Christians should never search for suffering but only accept it in faith when it comes. The opposition to the preaching of God's word motivates unbelievers against believers. However, it is the same divine word that consoles in desperate times and fights against the devil and the world. Suffering molds believers into the likeness of Christ. Affliction and persecution increases faith, and ultimately, "the gospel cannot come to the fore except through and in suffering and the cross." Luther was calling on this group of lay rulers

and clergy to fulfill the words of his most famous hymn (WA 32:28–39; quotation at WA 32:38.9–10; LW 51:197–208; quotation at LW 51:207).

Martin Luther's theology of the cross laid the foundation for his idea of martyrdom. God concealed himself under the suffering of Christ to redeem humanity, but he also revealed himself through the cross. Similarly, the Lord works through the suffering of the Christian in order to bring about the divine will within this sinful world. Those who rejected the message of the crucified Christ seek to persecute and kill those who believed and confessed it. According to Luther, preaching this message of the cross will bring suffering and might lead to martyrdom or, as he called it, the shame and disgrace of bearing the true cross. He understood taking up the cross of persecution and martyrdom to be a public proclamation of the faith and an imitation of Christ's passion. In fact, confession of true doctrine and suffering a martyr's death as a follower of Christ were inseparable. **LOGIA**



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God's Time Clock Never Stops

Persecution and Martyrdom in the Lutheran Church of the USSR

MATTHEW HEISE



THE WORD *MARTYRDOM* HAS A UNIQUE implication in the Russian language apart from the notion of “witness.” In Russian, мученичество (*muchenichestvo*) suggests the aspect of suffering. That is tragically appropriate as the Lutheran Church in Russia has long been associated with suffering, even before the societal explosions set off by the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917.

Lutherans first journeyed to Russia in the middle of the sixteenth century when Czar Ivan the Terrible (reign: 1547–1584) invited European Lutherans to emigrate and share their skills in trade and craftsmanship. But as they established businesses and began to live in Russia for longer periods of time, Lutherans formally requested the right to build their own churches. With the czar’s approval, the first Lutheran church, St. Michael’s, was built in 1576 within the confines of the city of Moscow. But Ivan was not named Terrible (in Russian, *awesome* is a better translation) for nothing. He soon reneged upon his decision to allow the construction of a Lutheran cathedral in Moscow, calling for its destruction.¹

His decree was an ominous sign that Lutheranism’s history in Russia would be anything but peaceful and stable. In time the church grew and its members exerted a powerful influence upon Russian society in politics and especially in education. Although ethnic Russians could not legally belong to the Lutheran Church, Lutherans established schools that were renowned for their quality and would educate Russians and the various Lutheran ethnic groups living within the Russian Empire. This included Estonians, Finns, Germans, Latvians, and Swedes.² The Church added to its rolls when particular czars who were favorable to Lutheranism were in power, like Peter the Great and Catherine the Great. They allowed large numbers of European Lutherans to immigrate and form congregations in Russia during the eighteenth century.³

Despite Lutherans’ positive contributions to Russian society, they would frequently be subject to persecution. In this they suffered the typical fate of ethnic churches that were not uniquely preferred by the Czarist state, like the state-sponsored Russian Orthodox Church.⁴ Ironically the Lutheran Church’s relationship to the state improved when the Communists came to power via the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. Initially the new-

ly formed Communist state directed most of its ire against the state church. In fact, the Lutheran Church, after the period of general persecution that all Christians encountered, began to experience more freedoms than the Czarist Romanovs had previously allowed them.⁵

For example, a Lutheran seminary was permitted by the state upon the territory of Russia proper for the first time in its history. In addition, the church was allowed to call a synod in order to rewrite the church constitution. These affirmative actions taken by the Soviet government were unprecedented in comparison with the more restricted life that the Czars had enjoined upon the Lutherans. They gave the church the hope that it might be able to carve out a reasonable existence within the new state. In response to the new freedoms, Bishop Theophil Meyer undertook bold initiatives, making frequent visits to the Kremlin in order to secure permission to import Bibles, publish a church journal titled *Unsere Kirche* [Our Church], and conduct pastoral visits to congregations in Siberia that were suffering from a dearth of pastors.⁶

1. О. А. Лиценбергер, Евангелическо-лютеранская церковь в российской истории (xvi–xx вв.) [The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russian history: 16th–20th cent.] (Москва: Просветительский фонд “Лютеранское культурное наследие”, 2003), 33–34, 39–40 [[O. A. Litzenberger, *Evangelicheskaya-Luteranskaya Tserkov v Rossiiskoi Istorii: xvi-xx vv.*]].
2. Theophil Meyer, Наследие Лютера в России: к 400-летию юбилею Реформации, отмечаемому евангелическо-лютеранскими общинами в России [Luther’s heritage in Russia: On the occasion of the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the Reformation in the Evangelical-Lutheran community in Russia] (Москва: Готика, 2003), 210 [[*Naslediye Lutera v Rossii: K 400-letnomu Yubileiyu Reformatsii otmechatemu evangelicheskolyuteranskimi obschinami v Rossii* (Moscow: Gotika)]]; Ярослав Бойченко, О лютеранах в России, Нижнем Новгороде и не только [About Lutherans in Russia, Nizhniy Novgorod, and elsewhere] (ижный Новгород: Поволжье, 2007), 354–55 [[Yaroslav Boychenko, *O Luteranakh v Rossii, Nizhnem Novgorode i nye Tolko* (Nizhniy Novgorod, Russia: Povolzhe)]].
3. Лиценбергер, Церковь, 64, 115.
4. *Ibid.*, 65.
5. Meyer, Наследие Лютера, 221–23.
6. Theophil Meyer to John Morehead, 16 October 1923, Lutheran World Convention [LWC] Papers, Archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America [ELCA]; John Morehead to Theophil Meyer, September 1, 1927, LWC Papers, Archives of ELCA.

MATTHEW HEISE is the Executive Director of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation.

These initial positive signs soon gave way to more restrictive actions taken against the Lutheran Church. Full-fledged persecution began in 1929 when Joseph Stalin secured complete political authority in the land. Stalin, a former Orthodox seminary student, was determined to stamp out any vestige of religion in the Soviet Union and he would curry no favoritism towards any denomination.⁷ A good example of how his actions were carried out against faithful Lutherans pastors and parishioners can be illustrated by the criminal case brought against the Leningrad Sunday school teachers in 1929.

Stalin, a former Orthodox seminary student, was determined to stamp out any vestige of religion in the Soviet Union.

Two energetic and faithful Lutheran pastors, Helmut Hansen and Kurt Muss, were former seminary classmates who were determined to stand against the Zeitgeist of the age. Hansen had long seen the winds blowing in the direction of atheism and had been active in educating young children in the basics of Christianity as confessed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia. His classmate, Kurt Muss, had already served a three-year stint in the Gulag concentration camps for administering food aid through the American Lutheran organization, the National Lutheran Council (NLC). Upon completion of his work, Muss submitted a report to the NLC on the economic conditions in the famine areas, no doubt arousing the interest of the GPU (*Gosudarstvennoye politicheskoye upravlenie*, which was the Russian secret police, translated to English as State Political Directorate).⁸ Muss made the unfortunate, although reasonably accurate admission, that the famine raging throughout the Volga and southern Russian regions in the early 1920s was not simply an “act of God” but was man-made. More than likely, censors spotted his report sent to America and reported his comment to the GPU.⁹

As a result, Muss was convicted as a spy in 1923 and served time in the infamous Solovetsky Island labor camp in northern Russia. When he learned of his conviction on the ridiculous charge of espionage, Muss went on a hunger strike, which he continued for eleven days. Upon his release three years later, he immediately sought ordination in the Lutheran Church, some-

thing he had not yet achieved, as he was still a student at the time of his arrest.¹⁰ Together with Pastor Hansen, Muss began training Sunday school teachers, ranging in age from 17 to 63.¹¹ On 8 April 1929, the Stalinist regime passed a more restrictive law on religion, including outlawing the teaching of Christianity to children within the walls of a church building. In addition, the workweek was altered in September, allowing workers only every sixth day off. Since the work schedule was staggered among industries, not everyone had the same day off. The altering of the workweek affected Sunday worship attendance, so that churches were forced to hold Sunday evening services after the workday had been concluded.¹²

Pastors Hansen and Muss were an enterprising duo and decided to divide the children into groups of five to eight and hold classes on Sunday mornings in apartments scattered throughout the city. Previous to the Sunday school lesson, the pastors would gather the teachers in their respective apartments during the week and prepare them by outlining the teaching for the coming Sunday.¹³ Hansen and Muss received criticism from some in the Church for stirring up a veritable hornet’s nest due to the sharpness of their sermons against the Soviet regime.¹⁴ Like believers down through the ages, some parishioners and pastors felt that accommodation with the state was the safer course to take. But taking into account the future of the Church, the pastors could not submit to the spiritual destruction of the younger generation. They urged their students to remain firm in the faith despite the atheist propaganda issuing forth daily from entities like the League of the Militant Godless. Coming from a family of engravers, Muss designed and had his brother, Konrad, create pins for confirmands to wear upon their confirmation. On the pins were carved the letters ВЕДГ, “Верен Ему До Гроба” [VEDG, “Veren yemu do groba”], that is, “Faithful to him to the grave.” With this visible symbol, the students were encouraged to take seriously their commitment to Christ in a society that was no longer ambivalent about aggressively indoctrinating the next generation in the particulars of atheism.¹⁵

The GPU was hardly unaware of the activities taking place at Hansen’s St. Peter’s Lutheran, located as it was on the main street, October 25th Prospect, right in the center of the city. Muss’s Jesus Christ Lutheran Church was situated on Vasily Island, one of the many islands comprising Leningrad. Greeting his colleague on the coming New Year and decade, in late 1929 Hansen wrote to Muss: “This new year in our lives will no doubt be one of the most difficult years of the struggle. Full speed ahead! A strong wind is inclined to give you strength, but

7. Robert Tucker, *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above, 1928–1941* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), 93.
 8. Mikhail Shkarovsky and Alexander Bovkalo, “Pastor Kurt Muss,” *Der Bote* 3–4 (1996): 15.
 9. John Morehead to Professor Robert Withington, 8 February 1935, LWC Papers, Archives of ELCA.

10. Shkarovsky and Bovkalo, “Pastor Kurt Muss,” 15.
 11. Delo P-87890, Volume 3, List 9, 66, 528, Archives of the Federal Security Bureau–St. Petersburg, Leningrad Region [FSB-SP, LR].
 12. N. S. Timasheff, *Religion in Soviet Russia: 1917–1942* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1942), 40–41; “Tilly Meyer’s Report on Her Brother’s Death,” 1934, LWC Papers, Archives of ELCA.
 13. Delo P-87890, Volume 1, List 614, Archives of FSB-SP, LR; Delo P-87890, Volume 3, List 10, 13, Archives of FSB-SP, LR.
 14. Delo P-87890, Volume 1, List 267, Archives of FSB-SP, LR; Delo P-87890, Volume 3, List 443, Archives of FSB-SP, LR.
 15. Delo P-2195/2196, List 611–612, Archives of the FSB-SP, LR.

constant battle will sink a person. And so I send you my special wishes for your approaching birthday. To the coming year of battle and war to the finish!"¹⁶ Muss and Hansen both would need those encouraging words to keep up their spirits, because this spiritual battle was advancing upon them maybe even sooner than they had expected. As governmental pressure continued to intensify upon all Christians throughout the country, a critical moment was soon to be reached in Leningrad.

On 17 December, the GPU struck in symbolic, biblical fashion, as those who seek to hide their nefarious activities have often done throughout history. In the dead of night, it carried out mass arrests of the pastors and Sunday school teachers of St. Peter's and Jesus Christ Lutheran Church. It was always easier to conduct night raids so that the Soviet people would not observe the activities of the secret police, and on this occasion the GPU followed precedent. In total, approximately thirty-two persons were arrested from the ages of eighteen to sixty-six. They included Pastor Helmut Hansen and his wife Erna; Pastor Kurt Muss and his wife Elena; as well as his sister Luisa along with twenty-seven other Sunday school teachers.

A glimpse at the photographs of the accused provides clear evidence that they were all arrested in the middle of the night. Some look confused, Pastor Muss's wife looks down, embarrassed. The younger teachers, perhaps not quite aware of the gravity of their situation, actually smile. Thankfully it wasn't yet 1937, when the methods of the GPU's successor, the NKVD, would prove to be more brutal and exacting. The poverty of their clothing is also a reminder that many in the Church were not among the economic elite in the Soviet Union. They were, however, among the faithful in the Church.¹⁷

On 19 December, as Pastor Muss was set before his interrogators, he foiled their attempts at an inquisition by engaging them in a conversation. The GPU interrogator requested that Muss first relate his history in the Church and the reason for his activities. Muss took the occasion to explain his rationale for creating the children's Sunday school groups, highlighting his rights as a Soviet citizen:

I don't consider the groups that I formed as illegal, for freedom of religion has its place in the USSR and it allows for the religious nurture of children. And likewise, I don't consider the children's groups as an underground organization because there was no conspiracy involved. We have the signatures of the children with their attendance or nonattendance recorded, as well as the lists which were preserved by me and handed over to the representatives of the government during my arrest.¹⁸

Muss's protestations notwithstanding, the Soviet government did not interpret the law in the same optimistic manner that he did. They interpreted his and Helmut Hansen's actions

as "attempting to get around the laws forbidding the teaching of religion to children." The GPU decided that Muss and Hansen were plotting to "prepare a cadre of religious-nationalist youth."¹⁹ Of course, as faithful Lutherans had done for centuries in Russia, they were indeed doing just that, with an emphasis upon religious education, though not nationalist.

Mikhailov admitted, "We cannot carry out the basic goal of violence and class struggle."

Most likely the real fear of the Communists, who were advocating the idea of class struggle, concerned young Lutherans like seminary student Peter Mikhailov who were actively working against the development of class consciousness among the children. Under Muss's and Hansen's influence, the 18-year-old Mikhailov admitted, "Working with children, we pursued the goal to plant the idea of Christianity within them, and the main thing, love to your neighbor, because we *cannot* carry out the basic goal of violence and class struggle" (emphasis mine).²⁰ One of the most remarkable observations from a reading of the GPU files is the honesty with which the arrested Lutherans answered the questions of the GPU. The GPU had to have been impressed, and perhaps just a little frightened by the certainty and zeal of these believers, as well as the lack of fear that many showed during their interrogations.

Since he was convinced that he was doing nothing illegal, Kurt Muss had no qualms about honestly answering and engaging his interrogators in a discussion of what was and was not legally permissible in the Soviet Union. For example, Muss admitted that he had moved the teaching of children to apartments, since the 8 April law had made it illegal to teach children in the church building. Muss acknowledged the accuracy of the list identifying his eleven Sunday school teachers, all of whom were in their teens or twenties except for Maria Weisberg (66 years old) and Viktoria Seleznyova (48 years old). He listed the five craft teachers he employed and spoke of how he formed the *Busy Bees* children's group. *Busy Bees* was an attempt to teach children a trade as well as imbue them with a Christian concept of labor. Muss even composed a hymn that the children memorized and sang!

Muss confessed that he had no idea what his teachers' political convictions were, no doubt to the amusement of his interrogators, who could think in nothing less than political terms. What mattered most to him is that his teachers were earnest and sincere Christians. Trying to speak to his interrogators in

16. Delo P-2195/2196, List 610, Archives of the FSB-SP, LR.

17. Delo P-2195/2196, List 642, Archives of the FSB-SP, LR.

18. Delo P-87890, Volume 3, List 9, 10, Archives of the FSB-SP, LR.

19. Delo P-2195/2196, List 614, Archives of the FSB-SP, LR.

20. Delo P-2195/2196, List 617, Archives of the FSB-SP, LR.

a language with which they were obviously not familiar, Muss described in Augustinian terms the community of God existing upon earth. Soviet power only interested him in how it impacted upon the faith of Christian believers. “My sermons, which you consider anti-Soviet, had the goal of revealing the sense of the times in which we are living. I wanted the believers to understand that all of life is under God’s direction.”²¹

*Muss told his parishioners
that atheism was actually
“a forethought of God.”*

The content of his sermons must have been of interest to his interrogators, because he returned to them repeatedly in the recorded sessions with the GPU. While addressing the topic of faith and atheism, Muss acknowledged urging his parishioners to battle atheism. Since atheism exists as a factor in Soviet society, he explained, the Church could not simply ignore it but had to offer a response. In fact, Muss told his parishioners that atheism was actually “a forethought of God,” allowed by him in order to awaken a sleeping Church! Drawing echoes from the story of Pharaoh, how small the GPU’s role must have seemed in comparison to an almighty God. God was actually using *them* for his purposes rather than vice versa! Muss explained to the GPU how God was providentially controlling all events, a topic that Muss had reiterated time and again to his teachers and students.

Explaining further how he steered clear of politics in his sermons, Muss stressed that he did not use the words *class* or *party* but addressed the issues of faith and nonfaith. If he did briefly use one political term, it was when he mentioned that some live in the past and some in the future and others, yet, in “five-year terms.” Muss was referring to Joseph Stalin’s Five-Year Plan to rapidly industrialize and collectivize agriculture.²² Although his point ultimately went beyond the politics of the day, by elevating the language of faith, Muss was subtly belittling the role of politics. An observant GPU interrogator should have come to the obvious conclusion that Muss believed God, not Stalin, was in charge of time. Of course, with Stalin’s Five-Year Plan now fully in operation, the GPU were not amused by his answers.

In her interrogation in 1930, Sunday school teacher Dagmara Schreiber, who was arrested in February 1930, recalled the rest of his sermon, referring to Stalin’s Five-Year Plan. This 18-year-old girl remembered Muss saying that of utmost importance was to live in the present time. God’s time clock never stops;

it continues to move. “When we see how they deface church buildings and . . . in fear listen to how they say in five years’ time there will be no more churches, it is all futile. *All these persecutions only strengthen hearts in faith and together with all of the ruined churches, God is creating for himself temples in the hearts of the people*” (emphasis mine).²³

Muss made clear in his 21 January interrogation that challenging atheism, not the activities of the government, was the primary thrust of his sermons. Since the Lutheran Church was committed to an apolitical outlook, the form of government in the country was of no genuine interest to him. The fact that Luther’s two-kingdoms theology resonated with his Sunday school teachers came through in their own interrogations by the GPU. For example, next to the question “political convictions,” Zinaida Petrova described herself as “nonpartisan” and elaborated further, “It doesn’t matter to me which party is in authority.” A review of the typical answers given by the teachers on this topic were of the same variety: Irina Prelberg, nonpartisan; Elsa Golubovskaya, nonpartisan; Peter Mikhailov, no political convictions; Tamara Kosetti, nonpartisan; Maria Weisberg, none; Luisa Muss, “I submit to any authority in power”; Otto Tumm, no; Ida Monakhova, no. Not once did a Sunday school teacher express political opinions, which certainly must have been disconcerting to Communists who must have thought that they were fighting shadows. They were used to fighting an enemy that they knew, such as the political parties that they had suppressed like the Cadets or Social Revolutionaries.²⁴

By September 1930, the interrogations had concluded and a range of sentences was handed down. For the most part, the Sunday school teachers received sentences of three years at hard labor, either being sent to Siberia or northern Russia. The pastors each received a ten-year sentence for being the ringleaders of the Lutheran teachers.²⁵ The teachers were invariably released before their three-year sentences were completed, several even working on the White Sea Canal, known for its extremely harsh conditions and environment. Pastors Hansen and Muss, though, would be afforded no clemency.²⁶

The Hansen-Muss Case would become a major turning point in the state’s relationship to those who served in the Lutheran Church. Until all of the Russian Lutheran churches were finally closed in 1938, no pastor would again act as boldly as Hansen and Muss. The parishioners in Leningrad were especially frightened by the sentences given to the Sunday school teachers. The sentences adversely affected the attitude of those who might have wanted to participate in church activities, dramatically reducing the role of the laity and church attendance. The Soviet authorities, assured that the battle was moving decisively

23. Delo P-87890, Volume 3, List 563, Archives of the FSB-SP, LR.

24. Delo P-87890, Volume 3, List 22, 438, 188, 119, 86, 66, 49, 104, 222, Archives of the FSB-SP, LR.

25. Delo P-2195/2196, List 643, 739, 740, Archives of the FSB-SP, LR.

26. “Косетти, Бенита Валентиновна,” Энциклопедия Петришуле, www.allpetrischule-spb.org, accessed 14 August 2014 [“Benita Kosetti,” Encyclopedia Petrischule]; Delo P-6790, List 13, Archives of the FSB-SP, LR.

21. Delo P-87890, Volume 3, List 13–14, Archives of the FSB-SP, LR.

22. Delo P-2196, Volume 3, List 13–14, Archives of the FSB-SP, LR.

in their favor, must have felt convinced that they had set new guidelines for future activities in the Church. Hence they could afford to be magnanimous at times in individual cases, because they knew that ultimately the future was with them.²⁷ Both pastors continued to defy the authorities while serving their sentences in Gulag concentration camps in northern Russia. The scant evidence we have from their time in the camps strongly indicates that neither pastor renounced his faith, but on the contrary continued to proclaim Christ to his fellow prisoners.

Pastor Helmut Hansen had been laboring in Gulag labor camps since his ten-year sentence had been handed down in September 1930. Prison officials claimed that he avoided heavy labor, no doubt as a result of his declining health, which an August 1937 medical exam confirmed. He was reduced to non-physical labor, working as an agronomist/entomologist, due to complications from an inflammation of the heart muscle, as well as suffering from a form of diabetes and anemia. In addition to his health problems, apparently he had not been a model prisoner in the eyes of the Gulag camp administration. In early 1937, he had sent the letter of another prisoner—presumably who had not been allowed the privilege—to the city of Segezha and also used the right for official correspondence to send his own private letters, no doubt to his wife Erna, who had been freed and was working as a nurse in Leningrad. For this alleged offense, he was put into the camp prison for five days without having those days deducted from his sentence.

As the camp administrators gathered evidence against him, witnesses came forward to testify to the anti-Soviet behavior of the pastor. One witness against him claimed that with respect to the coming twentieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1937, Hansen said: “We can’t expect an amnesty for the twentieth anniversary of the revolution because there are still classes and camps. But when we reach the fiftieth anniversary of Soviet power then we can expect amnesty because there will be no camps or classes.” This statement, the witness said, was accompanied by a knowing smile, meaning that Hansen didn’t believe it and was mocking the regime’s efforts to create a classless society. It is no stretch of the imagination to assume that Hansen may very well have been ridiculing the official Marxist line of the Soviet government that classes would “wither away” in the future.

To one man’s opinion that the Communist Party and working class all thought like Stalin, Hansen supposedly remarked that he would have to be a god for millions to think exactly like Stalin. Hansen probably couldn’t imagine how every citizen could think in robotlike fashion, as he himself most certainly would not. Whether Hansen actually made these statements, or whether they were fabricated, cannot be determined with any degree of accuracy, but these comments were certainly not out of character for him. For allegedly speaking and agitating against the Soviet state within the prison camp, Hansen was

given a death sentence. At 1:15 AM, 22 September, a Soviet government that could not countenance a man who boldly “obeyed God rather than man” (Acts 5:29) and spoke freely from his own conscience, executed Helmut Hansen.²⁸

Meanwhile Kurt Muss had also been under observation in the camps, especially for his penchant to continue speaking unabashedly about his faith in Christ. The NKVD, the Soviet secret police that was the successor to the GPU, had been accumulating evidence from his fellow prisoners, obviously in order to incriminate Muss. One man said that Muss, in front of all the prisoners, had condemned the Communists’ program for educating youth in the Soviet Union. Muss, he opined, was gathering fellow Russian Germans around himself and urging the prisoners to be disobedient to Soviet power. Furthermore, he claimed Muss had stated that the Soviet Union had imprisoned the entire country and placed its citizens on hunger rations, and if someone expressed this opinion publicly he would subject himself to the highest measure of punishment. Contradicting himself in his own testimony, this man concluded that Muss was one of those “hidden, anti-Soviet characters.”

*Individuals had the right to express
atheist convictions in public but not
religious ones.*

Another witness may have been closer to the truth in his bitter recriminations against Muss, exclaiming that he possessed “anti-Soviet, religious inclinations.” Muss was trying to “propagate his religious ideas among the mass [of prisoners].” Plays were often staged in the Gulag camps as a means to take the prisoners’ minds off their hardships. This witness claimed that Muss had used just such an opportunity to address the prisoners, offering commentary on a well-known nineteenth-century play by Alexander Ostrovsky called “Guilty without Fault.” Muss used the occasion, the witness continued, to “quote in his speech ‘faith in God.’” This individual described Muss as an “enemy of the Soviet people,” accusing him of describing the new Constitution of the USSR as “a collection of pretty words and nothing else,” and urging people to change their lives through religion. The new Soviet Constitution of 1936 supposedly advocated religious freedom, but a closer reading of the actual text reveals that individuals had the right to express atheist convictions in public but not religious ones. In reality, though, most of the churches had already been closed by that time, so Stalin could afford to be generous in regards to the performance of religious rituals within churches.

27. Helmut Tschoerner, *Arthur Malmgren: Theologe, Pfarrer, Bischof in Rußland und der Sowjetunion* (Erlangen: Martin-Luther-Verlag, 2012), 83–84.

28. Delo P-17014, List 3–14, Archives of the FSB-SP, LR.

These were Kurt Muss's real crimes. He was guilty of unashamedly proclaiming faith in Jesus Christ, the same message that he had preached to his confirmands and parishioners ever since the beginning of his pastoral service. His life continued to exemplify a faithful witness even after his arrest, despite the years of hardship in the Gulag labor camps of the far north. He knew that God remained providential over all aspects of life even though society had long since consigned men with free consciences to the graveyard. A fellow prisoner's hand-drawn picture of Kurt near the end of his life has survived the camps. Kurt's family preserved the picture and it was eventually passed along to interested parishioners of St. Michael's Lutheran in St. Petersburg. In the picture, Muss's forehead is full of lines, having aged prematurely while his face reveals signs of having been beaten. His had not been an easy path.

Now the moment had come. Labeling him a Fascist who praised Hitler, the NKVD brought out all of its rhetorical ammunition to calumniate Muss as anti-Soviet when its judicial *troika* in the northwestern province of Karelia took up his case. After one week of deliberations, the court formally sentenced Muss to death on 20 September for treason against the Soviet Union. In reality, his crime was following and confessing Christ alone. On 4 October, shortly before midnight at 11:50 PM in the far north near the city of Archangel, Kurt Alexandrovich Muss joined the ranks of the martyrs of the

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Russia. There would be many martyrs in 1937.²⁹

Today, Russian Lutherans are again free to proclaim publicly the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Only one of the teachers from the Leningrad Sunday school teachers' criminal case in 1929, Elsa Freifeldt (1904–1995), survived long enough to see the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991.³⁰ The Lutherans of St. Petersburg have not forgotten the inspired words of Scripture (Heb 13:7): "Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith." In remembrance of such leaders, a photo of Pastor Helmut Hansen hangs in the hallway of St. Peter's Lutheran Church in St. Petersburg. In the fellowship hall of St. Michael's Lutheran, just a few miles away across the Neva River, a 1929 photo of Pastor Kurt Muss and the confirmation class of Jesus Christ Lutheran Church adorns the wall. Although most direct ancestors have passed away, parishioners worshiping in the churches where the martyred pastors served still honor the memories of these bold men of God who remained faithful unto death, receiving the crown of life. May they rest in the peace of the Lord, for their deeds have followed them. **LOGIA**

29. Delo P-12690, List 1–7, Archives of the FSB-SP, LR.

30. Санкт-Петербургский мартиролог [St. Petersburg martyrology] (Санкт-Петербург: Мирь, 2002), 396 [[*Sankt Peterburgsky Marturiolog* (Saint Petersburg, Russia: Mir)]].

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Ecclesiastical Discipline Necessary to Preserve the Gospel

Excerpt: No amount of rhetoric can cover over the problem that confronts The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Hermann Sasse wrote, "Just as a man whose kidneys no longer eliminate poisons which have accumulated in the body will die, so the church will die which can no longer eliminate heresy."³ I, for one, am grateful that President Harrison does not want the LCMS of 2015 to become what the ULCA of the 1920's became.

Feb 3, 2015

Wilhelm Loehe on Child/Infant Communion

The following excerpt in translation is drawn from Wilhelm Loehe's "Neuendettelsau Letters." The letters were published in 1858 to explain and defend some of Loehe's practices, chief among them the way he practiced confession in Neuendettelsau.

Oct 13, 2014

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Patients in Suffering

What Good is Living for the Dying?

JEFFERY WARNER



PASTORS AND LOVED ONES OF THOSE who suffer prolonged or terminal illnesses often hear things like this from the sufferer: “I don’t know why I’m even still here. Why doesn’t God just take me home? Why does God make me suffer like this?” The unanswered matter of ongoing meaning and purpose in one’s life when seriously ill presents a terrible sort of suffering all its own. God’s purpose is hidden in suffering, both from the sufferer and from those who encounter him. But well-meaning caregivers feel compelled to respond to such sufferer’s questions in various ways. Suffering and death is mythologized, romanticized, mysticized, and even spiritualized in order to offer meaning and purpose to those so sorely wanting for it. Even pious Christians and clergy may inadvertently press false hope into the sufferer’s straining hand.

Some would mythologize the sufferer’s plight. They paint in heroic grandeur the great and (vain)glorious “fight” one puts up against such fearsome enemies as Pain and Disease and Death. Such an understanding bids the sufferer fight harder, exemplify further those virtues for which he shall surely be remembered. Here, suffering means being a hero. And the sufferer is commanded to “fight harder.” In the end, mythologizing suffering is law. The result of mythologizing the struggle is a sufferer who either proudly trusts his own virtue, or despairs of it.

Others romanticize the suffering into a tale of epic tragedy. These urge sufferers along a wistful journey to discover and admire all the bittersweet beauty in suffering and death. Suffering becomes a romantic task of gathering sweet petals of love, peace, joy, hope, and countless other precious moments into life’s little flower basket. Once it’s full, the sufferer at last falls into sweet Death’s longing arms, petals spilled and splayed about. “Look harder, gather more, feel better things, fair sufferer!” is the law preached here. But where are these fast-fleeting feelings when the unpleasant sensations of pain or weakness overcome him, or when he falls unresponsive to the sentimental stories, regardless how moving and bittersweet.

Still others would mysticize suffering as the means by which the sufferer retrieves secret knowledge, and perhaps makes it known to family and friends left behind. Might one get a glimpse into the afterlife, learn the secret deathbed lesson of what life is really all about, or find out firsthand whether “Heav-

en Is For Real”? The American culture’s spellbound fascination with near-death experiences makes for sufferers longing to experience the same. The result is a faith taught to let go of the Word made flesh and reach out for the false hope of experiencing something far beyond God’s revealed word.

Christians and non-Christians, clergy or not, all wrestle with the problem of suffering and death. Lutheran pastors strive to help one face suffering in such a way that justification by grace through faith alone is front and center. Pastors can communicate a more fully Christocentric view of suffering to people fully overcome in pain and weakness and weariness—and to their loved ones. Christian suffering possesses a deep purpose that continually serves the neighbor, particularly in a culture that wishes never to look upon suffering and trusts fully in medical science to save us from it.

Pastors with any length of years in ministry to the sick and dying will doubtless recognize such mythologizing, romanticizing, and mysticizing elements present in comments offered by friends and family attempting to be helpful to the sufferer. One can even find scriptural examples of such themes, and perhaps pastors themselves have utilized them in such a way as to paint the sufferer as hero, romantic, or mystic.

For instance, one could easily urge the brave taunt “O Death, where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting?” (1 Cor 15) toward a mythologizing of the struggle against death. Mysticizing the sickness and end-of-life experience as a search for secret revelations is a possible misapplication of Paul’s words in Philippians 3:10–11: “I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.” A romanticizing element can be present when Philippians 4:8 is misused: “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” Certainly not every application of these passages and others constitutes misuse. But not all such verses are applied toward a truly Christocentric focus, with justification by grace through faith alone as the real medicine applied from God’s word.

Some non-Lutheran clergy openly and fearlessly embrace the mythologizing, romanticizing, and mysticizing of suffering and death. Sometimes they don’t bother to clothe them in Bible verses. Among Lutheran clergy these three tendencies seem much less common, in this author’s experience at the deathbed.

JEFFERY WARNER presently serves as a full-time hospice chaplain in the Norfolk, Nebraska, area.

Lutheran clergy are taught a Christocentric focus that applies justification by grace through faith alone. But sometimes even Lutheran clergy are guilty of *spiritualizing* suffering and death. By spiritualizing, this author intends to point to that manner of ministry to the sick and dying that in itself disregards and encourages the sufferer simply to ignore the sheer physicality of suffering, with the result that what is happening to the body is not often addressed very well—or at all—in theological terms.

The sufferer remains a very physical creature and ultimately cannot escape his own flesh — and this by divine design!

Bodily aspects of suffering are sometimes treated as utterly irrelevant, nothing with which the preacher (or the sufferer) ought rightly concern himself. Sufferers are urged to consider things far away in heaven rather than come to understand that his or her body on earth still matters very much to Jesus, and remains of very great use to him! The body of the sufferer stands abandoned completely for the doctors and nurses to handle. Thus a pastor might easily and exclusively focus upon the soul of the sick and dying, spiritualizing the suffering itself.

The sufferer, however, remains a very physical creature and ultimately cannot escape his own flesh—and this by divine design! The sufferer must deal with it, whether a pastor offers the help and comfort of the gospel or not. This essay hopes to cope with that physicality of suffering, in order that we can better treat those in our care as if their bodies do truly matter just as much to God above as do their souls—even now, in their suffering. The doctrines of original sin, the incarnation, justification by grace, and vocation combine to define the precious and most useful role sufferers continue to play on earth in the divine economy of the kingdom of heaven.

THE SUFFERER'S BODY MATTERS MUCH TO GOD

Christ justifies sinful people, declaring them righteous and innocent before him. Christ redeems sinful people, completely purchasing them by his blood from all sin, death, and the power of the devil. There is a purpose to what Jesus has done, as the Small Catechism states: “that I may be his own, and live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in *everlasting* righteousness, innocence and blessedness” (Meaning of Second Article of the Creed, emphasis added). All of that which is “*everlasting*” must intrude into the now, completely to encompass the whole sufferer, body and soul.

Sufferers are sinful. This says much more than “a sufferer is a person who commits sin.” In the course of suffering debilitat-

ing and prolonged illness, one comes to a point wherein one can think, say, or do precious little at all—whether good or bad. Pastors have sometimes done their people a disservice by contributing to an understanding of sin that is essentially—and almost exclusively—cognitive, emotive, and behavioral. Sinners are not just people who do sinful things, think sinful things, or feel sinful things. Sufferers *are* sinful.

Much of American Christendom has all but forsaken and forgotten the doctrine of original sin, which necessitates a justification by grace alone. Countless times have orthodox Lutherans confessed before God and one another, “We are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word and deed. . . . We justly deserve Your temporal and eternal punishment.” One must consider these worthy words when one takes up the matter of sickness, suffering, and death. Notice in particular that phrase, “we are by nature sinful and unclean.” Even many Lutherans in the pew will conceive of sin in primarily cognitive, emotive, or behavioral terms. Also among orthodox preachers, often enough these mental, emotional, and actional matters are given the greater prominence in preaching and teaching and speaking of sin. This is unfortunate, in particular because at both the beginning and the end of life, one ministers to human beings with an extremely diminished capacity for any cognition, emotion, or behavior, good or bad. Therefore being focused on guilt incurred by what the Confessions term “actual sins” (sins involving activity), such Christians struggle to comprehend what precisely happens to their bodies, or to their loved one’s body. These cannot recall why death is so necessary a precursor of the resurrection to wholeness, perfection, and glory.

Sin is to behavior as a tree is to fruit. Sin is the cause of all misbehavior of mind, heart, and body. Acts of rebellion and disobedience comprise the fruit and result of our inward corruption. The Confessors illustrate this plainly in the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration 1:

[Original sin] is something in the nature, body, and soul of man, *and in all his powers*, namely, a horrible, deep, inexpressible corruption of the same, so that man is destitute of the righteousness wherein he was originally created, and in spiritual things is dead to good and perverted to all evil; and that, because of this corruption and inborn sin, which inheres in the nature, *all actual sins flow forth from the heart*. (par. 2, emphasis added)

The corruption of original sin permeates the flesh, adhering throughout that physical substance which is body, organs, skin, and bones. The flesh itself fails because of sin. God did not create man to die, but to live. As we well know, “the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23).

The phrase “by nature sinful and unclean” means that there exists in us an utter and terminal corruption, such that sinfulness is our state of being and the flesh stands guilty and condemned before God. *Unclean* means one cannot in his current, corrupt form be welcomed into the presence of the Holy One of Israel. Leviticus is helpful for correcting the concept of nearly

exclusive focus on cognitive and behavioral manifestations of sin, presenting us with the very real physicality of sin.

One's physical state alone was sufficient cause for exclusion from the presence and people of the God of Moses. Bleeding (even menses), infection, bad moles, contact with unclean things (a corpse), weeping wounds, or bad excretory function (incontinence)—these were all cause for exclusion and required the means appointed for its containment and cleansing. The priests were to concern themselves with such symptoms of sin, and when detected, forbid those whose inward corruption was breaking out in such a manner as to contaminate God's holy things or spread sin's uncleanness to others. For this reason the healing ministry of Jesus is unparalleled, because this God-Man willingly would draw near those who were sick and unclean and actually touch them. Christ takes on himself the uncleanness and defilement of sin and thus, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us" (2 Cor 5:21). So God excluded Jesus from the temple and cast him outside the holy city to an ignominious criminal's death on the cross, but in exchange brought healing by his word to many.

"Go, show yourself to the priests" is commanded in order that lepers might be readmitted into the presence of God, participate in the means of grace, and rejoin their place in the community of God's people (see Luke 5:12–14 and parallels). These point to a physicality of sinfulness and uncleanness *coram Deo* that often may be confessed, but seems seldom believed or apprehended in our contemporary age of medical sciences. Especially few perceive it in reference to suffering affliction, wounds, disease, and even death. More often than not these days, science defines death for Americans. For Christians, Christ must define death.

Thus the flesh stands condemned before God. There remains something so wretchedly wrong with the corrupt human creature (even after baptism) that only a resurrection will fix it. This God knows full well and actually states plainly enough in many places. Romans 6 comes to mind, read at both baptisms and at funerals. "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we were buried with him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin" (Rom 6:3–6).

Christians remain *simul iustus et peccator* this side of the grave. That means God's saints in this world continue to have a sinful flesh that must be put to death in order that it may be raised whole and undefiled. Lutherans confess that it is good and just and right that God should destroy these sinful bodies. Lutherans confess it is necessary for our most holy God to do so "that the body of sin might be done away with" (Rom 6:6). So we Lutherans pray whenever we confess "we justly deserve [both] Your temporal and eternal punishment." In other words, we are saying: "God, we believe by rights you should destroy us now and forever."

Luther also teaches Christians in the Small Catechism to pray that God "would break and hinder every evil scheme and purpose of . . . our sinful nature" (Lord's Prayer, Third Petition). To pray that God would break and hinder the sinful nature is no trifling matter, especially when that sinful nature remains essentially part of "the earthly tent which is our house" (2 Cor 5:1–4 NASB) for the present. The Lord answers that prayer he taught all disciples to pray. He breaks the sinful nature, in which breaking that nature finds no pleasure. "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand" (Deut 32:39 ESV).

Jesus willingly would draw near those who were sick and unclean and actually touch them.

The Formula of Concord offers a needful corrective though, in our understanding of the distinction between original sin and the "very good" (Gen 1) human flesh God created, as stated, for example, in Epitome 1.

7] Hence the distinction between the corrupt nature and the corruption which infects the nature and by which the nature became corrupt, can easily be discerned. 8] 3. But, on the other hand, we believe, teach, and confess that original sin is not a slight, but so deep a corruption of human nature that nothing healthy or uncorrupt has remained in man's body or soul, in his inner or outward powers, but, as the Church sings: Through Adam's fall is all corrupt, Nature and essence human.

9] This damage is unspeakable, and cannot be discerned by reason, but only from God's Word. 10] And [we affirm] that no one but God alone can separate from one another the nature and this corruption of the nature, which will fully come to pass through death, in the [blessed] resurrection, where *our nature which we now bear will rise and live eternally without original sin and separated and sundered from it*, as it is written Job 19, 26: "I shall be compassed again with this my skin, and in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold." (emphasis added)

So in death and the resurrection God finally will have "*separated and sundered*" the corruption of original sin that adheres to the physical being from that good flesh that he created. Were sin not a physical problem, flesh-and-blood people would need no resurrection, no physical Christ, nor any physical means of grace by which to receive Christ. But because sin is and remains also a bodily issue, sinful and unclean people need such things

as water and bread and wine and the revealed Word of God in, with, and under it all.

Orthodox Lutherans will stand for no less than a physical Jesus Christ who “was conceived . . . , born . . . , suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried, who descended into hell, and on the third day rose again from the dead [literally, bodily, physically] and ascended into heaven” (Apostles’ Creed). Among those churches who deny the physicality of original sin, one logically winds up with a spiritualized Jesus and little if any use for the physical sacraments Christ appointed as his means of grace for dealing with our physical problem with the fallen flesh. That spiritualized Jesus likewise finds little value or use in that same person’s flesh. Not only the soul, but our bodies too are redeemed and belong in heaven, thanks be to God! What this means in the hour of our death is that apart from faith that believes what God says about the bodily aspects of our problem with sin, human suffering and death appears always unfair and unjust. Fine, upstanding, church-going folks who do not comprehend the physicality of sin, its substantive nature, inevitably conceive of sin existing mostly in somewhat more easily managed cognitive, emotional, and behavioral ways.

Death is that sundering of original sin from the “very good” redeemed creature of God.

But for those who do confess the physical reality of sin in the flesh, these find death’s sting is lost precisely because we believe God is herein separating the corruption from his good physical creature. He shall raise that “very good” sin-free person from death for Christ’s sake, whole and undefiled, and welcome that redeemed and resurrected creature fully into his presence once more, where “we shall see him face to face” (1 Cor 13:12). The corruption itself is removed and destroyed, that good creature of God, formerly corrupted, is resurrected and restored to physical presence before God to rest eternally in his favor. Death is the separation of body and soul, as most people with even vaguely Christian background believe. Even better for us, death is that sundering of original sin from the “very good” redeemed creature of God, that most necessary precursor to resurrection.

Even those living at the time of Christ’s return must undergo and experience this complete and final sundering of the Old Adam from the New Man. Witness St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:

I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but *we will all be changed*—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable,

and *we will be changed*. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” (1 Cor 15:50–54 NIV; emphasis added)

THE SACRED VOCATION OF THE SUFFERING, SICK, AND DYING

God calls his people to certain tasks by various means. God calls pastors to the ministry of word and sacrament by means of his church. God calls men and women to the vocation of husband and wife in marriage. He calls them to the office of father and mother ordinarily by means of intercourse or via adoption. He calls some persons to oversight and stewardship of a business by inheritance or the blessing of their hard work; through these managers of his blessings, God calls employees to their various vocations when they are hired. God grants all persons the calling to love and serve their neighbor in many stations and by various means. In this ordinary fashion, “all things work together for good to those who love God” (Rom 8:28).

A beautiful example of this is found in the Gospel, where Jesus heals a paralytic (Matt 9, Mark 2, Luke 5). This miraculous healing account shows many different persons in their various vocations all working together. The centerpiece of each account is that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins—that Jesus justifies sinful people by grace, through faith.

One man is a paralytic. Whether a partial or more complete paralysis afflicts him is not stated. None of the accounts lists the cause of his paralysis. Whether from birth, by injury, or due to some disease (for example, Parkinson’s disease or stroke) is of no concern. Plainly, though, the man cannot spiritually cure or care for himself—nor even act to secure audience with Jesus. Ponder that man’s life the day, or month, or perhaps years before Jesus ever came to town, and the hour of his restoration and relief arrived for him. Day by day, a man suffered his limitations, which compelled him to rely upon friends for transportation, likely also for food, shelter, clothing, and all his bodily needs. Whether the man prayed or cried out to God for help and mercy in his circumstances is not told us, but seems likely enough. Whether he could even talk is not made clear. God gave the paralytic friends and family to supply his need, and they do just that. Mark and Luke point out in particular, “and when Jesus saw their faith,” he acted (Mark 2:5, Luke 5:20). The referent of “their” certainly points to the four men who brought the paralytic; whether “their” includes the paralytic himself remains uncertain at best. At the very least, the paralytic’s own faith is not primarily in view. Those four people together worked to bring the paralytic to Jesus. They believed Jesus could help him. This is told us explicitly in the word and shown us by their deeds of service to their neighbor. They brought him to the place where Jesus could be found helping and healing many. Those today who care for the sick and dying have a difficult calling to behold intimately the extremes of human brokenness. The Christian caregiver’s calling exercises faith in Christ and

responds to human need. The more difficult calling, though, is that which God bestows upon the paralytic himself, by means of whatever birth defect, injury, or illness placed his paralysis upon him. This man, too, has a vocation—a calling from God. This sufferer’s vocation also must “work together for the good of those who love God” and serve ultimately to reveal God in the flesh who absolves sinners.

God does not need our good works, but our neighbor does (as Gustav Wingren summarizes Luther). That general Christian calling and command to love and serve our neighbor’s needs lacks purpose without finding some neighbor who, in fact, does need our help. One is called to experience need, the other called to meet, address, and (insofar as possible) help fulfill that need. Such is the economy of God’s kingdom: Christians constantly exchange a holy giving and receiving in accord with their calling, the common transactions of now experiencing terribly demanding needs for gifts graciously given, and then in turn supplying a neighbor’s need out of the abundance of God’s blessings graciously received.

In the course of hospice chaplaincy, I find myself thinking often of this passage. It is a team effort to identify and address a patient’s various needs. Together doctor and nurse, health aide and trained volunteer, social worker, chaplain, family members and others each strive according to their calling to help meet and carry the burden of terminal illness pressed upon a person and his family. In this way, Christians commonly “bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal 6:2 ESV).

Such is my calling in life today, that I might by word and sacrament bring Christ to meet people in their brokenness and help people in their final weakness and distress be brought nearer to Jesus. Lutherans know where Jesus is pleased to be found, absolving and tending still to the sick and wounded lambs of his flock. That ordained servant of the word is to give from Christ’s abundance; the sufferer’s calling and work is to receive that abundance in faith. The doctor, nurse, social workers, health aides, and volunteers each provide from the abundance of their gifts of knowledge, skill, and medicinal resources for the person’s safety, sustenance, shelter, dignity, comfort, and relief. In faith, the sick and suffering Christian receives them. All his life, the Christian has received God’s gifts through his appointed means in faith.

Though it ought to be obvious enough, this fact simply does not go without saying. Thus Jesus says, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick” (Luke 5:31; Mark 2:17; Matt 5:12). The one who is not paralyzed does not need four friends or family members to carry him to Jesus, cut a hole in a roof, and lower him down. Those without sinful flesh do not need a called and ordained servant of the word to baptize, absolve, or commune them either. Here we behold the first part of the sufferer’s service to his neighbor: the sufferer provides manifold opportunity for others to exercise their faith in Christ, whether this be through prayer and intercession, through visitation, through fulfillment of medical vocations—indeed, even office personnel to process and keep records. Truly, “all things work together for the good of those who love God in Christ Jesus.”

Together, pastors, hospice team, and family members serve the needs of our neighbors, all the while acutely aware that we may one day be called to that same office of suffering sickness and want. The sufferer’s office may include for us all the human weakness and need we find in our suffering neighbor right now. We may be called one day to serve our neighbors by providing through our suffering an opportunity for them to exercise faith in Christ and render their love and support in keeping with God’s command.

The sufferer provides manifold opportunity for others to exercise their faith in Christ.

One day, most likely, it will be your turn and my turn to lay in that bed and trust in God to shower down gracious gifts for body and soul. God graciously gives gifts far beyond what one easily imagines or deserves to help him, even when a person has lost all capacity to care and fend for himself. Chief among those necessary gifts is the absolution that Christ bestows. This Jesus grants the paralytic, first and foremost. The healing comes—a veritable resurrection of sorts—only to prove his authority and righteousness in forgiving sinners.

LEARN FROM SUFFERERS THE MEANING OF THE VERB *DIED*

God’s purpose is hidden in suffering, both from the sufferer and from those who encounter him. Whenever God’s word is revealed, his purpose is made known to faith. We do know much of what God intends to do to us, and through us, in our suffering and death.

Ask most contemporary Americans how they hope to die and two key notions present themselves. “Peacefully in my sleep” would likely top the list. “Quickly, instantly if possible” is most probably the other top response, perhaps emphasized by a quick snap of the fingers. Both of these share in common the absence of suffering, especially prolonged suffering. Naturally, none aspires to a death like our Lord’s death.

Christian artwork, hymnody, and even sermons quite often present Christ’s death to people as heroic, tragic, or mystical. If this be true, it is only in hindsight. At the time, Jesus died as ordinary-looking a death as had the men hanging on either side of him. Jesus does not die alone, but in the company of sinful people in whose humiliation and weakness he fully shares. On one side, a man dies bitter and angry, mocking all the while. On the other side, a man dies in repentance and faith, asking simply “Remember me.”

Part of the purpose of the sufferer’s vocation was illustrated above in terms of providing occasion for others’ exercise of faith and obedient fulfillment of their respective vocations.

Humbly the sufferer receives those gifts with thanksgiving. In that sense, the sufferer is a model of the whole Christian life, wherein we constantly must stand as beggars before God, receiving his undeserved gifts by grace alone. Yet there remains another purpose to the sufferer's vocation, the preeminent purpose, specific to the suffering of the Christian.

The sufferer is a model of the whole Christian life, wherein we constantly must stand as beggars before God, receiving his undeserved gifts by grace alone.

God presents his baptized sufferers as a living picture and witness to his own Son's suffering. This is more easily seen and understood in distant history and even at our present time, in the case of those who are "martyred" for the faith. Too often these Christians are literally crucified before the world's mass media cameras, forwarded in email, shared on Facebook, even tweeted on Twitter.

Those who endure a slow death due to incremental disease progression (such as Alzheimer's disease, various slower growing cancers, and the like) or a gradual decline with prolonged medical treatment due to advanced age alike are not commonly considered among the numbers of Christian martyrs. Nonetheless, these believers also bear witness to Christ's own humiliation as they fulfill the sufferer's vocation.

Christians learn to pray from Christ. They come to join him in his prayer, "Why have you forsaken me?" Beholding the often senseless actions of those around them, they learn also to pray, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." In the end, Christians join Jesus in praying, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit," and also breathe their last.

Frequently in the course of presentations on this subject and my work as a hospice chaplain, I am often told afterward, "I don't think I could ever do what you do, visiting the dying." It is difficult at times, less so at others. But in so doing, I find God constantly sets before my eyes a vivid, living picture of what our Lord Jesus endured for our sakes, though certainly without the nails and thorns and soldiers. All our lives long, we who were raised in the Christian church are told, "Jesus died for you." At some point in life, we must learn what that verb *died* means, what it looks like, what it involves.

Aside from experiencing times of active, violent persecution, Christians are most likely to learn about dying during those times of illness, suffering, and death of their family members or friends. But the witness given to Christ is not obvious apart from the word of God. That word which speaks of the nature of original sin needs to be taught and spoken, for the deaths we witness are the separation and sundering of the Old Adam from the New Man of the baptized. The marvel of the incarnation itself needs to be proclaimed, that Christ took upon himself skin and bones as real as those lying there, dying on the bed. That word which proclaims that Jesus, through his death, justifies sinful people by grace through faith, needs to be spoken. Families and friends also need that word through which Christ gently splashes forgiveness upon the fallen flesh of a sinner in baptism and speaks absolution to the sick because it is their chief need. That word must be administered by which Jesus touches the lips and tongue of the same in Holy Communion, there exchanging his holiness and righteousness for the uncleanness and corruption evident in the flesh.

St. Paul notes in Romans 8:28–29 (and teaches elsewhere in different form): "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son." Sin is not primarily cognitive, emotive, or behavioral — but has a certain physicality to it. How much more is this true of our being "conformed to the image of his Son" through the vocation of suffering, through death, and ultimately through the resurrection?!? **LOGIA**

Apostolic Suffering in 2 Corinthians

ADAM KOONTZ



ST. PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE Corinthians is not classified with the two letters to Timothy and the letter to Titus as one of the Pastoral Epistles, but this must be due more to tradition than Scripture. In all of Paul's Epistles his heart is laid open (6:11),¹ and his profoundly intense care for his hearers is everywhere apparent, "besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches" (11:28). No Pauline Epistle surpasses 2 Corinthians in unguarded emotion and pained yet soaring rhetoric. In 2 Corinthians the heart from which proceed all things in a man's life is wide open.

This has occasioned accusations of disorder and distraction in Paul's thought,² and is the most basic reason that 2 Corinthians is chopped up by critics into numerous different documents, layerings, and redactions.³ All are agreed that the letter was formed by the stitching together of many documents, though no two agree on what those documents were or may have been.⁴ We may concede that 2 Corinthians is less well organized than Romans without seeing it as the product of many hands or incremental production across time.⁵ There are scholarly yet faithful explanations for the great shifts in tone and subject within the letter's body, but our concern here will be the pastoral unity of the letter in Paul's suffering as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Whatever the circumstances of its composition, one finds Paul "crucified in weakness" (13:4) at every stage. The letter is one in its focus on the nature and necessity of suffering in the life of those who preach the gospel. It is Paul's pastoral "theology of the cross."

SUFFERING AT THE HANDS OF THE WORLD

In considering suffering at the hands of unbelievers, there is a strange silence in the letter. Paul's suffering from his extra-ecclesiastical opponents, both Jews and Gentiles, is mentioned in 2 Corinthians as a fact of his life (6:5; 11:24–27, 33). Without further elaboration he accepts it as descriptive of the apostolic life. What is noticeably absent in Paul's description of his sufferings from non-Christians or even the elements (see 11:25–26) is outrage or other emotional intensity. He mentions his suffering at the hands of Jews (11:24) and Gentiles (11:26) only by way of "foolish boasting," something he would not do were he not pushed to it (11:16). He is by no means surprised that he suffers

at the hands of unbelievers nor does he devote time to complaining about or explaining its existence. He does not need to justify its presence. Paul has accepted the dominical teaching that suffering will come to the disciples of Jesus because they belong to him and not to Caesar, Herod, or Mammon (Matt 16:25).

Therefore the apostle is not subject to passions born of continual recrimination or to anger directed at anyone outside the church. Hatred and rage are characteristics of the Gentiles who are under the sway of their own passions (1 Thess 4:5; Titus 3:3). Paul now suffers from others what he once inflicted on the church,⁶ yet the irony is cause for thanksgiving and praise, not anger (1 Tim 1:16, among others). He can cultivate and counsel good works in the face of persecution (Rom 12:17–21) because he does not rely on an extra- or subtheological account of "rights" or "religious freedom" bound to disappoint its believers when their rights and freedoms are trampled by earthly forces mightier than they who can "kill the body" (Matt 10:28). He does not expect the world to accord him freedom or the right to wor-

1. Thus all references to 2 Corinthians itself. References to other canonical books will be preceded with the book's abbreviation.
2. Notable breaks in the flow of thought occur between 2:13 and 2:14; 6:13; 7:4 and 7:5; the position of chapters 8 and 9; and the transition between 9:15 and 10:1.
3. "G. Bornkamm . . . has offered a reconstruction that sees no fewer than five or six compositions, including a 'Letter of Defense' (2:14–6:13; 7:2–4)" (Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 40 [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1986], xxxix). Bornkamm's reconstruction, like all others, welds together parts of the text never found together in any extant manuscript.
4. A helpful table summarizing the various critical theories is available in Margaret E. Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 1:47–49.
5. An attractive suggestion accounting for the letter's stops and starts is offered by H. C. G. Moule: "We may picture the Apostle composing it, perhaps as we have already suggested in sections, as he travels along the Roman road from one church centre in Macedonia to another in the summer and autumn of the year 57 AD" (H. C. G. Moule, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* [London: Pickering & Inglis, 1962], xxviii).
6. "There is irony in the fact that as a Christian Paul repeatedly received the very punishment—synagogal floggings—that he, as a ruthless persecutor of Christians, had repeatedly caused to be meted out to them or himself had inflicted on them (Acts 22:19; 26:11)" (Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005], 802).

ADAM KOONTZ is senior pastor of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Lititz, Pennsylvania.

ship Christ as God, so that its hatred and persecution are in accord with its devotion to the flesh and to demons (Gal 4:8). The unbeliever is unwise according to Paul's gospel, for if he were wise, he would "not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor 2:8), nor flogged or beaten his servant who shares abundantly in the Messiah's sufferings (1:5). The world's violence proceeds from its basic allegiance to its god (4:4).

The preacher's conformity to the gospel is evident in his conformity to the sufferings of Jesus.

The world lies on the other side of Paul's most basic divide between the Spirit and the flesh (Rom 8:3–4), and the unspiritual man does not comprehend the things of the Spirit (1 Cor 2:14). He can then scarcely be expected to appreciate or recognize or tolerate the things of the Spirit, when they are foolishness to him and a public danger to the belief structures that hold communities together (for example, the riot of the Ephesian idolaters in Acts 19:21–41). Our modern tendency to understand persecution as rare or unfortunate or outrageous is foreign to Paul. Suffering at the hands of the unregenerate is for him natural and cannot be the reason for the emotional intensity of 2 Corinthians.

SUFFERING AT THE HANDS OF CHRISTIANS

The Corinthians themselves are the major source of Paul's suffering; they are the cause for his tone, his urgency, and even his seeming distraction in writing. His anxiety over them to which he gives voice issues forth in this epistle as a lover's complaint.

Second Corinthians may be the fourth of Paul's missives written during his absence from this church he planted, but even if one holds that the two canonical letters are the only letters he sent to Corinth, 2 Corinthians is at least his second attempt at righting the vessel.⁷ Notable is the dearth of results for his work. The man whom Paul desires the Corinthians to restore (2:5–8) may be the man who committed incest and is censured in 1 Corinthians 5, yet other than that, one finds little improvement, if overwhelming sorrow may in some sense be an improvement. If some disorders mentioned in 1 Corinthians — such as the confusion of male and female roles — are not picked up in 2 Corinthians, it can only be because it is more urgent that Paul attend to their treatment of him and their pref-

erence for the false teachers who threaten his ministry ("for you put up with fools gladly" [11:19]).

The Corinthians spoke so ill of Paul (10:10) that he must defend himself and his ministry *in extenso*. Paul reviews in 2 Corinthians 1–4 not just a general understanding of how the Old Testament relates to the New Testament, or how the law and ministry of Moses relate to the gospel and ministry of Christ, but the very specific reason and purpose for his own preaching of the gospel of Christ. Each point of distinction between the ministry of condemnation and the ministry of righteousness is an occasion for careful consideration of Paul's own practice of ministry. Openness is characteristic of the ministry of righteousness in which nothing is any longer veiled (3:18). The face of God is no longer veiled but known in Christ (4:6), which is Paul's entire task. The Scriptures are no longer veiled but known to be about Christ according to Paul's preaching from the very beginning in Corinth (Acts 18:5). Paul's ministry of righteousness has been entirely open and forthright in accord with the gospel he preaches by the Spirit who sets free and does not hold back anything from those he graces (1:12).

Questions have arisen about whether or not Paul is sufficient or fit for the ministry he claims to have received. The numerous references to sufficiency in 2 Corinthians at 2:16; 3:5; 3:6; and 12:9 all make it a certain sore spot Paul cannot help rubbing to ease the pain. He does not pretend to be sufficient, as do his opponents, but questions the entire premise of self-sufficiency: "Who is sufficient for these things?" (2:16).⁸ If the Corinthians must question whether or not Paul's uncharismatic personality or his inability to heal the thorn in his own flesh are truly signs of the invalidity of his ministry, then they question the gospel of Jesus crucified in weakness. The preacher's conformity to the gospel is evident in his conformity to the sufferings of Jesus (1:5); when one dispenses with the preacher, one dispenses with the Jesus he preaches. Christology is pastoral theology and always vice versa.

This undermining of Paul is then a return to something that is not the gospel, a return to reading the Scriptures apart from Christ crucified (3:14), as those do to whom Paul has not preached. The congregation that attacks the apostle attacks the apostolic gospel and so returns to the beggarly elements of this present age, under the sway of the god of this age who blinds the unbeliever (4:4) that he may not know the glory of God in Christ. Paul's vehemence in Galatians is matched by 2 Corinthians because in both the accusations against Paul are so extensive that the congregations are in danger of losing their faith altogether.

7. For two faithful attempts to interpret the Corinthian correspondence in its canonical integrity, see the brief chronology laid out by Martin, *2 Corinthians*, xlvi, with the tremendously helpful complete chronology of Paul's relationship with Corinth in Harris, *The Second Epistle*, 102–5.

8. "Die Gegner müssen gesagt haben: *ἰκανοί ἔσμεν*. Dieser selbstbewußten Behauptung stellt Paulus seine kritische Frage entgegen. Paulus will zeigen, daß es unmöglich ist, sich angesichts des richtenden Gottes mit Dingen zu schmücken, die eigentlich nur Gott zukommen. . . . Die Gegner konnten offenbar deshalb so ungebrochen *von ihrer Fähigkeit reden, weil ihnen der eschatologische Aspekt fehlte, der Paulus die Dinge ins rechte Lot rücken läßt*" (Dieter Georgi, *Die Gegner des Paulus im 2. Korintherbrief* [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1964], 224–25; emphasis added).

The pain Paul experiences comes because his entire intention in the Corinthian endeavor is therefore misunderstood. He must continually refute the suggestion that his use of authority is for his own benefit (1:24; 10:8), as if his ministry were at any point or in any sense self-aggrandizing, where Christ's was self-denying. He has scrupulously avoided being a burden at any point in the Corinthian work (11:9). He is not a lord but a fellow worker for the joy of the Corinthians (1:24). One knows that the Corinthians did not beat Paul or chase him out of town so that he had to escape through a hole in the city wall lying in a wicker basket (11:32–33). The suffering he experiences from them is not a light thing as beatings or stripes or stoning might be, because what the Christians do to him is worse than what the world does to him.

The world may attack the body, but the Christians attack body and soul by questioning the entire purpose of Paul's apostolate, his proclamation of Jesus to the Gentiles; they question the calling of God in Christ to Paul. This is why Paul devotes so much time to the distinction between the law and the gospel (3:4–18) and the nature of Christ's reconciliation of the world to himself (5:12–21). He is going over well-trodden ground (see 3:4–18 and Rom 7:8 or 5:12–21 with Gal 4:4–7; Eph 5:1–2), but with the rehearsal of these basics and the plea to the Corinthians to be reconciled to God, Paul is speaking not to unbelievers but to Christians in present danger of unbelief, Christians who in rejecting the sent one may reject the One who sent him, "lest being present I should use sharpness," a knife that might excise too much altogether (13:10).

Thus Paul's urgency and constant connecting of catechesis to pastoral theology: each portion of his catechism, whether the distinction between law and gospel, the atonement, the place of Moses, or the office of the ministry itself, is an occasion for the Corinthians to understand why Paul does what he does and is who he is. As in a classical pastoral text, Paul explores the key points of the faith in their intimate connection to the purpose and manner—the entire tenor—of his ministry.⁹

THE FALSE APOSTLES

Paul's ultimate opponents are not, though, the congregation. They reflect the messages they have come to believe (11:19–20), just as Jesus may have been decried by his fellow Jews but only at the instigation of Jewish leaders. His heart is open to the Corinthians, but for his real opponents he does not speak of reconciliation (5:18; 6:13) but of blindness (4:4) and falsehood (11:13). The false apostles have an entirely different ministry not of Christ or from Christ; they are deceitful workers whose origin is in Satan (11:14). This is identifiable not so much in their message, which may sound similar to Paul's, as in their way of life and boasting, which are so different from his own. Where Christ and Paul suffer, the false apostle goes from strength to strength

and is made perfect in strength, not weakness. The Corinthian muttering about Paul stems from his weakness (10:10), such a contrast to the power of his opponents.

The pain Paul experiences comes because his entire intention in the Corinthian endeavor is misunderstood.

Paul cannot boast save in Christ, but the false apostle can boast about his heritage¹⁰ and his deeds.¹¹ It is everywhere characteristic of Paul that he lives in suffering, while his opponents escape it. His catalogue of suffering appears foolish in the eyes of the "wise," but is actually a glorying in the God whose glory is known in the suffering Christ. His opponents live well or at least preach and live as they do with the intent of living well; he calls them very simply "those who desire to be regarded" (11:12). In all this they make no scruples about deception and falsehood in order to bring their hearers under their sway. They exercise a truly charismatic (in the modern usage of the word) authority, whereas Paul has no particular "draw" about him. Paul lives in crucifixion with Jesus. The opponents heal others and themselves. Paul cannot heal himself.¹² The minister's life mirrors the one in whose name he ministers.

Less patently obvious than it is in some of his other letters, Paul's understanding of his call is tremendously important for comprehending the nature of his accusations against the false apostles. Where Paul is called to be an apostle "by the will of God" (1:1), the false apostles transform themselves into apostles of Christ (11:13). Where Paul is given the ministry of righteousness (3:9; 4:1), the false apostles transform themselves into ministers of righteousness (11:15). This accords with their sending

9. "Thus as the 'Spirit-giver' with the gospel, Paul's role is parallel to that of Moses, the mediator *par excellence* between YHWH and Israel" (Scott J. Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990], 227).

10. Read behind Paul's "boast" at 11:22.

11. Likewise, behind their claim to be *diakonoi Christou* is Paul's redefinition of the term in 11:23. The servant of Christ is defined as the one who suffers the sufferings of Jesus for the sake of the body of Christ.

12. Frank J. Matera identifies three lines of interpretation on the "thorn in the flesh": (1) Paul was afflicted by head pains since he uses the verb *kolaphizo*, "to beat" or "to strike." Tertullian first recorded this understanding. (2) Chrysostom knew Tertullian's reading and rejected it because Satan had submitted himself to Paul already (*Homily* 26:2). Thus Paul was using "satan" in the Hebraic literal sense of "adversary," whom Chrysostom identified with Alexander the coppersmith (2 Tim 4:14), Hymenaeus and Philetus (2 Tim 2:17), and all adversaries of the gospel. (3) The popular Western understanding based on the Vulgate's *stimulus carni* of a sexual temptation was actually rejected by Luther and Calvin. See Matera, *II Corinthians* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2003), 283. Chrysostom's opinion has the most to recommend it as according with the pastoral difficulties of 2 Corinthians and Paul's similar vehemence about false teachers in 2 Timothy.

not from Christ but Satan, who acts not according to the call of God but according to his desire, and so transforms himself into what he is not, an angel of light (11:14). The false apostle is recognizable by his lack of conformity to the sufferings of Jesus and his being as self-made man. The true apostle is commissioned by Christ to preach the gospel and share abundantly in his Lord's sufferings. The preacher's God/god is evident in the preacher's origin and life.

IDENTITY WITH CHRIST

In these patterns of suffering, Paul does nothing other than substantiate the claim he makes in Galatians that he has been "crucified with Christ" (Gal 2:20), a statement indicative both of the Christian life and specifically of Paul's own life in Christ. The righteous one actually lives by faith, so that the cross of Jesus is his wisdom in all circumstances, whether suffering from Jews, Gentiles, or even false brothers. The apostle takes on an utter identity with the crucified Lord of glory.

He suffers at the hands of outsiders who misunderstand his message and person and have the power to do him bodily harm. This is no surprise to him, and even if it is the immediate cause of his imprisonment and death, he understands it as the will of the Father whose control over the world and time extends even to Gentile rulers. He is no panicky Samson trapped in the temple of a foreign god, bringing down himself with his enemies, but his entire service is for the sake of the enemy Gentiles that they might be reconciled to God by the blood of the cross.

He suffers most unrelentingly and perhaps surprisingly at the hands of his own, who receive him not. They refuse to agree with his christological interpretation of the Old Testament and will not cease to plot against him. They punish him as a blasphemer, and they are the ultimate cause of his death, working by means of the Romans. He receives stripes and stoning, and

his afflictions are borne in his own body. His own people speak against him violently and question whether or not he is who he claims to be. His identity as sent by God is questioned so constantly that the corpus narrating his life is concerned that it be substantiated at all times. No controversy is greater than the one caused by their refusal to recognize him as the one whom God had sent to be for them.

There are false substitutes for him who will arise and do arise, claiming to be like him but yet greater. He can never be rid of potential replacements or superseding figures until the end of time, so that in the meantime, he is very much concerned that those whom he catechizes should be able to recognize an impostor when he comes to them with their teacher's name on their lips. This preparatory teaching is his only weapon to protect the flock in his absence. Even his mission from God must be suffered, as the prayer is made that the suffering destined for him pass from him if it is possible. He appears to be a man under a curse who is unable to heal himself, however he may have healed others by God's power. Power in his case is exercised solely in weakness.

The singular pronoun refuses to be pinned down to one referent. Where we would find Paul's life, we find Jesus' also, and where we find Christ, we find Paul. Christ lives in Paul as they are crucified together. Paul's ministry becomes so identical to Jesus', that 2 Corinthians is the epistle of Christ's climactic teachings on his own suffering and the cries of desperation and loneliness tearing through him on the cross. In this pastoral theology Christ becomes all in all. The cross the apostle bears conforms entirely to the cross of Jesus. For the servant of Christ it is finally and utterly enough to be like the Master. No other life is his than suffering. No other death is his than for others. No other resurrection is his than by the surpassing power of God, which makes whole the shattered jar of clay. **LOGIA**

Lutheranism

Between Pietism and Orthodoxy?

SCOTT R. MURRAY



THE THEME OF THE North European Luther Academy Conference of 2014 is “Lutheran Spirituality in the Tension Between Orthodoxy and Pietism.” To my way of thinking, there is a world of trouble between Orthodoxy and Pietism.

At once, one can point to some salutary church practices that Pietism might have introduced to the Church of the Augsburg Confession, such as confirmation, pastoral conferences, catechetical services, the establishment of orphanages, and Sunday schools. However, such things are purely incidental to the heart and essence of Pietism. The Pietists would have generated no opposition from the Orthodox if their work had only entailed these revised or renewed practices. What orthodox Lutheran would look askance at those practices (although there are occasional rumblings against confirmation)? But are these practices being used to further proclamation of the truth or to enforce piety rules foreign to the justifying gospel of Jesus Christ by leading away from the means of grace and their objective delivery of the divine verdict of justification in the sight of God?

Here is how we judge doctrine and practice in the Lutheran church. Here is the way of the gospel that is itself the Bible’s own way. Even a correct view of the use of the law can become a false or misleading emphasis, if justification is not the ruling theological criterion. Luther says it so clearly in the Smalcald Articles: “Upon this article [of Jesus Christ] everything that we teach and practice depends” (SA II, I, 5). Both doctrine and practice must come under the discipline of the article of justification, which is the chief article and is about Jesus Christ and his status as a saving God. Indeed, the law can only be understood and rightly preached where justification functions in the way described by Luther in the Smalcald Articles.

When I was a college student many years ago, I often frequented the Lutheran bookstore in my home town. While perusing the bound offerings with some degree of bibliolatriy (a besetting sin for me), I stumbled across the title *Pietism*. I took the book to the cashier to buy it with a few other works I had chosen. While ringing up my purchase, the clerk looked at the title of the book and exclaimed, “Ooh, pietism! We need a lot

more of that.” After all, what could be wrong with piety? However, piety and pietism are not the same things at all, as I, like a coward, failed to explain to the clerk.

The difference between piety and pietism is like the difference between commune and communism. A commune freely agreed to may not be a bad thing, as was the case with the early church (see Acts 2:44). Once the commune becomes an overarching concern—the lens through which everything is interpreted—it becomes a dangerously dominating and oppressive world-view (notice the early church’s experiment in shared property was dropped very early on), as twentieth century history showed. Once the commune has become an “-ism,” it is an entirely different thing; it overrules all other life concerns, even trumping legitimate common sense in favor of its hidebound presuppositions. Pietism is similar in that piety is good, within its proper Lutheran boundaries. However, when piety becomes an “-ism” and begins to dictate the way in which theology looks at life, Scripture, liturgy, practice, and teaching, it can have a corrosive and dangerous effect on Lutheranism.¹

Pietism gained a metatheological or criteriological significance for its practitioners. How did that affect their approach to Lutheranism? It is the thesis of this paper that it displaced the metatheological function of justification in the life and teaching of the Lutheran church and brought a different hermeneutic to Scripture. The overarching normative power of Pietism set in the foreground the themes of external works, conversionism, chiliasm, ethical optimism, prayer meetings, and other pietistic themes. These subjects dominated the theological conversation. These dominating themes all too easily displaced the doctrine of justification among Lutherans. In this way, pietistic Lutherans lost the centrality of the doctrine by which the church stands or falls in favor of any number of collateral themes. And in this loss of justification there was lost the proper distinction between law and gospel and the right understanding of the use of the law in the church’s proclamation.

Do not misunderstand me; the themes often broached by pietistic Lutherans were not all bad (some were!), nor were they *intentionally* seeking to push justification to the edges of their theological activity or life. However, they did evince an ane-

SCOTT R. MURRAY is senior pastor of Memorial Lutheran Church and School, Houston, Texas, and a contributing editor for *LOGIA*. This paper was delivered at a conference of the North European Luther Academy (NELA) in Gothenburg, Sweden, 4–7 August 2014.

1. Certainly the Lutheran church had a piety long before there was a thing called Pietism, before piety got turned into an “-ism.” The term Pietism was coined after the publication of the *Pia Desideria* of Philipp Jacob Spener in 1675.

mic understanding of the meaning of justification as the chief article in the sense in which Luther and the Lutheran Confessions use it. Pietistic concerns simply pushed the central thing out of the center of Lutheran life, preaching, teaching, and the understanding of Scripture. I do not mean that pietistic leaders

Too often doctrinal discussions devolve into a piety fight: “I am nicer, more pious and holy than you; therefore, I am theologically correct and you are wrong.”

and preachers were treated by their orthodox Lutheran opponents in ways that were morally acceptable. However, moral failure does not mean that the concerns expressed by Pietism’s opponents were illegitimate. Bad behavior hardly invalidates the truth. Too often doctrinal discussions devolve into a piety fight: “I am nicer, more pious and holy than you; therefore, I am theologically correct and you are wrong.” However, since all men are liars (Ps 116:11), this is highly unlikely. God alone is true. When the truth is God’s, it may not be defeated by ethical arguments. Your piety does not improve God’s truth. Martin Luther said:

Therefore I say that there is no force that can resist the sects, and no remedy against them except this one doctrine of Christian righteousness. If this doctrine is lost, it is impossible for us to be able to resist any errors or sects. We can see this today in the fanatics, Anabaptists, and Sacramentarians. Now that they have fallen away from this doctrine, they will never stop falling, erring, and seducing others *ad infinitum*. Undoubtedly they will arouse innumerable sects and think up new works. Although in outward appearance all these things may be very good and saintly, what are they in comparison with the death and the blood of the Son of God, who gave Himself for me? Who is this Son of God? What are heaven and earth in comparison with Him? Rather than that the truth of the Gospel should be obscured and the glory of Christ perish, let all the fanatics and papists go to hell, with all their righteousnesses, works, and merits—even if the whole world should be on their side! Then why is it that they brag about works and merits? If I, an accursed and damned sinner, could be redeemed by some other price, what need was there that the Son of God should be given for me? But because there was no price in heaven or on earth except Christ, the Son of God, therefore it was extremely necessary that He be given for me. (LW 26:176–77)

Note that for Luther, in the midst of controversy, the person and work of Christ and his perfect cleansing righteousness must be brought to the forefront. This, it seems to me, was often lost by the Pietists who demanded greater external piety. Nor is this problem resolved by looking at particular biblical texts taken out of the larger theological context as offered by the Bible itself in the article of justification. Exegetes seem to be adept in telling us the meaning of particular snippets of the biblical text, or in setting them in the context of a particular biblical book or genre of literature. However, they are inept in seeing how biblical texts are woven into the larger theological picture created by the Bible. And as important as issues of literary context might be, not paying attention to the theological universe in which they are set can cause significant confusions. It is somewhat like looking into the night sky and presuming that the sight that shimmers before us is created by a pin hole display pasted just above our heads. If we interpret what we see on the basis of that misunderstanding, we will make grave errors about the meaning of what is seen. So too, for example, with the use of the law; if it is not understood within the field of meaning created by the Bible in the article of justification, then grave errors, legalistic errors, will creep into the interpretation and application of the teaching of the Bible. This is Scripture’s own view of itself.²

I know nothing about how Pietism affected church practice and theology in Scandinavia and Finland, beyond a general familiarity with, and appreciation for, Bishop Bo Giertz. I will leave it to the Scandinavians and the Finns to be the experts here. I will look at how Pietism made an impact on nineteenth-century American Lutheranism and the reaction to that Pietism beginning about the mid-nineteenth century, with a view to the use of the law in Lutheran preaching, and the understanding of Scripture.

Historically speaking, early American Lutheranism was nothing but pietistic. The first Lutheran missionaries who arrived on the shores of pre-Revolutionary America were sent by none other than the Franckean Pietists of Halle. Before coming to America, the father of American Lutheranism, the much-revered Henry Melchior Muhlenberg (1711–1787), taught at Halle. He arrived in America in 1742, beating back the incursions of Zinzendorf among the German Lutheran congregations of Pennsylvania. His sons were educated at Halle and were thoroughgoing Pietists. Father and sons had an enormous impact on American Lutheranism until the end of the American Civil War (1865). They started and served many congregations, taught future preachers, and oriented to the American context the missionaries sent from Halle. Their most significant protégé was none other than Samuel Simon Schmucker (1799–1873) of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, where he founded a seminary upon pietistic lines.

2. See my paper delivered at the conference of the North European Luther Academy in 2007 and published by *LOGIA*: “Church Authority and Scripture Authority: The Intersection of Law and Gospel.” *LOGIA* 17, no. 2 (Eastertide 2008): 29–37.

Schmucker was the true spiritual son of eighteenth-century American Pietism. Schmucker specifically said that he “desire[d] to establish a Franckean Seminary.” That Franckean Seminary was the Gettysburg Seminary. Schmucker’s work might be considered the ultimate and proper conclusion to the pietistic tradition in America. The American context, untouched by Orthodoxy or government intrusion, was then a hothouse in which the true fruit of Pietism could grow and flourish without external hindrance. Perhaps Schmucker was the last true and the most truthful Pietist.³

It is worthwhile tracing some aspects of that final efflorescence and ultimate eclipse of the pietistic tradition in America. As the eighteenth century came to a close, American Lutherans sought to organize into synods. Schmucker’s father, John George Schmucker, was the president of the Pennsylvania Ministerium, which had been founded by Muhlenberg in 1748 and had begun trying to build unity with other ministeria along the eastern seaboard of the United States. Founded in 1820, the original constitution of the General Synod made no reference whatsoever to the Lutheran Confessions. Having inherited doctrinal indifferentism from their pietistic forebears, they thought of arguments over nonfundamental doctrines as “a particularly heinous sin.”⁴ It is quite hard to tell what those nonfundamental doctrines might have been, although in the first half of the nineteenth century, the laundry list became quite shocking, much to the detriment of the article of justification and the proper distinction between law and gospel. Schmucker wrote as early as 1820, “a confession should be adopted which ought to include only fundamental doctrines, and that would leave sufficient room for . . . liberty of thought. . . . This would enable us to exclude from the Church of Christ those pests of society, the socinians.” The problem is that this very liberty of thought would allow socinianism to intrude just where Schmucker intended to exclude it.⁵

Schmucker was educated at Princeton, where he was influenced by Archibald Alexander and Samuel Miller.⁶ Alexander

was influenced by both Puritanism and Pietism.⁷ Miller “considered the Pietism of Spener as a reformation of Lutheranism that restored it to the shape originally given to it by Martin Luther. He even asserted that it was in the followers of Spener that the true church was to be found in Germany during the seventeenth century.”⁸ This education simply reinforced Schmucker’s strong pietistic leanings.

Optimistic assessments of American Pietism begin and end on a faulty view of the article of justification.

Since the 1950s church historians in America have attempted to revive the reputation of Pietism. However, optimistic assessments of American Pietism begin and end on a faulty view of the article of justification. Paul P. Kuenning is a characteristic example. Kuenning was seeking to vindicate what he called “activist” Christianity, which gets involved in the latest movements in the culture and political realm, for example, supporting the push toward social justice, along with whatever may be entailed in it. In the United States the church body that has become the heir to this activism is the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, founded the year Kuenning’s work was published in 1988. Remarkably, he can say, “Pietists felt little compunction about applying the *precepts of the gospel* to civil affairs as well as to community, family, and personal life.”⁹ Completely apart from what this means historically about Pietism, it makes it quite clear that Kuenning, who sought to give American Pietism a clean bill of theological health, could only do so in terms that do not derive from confessional Lutheran theology—his “precepts of the gospel” being a contradiction in terms strictly speaking and a loud echo of the medieval “evangelical precepts” so roundly excoriated by Martin Luther. This is purely a confusion of law and gospel. Kuenning can vindicate the pietism of Samuel Simon Schmucker because Kuenning does not know what the Lutheran doctrine of justification means or how it functions.

In the introduction to his book, Kuenning claims to be looking at the more positive aspects of the American pietistic tradition.¹⁰ However, assessing the theological value of Pietism

3. Kuenning rightly says that under Schmucker’s influence “American Lutheran Pietism reached the pinnacle of its power and influence” (Paul P. Kuenning, *The Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism: The Rejection of an Activist Heritage* [Macon: Mercer University Press, 1988], 60).

4. *Ibid.*

5. As an historical aside, it is no wonder that Franz Pieper of the Missouri Synod spends so much time defining fundamental and nonfundamental articles in his *Christian Dogmatics*; not because it is a particularly helpful distinction theologically or biblically, but because so much of early American Lutheranism had already danced with these demons. Doctrinal indifferentism of one level or another was a hallmark of American Lutheranism until the mid-nineteenth century.

6. “Schmucker’s conviction that reason always ratified the claims of revelation was heightened, his sympathy for moral causes confirmed, his devotion to personal piety and revival expanded, and his understanding of other Protestant denominations brought and sharpened. The Presbyterian Church had afforded Schmucker a positive and highly creditable educational experience, but in no discernible way had diminished the dedication to his Lutheran

heritage. He left Princeton as he arrived, a devotee of classical Lutheran Pietism” (Kuenning, *American Lutheran Pietism*, 64). This simply means that Kuenning presumes that Pietism is the legitimate Lutheran heritage as espoused by Schmucker. Of course, we would disagree most strenuously.

7. Kuenning, *American Lutheran Pietism*, 62.

8. *Ibid.*, 64.

9. *Ibid.*, 16 (emphasis my own).

10. *Ibid.*, 4.

cannot merely devolve into a study “accentuating the positive and eliminating the negative,” as the old Sam Cooke pop song put it. This is hardly a theologically adequate way to assess any theological movement. Instead, in confessional Lutheran theology we are attempting to assess theological tendencies and practices on the basis of the person of Christ, the doctrine of justification, and the proper distinction between law and gospel, which all belong together. If we eliminated the negative, all law preaching would immediately be a casualty of that method.

In Pietism, sanctification and its cultivation, instead of justification, norms everything.

Kuenning actually contended that the American Pietists did not depart from the basic Reformation heritage, as mediated by Martin Luther. According to Kuenning, Schmucker’s Pietism

traced its roots back to Martin Luther and to the classic doctrines of the Reformation. On these well-accepted Lutheran foundations it continued to promote the strong strain of spirituality that had been a major characteristic of German Pietism. . . . American Lutheran Pietism directed this spiritual emphasis into practical forms of active expression rather than intricate doctrinal definitions. It moved more in the direction of ethics than of dogma, practical religion rather than doctrinal formulation, activism rather than theological analysis.¹¹

For a moment, let’s permit the idea that some of this might be positive, such as the need for a “practical religion”; for who wants useless religion taught in the churches? But what does such practicality consist of? How is a doctrine or practice determined to be impractical and who sets such a standard? This gives us a clue about the value of the Bible in which its teaching can be divided into the practical and important, on the one hand, and the impractical, and therefore unimportant, on the other. In American Pietism this becomes clear to us when we see what things needed to be cast out of American Lutheran confession and practice.

Mere lip service to the doctrine of justification simply masks the reality that Pietism rejected Luther’s doctrine of justification and its metatheological significance as a theological and practical norm. In Pietism, sanctification and its cultivation, instead of justification, norms everything. Practice defeats theology. Warmth of heart displaces the means of grace. Ethical

optimism overcomes human depravity. To say, then, that this is still faithful to confessional Lutheranism because Pietists claim to teach justification is the same as to say that Arianism was faithful because the Arians still taught Christ. Scattering a few obligatory references to justification around your theology will not suffice any more than sprinkling a little salt into the sauce makes a meal.

Once the pietistic program is fully put into practice, how does Schmucker come out on sanctification, millennialism, revivalism, ecumenism, the Altered Augsburg Confession, Holy Absolution, baptismal regeneration, and the real presence? For confessional Lutherans the picture is not pretty. When justification is killed, much dies with it.

SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification becomes much more significant in a doctrinal pattern that emphasizes human autonomy and choice. Schmucker himself defined justification in forensic language, “not as a change in man, but a forensic or judicial act . . . the imputation of the Savior’s righteousness to the sinner.”¹² Who could express anything but a hearty “Amen” to such a statement? Yet at the same time, he could reject baptismal regeneration and the real presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper as not consonant with the Reformation doctrine of *sola fide*. Schmucker is an Arminian on conversion, baptism, and the Lord’s Supper. So while he has *justification* as a discrete theological topic, it does not function to shape the theology of conversion or his view of the means of grace. I would take it as a straight up denial of the Lutheran doctrine of justification if a theologian denies baptismal regeneration or the article of the real presence of Christ’s body and blood in the sacrament of the altar.

I recognize that people are hardly consistent in their thinking about the corpus of Christian doctrine. They may well still believe that Christ alone is their salvation while holding fundamentally Arminian emphases in other articles of the faith. However, this cannot be said to be faithful or theologically consistent. The apostle Paul charged the Ephesian elders: “I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them” (Acts 20:27–30). Justification does not give us the right to chop appendages from the body of doctrine, just because we think them insufficiently central to the faith. No, as Paul commanded, we are to proclaim the whole counsel of God, and nothing less. Justification’s limiting theological function does not limit doctrine. It limits the law’s sway and keeps it from intruding into the church’s teaching of salvation by the gospel. Kuenning, who attempted to revive Pietism in America, can write:

11. *Ibid.*, 70.

12. S. S. Schmucker, *Elements of Popular Theology*, 9th ed. (Philadelphia: Smith, English, 1860), 191.

It was, in fact, a reticence to deviate from the principle of *sola fides* [sic] that led Schmucker and his Pietist colleagues to question orthodoxy's insistence on regeneration in the baptism of infants and the presence of Christ in the Supper, regardless of the presence or absence of faith in the communicant.¹³

Leaving aside this interpreter's faulty Latin, this quote evinces the idea that faith is a personal work that effects something, rather than the hand that receives the gifts of God *pure passive*. If this is a defense of Schmucker's views on justification, I would hate to read an attack on the same. Ultimately, Schmucker had abandoned a confessionally Lutheran doctrine of justification.

PROGRESSIVISM

Schmucker shared the ethical optimism of American progressivism. This colored his views, for example, on chiliasm. The millennium was to be characterized by

[e]xtraordinary and general diffusion of Christianity . . . among all the nations . . . by professing Christians, accompanied by extraordinary effusions of the Holy Spirit, facilitated by the improvement of science and the arts. This prevalence of Christian principle will . . . be the harbinger of peace and good will among men . . . [and] the triumph of the Gospel will everywhere be accompanied by its legitimate train of benevolent influences on the civil and social institutions of the world, and war itself, the prolific mother of all evil, will retire before the progress of the Prince of Peace.¹⁴

In less than thirty years from the writing of these words, the United States were no longer united and were tearing themselves apart in a bloody civil war. Inevitable progress was nowhere to be seen and has yet to make an appearance. Schmucker and his fellow travelers ignored the hiddenness of the kingdom. As we hear on the lips of our Lord about the hiddenness of his treasured possession: "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field" (Matt 13:44). The triumph of the church is hidden to all but the One who produces her victory, which he accomplished through means hidden in weakness on a cross. The church's triumph remains only in the Suffering Servant.

Kuenning claimed, "In Schmucker's eyes Americanization did not mean a desertion of the historic Lutheran doctrines or confessions or a capitulation to other forms of Protestantism."¹⁵ Not everyone agreed with his assessment. The leaders of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod did not believe Schmucker was actually a Lutheran, but rather a Reformed theologian working to destroy American Lutheranism from the inside

through absorbing it into a union with non-Lutheran American Protestants.¹⁶ All coming from differing perspectives, Charles Porterfield Krauth,¹⁷ Wilhelm Sihler, and Adolph Spaeth shared this judgment. Spaeth said, "Dr. Schmucker's theological standpoint may be characterized as a peculiar mixture of Puritanism, Pietism, and shallow rationalism."¹⁸ Progressivism and rationalism had entered through the door opened to them by Schmucker's American brand of Pietism.

The Bible's witness to the hiddenness of the work of God was simply ignored.

REVIVALISM

Schmucker encouraged the adoption of the methods of revivalism, including the use of the anxious bench, which Schmucker called the "New Measures." In the overt conversions that resulted from these emotionalistic "new measures," Schmucker found reinforcement for his position. The results proved the value of the methods being employed. The Bible's witness to the hiddenness of the work of God was simply ignored. What would be hidden under humble means in Lutheran practice had now broken out into the full daylight through the imposition of the "new measures," for which there is little evidence in Scripture, even if there was plenty of evidence in experience. And experience of conversion certainly had become the touchstone of genuineness.

ECUMENISM

When experience of conversion becomes the standard for legitimacy, the doctrinal differences that exist among denominations become less significant. Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and others were all having the same experiences as the fervor of revival spread across the communities and farmsteads of America. Fervor was everything. Truth took a back seat. Complete doctrinal unity was not a "prerequisite for meaningful cooperative endeavor."¹⁹ A few shared fundamental truths were enough for full Christian fellowship, for the common goals of the gospel. Schmucker's union was based more on shared love than unity of confession. In the end, Schmucker's prodigious efforts toward ecumenical unity came up against the fact of clear denominational con-

13. Kuenning, *American Lutheran Pietism*, 71.

14. Schmucker, *Elements*, 347.

15. Kuenning, *American Lutheran Pietism*, 76.

16. *The Concordia Cyclopaedia*, s.v. "Schmucker, S. S."

17. Charles P. Krauth, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology* (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publication House), 1913.

18. *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, s.v. "S. S. Schmucker," by Adolph Spaeth.

19. Kuenning, *American Lutheran Pietism*, 84.

fession. Facts are stubborn things. Finally, Schmucker's "New Measures" resulted in a reaction in many quarters whereby Lutherans began to read and appreciate the Lutheran Confessions, setting off a confessional revival in America in the last half of the nineteenth century. Justification stood athwart the road to the "new measures" and the complete Americanization of Lutheranism.

THE ALTERED AUGSBURG CONFESSION

The earliest constitution of the General Synod (1820) made no mention of confessional statements. Schmucker should have left well enough alone. His Definite Platform of 1855 recommended to American Lutherans an *American Recension of the Augsburg Confession* in which, as he claimed,

not a single sentence has been added to the Augsburg Confession, whilst those several aspects of doctrine have been omitted, which have long since been regarded by the great mass of our churches as unscriptural, and as remnants of Romish error.

Schmucker's definite platform clearly repudiated essential parts of the scriptural revelation: "The only errors contained in the Confession (which are all omitted in this Recension) are

1. The Approval of the Ceremonies of the Mass.
2. Private Confession and Absolution.
3. Denial of the Divine Obligation of the Christian Sabbath.
4. Baptismal Regeneration.
5. The Real Presence of the Body and Blood of the Savior in the Eucharist."²⁰

Ceremonies of the Mass

Where the real presence is rejected, the liturgical life of the church must be adjusted to accommodate that theological weakness. But what has this to do with the doctrine of the real presence? We get a hint as to the answer in the text of the Augsburg Confession itself: "The ceremonies are needed for this reason alone, that the uneducated be taught [what they need to know about Christ]" (AC xxiv, 3).²¹ The *Concordia Triglotta* edition of the Augustana is the source of the last phrase, which certainly clarifies the true purpose of the liturgical reforms of Luther and the meaning of the ceremonies of the mass: they teach the people about Christ. Leif Grane is off the mark in his agreement with Clausen that this "tends to overemphasize the intellectual."²² It is not mere education that is at stake but Christ himself. In the ceremonies of the mass, the Lutheran reformers **were intending to deliver a proper understanding of Christ and**

thus to deliver the righteousness of Christ to those who were worshiping in the services. To reject those ceremonies is to deprive the people of Christ, as we see in all liturgical reforms that do not derive from the article of justification. Liturgical reform that does not arise out of the article of justification will arise out of other principles, such as human performance and works, resulting in Methodistic and Arminian reforms that highlight good works, fruits of faith, and the genuineness of external displays of emotion. Christ gets lost in the shuffle. How different this is from the stated goals of liturgical conservatism in the Augustana: "The people are also advised about the dignity and use of the Sacrament, about how it brings consolation to anxious consciences, so that they too may learn to believe God and to expect and ask from Him all that is good" (AC xxiv, 7). If Christ is taught and extolled through the liturgical life of the church, then there will be consolation and faith. Nothing better could possibly be expected from the liturgy, except perhaps by a legalist. The criterion for liturgical reform must be the article of justification if the reform is to be biblical and Lutheran.

Liturgical reform that does not arise out of the article of justification will arise out of other principles, resulting in Methodistic and Arminian reforms.

Holy Absolution

When I was a child, my Lutheran uncle married a woman who had been brought up in the Roman Catholic Church. My aunt said that she would be glad to become a Lutheran because now she no longer had to go to confession. At the time, I suspected that this was a poor reason to become a Lutheran. Now, I am confirmed in that judgment. The individual application of Holy Absolution to the person who declares his sin to his pastor is a powerful pastoral tool to give peace to troubled consciences and an individual hearing of the word of God that declares us righteous for Christ's sake. Of course, the Lutheran church maintained the requirement of individual confession and absolution for people to be admitted to the Holy Sacrament into the early eighteenth century. It died, killed by an unholy trinity of lethargy, Rationalism, and Pietism. Schmucker wanted to put a stake in its heart to make sure it did not rise again. The declaratory or forensic nature of the doctrine of justification cannot be properly understood where Holy Absolution is treated as anathema. Indeed, only here can proper soul care be carried out, a high ideal of Pietism. For this is the weapon of the word of God applied personally, individually, and in an enfolded way to bring the comforting verdict of God to the

20. Richard C. Wolf, ed., *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 43-44.

21. Paul T. McCain, ed., *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: CPH, 2006), 47.

22. Leif Grane, *The Augsburg Confession: A Commentary*, trans. John H. Rasmussen (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1987), 225.

heart of the penitent.²³ Jesus himself has staked out the ground in John's Gospel and compelled the preacher to say sin out of existence by being his mouthpiece: "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.' And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld'" (John 20:21–23). The final verdict of God is in view here as is made plain by the threat of forgiveness withheld.²⁴ Far from being a Roman imposition, individual confession and absolution turns from being a casuistic nightmare with its burdens of commensurate penances for divine righteousness and purgation; rather, it is indicative of the living gift according to the article of justification in the Lutheran church. This practice is not a return to medievalism or a legalistic criterion for righteousness, but a looking forward to the final judgment of God through the declaration of the verdict of "not guilty."

Nor can Holy Absolution be treated as a Lutheran quirk unrelated to the doctrine of justification. Gottfried Martens has identified this when he condemns the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (1999):

When the gospel as God's power to save those who believe is domesticated [by robbing the declaration of not guilty of its performative and effective character], it is obvious that the message of justification simultaneously loses its criteriological function. It is not by chance that the Roman Catholic side so vehemently opposed the Lutheran concern of justification as the criterion for the proclamation of the church. There are many areas in the life and doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church that are not compatible with this message of justification.²⁵

I would say in the case of American Pietism the opposite is also true: that when the criteriological (metatheological) function of justification is rejected, its function as an effective and performative word of God will also fade and finally die in the preaching of the church; legalism holds sway, and piety is emphasized over the righteousness of God. It is a matter of hermeneutical emphasis that is intensely related to the center of the Christian proclamation, so much so that when justification is lost, Christ himself is lost. So Luther ties justification to the First Commandment in his comments from the Lectures on Galatians:

Whoever falls from the doctrine of justification is ignorant of God and is an idolater. Therefore it is all the same whether he then returns to the Law or to the worship of idols; it is

all the same whether he is called a monk or a Turk or a Jew or an Anabaptist. For once this doctrine is undermined, nothing more remains but sheer error, hypocrisy, wickedness, and idolatry, regardless of how great the sanctity that appears on the outside. (*LW* 26:395–96)

*If your God is not the ever-justifying,
then you are worshipping an idol.*

If your God is not the ever-justifying, then you are worshipping an idol. The evidence of external piety is no guarantee that God is possessed by us, and in fact under the criterion of justification, the exact opposite is the case. This is why Luther is willing to say in the Heidelberg Disputation,

20. He deserves to be called a theologian, however, who comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross.

21. A theologian of glory calls evil good and good evil. A theologian of the cross calls the thing what it actually is.

22. That wisdom which sees the invisible things of God in works as perceived by man is completely puffed up, blinded, and hardened. (*LW* 31:40–41)

What appears to be holy might well not be, and what appears contemptible and weak might well be the righteousness of God. The law too has this wild, hidden character. The threefold use of the law may well break out upon the hearer as any or all of the three uses. This is dependent upon the hearer's status over against justification. The law works as God sees fit, not as we think. What we preachers might see as a mild admonition could well damn to hell the tender-hearted hearer or lead the self-righteousness to a smug and presumptuous piety. So Luther will say:

Sinners will become frightened by the sound of a falling leaf and will take to flight as though from a sword. When the conscience is truly and thoroughly frightened, man is so overcome that he not only cannot act but is unable even to do any thinking. They say that such a thing happens in battle when soldiers who are overcome by fear cannot move a hand but permit themselves to be slain by the enemy. Such a terrible punishment follows sin that at the rustling of a leaf conscience is full of fear, nay, that it cannot even bear that most beautiful creature, the very light of day, which is by nature so refreshing to us. (*LW* 1:170–71)

Blessing may become bane and bane blessing where suffering and death are life and good. This is why preaching law and gos-

23. See my "Justification and the Pastor's Daily Work," in *Propter Christum: Christ at the Center*, ed. Scott R. Murray et al. (St. Louis: Luther Academy, 2013), 217–24.

24. See Gottfried Martens, "Agreement and Disagreement on Justification by Faith Alone," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 65 (2001): 215–19.

25. *Ibid.*, 221.

pel is so difficult an art; it is still preaching the word of God, which God himself uses as he sees fit.

The demand to partake of individual confession can be contrasted with the legalistic requirements of Pietism, with its rejection of worldly habits. The genuine law of God, especially in its understanding as the third use of the law, limits the imposition of self-generated works: the prohibition of cards, dancing, length of hair, and so forth. Not only does the law prohibit self-righteousness, but the law also will keep the church from imposing human works of righteousness on the faithful. If Scripture does not forbid these innocent amusements, why should the church?

*The law is a horrifying hammer,
crushing and destroying wherever
it is swung.*

What will be the result if we crush and terrify Christian souls with the extra burdens Pietism imposes? The law is a horrifying hammer, crushing and destroying wherever it is swung. We wield it so adeptly against our brothers and sisters in Christ, who are struggling to obey the law in true fear and trust of God. If our only response to such people is the smashing power of the law, we will be like the surgeon who opens the chest of a person suffering from lung cancer, and after removing the offending tumors, declines to close the chest of his patient again, arguing, “I did what was necessary. I know it hurts, but it is good for you. You would die if I hadn’t removed the tumors.” Yet without a proper closure of the patient’s chest he will also die, and probably more swiftly than the tumors would have killed him. The covering of ribs, skin, and sinews, all properly stitched up, is necessary for a complete recovery. Removal must be followed by a covering.

This is why our Lord warns us to be careful of the log in our own eye (Matt 7:3–5). We are so blind to our neighbor’s great need for the gospel that we wield the log in our own eye to poke our neighbor’s eye. Often, this is a case of transference, that is, that we tend to abhor and condemn most vehemently in others the very things we most hate about ourselves. If we are ourselves gospel-challenged, we feel better by attacking others for our own sins. Wrecking someone else with the law hurts us less than turning it on ourselves. How different this is from God’s way, in which David, the fearful sinner, turns to God with the simple confession, “Have mercy on me, O God!”

Martin Luther warned us that we need to have an evangelical approach to our use of the law. We must recognize the unfinished nature of every true Christian. Luther calls this use of the law a “truly evangelical dispensation or differentiation.” The evangelical differentiation in the use of the law is that we will err on the side of the gospel as we deal with sinners, sinners just

like us. No wonder Jesus says to us: “For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you” (Matt 7:2). The evangelical difference recognizes the weakness of sinners, who feel their sin, fear God, and trust his mercy. The evangelical difference means that we apply wonderful covering mercy upon the sins that erupt in the life of every sinner (who does this exclude?). We are to impute to others what the Lord has imputed to us, that is, the covering righteousness of Christ. This is hard to do, because it is far easier to impute sins to sinners, obviously. The evangelical difference walks backward into the tent of our neighbor and throws a cloak over his nakedness (Gen 9:23), covering his sin for the sake of Christ. So Luther encourages us preachers:

We want to keep and observe the Ten Commandments, but with a large, that is, with a truly evangelical dispensation or differentiation [*vere evangelica dispensatione, seu distinctione*], because we have received only the first fruits of the Spirit (Rom 8:23), and the groans of the Spirit remain in our hearts. Likewise our flesh with its lusts and desires, that is, the whole tree with its fruits, remains too. This is the reason why the Ten Commandments are never able to be fully kept. Otherwise, if the Ten Commandments could be kept whole and undefiled, what need would there be of the righteousness for which David prays in the word ‘Have mercy’? What need would there be of imputation? Now, since even in the saints there are still remnants of sin that have not yet been fully mortified, two things happen: Through the Spirit dwelling in us we resist sin and obey the Ten Commandments; and yet, since we are driven to sin by flesh and Satan, we hope for the forgiveness of sins. (*LW 12:320–21*)

The law’s use is normed by justification, kept within its proper bounds in its use by the church. There can be no truly scriptural use of the law without the right doctrine of justification. For example, the church should have no hesitation to tell its children to live in specifically Christian ways, as we see in a large proportion of the Epistles of the New Testament. However, when that demand of piety becomes established apart from justification, it quickly devolves into its own criterion for righteousness in God’s sight. Earthly judgment may only be undergone where it is clear that those who undergo it do so rightly only under the standpoint of justification. This is what the apostle means when he encourages Timothy in the in-between time to “know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of truth” (1 Tim 3:15). We Christians are to behave in a specific way in relation to the church, which is God’s household. But this is only truly possible where justification is the indispensable theological criterion.

Baptismal Regeneration

Rejection of baptismal regeneration is an even more egregious violation of the justification principle than the foregoing. Our Lord Jesus actually gives the best case scenario for regeneration when he says, “Let the little children come to me

and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 19:14). This is why the Augsburg Confession can say that baptism is necessary for salvation (AC IX, 1), because it is pure grace.

Infants are the test case for grace and the possibility of regeneration. Infants become believers, and thus part of the church, through the gift of grace bestowed on them by baptism. Grace is the divine attitude of compassion given to those who are weak and unable to find God by their own efforts or works. What would better describe a newborn infant than that he or she is weak and incapacitated? Yet, exactly such as these are the ones whom the God of all grace has determined to save through the work of his only-begotten Son. Leif Grane is helpful at this point by alerting us to the significance of justification in the thinking of Luther about baptism. Luther does not invent a more spiritual doctrine of baptism over against Roman scholasticism, as is sometimes claimed. Grane says,

At issue here is not the opposition between the spiritual and material, but rather the opposition between the righteousness of faith and the righteousness of works. Where faith ceases to be decisive, works soon fill the vacuum.²⁶

The Pietists disconnected the means of grace from grace. This arises not from an understanding of grace as the free gift from God, but from the presupposition that humans need to provide God some sign of their inclination toward him, that they are seeking him, that they are worthy of grace, or that have opened their hearts to him. Such views are prevalent in American Evangelicalism, and yet have more in common with the classic doctrine of prevenient grace as taught by the Roman Catholic Church. Prevenient grace is the grace that disposes the person toward God. Prevenient grace is a contradiction of grace. Earned grace is never grace (Rom 4:4).

All persons may be under the grace of God irrespective of their age. Age is no impediment to the grace that saves. If age were an impediment, grace would no longer be grace. Grace is God’s. Grace is the attitude of God’s heart toward fallen humans. If grace is truly God’s, how could age hinder it? Baptism, then, is not a human accomplishment but a divine gift. You are not proving anything to God by being baptized. God is proving something to you in your baptism. He is proving his unchanging mercy in that he is immersing you into the death and life of Christ our Lord in baptism. You are receiving something that could not be yours except on the initiative of the gracious God. Again, this is why no one can boast, at least not before God (Eph 2:9). If grace is to be grace, it must be free.

If baptism proves our commitment to God, then yes, it is a legal criterion for inclusion in the church and has truly become antigospel. The Bible’s own teaching on grace must norm our teaching on and practice of baptism. A hermeneutic that ignores the meaning of justification led American Pietism away from baptismal regeneration.

26. Grane, *Augsburg Confession*, 108.

Real Presence

The American Pietists capped their assault on the Augsburg Confession by rejecting its teaching of the real presence of Christ’s body and blood in the Lord’s Supper. Schmucker had succumbed to the sects that surrounded him in pre-Civil War America.²⁷ They were fully Sacramentarians in Luther’s sense of the word.

The Pietists disconnected the means of grace from grace.

They thought that Christ is now confined in heaven and could in no way permit his body to be the bread nor his blood to be the wine on Christian altars. They were unable to comprehend how the body of the Lord could possibly be present under the bread to be consumed at the invitation of the Lord Christ, who gives himself in this body and blood. Unable to digest what God had said, they turned on God’s speech and tried to reinterpret it to fit with their own views. They rejected the truth that God’s word is an effective-performative word. Their view of the presence of Christ is best characterized as the doctrine of the “real absence.” By extracting the real presence, they leave the communicant to “make” the sacrament for himself—as though my receiving in faith makes it what it is. This is pure Pelagianism, as though faith makes rather than receives what God has graciously placed on the table for us with Christ’s body and blood.²⁸

Christians believe that when Christ has said of the bread in the Supper, “This is my body,” he both knows what he is talking about and can do exactly what he says he can do. Knowing how he can do it is not my business. Our business is to listen when God speaks and believe what he says. If we believe only that which fits with our own human reason and presuppositions, we will believe very little. And that very little will hardly be distinctively Christian. No matter how hard you try, you cannot make the word of God of none effect. Your thinking doesn’t make things so. God’s saying does. We need to conform our minds to what God says. Luther explained:

The Sacramentarians teach God most prettily: “How is the body of Christ able to be in the bread and wine when Christ has ascended into heaven?” For they think this way: “Because I am unable to comprehend the presence of the

27. “Schwenkfeldianism and Pietism are even more closely akin, if not genetically, at least morphologically” (George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 3rd ed. [Kirkville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1992], 1240).

28. See my article “The Sacrament of the Altar and its Relationship to Justification,” *LOGIA* 9, no. 3 (Holy Trinity 2000): 11–16.

body and blood in the Lord's Supper, I shall prescribe to God some plan by which He can be present." In this way, you see, they bring God down to their own order and teachingBecause they measure the words of Christ in a mathematical way and dispute about heaven and earth, they never understand the true and proper power of the words of Christ; for they have been driven mad by the blind judgment of reason. (*LW* 7:105)

This blind reason can never let justification rule our view of Scripture, so that God can be God and do what he gives and promises in his word. Having justification at the center of our hermeneutical approach means that we have a performative word making present today what God has promised to deliver through his speech.

CONCLUSION

Biblical interpretation, including our view of the law and its function, must be normed by the article of justification. How that works out in actual function still remains a daily pastoral and theological challenge. In that task we would find a dear father agreeing about the centrality of Christ and his work. *The Hammer of God* sums up what we have said here so beautifully.

The Curate Fridfelt, reflecting on the discussion about baptism in a house meeting said, "They had talked about faith, confession, personal commitment, works—but not about Jesus."²⁹ Upon consideration of his own situation he had clear judgment: "I have looked for penitence, for amendment of life. I have taken stock of my deeds, but I have lost sight of Jesus in all this mess."³⁰ Let us keep our eyes on Jesus. The rest will come. **LOGIA**

29. Bo Giertz, *The Hammer of God*, trans. C. A. Nelson (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1960), 205.

30. *Ibid.*, 202.

A CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

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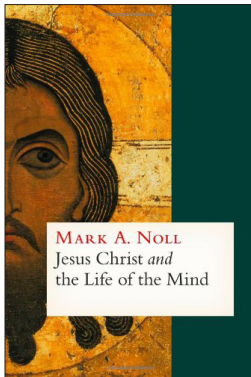
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REVIEWS

“It is not many books that make men learned . . . but it is a good book frequently read.”

Martin Luther



Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind. By Mark A. Noll. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011. Hardcover, 180 pages.

✚ In light of the many perceived conflicts between Christianity and the academy, Christians may be tempted to avoid vocations in academia. Mark Noll challenges Christians to a rigorous engagement with all fields of study by offering the

many reasons that Christians can and should study the world. For Noll, all of these reasons are found in the person of Jesus Christ. While not all will agree with his views on Christology or the particular ways in which he tries to resolve debates between Christians and the academy, Noll rightly challenges Christians to bring their trust in Christ to bear upon the study of the world spoken into existence by our Savior.

Noll makes his argument for engaging the world by laying out general principles drawn from Christ's nature and work and then applying those principles to specific fields. After looking at the Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, and the Definition of Chalcedon, Noll argues that Christ's involvement in creation and his incarnation compel Christians to study the world. Noll then draws principles from the person and work of Christ that, he believes, should guide the scholar. The particularity and universality of the incarnation encourage the scholar to study the particular but also acknowledge universal truth. Christ's self-denial becomes an encouragement to humility in scholarship. Finally, the personal union encourages the scholar to look for divine and natural causes in events that appear to be caused by human agency or natural process.

After offering general principles for the Christian scholar, Noll moves on to make specific recommendations. In this portion of the book, he devotes three chapters to some of the most contentious debates between Christianity and the academy. Noll offers Christians a way to believe and still engage the scholarly community. His chapter on the Christian study of history is the best of these three chapters, as he considers many Christian scholars and the various ways they have studied history as they affirm God's work in history while doing solid historical research.

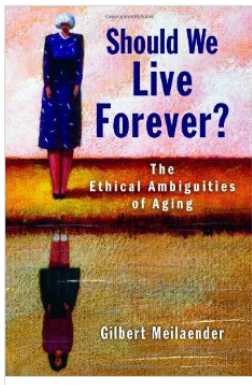
In the following two chapters, Noll does not give the same comprehensive overview of Christian approaches to a field. In the chapter on science, Noll argues that Christians can accept many conclusions of science regarding evolutionary development while still affirming the trustworthiness of Holy Scripture. Noll wants Christians to see divine and human causes in nature (just as there are two natures in Christ), suggesting God is behind what appears to be an unguided process of evolution. Regarding biblical exegesis, Noll wants his readers to consider the context of biblical writers, understanding how their cultural context shaped what they wrote and how they interpreted other Scripture. He argues that one need not see this as a denial of divine authorship but an acknowledgment that Scripture is fully human and fully divine. In these two chapters, Noll should have offered an analysis of other Christ-centered views on each subject rather than relying on only a few scholars. In doing so, he would have been able to focus less attention on debates over evolution and the veracity of Scripture and more on how many Christian scholars have approached the fields of natural science and biblical exegesis. He does offer a positive contribution, however, by encouraging Christians to consider and respond to the data gathered by all scholars.

Much of Noll's argument throughout the book rests upon his understanding of Christology. While he relies on statements regarded as orthodox by most Christians, he fails to acknowledge that Christians still disagree on Christology. If Christology should shape scholarly study, then one must acknowledge these differences and spend a great deal of time on the study of Christ before formulating principles to guide scholarship. Thus, theological distinctives, especially on the issue of Christology, must be acknowledged and dealt with. Unfortunately, Noll praises the fact that Christians are putting aside denominational distinctives for the sake of rigorous study, seeing this as a hopeful sign for Christian scholarship. If rigorous study is to be built on the person and work of Christ, it would behoove Christian scholars to pay all the more attention to why Christians have disagreed on Christology and how these differences might shape study of the world.

Noll's book is a worthwhile read for all Christians. Those of particular traditions, especially Lutherans, should reconsider his views on Christology and then formulate their own conclusions about the impact of Christ on the study of the world he

spoke into existence. A Lutheran examination of Christology and its application to study may, however, result in more reasons to study. Christ's physical presence in the Lord's Supper encourages those who receive Christ into their body to a rigorous study of the world in which Christ continues to dwell. Rather than fleeing the academy, Lutherans must make the academy a place to live out their divine calling to love others—all from the perspective of solid, biblical Christology.

*Daniel Burfiend
Fort Wayne, Indiana*



Should We Live Forever? The Ethical Ambiguities of Aging. By Gilbert Meilaender. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013. Paperback, 135 pages.

☞ Gilbert Meilaender's book, underwritten by a grant from the John Templeton Foundation to explore the "virtues in relationship to anti-aging research," addresses the values of aging and whether the continual search to extend life will, in the long run, be worth it. Focused

afresh on the "ambiguities" of aging, this book presents many different philosophies of why age retardation might not be desirable and how particular virtues may bring a desire not to live indefinitely.

In this brief, insightful book, Meilaender presents cohesive ethical arguments from philosophy, science, and theology, adding to his own research background from, for example, Aristotle, C. S. Lewis, and Immanuel Kant. The first three chapters explore whether age retardation is something that is actually desirable. The next three chapters each focus on a different virtue dealing with aging, including generativity, patience, and a complete life. A final chapter leaves the reader contemplating the important issues by way of a conversation among three gentlemen of differing perspectives on age retardation.

Meilaender argues that the desire to extend life is not necessarily ethical. While many people wish to prolong life, Meilaender argues that their reasons transcend what is naturally human. Although one motivation for people to extend their life is love, Meilaender shows that love manifests itself in other ways, such as the passing on of culture to another generation. Another reason people wish to live forever is a result of a post-modern philosophy Meilaender rejects, in which the person is not really viewed anymore as a human being but as a "mechanism"; thus humans are computers not in need of the body.

In each chapter Meilaender also explores the theological aspects of aging. Does a desire to live forever result either from longing for God, or from longing to put oneself indefinitely in the place of God? Regardless, it is God who gives and blesses

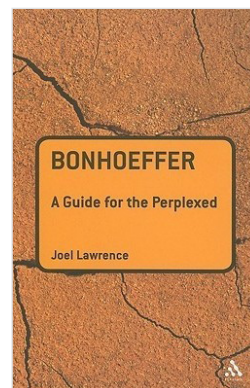
humanity with the gift of life. One then looks at what God has given them and makes use of the means they have, despite their disabilities. It is through these limited means, Meilaender points out, that one hopes for something in the future. That hope is not for an extended future but a "lasting union with God."

As someone who works with the elderly and aging, I think this book really grasps and works with the issues that I see this generation facing. While Meilaender focuses more on the philosophical aspects of both sides of this ethical issue, in every chapter he advances the God-given vocation of a Christian living the complete life, looking forward to the eternal future in heaven.

As a Christian living yet in the world, I can understand the desire to extend my life. However, Meilaender really drives home the point that Christians look forward to something beyond this world. I would prefer to live out my Christian calling here on earth by focusing on the relationship between generations and one day being able to die and move on to eternity with God, looking forward to a resurrected body.

A church worker interacting with the elderly finds a certain depression growing among them because they feel they cannot be active in the same way they were fifteen years ago. They often feel useless. Meilaender shows, though, there is actually a freedom to aging, and that the freedom comes at the end rather than at the beginning. Making use of the talents God has given is imperative as one ages. As Meilaender wisely points out, when Job had lost almost everything he still returned thanks to God for the gifts that he had been given. Even though the aged lose many of the blessings they had before, old age is a gift itself. An aging Christian looks forward to a "completion" not here on earth but in heaven: "[Human life] looks for completion not to the natural course of life, nor to the achievements of human press or history, but to the genuinely creative and re-creative power that is God's" (34).

*Faith Elizabeth Swenson
Fort Wayne, Indiana*



Bonhoeffer: A Guide for the Perplexed. By Joel Lawrence. London: T & T Clark, 2010. viii + 134 pages.

☞ The immense quantity of literature examining the life, witness, and theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer from every possible ideological perspective presents the student of his work with the daunting task of separating what is useful from what is not. That being said, Joel Lawrence's brief introduction provides an excellent overview of the major ideas developed and explored in Bonhoeffer's writings.

major ideas developed and explored in Bonhoeffer's writings.

Lawrence's approach is an integrated one that chronologically and thematically elucidates both the coherence of Bonhoeffer's theology over time, as well as areas of maturation and development. He helpfully contextualizes the various themes that he examines with biographical, historical, and theological information both to enhance an understanding of Bonhoeffer's perspective as well as to enable greater comprehension of the primary texts.

After introducing the life and thinking of Bonhoeffer in a general introduction (chapter 1), Lawrence breaks down his overview using key items from Bonhoeffer's *Letters and Papers from Prison*. The methodological import of proceeding in this way cannot be overemphasized: by doing so, Lawrence highlights his conviction that Bonhoeffer's early, middle, and late theologies represent a coherent whole rather than a disjointed, undirected process of development.

To begin with, Lawrence explores the centrality of Christ for Bonhoeffer's theology (chapter 2). He helpfully traces the beginnings of Bonhoeffer's interest in Christology to his doctoral dissertation, *Sanctorum Communio*, in which Bonhoeffer develops an account of the doctrine of the church utilizing a theological analysis of human social relations. In the church, Bonhoeffer proposes that one finds a distinctly Christian understanding of what it means to be a person, since this is always seen in connection to human identity in Christ. The church is thus "Christ existing as community." Lawrence views this radically christological construal of the world, the Christian life, and the ethical task as carrying through the rest of Bonhoeffer's writings, especially in *Discipleship* and *Ethics*.

Related closely to this christological focus, Lawrence identifies ecclesiology as a centrally important concern for Bonhoeffer (chapter 3). There is a mutually coherent interrelationship between his Christology and his ecclesiology that Bonhoeffer begins developing in *Sanctorum Communio* and that continues into his later writings, especially *Life Together*. Lawrence seeks to highlight this by exploring the fact that the church must be a community that exists for others. Since Christ exemplified this, so should his church if it is to be his body. Lawrence (unlike some interpreters) also wants to maintain that ecclesiology remains important for Bonhoeffer throughout his career, doing so by exploring the role of ecclesiology in the prison letters.

Perhaps one of the great strengths of Lawrence's overview is his recognition that worldliness forms an important feature of Bonhoeffer's theology (chapter 4). Surprising though this might be, it is here that confessional Lutherans may have the most to learn from Bonhoeffer. Lawrence rightly concludes that Bonhoeffer's "worldliness" does not constitute an affirmation of secularization, but rather is an integral piece of his theology of creation. By rejecting a Christianized Platonism that seeks the kingdom apart from this world, Bonhoeffer demonstrates that Christ is Lord of *this* world, and it is creatures *as* creatures that Christ has come to redeem.

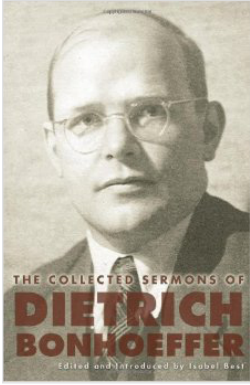
Also interesting is the role that Lawrence assigns to the theology of the cross for Bonhoeffer's broader theological trajectory (chapter 5). Some statements in the prison letters have been misconstrued, Lawrence argues, as demonstrating that Bonhoeffer's incarceration destroyed altogether his faith in God. By contrast, such proposals of Bonhoeffer to "live before God without God" actually constitute a *theologia crucis* in which faith must seek God apart from glory and majesty, in suffering and the cross. Here, Lawrence recognizes the continuity between Bonhoeffer's project and Luther's own proposal that God be sought where he reveals himself in the incarnate and crucified Christ.

Related to this is Bonhoeffer's revised concept of religiosity (chapter 6). Lawrence holds that Bonhoeffer recognized the modern challenge of classical theism, the response to which should not be apologetic in nature. Rather, modernity has granted Christians the opportunity to divest their faith of the problematic features accompanying Western metaphysical ideas about theism that do not adequately cohere with Scripture's portrayal of God. This "religionless Christianity," Lawrence argues, creates space for Christ to be viewed as the center and source of everything. From this perspective, Bonhoeffer is enabled to view Christ at the center without making him a domesticable feature of human history and religious imagination. Lawrence sees this insight as pervasive of Bonhoeffer's theology, even informing his ecclesiological reflections in *Life Together*.

Lawrence's final chapter (chapter 7) provides a brief assessment of Bonhoeffer's relevance as a resource for today. He reiterates his desire to contextualize Bonhoeffer robustly without proof-texting his works as to bolster his own proposals, as is so common in much handling of Bonhoeffer's writings. Lawrence instead argues that enlisting Bonhoeffer's insights for today necessitates a depth of sustained engagement with the primary sources that transcends the extraction of mere snippets of his thought. Christian worldliness, the suffering of God, and religionless Christianity are three key themes from Bonhoeffer's theology that he believes are most relevant to our contemporary setting.

Lawrence's project is commendable primarily because of the concision with which he interacts with major themes from Bonhoeffer's writings. Without reducing his task to the analysis of a single motif, Lawrence provides a clear and informative outline of the major contours of Bonhoeffer's theology. Lutherans especially will profit from Lawrence's clear grasp of Bonhoeffer's Christology and theology of creation, but anyone seeking a guide by which to read his work more effectively should certainly consider this helpful volume.

*John Hoyum
McKenzie, Tennessee*



The Collected Sermons of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Edited and Introduced by Isabel Best. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012. Hardcover, 240 pages.

✦ In the autumn of 1933, Dietrich Bonhoeffer assumed responsibility for two German-speaking congregations in London. Standing before his flock for the first time, Pastor Bonhoeffer outlined his calling:

“When a preacher opens the Bible and interprets the word of God, a mystery takes place, a miracle: the grace of God, who comes down from heaven into our midst and speaks to us, knocks on our door, asks questions, warns us, puts pressure on us, alarms us, threatens us, and makes us joyful again and free and sure” (90).

The Collected Sermons of Dietrich Bonhoeffer offers a glimpse of Bonhoeffer the preacher. One encounters in this volume a Bonhoeffer who challenges those who would make him the founder of a *religionless Christianity*. Preaching occupied a major part in Bonhoeffer’s life and work. He cannot be separated from his preaching. From the pulpit, he delivered his clearest exposition of thought, faith, and vision for the church.

There are many positive aspects to this volume. Editor Isabel Best gathered an anthology of thirty-one sermons spanning his career. The reader joins the congregations of the early Bonhoeffer and sits among the students of the more mature Bonhoeffer as well. Proclamation of the cross of Christ is prominent throughout: “It is the wonderful theme of the Bible, so frightening for many people, that the only visible sign of God in the world is the cross” (17); and “[I]t is wisdom at its best to recognize the cross of Christ as the invincible love of God for all humankind, for us as well as our enemies” (195–96). Furthermore, there is clear witness to the authority of God’s word. This word of God, for Bonhoeffer, gave life to the church. Far from advocating a *religionless Christianity*, Bonhoeffer’s kerygma unmistakably endorses a Christianity that is historical, orthodox, and classically Lutheran. Often he is reminiscent of Luther: “Let the word and the sacraments and the commandment of God be your weapons” (72). The biblical, sacramental theology of Bonhoeffer is inescapable: “Ultimately, only this remains for you in the world: God’s word and sacrament” (206).

Included in *The Collected Sermons* is a four-part sermon series preached on 1 Corinthians 13:1–13. Speaking to his London congregations, Bonhoeffer explored the meaning of love for the church community. He explained that love is, in the end, the only thing needful for Christians. “Human life is only meaningful and worthwhile to the extent that it has love in it. . . . [O]nly one thing is asked of us—whether we have love” (142). He did not, however, promote a theology of love-righteousness whereby “loving” people are saved. Bonhoeffer stated that salvation is bestowed on those who have *been* loved. “It doesn’t say a *loving person* does this or that, but rather says *love* does this or

that. Who is this love? Whom are we talking about?” (149). Love was not an abstraction for Bonhoeffer, but rather the person of Jesus Christ found in the symbol of the cross.

Isabel Best, a principal translator in the English edition of *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, provides an accessible general introduction (xii–xxvi), placing Bonhoeffer’s sermons within the framework of his biographical and theological development. Accompanying each sermon, she offers helpful introductions. Editorial decisions in this volume are not without their weaknesses, however. Best calls attention to her employment of “inclusive language”:

[N]ew sermon translations as published in the Complete Works have preserved Bonhoeffer’s now dated language. We know however, that Bonhoeffer valued and honored women as members of his family, friends, coworkers, and students, although no established church in Germany at that time ordained women to the ministry. Therefore, I have felt that he would want to speak to women of the future in language that we would find respectful of us. This is consistent with his vision of a new church that would treat people as adults. (xxv)

Such scholarship does great injustice to Bonhoeffer’s own position. It is an unwarranted move retrospectively to amend the work of an earlier theologian in order to accommodate one’s own agenda and assumptions. In effect, Bonhoeffer is rendered to say that which he did not; for example: “If only the mission is carried out, in preaching and in life, if only the pastor’s sole concern is to devote his or her life to this master and this commission . . .” (89). By altering his words according to the pretext of inclusive language, some of these sermons give the impression that Bonhoeffer supported women’s ordination. Evidence from his teaching seems to indicate the contrary. Lecturing on 1 Timothy 2, Bonhoeffer told his students, “For Paul the order is clear: Women have a full part in salvation and truth. But they have a different vocation from that of men” (*Theological Education Underground: 1937–1940*, 330). The reader of this volume should be vigilant and prepared for critical recognition of editorial modification.

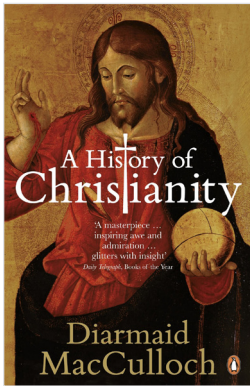
Despite such reservations, this volume is recommended to those interested in Bonhoeffer’s legacy. This is a noteworthy resource for laity, pastors, and theologians alike interested in acquainting themselves with this towering theologian. For those unacquainted with Bonhoeffer, this volume serves as an excellent primer. For those more familiar with Bonhoeffer’s theology, this volume has great devotional value. These sermons stand out for their beauty and vivid imagery. His provocative rhetoric challenges readers to abandon entanglements of sin and go the way of the cross. Finally these sermons testify to Bonhoeffer’s own resolute faith:

We proclaim and believe this, against everything that we see around us, against the graves of our loved ones, against the dying nature outdoors, against the death that the war casts

over us once again. We see the reign of death, but we preach and believe in the victory of Jesus Christ over death. (209)

Through the proclamation of such faith in the victory of Jesus Christ, these sermons continue to bless the greater church.

*Scott Johnson
Fort Wayne, IN*



Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years. By Diarmaid MacCulloch. New York: Penguin Group, 2010. 1184 pages.

• Diarmaid MacCulloch is an Anglican Church historian who teaches at Oxford. Most of his scholarship to date has focused on the English Reformation. In this large volume, MacCulloch gives an interpretation of the whole breadth of

the history of the Christian church. This book is intended to be for more of a popular audience (much like his earlier popular history of the Reformation), and less of an advanced work of scholarship as some of his earlier specialized studies.

Because this volume deals with the history of the Christian church, many will find the subtitle “The First Three Thousand Years” puzzling. The title can be explained by the fact that MacCulloch begins his narrative with the genesis of the Greek and Hebrew cultures, both of which served as the soil within which early Christianity germinated. This is emblematic of how the book is written. MacCulloch is not simply content to give histories of church debates, but also wants the reader to understand the full historical and cultural context of the subject matter.

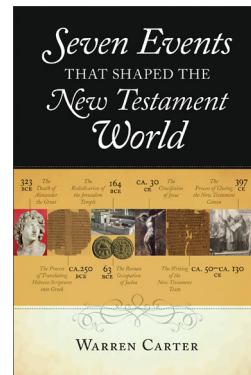
The main virtue of this book is the breadth of the author’s learning and comprehensiveness of his discussion of various periods of church history. The reader should of course be warned that such breadth does not mean originality. As MacCulloch himself notes, the book’s discussion of each topic largely follows the standard scholarly consensus at the present time. To many orthodox Christians, this will occasionally prove problematic in the sections dealing with Scripture, insofar as the author frequently adopts the all-too-mainstream hyperskepticism about the reliability of the New Testament. On most other topics, the scholarly consensus is saner and, consequently, the book becomes delightfully informative. This is the case in spite of the obvious “broad-church” Anglican slant to most of the story being told. In spite of his obvious theological liberalism, MacCulloch is generally very kind to conservative Protestants, while being less so to Roman Catholics. The author is particularly lavish in his praise of Anglo-American Evangelical efforts at world mission and social reform. This

being said, MacCulloch occasionally makes it more than obvious that he regards theological conservatives as people who simply have not recognized that the Enlightenment project delivered a knockout argument from which Christianity cannot fully recover in its strictly historic orthodox form. One is reminded of a similar tendency in the historiography of Martin Marty.

This work is also valuable because of its additional focus on non-European churches and their history. Many comprehensive church histories focus almost exclusively on the European scene, with some discussion of Russia and North America. Other regional churches and their history are rarely discussed until the reader enters the age of colonialism and world Christian missions. MacCulloch, however, gives equal weight to telling the stories of Christians in sub-Saharan Africa, eastern and central Asia, and the Middle East. Many of these churches represent heretical (or near-heretical) strains of Christianity that rejected either the third ecumenical council (Nestorians), or the fourth (Monophysites or Miaphysites). Though on the margins of Christianity theologically, their histories are extremely interesting and valuable for the larger evaluation of the history of the faith.

Overall, MacCulloch’s book recommends itself for the breadth of its subject matter and the relative reliability of the information that it presents. Although many will find MacCulloch’s spin on particular events objectionable, the work is a good source of information on a variety of episodes of church history across a wide range of cultures.

*Jack Kilcrease
Grand Rapids, Michigan*



Seven Events that Shaped the New Testament World. By Warren Carter. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013. Paperback, 162 + xxi pages.

• Warren Carter’s latest offering is a slim volume, but it is packed with information helpful for pastors, students, and interested laity. Carter surveys seven hundred years, beginning with the death of

Alexander the Great in 323 BC and ending with the “closing” of the New Testament canon in AD 397. The other five events concern the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, the rededication of the Jerusalem Temple, the Roman occupation of Judea, the crucifixion of Jesus, and the writing of the New Testament texts. The front cover features a timeline adorned with some of the well-chosen illustrations that are sprinkled throughout the book (though unfortunately rendered in gray scale in the text). Located among the illustrations and text are numerous sidebars that expound on tangential topics, or ex-

pand on the discussion of issues only briefly touched on in the main text. A concise list of abbreviations is included before the introduction, helpful for the uninitiated or the rusty.

Each event is given its own chapter. In the first chapter, Carter proposes a “résumé” listing Alexander’s achievements. However, as Carter explains, the purpose of this chapter (and the entire book, for that matter) is not to focus on the “Great Men” of history (xix). Alexander’s achievements are described to point out their influential and long-term effects that continued down the centuries until the time of Jesus. Carter concludes the chapter with a provocative comparison between Alexander and Jesus.

Chapters two through seven continue the pattern. In the second chapter, Carter engages the writing of the Septuagint through the pseudepigraphal *Letter of Aristeas*, often in an entertaining fashion. In chapter three, Carter narrates the events leading up to and including the rededication of the Jerusalem Temple, and makes a case for how those events shaped Judaism and its eventual response to Jesus. Chapter four draws ever closer to the time of Jesus. Carter explores the Roman conquest of Judea and the Judeans’ various responses to Roman rule. Carter argues that those responses greatly affect how Jesus will later be perceived. Chapters five through seven describe the crucifixion of Jesus (including a fascinating discussion of crucifixion in general) and its effects on the New Testament writers and writings, culminating with the “closing” of the canon of Scripture at the Council of Carthage.

Carter does a fine job of imparting historical knowledge, often with a dry wit. However, Carter is most concerned with how the common people “negotiated” their world as it was shaped by these events (xx). For example, in chapter four, Carter contemplates the eschatological character of some of the New Testament texts and the reality of Roman rule. In response to these texts, he asks the question: “How, then, are Jesus-followers to engage the empire in the meantime?” (84). Carter then answers the question by referring back to the texts themselves.

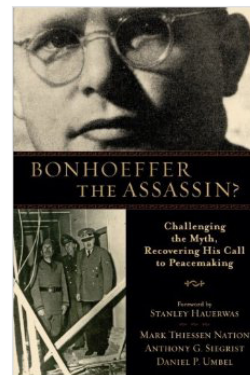
This also serves to highlight the major drawback of Carter’s offering: he is an unapologetic proponent of the historical-critical method. The author frequently refers to Christianity and Christians as “the Jesus movement” and “Jesus-followers,” (1) respectively. Even more telling, Carter describes the way in which Christians interpret the Old Testament through Christ as reading “it with their Jesus-glasses on” (35). Carter cites Isaiah 7:14 as evidence of such gazing through “Jesus-glasses” (35). He observes that Matthew’s Gospel chooses the Septuagint over the Hebrew text by using the word *virgin* as opposed to the Hebrew *young woman* because it “has theological importance for Matthew’s story about Jesus’s origins” (35).

If the reader can overlook Carter’s adherence to historical criticism (and I strongly suggest that you do!), there is much to gain from this book. For the parish pastor, this volume can serve as a refresher course on the context of early Christianity, as well as provide the impetus and the means to teach that context to the adults of his congregation. The pastor can also use this book in an apologetic way to instruct parishioners in

historical criticism and the truly Christian way in which the Scriptures should be understood. This book provides a quick overview of the subject for both undergraduate and seminary students, presumably Carter’s intended audience (xvii). Interested lay people will find this book to be an engaging read, if they are willing to set aside Carter’s prejudices.

Carter’s *Seven Events* is a welcomed addition to my library. I look forward to referring to it in the future, and reading some of the works cited in each chapter’s bibliography.

Michael Manz
Fort Wayne, Indiana



Bonhoeffer the Assassin? Challenging the Myth, Recovering His Call to Peacemaking. By Mark Thiessen Nation, Anthony G. Siegrist, and Daniel P. Umbel. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2013. 233 pages.

☞ Dietrich Bonhoeffer is arguably one of the most misunderstood theologians of the twentieth century. His later life seems to con-

tradict the earlier years. This contradiction exists both in his own life events and his theology articulated in his writings. A closer study of the context of his life may reveal a certain consistency.

In this book, three authors, Mark Thiessen Nation, Anthony G. Siegrist, and Daniel P. Umbel, take up the study of apparent inconsistencies in Bonhoeffer’s ethical theology. His ethical theology tends, for example, toward pacifism, even though he has been associated with several attempts to assassinate Nazi regime leader Adolf Hitler. Scholars have questioned if Bonhoeffer remained true to his pacifism in the midst of the Second World War, when a person’s public opposition to the actions of his country might lead to his execution.

Part one of the book provides a Bonhoeffer biography. The first three chapters include the major life events that contributed to the person and theologian Bonhoeffer becomes. The authors include an explicit goal in his biography: “Every effort has been made . . . not only to be fair in this portrayal but also to avoid distortion by omission” (15). They begin with a unique perspective into Bonhoeffer’s immediate family growing up, claiming the family “saw the [Nazi] regime very early on for what it was” (18). This is the first of many times the reader is introduced to his major influences.

Any historian will appreciate chapter three. This section discusses the known facts of Bonhoeffer’s involvement in the attempts to assassinate Hitler while working for the Abwehr. This chapter is the climax for calling into question the myths regarding Bonhoeffer. Many scholars conclude their knowledge of Bonhoeffer based on these presumed facts. However, these

authors suggest that drawing strong conclusions strictly on the basis of these facts proves disingenuous to his entire context.

A particular golden thread that runs through Bonhoeffer's life and theology is brought up in chapter one. It speaks of his liberation as a theologian, but more importantly, as a Christian. His interest in Jesus' words at the Sermon on the Mount shaped who he was as a thinker. Bonhoeffer proclaims, "It was from this that the Bible, especially the Sermon on the Mount, freed me" (21). These words of Jesus underlie his entire theology towards pacifism.

The majority of part two explores Bonhoeffer's theology, with a focus on details and explanations of his writings. The brilliance of this book is demonstrated in the unification of Bonhoeffer's life and his writings. The authors attempt to rediscover Bonhoeffer's theology by understanding the context and times. By doing so, they challenge the notion that Bonhoeffer the young pacifist matured into a strong militant as the realities of war became more evident to him. Instead, this book reveals a development of his theology that is less radical than many scholars have previously implied.

This book is to be praised for its extensive look into Bonhoeffer as a theologian and a person. The authors provide the reader with an academic, yet conversational, understanding of his writings. Instead of drawing conclusions that Bonhoeffer matured towards redemptive violence as the only means of a solution in the time of war, the authors provide the reader with excellent contrary evidence. Many readers will come away with a new meaning of pacifism, not as a reactionary movement against war, but as Bonhoeffer understood it, a "Christ-centered peace ethic" (186).

The authors conclude by proposing a new thesis of Bonhoeffer's ethics. Instead of understanding morality within the context of right and wrong, they read Bonhoeffer as responding to the context of the individual within the fundamental actions of Christ. This is further explained with regard to Bonhoeffer's arguments furthering philosophical models used by preceding German philosopher Immanuel Kant and mentor Karl Barth in chapter five. In chapter seven, the authors explain the contested themes in *Ethics*. Understanding Bonhoeffer's view of morality determines how one judges whether his behavior is consistent or hypocritical with regard to his own theology.

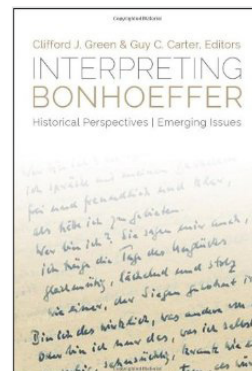
Overall, Bonhoeffer's ethics are thoroughly explained to the reader. However, his Lutheran background tends seldom to challenge the Mennonite authors. This is evident when Bonhoeffer's view of ecclesiology is first mentioned in chapter six and the author insists that Bonhoeffer would refute Lutherans' two-kingdom theology. The author explains two kingdoms as being mutually exclusive, consequently demanding two sets of ethics. Instead, Lutherans' two-kingdom theology recognizes the tension in the life of a Christian without compromising his ethics, but rather, understanding his vocation. Chapter seven's extensively researched explanation for Bonhoeffer's theology of civic responsibility and the life of the Christian does not contradict, as the author believes, but encourages Lutherans' two-kingdom theology.

For the purpose of review, the previous point is trivial to the whole. Yet it proves the work of Bonhoeffer is still an open conversation. This book is a major contribution in rereading Bonhoeffer, successfully challenging the myth of Bonhoeffer as ultimately embracing the necessity of a violent solution and even providing thorough evidence to the contrary.

This book is able to provide a connection for the reader with Bonhoeffer's own theological language. For example, the authors use Bonhoeffer's words to explain the development of his theology in *Discipleship* and *Ethics*. "[He] asserts that obedience and freedom are interwoven by arguing that the two concepts should be laid alongside each other" (203). These words, *obedience* and *freedom*, leave the reader impacted by Bonhoeffer's own phraseology, with added commentary by the author.

This is valuable, since Bonhoeffer's works can be academically challenging, and demand the time for consideration, especially concerning Bonhoeffer's ethics regarding the individual Christian and the church. This book is an excellent resource as an overall summary of continuity between early writings and later decisions and works. It will be a valuable aid in any further study of Bonhoeffer.

Zachary W. Marklevitz
Fort Wayne, Indiana



Interpreting Bonhoeffer: Historical Perspectives, Emerging Issues.

Edited by Clifford J. Green and Guy C. Carter. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013. Paper, 259 pages.

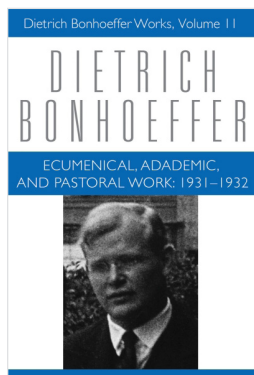
The massive project of rendering Bonhoeffer into English has been brought to completion with the release of the final volume in the Fortress Press project *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*. With the seventieth anniversary of Bonhoeffer's death in 2015 and with an undiminished interest in his life and legacy across the theological and ecclesiastical spectrum, it is not surprising that interpretative anthologies such as this one would emerge. The papers in this volume represent, for the most part, what might be termed a "postliberal" reception of Bonhoeffer. Originally presented at a conference, "Bonhoeffer for the Coming Generations," held at Union Theological Seminary in November 2011, these papers seek to retrieve aspects of Bonhoeffer's theology for contemporary projects.

The essays are arranged under two headings. Part I is devoted to "Interpretation from Historical Perspectives" while Part II addresses "Emerging Issues of Interpretation." Under Part I, readers will find essayists examining the reception of Bonhoeffer in three Germanys (Wolfgang Huber), South Africa (John W. de Gruchy), Britain (Keith Clements), the United States (Larry Rasmussen), Brazil (Carlos Ribiero Caldas, Filho), and

Japan (Kazuaki Yamasaki). In many ways, these chapters are the most informative and the most interesting. For example, Yamasaki tells of how Japanese Christians sided with the Emperor during the Second World War in a way that paralleled the so-called German Christians and of how Bonhoeffer was discovered in Japan only after 1950. Clements chronicles shifts in Bonhoeffer's reception in England, from the early days of J. H. Oldham and Bishop George Bell to Gregor Smith after the war to John A. T. Robinson's *Honest to God*. Other essays in Part I address the challenges faced in translating Bonhoeffer into English, commenting especially on the Fortress project. Other essays in Part I take up Bonhoeffer's context. Worthy of note here is the essay by Union professor Gary Dorrien, "The American Protestant Theology Bonhoeffer Encountered," which offers generous glimpses into Liberal American Christianity in the first three decades of the twentieth century. No wonder that Bonhoeffer complained that sociology had replaced theology at Union when he came to study there in 1930.

Part II takes up issues of interpretation. Two of the writers, Brigitte Kahl and Clifford Green, suggest that Bonhoeffer was a forerunner of the New Perspective on Paul. Christiane Tietz seeks to find a way to accommodate religious pluralism in Bonhoeffer's Christology. Interpreters of Bonhoeffer often see a gap between his *Cost of Discipleship* (early Bonhoeffer) and his *Ethics* (late Bonhoeffer); Florian Schmitz attempts to show the coherence between these two works. Michael DeJonge situates Bonhoeffer near Barth in intellectual history. Reggie Williams examines Bonhoeffer's experience in Harlem with "the Black Christ" while Samuel Wells speculates on how Bonhoeffer continues to challenge the church as a theologian, activist, and educator.

*John T. Pless
Fort Wayne, Indiana*



***Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, Volume 11: *Ecumenical, Academic, and Pastoral Work 1931–1932*.** Edited by Victoria J. Barnett, Mark S. Brocker, and Michael B. Lukens. Translated by Anne Schmidt-Lange et al. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012. Hardcover, 612 pages.

• This volume covers just a little over a year in the life of Bonhoeffer, commencing with his return from

Union Seminary in New York in June 1931 and concluding with materials from October 1932, during the final days of the Weimar Republic. Bonhoeffer's biographer, Eberhard Bethge, identifies Bonhoeffer's return to Germany in the summer of 1931 as a

crucial marker: "The period of learning and roaming had come to an end. He now began to teach on a faculty whose theology he did not share, and to preach in a church whose self-confidence he regarded as unfounded. More aware than before, he now became part of a society that was moving toward political, social, and economic chaos" (1). It is in this context that Bonhoeffer, not yet thirty years old, lectured, preached, and wrote.

Over a hundred pages of the volume are devoted to correspondence. Apart from the letters to family and friends and notes or documents of more or less mundane matters, there are significant letters to colleagues Paul Althaus, Paul Lehmann, Erwin Sutz, and Wilhelm Stählin. Also included are letters to Bonhoeffer from Hermann Sasse and Walter Künneth. These letters give glimpses into Bonhoeffer's personal life, his transition from student to pastor, as well as the mounting tensions in Germany.

The second part of the volume contains conference reports, lecture notes, and drafts of documents in progress. Growing out of Bonhoeffer's tenure as a "campus pastor" at a Berlin technical school, he offers reflections on this work in "Pastoral Care for Protestant Students at a Technical College" where he argues that the church needs to be with its students:

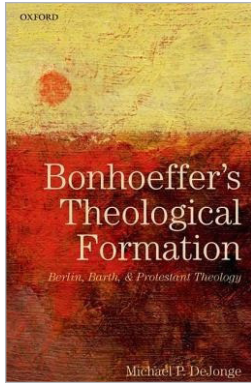
The church believes in all seriousness, in a time of the deepest ideological division, that it can and may stand there where ideologies reach their end and something new and ultimate begins. The church will proudly preserve that which it has and not market it like false goods, perhaps under deceptive names. For the church knows nothing is greater than to be there where people really want the church to be, to help with the resources that it has. This is what the church is telling the student body when it assigns a student chaplain to work with them. (257)

Good advice for campus ministry yet today.

Another noteworthy inclusion from this period is Bonhoeffer's attempt at writing a "Lutheran Catechism" (258–67). Student notes on Bonhoeffer's lecture at Berlin in the summer of 1932 on "The Nature of the Church" provide a window into his early ecclesiological reflections based on his 1927 dissertation, *Sanctorum Communio* (see Volume 1 of *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*) and lay out themes that will be further developed, such as "the worldliness of the church," later in his career.

Volume 11 is rounded out with fourteen sermons or devotional meditations delivered in Berlin in 1931–1932. Two of these sermons were baptismal sermons, preached on the occasion of the baptisms of his nephews, although they have little to say about the sacrament itself.

*John T. Pless
Fort Wayne, Indiana*



Bonhoeffer's Theological Formation: Berlin, Barth, and Protestant Theology. By Michael P. DeJonge. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. Hardcover, 158 pages.

✦ This is a significant and insightful reading of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theological development by an American scholar, Michael DeJonge, assistant professor of religious studies at the University of South Florida. DeJonge devotes

most of his effort to comparing and contrasting Bonhoeffer with Barth, but he does not neglect other influences in the shaping of Bonhoeffer's theology.

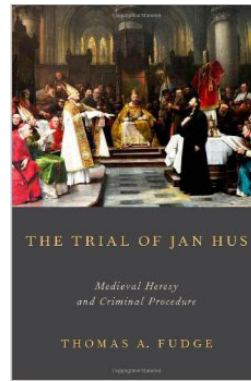
Particularly noteworthy is his treatment of Bonhoeffer's teacher at Berlin, Karl Holl, and the so-called Luther Renaissance he spearheaded. Along with Adolph von Harnack and Reinhold Seeberg, Holl was representative of the old liberal theology embedded in what Bonhoeffer would call "cultural Protestantism." Holl accented the place of conscience in Luther's theology but in a way, according to Bonhoeffer, that reduces revelation to a possibility within the human psyche. DeJonge isolates two particular aspects of Bonhoeffer's dissent to Holl. First, Bonhoeffer sees Holl as intending to see the conscience as the voice of God but in effect he understands it "as the voice of the sinful, self-justifying human being" (122). Second, "conscience cannot be the beginning of religion and morality, since it connects the self neither to God nor to the neighbor. Conscience is the 'final perseverance of the I to itself'" (123). No doubt that Holl's pioneering research in Luther studies was instrumental in opening paths for Bonhoeffer to engage with the Reformer, but finally it would not be Holl's portrayal of Luther that would guide Bonhoeffer's appreciation for Luther's theology. Bonhoeffer sees Holl's estimation of Luther's Christology as "meager" and without a strong christological basis; the nature of justification by faith alone is impaired. DeJonge concludes, "Thus the tragedy of Holl's theology: having emphasized justification as the doctrine by which the church stands or falls, he ties justification to the dynamics of the conscience and thereby renders it *self-justification*" (126).

The bulk of the book is aimed at teasing out dimensions of Bonhoeffer's theological kinship with and distance from Karl Barth. Here DeJonge tackles what is perhaps the most opaque of Bonhoeffer's works, *Act and Being: Transcendental Philosophy and Ontology in Systematic Theology* (1930). Bonhoeffer sees Barth as the primary representative of an "act theology" while Holl, among others, is identified as a "being" theologian. "Act" and "being" present a theological impasse that can be overcome, according to Bonhoeffer, by a theological understanding of person. In developing his argument, Bonhoeffer uses classical Lutheran categories in Christology to critique Barth, who is viewed as finally echoing classically Reformed positions.

Bonhoeffer's Theological Formation serves as a helpful reader's guide to some of the most challenging conceptualities of

Bonhoeffer's earliest theological work as reflected in *Act and Being*. For this reason alone, the book deserves careful study by those interested in assessing Bonhoeffer's theology and its viability in the ongoing theological tasks. The book also invites further investigation into other sources of influence in Bonhoeffer's theology. For example, Bonhoeffer makes significant use of the so-called Erlangen theologians of the nineteenth century. This deserves further study.

John T. Pless
Fort Wayne, Indiana



The Trial of Jan Hus: Medieval Heresy and Criminal Procedure. By Thomas A. Fudge. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. xxiii + 392 pages.

✦ In recent years, the prodigious Hussite scholar Thomas Fudge has composed a self-described "trilogy" on Jan Hus. This volume is the second in that series and it intends to commemorate the six-hundredth

anniversary of Hus's death. While much has been written concerning the Bohemian reformer's execution at the Council of Constance in 1415, this book treats one topic in particular that no Anglophone study—and only one Czech study—has addressed: the legal validity of Hus's heresy trial. Rather than looking at the trial through the lens of modern notions of religious toleration, let alone that of a Reformation or Czech historiography that lionizes Hus, Fudge instead studies it in the context of medieval canon law related to heresy.

This volume approaches the topic from two related but distinct vantage points. One is a legal assessment of the trial itself against the backdrop of medieval jurisprudence. The other is a theological account of the legitimacy of the heresy charges against Hus. To the issue of heresy, Fudge first provides a survey of medieval heresiology literature, somewhat idiosyncratically identifying medieval heresy as a "haunted house" with nine specific windows offering complementary views of the different forms of heresy. The most significant for his treatment of Hus is the window of "contumacy." Fudge details how Hus resisted ecclesiastical correction, defended John Wycliffe's condemned teachings, refused to recant of any of his own positions, and even turned away numerous attempts to sway him on the eve of his sentencing. While the Bohemian reformer's teachings in particular were not always problematic, his persistence in them despite correction fell under the medieval rubric of contumacy. Since the medieval church saw heresy as being social as well as theological, contumacious heresy was punishable by death. For Fudge, then, Hus was guilty of heresy as defined by canon law and his sentencing to death was theologically warranted.

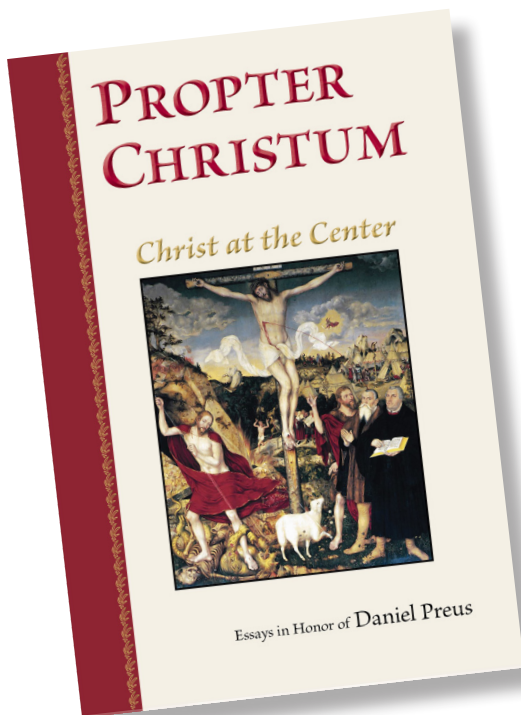
The question of the trial's legal validity takes a similar course. Fudge first analyzes the jurisprudential procedures in canon

law for trying suspected heretics, thereby establishing that the trial of Hus leading to his official excommunication in 1412 was procedurally appropriate. He then sketches the contours of the trial, dating them back as far as Prague's condemnation of Wycliffite teachings in 1403. The upshot of his analysis is that the trial did not begin and end in Constance, but rather Constance was the culmination of prior legal proceedings. Some of Fudge's more important insights emerge from this legal analysis. For instance, Hus's famous "appeal to Christ" (rather than pope or council) not only bordered on contempt of court, but it came at the expense of an actual appeal challenging the validity of his excommunication. As a result of this delaying tactic, Hus cost himself the legal opportunity to appeal the ecclesiastical decision. Second, Hus confused the general imperial safe conduct he received from Emperor Sigismund for Constance with a papal safe conduct. The council, however, stipulated that no safe conduct could interfere with church authority, and so Hus had no legal protection against imprisonment or execution. Despite frequent irregularities in the actual proceedings

at Constance, Fudge nonetheless maintains that the trial itself was canonically legitimate and well within its right to convict Hus of heresy.

The more significant question remains how twenty-first-century eyes should view the willingness of the fifteenth-century church to condemn and execute someone for heresy. Fudge neither shrinks from the question, nor validates it. He claims that such a judgment is outside the ken of the historian, who must approach the trial of Hus on its own terms, and that in turn means the terms of medieval canon law and criminal procedure against suspected heretics. On those counts, the trial was entirely legitimate, even if offensive to modern sensibilities. This volume provides an important first attempt in English to account for the canonical and procedural legitimacy of Hus's trial, while at the same time reminding the contemporary reader that one must judge the trial by its own legal standards, not those of modern jurisprudence or religious toleration.

*Richard J. Serina, Jr.
St. Louis, Missouri*



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SHORT STUDIES AND COMMENTARY

SUFFERING? REALLY?

Yes, really! The church suffers. Get used to it. And more is on the way if the pretend divinities of the world have their way just like all the make-believe gods of the past (for example, Dan 3, 6; Rev 13). Nothing new under the sun! Consequently, Dr. Luther correctly identified suffering as one of the marks of the church.

The holy Christian people are externally recognized by the holy possession of the sacred cross. They must endure every misfortune and persecution, all kinds of trials and evil from the devil, the world, and the flesh (as the Lord's Prayer indicates) by inward sadness, timidity, fear, outward poverty, contempt, illness, and weakness, in order to become like their head, Christ. And the only reason they must suffer is that they steadfastly adhere to Christ and God's word, enduring this for the sake of Christ, Matthew 5 [:11], "Blessed are you when men persecute you on my account." (LW 41:164–65)

When the church suffers in this way what usually happens? She grows. Tertullian remarked that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." How ironic! What the bigwigs/experts — with all their programs and designs for church growth that American Lutheranism has lustfully and frantically tried and forced on congregations for decades — could not bring about, *may just take place!* How? Well, hang on tight. You might not like the answer. The church may finally grow in America as she suffers for confessing Christ and his word to the fabricated and bogus deities of the world. So when your sermons get subpoenaed by the authorities, do them one

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better. Tell them that you'd be delighted to preach God's word to them personally in their offices and/or their living rooms. And get ready to suffer the consequences. All hell will break loose. But so also will *all of heaven!* We will leave it all in the Lord's hands who promises that not even the gates of hell. . . . And who knows — perhaps the confessing and suffering on account of Christ and his word will lead to a change of tune like in Daniel 3:28 and Daniel 6:25–27 and the Lord will continue to use his two witnesses (the church, Revelation 11) to preach the "eternal gospel" for the conversion of many from "every nation, tribe, language, and people" (Rev 14:6).

NOT A GOOD FIT!

As the Lutheran pastor does his work faithfully according to the divine word in the congregation and the community in which he lives, he encounters blowback and flat-out rejection. Why the antipathy and opposition? Usually, the institutional types give this excuse: "He's not a good fit." Well, they are absolutely right. But in a way they never even consider, let alone understand. Let's face it: all faithful preachers are not "good fits"!

Check it out. God sends preachers to proclaim: "Hear, you deaf!" (Isa 42:18) and, "Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but do not see, who have ears, but do not hear" (Jer 5:21). Preach to the deaf? To the blind? Or to dead, dry as dirt bones (Ezek 37)? Not a good fit! And then the faithful preachers preach more foolishness. What could that be? Glad you asked. They preach Christ crucified. Mocked by Roman graffiti as "Alexamenos worships his god" — you know, the donkey head on the cross. Such a preacher certainly is not a good fit!



Thanks be to God that the faithful pastor is not a good fit! After all, he preaches and applies what it takes to kill the old Adam (law) and raise up the new man (gospel) spelled FA-ITH.

BETTER WORDS THAN THE LORD? YOU DON'T! SO GET OVER IT!

There is another reason why there is blowback and rejection as the faithful pastor does his work. It is really simple but rarely recognized or diagnosed. It is this: The old Adam, in league with the devil who whispers lies, contends that he has better words than the Lord. Test it out. No matter what the topic. The old Adam bullishly insists on having the say so. The first and last word. The only word.

The pastoral task is to speak the Lord's words. To let the Lord have the say so. To let the Lord have his way with his sinners according to his words. For the baptismal life of repentance, faith, and holy living. Repentance: here is the truth—you don't have better words than the Lord! Faith: you are to trust only in Jesus and his promises for your salvation. Holy living: you have his words that order your life as his instrument to sacrificially serve the neighbor. Jesus' words are certain and sure.

Dr. Luther gave sound advice on the use of Jesus' words for pastoral care: "You should deal first with the center of our teaching and fix in the people's minds what [they must know] about our justification; that is, that it is an extrinsic righteousness—indeed, it is Christ's given to us through faith which comes by grace to those who are first terrified by the law and who, struck by the consciousness of [their] sins ardently seek redemption" (*LW* 49:261–62).

One of the best ways that pastoral care does this is through the Lord's Supper. The words of institution that the pastor sings or speaks to the congregation are the *viva vox Christi*. The *Verba Domini* exegete Christ's sinless life, his expiatory death, while instructing the congregation regarding what they receive in Christ's body and blood, the signs of the new testament in his blood. This exhortation is the liturgical execution of what Luther had previously written in his 1521 treatise *The Misuse of the Mass*:

For if you ask: What is the gospel? You can give no better answer than these words of the New Testament, namely, that Christ gave his body and poured out his blood for us for the forgiveness of sins. . . . Therefore these words, as a short summary of the whole gospel, are to be taught and instilled into every Christian's heart, so that he may contemplate them continuously and without ceasing, and with them exercise, strengthen, and sustain his faith in Christ, especially when he goes to the sacrament. And this is what the minister is indicating when he elevates the host and the cup. (*LW* 36:183)

Elsewhere Dr. Luther stated:

[Y]ou must above all else take heed to your heart, that you believe the words of Christ, and admit their truth, when *he says to you and to all*, "This is my blood, a new testament, by which I bequeath you forgiveness of all sins and eternal life." . . . Everything depends, therefore, as I have said, upon the words of this sacrament. *These are the words of Christ*. Truly we should set them in pure gold and precious stones, keeping nothing more diligently before the eyes of our heart, so that faith may thereby be exercised. . . . So if you would receive this sacrament and testament worthily, see to it that you give emphasis to these *living words of Christ*, rely on them with a strong faith, and desire what Christ has promised you in them." (*LW* 35:88–89, emphasis added)

Happy letting the Lord have his say!

OH, FOR THE DAYS WHEN INERRANCY WASN'T A DIRTY WORD!

One of the finest statements in the 1992 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), a quotation from Vatican II's *Dei Verbum*, is to be found at #66: "The Christian economy, therefore, since it is the new and definitive Covenant, will never pass away; and no new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ." The previous paragraph begins with the opening verses of Hebrews 1, flowing into commentary on them by John of the Cross (+1591): "In giving us his Son, his only Word (for he possesses no other), he spoke everything to us at once in this sole Word—and he has no more to say . . . because what he spoke before to the prophets in parts, he has now spoken all at once by giving us the All Who is His Son."

The accelerating vortex of the end times being what it is, only the incurably naïve could take for granted that all major hierarchs of the Roman Church accept the foregoing catechetical proposition, along with its exposition by a major figure of the Counter-Reformation. In an interview published on 27 July 2014, the Brazilian Claudio Cardinal Hummes, a big buddy of the current bishop of Rome, who appeared with him on the balcony of St. Peter's immediately after his election and who is allegedly responsible for Francis's choice of papal throne name, professed a doctrine of Christ and Scripture indistinguishable from that of liberal Protestantism. In response to the question, "If Jesus were alive today [*sic!*], would he be in favour of gay marriage?" the cardinal gave the lame response, "I don't know, I formulate no hypothesis on this. Who must answer this is the Church in its entirety. We must take care not to raise issues individually, because this ends up creating more difficulties for us to reach a valid conclusion. I think we must get together, listen to people,

those who have an interest, the bishops. It is the Church that must indicate the ways, and there must be a way for all” (<http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2014/07/let-your-yes-be-yes-and-your-no-no.html>). The “clarification” offered by Hummes some weeks later only exacerbated the offensiveness of his original response (<http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/exclusive-popes-friend-cardinal-hummes-clarifies-jesus-gay-marriage-remarks>).

Francis’s close ally has clearly not cracked open the pope emeritus’s three-volume *Jesus of Nazareth*, and he is manifestly unsympathetic to the core of Ratzinger’s well-crafted argument for the authenticity of the Gospel record. Even more startling than his dismissal of the Decalogue and its consistent exposition from the first syllable of Sacred Scripture to the last, though, is the cardinal’s stunning denial of the divinity of Christ. We might expect a believer to respond to Hummes’s questioner that Jesus is no ordinary man, but enfleshed God, once crucified but raised from the dead and hence more alive than the interlocutors in any conversation here on earth. Why did the cardinal not crisply confess that the preexistent Logos manifested himself in the Old Testament theophanies, which include his appearance to Abraham at the oak of Mamre ahead of the angels’ visit to Lot? Why did he not point out that the entire Bible is breathed out by the Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and that Christian tradition dating back to the *Didache* permits not a shred of doubt as to how Scripture answers the question posed by his interviewer? In fine, why did he not let CCC #66 guide his reply instead of treating this excellent dogmatic statement as a dead letter?

The short answer to these questions is that, over somewhat more than the past half century, Roman Catholicism has been massively infected by the “critical scholarship” that arose in European Protestantism in the age of the Enlightenment. A longer and more careful response necessitates a brief visit to the planning stages and opening scenes of Vatican II. As John XXIII appointed ten commissions headed by curial cardinals to prepare documents for the council fathers’ consideration and approval, pride of place belonged to the Preparatory Theological Commission headed by Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani (1890–1979). Curiously, the only document to emerge basically unscathed from the mountain of paperwork produced by the curia was the work of the liturgical commission duly promulgated as *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, while the nine documents crafted by Ottaviani’s team were dead upon arrival in the aula of St. Peter’s. Researchers owe a debt of thanks to Marquette University’s Fr. Joseph Komonchak for translating and making available five of these documents (<http://unamsanctamcatholicam.com/history/historia-ecclesiae/79-history/421-original-vatican-ii-schemas.html>), only one of which will engage our attention here.

Dei Verbum, the conciliar constitution on divine revelation, is rightly famous for softening Tridentine rigidity by the way it expresses the interrelationship of Scripture, tradition, and ecclesiastical teaching office. Vatican II had hardly begun when the “progressive” bishops of Northwest Europe sent Cardinal Ottaviani’s *De Fontibus Revelationis* (On the sources

of revelation) back to the drawing board, denouncing the document as “scholastic,” “unpastoral,” and not at all suited to the palate of the “separated brethren” to whom the council fathers would fain draw close (see John O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II*, 140–52). Well and good, if the nub of the argument actually concerned plural sources of revelation, but a read of Ottaviani’s draft raises questions galore over the actual points at issue (<http://jakomonchak.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/de-fontibus-1-5.pdf>). Missourian eyes will pop and orthodox Lutheran ears pay heed over *De Fontibus*’s second chapter, “On the Inspiration, Inerrancy, and Literary Composition of the Scriptures.” An opening quotation of 2 Timothy 3:16 leads straight into an account of the inspiration of the sacred writers and the inerrancy of their words. Try this definition of inspiration for size: “Similarly, since God himself by the inspiring Spirit is the Author of all Holy Scripture and, as it were, the writer of everything produced in it by the hagiograph’s hand, it follows that all and each of the parts of the sacred books, even the slightest parts, are inspired. Therefore, everything stated by the hagiograph must be considered to have been stated by the Holy Spirit” (II, 11). And what about this confession of inerrancy? “Because divine Inspiration extends to everything, the absolute immunity of all Holy Scripture from error follows directly and necessarily. For we are taught by the ancient and constant faith of the Church that it is utterly forbidden to grant that the sacred author himself has erred, since divine Inspiration of itself as necessarily excludes and repels any error in any matter, religious or profane, as it is necessary to say that God, the supreme Truth, is never the author of any error whatever” (II, 12). The much-excoriated Cardinal Ottaviani would obviously have taken the side of J. A. O. Preus rather than that of John Tietjen in the conflict that broke out within the Missouri Synod in that fateful decade, the 1960s.

Dei Verbum III, 11, to which the council fathers appended quotation of 2 Timothy 3:16, can of course be understood *in bonam partem*: “Therefore, since everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully, and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings for the sake of salvation.” Would we be wrong, though, to discern here a kindred slide from stout confession to the mouthing of weasel words as occurred in official statements of the American Lutheran Church between its foundation in 1960 and its dissolution in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America less than thirty years later? After all, the sentence just quoted fatefully restricts inerrancy’s scope. John O’Malley’s snitty remark speaks volumes about the sea change in Roman Catholic scholarship, doctrine, and proclamation that took place in, with, and under Vatican II: “The way [Ottaviani’s draft] spoke of inspiration and inerrancy seemed crude and almost fundamentalist” (147). Which reader of *LOGIA* would presume to contest *Dei Verbum* v, 19’s avowal of the historicity of the Gospels? “Holy Mother Church has firmly and with absolute constancy held, and continues to

hold, that the four Gospels just named, whose historical character the Church unhesitatingly asserts, faithfully hand on what Jesus Christ, while living among men, really did and taught for their eternal salvation until the day He was taken up into heaven (see Acts 1:1).” But this excellent formal statement is a dead letter for the many Roman Catholic priests and scholars who ape liberal Protestant apostates by claiming to discern the “real” Jesus hidden beneath layers of erroneous “spin” put on his words and deeds by the four Evangelists (see <http://remnantnewspaper.com/web/index.php/articles/item/846-modernism-alive-and-well-in-diocese-of-erie-pa>).

Since the world’s way of talking has freighted the word *fundamentalist* with the sense of illiterate ignoramus and/or violent ideologue, few confessors of the divinity of Christ and the inspiration of the Scriptures would willingly be tarred with the “fundamentalist” brush. But honesty bids us concede that such launchers of the Fundamentalist movement as the Presbyterians Gresham Machen and B. B. Warfield were scholars of unimpeachable credentials. Moreover, as they endured the scorn of the chattering classes and the media elites, the Fundamentalists injected a powerful impetus for acknowledgement of the core truth of Christianity and the Scriptures into North American culture, a head of steam that retained its force until around the onset of the Reagan presidency. Apart from this wind at his back, could J. A. O. Preus have succeeded, humanly speaking, in wresting the wheel of the Missouri Synod’s governance from the hands of those who willingly went with the prevailing heterodox/apostate flow?

The past generation has seen the capitulation of North American culture to the assumption that Jesus of Nazareth was just one guru among others and that the Scriptures are a ramshackle collection of writings replete with legend, myth, and downright untruth, not to mention throbbing with unacceptable prejudices that increasingly render those who profess them subject to criminal penalties. Against this background it is startling to discover how some learned Roman Catholic scholars of traditionalist stripe were keenly aware of the inevitable implications of the “modernist” approach to Scripture that was making deep, albeit largely hidden inroads within Roman Catholicism as early as 1960. Ernesto Ruffini (1888–1967), cardinal archbishop of Palermo, saw the writing on the wall by that date (see Roberto de Mattei, *The Second Vatican Council: An Unwritten Story*, 142–43), and, as he raised the alarm over the intrusion of the modernist mindset and methodology into the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Msgr. Antonino Romeo (1902–1979) saw with prophetic clarity the destination that would be reached once inspiration and inerrancy were abandoned: “Christianity ‘of modern times’ will be based on the cosmic divinity and on human rights; it will have as the dogmas of its ‘Credo’ evolutionist monism and unending progress, unlimited human liberty and universal equality, with traces of scientific, theosophical, or occultist ‘faith’ that will vary according to the circumstances. It will have as its obligatory morality ‘adaptation,’ in other words, ‘conformism,’ with the prohibition of any ‘frustration’ and the obligation to satisfy all instincts and impulses; the ultimate

finality of eternal life will be dismissed and ‘earthly realities’ will take its place” (de Mattei, 140).

Father Romeo’s sober prophecy goes a long way toward explaining the mindset of the Brazilian cardinal who appeared at Francis’s side on his election in March 2013, and who so eerily ducked the no-brainer of a question directed to him at the end of July 2014. With no more Fundamentalist wind at their backs and seemingly helpless before the twin jihads of aggressive Islam and militant secularism, believing Christians of all confessions currently face intensifying waves of scorn, harassment, and even martyrdom as they defy the world and the devil and triumph over their own flesh by confessing Jesus as enfleshed God and the Holy Scriptures as God’s word. Such belief and confession across ecclesial borders is the core of true ecumenism and catholic consensus. In this setting, even as we note that Alfredo Ottaviani and his confrères were Tridentine Roman Catholics disinclined to acknowledge the positives of Lutheran Christendom, we might spare a kind thought for them and admit that, as it headed ignominiously to the waste basket of Vatican II, *De Fontibus Revelationibus* had its good points.

John R. Stephenson

WELCOME HOME!

From Eric R. Andræ, edited and adapted from his congregation’s use.

The church’s worship is her very life-breath by the means of grace. Through it she gives form and shape to the faith she believes and proclaims, while bearing Christ and delivering him to his people. The Lutheran Church is liturgical (AC xv; Ap xxiv, 1). We use what some call a “traditional style.”

The church is not the world. She does not speak like the world, sound like it, act like it, appear like it, or even smell like it. The church is not worldly. In her children’s gift-receiving and thanks-giving, the church speaks and sings biblically and uncommonly liturgically. She sounds a heavenly harmony of angels and archangels and all the company of heaven. She acts corporately and humbly and reverently. She appears in unique garments and sanctified dress and she smells like the incense of God-pleasing repentant prayer with lifted up hands. The church is foolish, not being recognized by worldly wisdom, by the spiritually undiscerning, commercially focused, emotionally manipulating man (1 Cor 2:14). Instead, she presents herself a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable only to God, not to consumer culture or market-driven society. She, and we who have been freely begotten and borne by her through the Word of the Father, are not conformed to this world’s language, sounds, behavior, appearance, and aroma — *its* worship — but are transformed by the renewal of mind and ears and mouth and heart, proving what is the good

and acceptable and perfect will of God, as we hear *him* (Rom 12:1–2; Luke 10:39, 42; Matt 17:5).

As such, rejecting historical amnesia and mere individualistic preference or bias, we listen to and respect and worship with those sainted men and women who have gone before us, the cloud of witnesses in ages past, showing ourselves to be true members of the eternal body of Christ (AC Conclusion, 5; Heb 12:1; 13:8). This “means giving votes to our ancestors,” for the church “refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about” (G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* [New York: Image Books/Doubleday, 2001], 45). In these ways we are and will remain healthy, whole, and complete—a people, a church, a parish, a congregation, missions and ministries of integrity and authenticity.

In the midst of a constantly transitioning and chaotic world, liturgical form provides stability, safety, and security. The historic liturgy is a cornerstone for all. In order “to be always relevant, you have to say things which are eternal” (Simone Weil). The liturgy, “as it bears the Word of God, keeps us relevant by speaking into our ears words that are eternal” (John T. Pless, “Liturgy and Evangelism in the Service of the *Mysteria Dei*,” in *Mysteria Dei: Essays in Honor of Kurt Marquart*, ed. Paul T. McCain and John R. Stephenson [Fort Wayne, Indiana: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1999], 233, 234.). Otherwise, if the church marries the spirit of the age with vows of forced contemporaneousness, she will soon be a widow.

But here, in her worship, the church is indeed alive and well, for through her the Lord gives his very self—alive and well, resurrected!—to his redeemed that they, too, may have life and have it in abundance (John 10:10).

We thus encourage especially those of you for whom this style of worship is at first new and challenging to find here a renewing refuge and a steadfast haven. To live within the mysteries of the body of Christ, to be given his gifts of forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation, to be joined together with your brothers and sisters, and to be lifted up by them beyond self. And, of course, to ask questions, to learn, to grow with us all. It may take weeks or even months for you to find yourself at home within the liturgy and ceremonies of the historic Lutheran church, but many before you have found it well worth the journey. Welcome home!

BO GIERTZ ON PERSECUTION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

In 1945, four years after writing the acclaimed novel *The Hammer of God* and at the close of World War II, Bo Giertz authored *Den stora lögnen och den stora sanningen* [The big lie and the big truth]. This book is his most systematic presentation of “basic Christians truths” (subtitle), again accessible to

the interested layman, as well as invigorating for the seasoned theologian or pastor. Several of its fifteen chapters have been translated into English in whole or in part, including the title chapter, as well as “Your Conversion” and “What is an Evangelical Lutheran Christian” in *The Message of the Church in a Time of Crisis* (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Book Concern, 1953), plus “The Table of Grace” in *A Hammer for God: Bo Giertz*, ed. Eric R. Andræ (Fort Wayne: Lutheran Legacy, 2010).

In the next-to-last chapter Giertz addresses “De två regementerna” [The two regiments]. Under the topic of the earthly regiment, Giertz recognizes both optimistic and pessimistic traits in the Christian view of society. On the “optimistic” side, “A Christian knows that he is God’s coworker everywhere where he in his civic work assists in preserving justice and creating better conditions in society. He thanks God for every force for good which does the same, and he acknowledges all good contributions, regardless of faith or opinions.” All of this is because God is actually “at work, not only as Savior but also as Creator” (*Den stora lögnen och den stora sanningen: Femton kapitel om kristna grundsanningar* [Göteborg: Kyrkliga Förbundets Bokförlag, 1993, 11th printing], 206, 205). On the other hand, under the “pessimistic” angle, Giertz gives some thoughts on the educational system as it relates to the increasing persecution of Christians in the end times:

Evil mobilizes more and more of its power, the longer the battle lasts. At the same time as the gospel gains ground, evil also strengthens its positions. The final stage is a violent power struggle, in which Satan fully mobilizes all his resources and seems close to victory. He will then grasp for his disposal the entirety of society’s apparatus and all of the options of the state. Then emerges a truly demonic state, a regiment of Antichrist, before which a Christian has only two possibilities: apostasy or martyrdom.

This view of the future permeates the entire Bible’s message, from the prophets to Revelation. It is very clearly articulated in Jesus’ own words. The one who before did not really want to take it seriously, has perhaps over the past several years received a gruesome reminder of its realism through what has happened out in the world. And no one should imagine that the danger has passed if only the power of the dictators is routed. Even the democratic form of the modern state has also gathered such means of power—for example in shaping public opinion through radio or the educational system—that it requires a great measure of a sense of justice and self-control in order not to abuse them. Already in our land voices have been raised which have shamelessly revealed how the power of the state could be misused. The strange thing is that many of them, who have most fervently opposed and condemned Nazism, seem willing to learn from its methods when it comes to opposing Christianity and the church. If the state uses its power over the educational system to oppose the Christian faith and undermine Christian morality, then we find ourselves at that limit where the

church must resist and where all Christians should refuse to bow to the dictates of the state.

However, we have not yet—fortunately—come that far. A Christian can still thank God for most things: the laws and institutions of the Swedish society, and know that it is his simple and clear responsibility to take his place therein, not because the society is “Christian” in the sense that it is established for service unto the gospel, but rather because it is part of God’s work for the promotion of earthly justice and mercy. (206–7)

Seventy years later, have we now arrived at the point about which Giertz warned us? If so, what actions should we take? Are our only options apostasy or martyrdom?! Or is the public education system not yet the foe of our faith, but rather still a friend, or at least a tool for God as he shapes us through *tentatio*?

Eric R. Andræ

THESES ON INFANT/TODDLER COMMUNION

Thesis 1: The question of admission to the Lord’s Supper is addressed from the instituting words of the Lord, which also disclose the purpose and beneficial use of the sacrament.

Jesus’ words tell us what the sacrament is, his body and blood given Christians to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of their sins. As Luther puts it: “We know, however, that it is the Lord’s Supper, in name and in reality, not the supper of Christians. For the Lord not only instituted it, but also prepares and gives it himself, and is himself cook, butler, food, and drink” (LW 37:142). The sacrament is to be received in “remembrance” of the one who instituted it, that is, in faith trusting in his gracious words, “given and shed for you.” The sacrament itself is the preaching of the gospel. It is misused when it is turned into an enactment of inclusiveness or thought of as the impartation of a mystical energy through the act of eating and drinking. Arguments for the communion of infants and toddlers tend to drive a wedge between “take eat, take drink” and trust in “these words, given and shed for you.” It is not simply eating and drinking that constitute the salutary use of the sacrament but that eating and drinking accompanied by trust in Christ’s words, that is, the explicit promise of his supper.

Thesis 2: The apostolic teaching that a man is to examine himself (1 Cor 11:28) cannot reasonably be interpreted as to exclude the noetic dimension of which infants/toddlers are not capable.

Paul speaks of self-examination in verse 28 in conjunction with “discerning” (*diakrino*) the body in verse 29. Both BAGD (231) and TDNT (3:946–49) demonstrate that this term means

to separate, arrange, make a distinction, differentiate, evaluate, judge. This text cannot be dismissed by limiting its application to the original context of the Corinthian congregation, as Wolfhart Pannenberg does when he asserts that the “self-examination that 1 Corinthians 11:28 demands does not relate primarily to the individual moral state but to the breaches of fellowship that ought not exist between members of the body of Christ” (*Systematic Theology*, 3:327). While the apostle is certainly addressing and correcting these breaches of fellowship enacted in the way the rich assert their priority over the poor, he does so on the basis that this is no ordinary meal but a communion in the body and blood of the Lord. Communicants are not to eat and drink without the discernment of this reality. For more on this, see Gregory Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, Concordia Commentary, 405–8; and Jeffrey Gibbs, “An Exegetical Case for Close(d) Communion: 1 Corinthians 10:14–22; 11:17–34” *Concordia Journal* 21 (1995): 148–63.

Thesis 3: Baptism is an absolute prerequisite for admission to the Lord’s Supper but it does not follow that all the baptized are categorically to be admitted to the altar.

The slogan “communion is the birthright of the baptized” is sometimes used to assert that all the baptized are entitled to eat and drink in the Lord’s Supper; however, this is not only problematic in making admission to the Lord’s Supper a “right” rather than a gift, it also misses the point that for numerous reasons baptized Christians are excluded from the Lord’s table. Those under church discipline are barred from the altar as are those who do not share in the confession of a particular altar. Infants and toddlers who have not yet been taught the faith and examined on the basis of this teaching are not admitted to the supper. As Werner Elert notes: “Even though a man must first be baptized before he may partake of the Holy Communion, this does not mean that all the baptized may without distinction partake of the Eucharist together” (*Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries*, 80). The baptized are to be taught according to the Lord’s bidding (Matt 28:19–20). This teaching leads to the sacrament, not vice versa.

Thesis 4: Arguments for infant/toddler communion bypass the truth that in baptism, we receive “victory over death and the devil, forgiveness of sin, God’s grace, the entire Christ, and the Holy Spirit with his gifts” (LC IV, 41; Kolb-Wengert, 461) as though the promise of baptism remained unfulfilled without the Lord’s Supper. By waiting until children have been instructed, examined, and absolved before admitting them to the Lord’s Supper, they are not being deprived of Christ.

In the New Testament and the Lutheran Confessions, Holy Baptism is not an event in a series of “rites of initiation” that is left incomplete without participation in the sacrament. Instead, Holy Baptism bestows the “entire Christ” and encompasses the whole life of the believer. Not only is it foundational but it is also enduring in the life of the Christian.

The teaching that our Lord attaches to baptism (Matt 28:16–20) surely leads the baptized to eat and drink his body and blood as the Lord bestows his gifts in more than one way, but infants and young children are not deprived of Christ before this teaching has been accomplished. Here note Craig Koester:

The Lord's Supper was instituted "for the forgiveness of sins" to be received with a discerning faith. Adults and children who recognize their sin and seek forgiveness should be encouraged to partake of the meal. Since infants are not capable of recognizing sin or desired forgiveness, they should not participate in the Supper. The grace given in baptism is sufficient for them at this early stage of their lives. It is when they reach the point where they recognize the need for forgiveness for their sins that they should be instructed and encouraged to take, eat, and drink of Christ's body and blood at the Lord's table. ("Infant Communion in Light of the New Testament," *Lutheran Quarterly* 10 [1996]: 238)

Maxwell E. Johnson, himself an advocate of infant communion, notes that through a coupling of John 3:5 (unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom) and John 6:53 (unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man) into a single logion in the *traditio fidei*, both baptism and the Lord's Supper are made necessary for membership in the Christian community (*The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation*, 68–69). Unlike Cyprian (and Augustine for that matter), the Lutheran Confessions do not operate with what might be called a "unitive" understanding of the sacraments. Baptism is the rebirth into the body of Christ, as in it sins are forgiven and the Holy Spirit bestowed. The Lord's Supper is not an additive to baptism, but serves instead to strengthen the Christian in the forgiveness of sins according to the word and promise of Christ to which faith clings.

Thesis 5: Faith does not make the sacrament, but it is only by faith that the benefits of the sacrament are received.

Faith is precisely trust in these words: "given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins" (SC). In the Small Catechism, eating and drinking are joined together with trust in the spoken word "given and shed for you." The Lord's Supper is given precisely to strengthen the faith of those who through the accusation of the law recognize their sin and whose terrorized consciences acknowledge their need and desire the forgiveness of their sins. "For people are admitted only if they have first had an opportunity to be examined [*explorati*] and heard. The people are also reminded about the dignity and use of the sacrament—how it offers great consolation to anxious consciences—so that they may learn to believe in God and expect all that is good from God" (AC xxiv, 6–7 [Latin]; Kolb-Wengert, 68). The Augsburg Confession continues the same trajectory set by Luther in 1523 in his *Order of Mass and Communion for the Church* at Wittenberg where he outlines how those who would commune are to be examined (LW 53:33–34).

Worthily eating and drinking the Lord's body and blood requires instruction. Admitting the uninstructed and therefore unexamined, whether they are adults or infants, was out of the question for Luther. Already in 1522, Luther provides a descriptive template for the structure of the Catechism:

Thus the commandments teach man to recognize his sickness, enabling him to perceive what he must do or refrain from doing, consent to or refuse, and so he will recognize himself a sinful and wicked person. The Creed will teach and show him where to find the medicine—grace—which will help him to become devout and keep the commandments. The Creed points him to God and his mercy, given and made plain to him in Christ. Finally, the Lord's Prayer teaches all this, namely, through the fulfillment of God's commandments everything will be given him. In these three are the essentials of the entire Bible. (*Personal Prayer Book*, LW 43:14)

Instruction in and confession of these essentials of the Christian faith are a prerequisite for admission to the Lord's Supper. Four years after writing the catechisms, Luther writes in 1533 in his *Open Letter to Those in Frankfurt on the Main*:

It is quite true that wherever the preacher administers only bread and wine for the Sacrament, he is not very concerned about to whom he gives it, what they know or believe, or what they receive . . . However, because we are concerned about nurturing Christians who will still be here after we are gone, and because it is Christ's body and blood that are given out in the Sacrament, we will not and cannot give such a Sacrament to anyone unless he is first examined regarding what he has learned from the Catechism and whether he intends to forsake the sins which he has again committed. For we do not want to make Christ's church into a pig pen [Mt 7:6], letting each one come unexamined to the Sacrament as a pig to its trough. Such a church we leave to the Enthusiasts! (trans. J. D. Vieker, *Concordia Journal* 16 [1990]: 343)

Often left out of the discussion of infant/toddler communion is the aspect of the terrorized conscience which Luther includes as a dimension of the examination of communicants. Examination includes exploration of why it is that the body and blood are needed. Lutheran practice should be both catechetical (the communicant should have knowledge of the basic texts and how to use them) and diagnostic (the communicant should have an awareness of his/her sin). The communicant should know what the sacrament is and how the body and blood of the Lord are to be used against the conscience that is afflicted by sin.

Thesis 6: The Lutheran Confessions assert that none are to be admitted to the sacrament who have not been instructed, examined, and absolved (see LC V, 1–3; Kolb-Wengert, 467; AC xxv, 1–3; Kolb-Wengert, 73).

Arthur Carl Piepkorn summarizes the position of the Lutheran Confessions: “Communicants are to know from memory at least the Decalog, the Creed, the Our Father, and the words of institution of Holy Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar” (*What the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church Have to Say about Worship and the Sacraments* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952], 37). Evidence for Piepkorn’s assertion may be seen in the Large Catechism, where Luther writes, “All this is established from the words Christ used to institute it [the Lord’s Supper]. So everyone who wishes to be a Christian and to go to the sacrament should know them. For we do not intend to admit to the sacrament and administer it to those who do not know what they seek or why they come” (LC v, 1–2; Kolb-Wengert, 467). Near the end of this section of the Large Catechism, Luther does speak of children (not infants!) being instructed in the catechism so that they may come to the Supper: “Therefore let all heads of a household remember that it is their duty, by God’s injunction and command, to teach their children or have them taught the things that they ought to know. Because they have been baptized and received into the people of Christ, they should also enjoy this fellowship of the sacrament so that they may serve us and be useful” (LC v, 87; Kolb-Wengert, 476). Article xxv of the Augsburg Confession is coherent with the Large Catechism: “For it is not our custom to administer the body of Christ except to those who have been previously examined and absolved” (AC xxv, 1; Kolb-Wengert, 73).

Thesis 7: Lutheran theology does not begin with a generic category of sacraments but works instead from the Lord’s mandates for baptism and the Supper. Each has its own distinctive features. They are not interchangeable. It does not follow that arguments for the baptism of infants are to be applied to the communion of infants/toddlers.

Neither the New Testament nor the Lutheran Confessions operate with a generic definition of *sacrament* but instead begin with the Lord’s instituting words for Holy Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and absolution. What might qualify under the heading of “sacrament” is rather elastic, but it is clear that baptism and the Lord’s Supper are not interchangeable. Baptism is administered once for incorporation into the one body of Christ, while the Lord provides his Supper to be administered time after time to strengthen believers in the forgiveness of sins.

Thesis 8: The Lord’s Supper is the new testament of the Lord, not the new Passover. Hence, it does not follow that because infants/toddlers were included in the Passover meal that they are to be communed.

Paul G. Bretscher sees the inclusion of infants in the Passover seder as a grounds for their admission to the Lord’s Supper. In a paper first presented at the Institute of Liturgical Studies at Valparaiso University in 1963 and subsequently published in *Una Sancta*, Bretscher writes:

Little children, even infants, were never excluded from the history itself which worship is designed to relive and recover! In the case of Ancient Israel it is ridiculous even to imagine such a possibility. When that first Passover was celebrated in Egypt, and God commanded all Israel to keep it, did they leave the babies out of the house? Or, when they ate of the roasted lamb and unleavened bread, did they deny this food to their children? When they left the land and crossed the Red Sea and made their way through the wilderness, were the children left behind? It is interesting to note that Pharaoh at one point during the plagues offered to let the men go but not the children (Ex 10:7–11, 24). The children must be participants in the saving history. (“First Things First: The Question of Infant Communion,” *Una Sancta* 20, no. 4 [Advent 1963], 37)

Bretscher’s desire for inclusivity presses the argument without regard to the obvious, namely, that an infant would choke on such food. On a deeper level, Bretscher operates with a faulty theology of worship as “reliving” a past event.

Following in the wake of Odo Casel, Louis Bouyer asserts in a discussion of Luke 22:19: “Far from needing or not needing to create a new rite for future use, Our Lord was only performing again a very ancient rite which, even without him, his disciples would have certainly gone on performing so long as they lived together. What our Lord intended by these words was to give new meaning to this old rite” (*The Christian Mystery: From Pagan Myth to Christian Mysticism* [1990], 122–23). However, this approach fails to acknowledge the newness of the New Testament in what Christ bestows—his body and blood for disciples to eat and to drink. Norman Nagel would often point out that when we line up the Passover as described in Exodus with the narratives of the institution of the Lord’s Supper in the Synoptics and 1 Corinthians, the first and crucial question is not, “How are they similar?” but “How are they different?” This is also Luther’s approach in the Large Catechism. To paraphrase Hermann Sasse, the Lord’s Supper renders the old Passover obsolete (“The Lord’s Supper in the New Testament,” in *We Confess the Sacraments* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1985], 49–97). Sasse observes that “all the details of the traditional Passover ritual, which Jesus doubtless observed, [were] irrelevant for the Lord’s Supper itself” (64). And again, since Jesus himself is the Passover Lamb who gives his body and blood to be eaten and drunk, Sasse argues that “[t]here is no analogy to this fellowship, just as there are no parallels to this celebration. The Lord’s Supper received this character as something unique, something remarkable from the Words of Institution” (66). Also see Otto Procksch, “Passa und Abendmahl,” in *Vom Sakrament des Altars: Lutherische Beiträge zur Frage des heiligen Abendmahls*, ed. Hermann Sasse (Leipzig: Dörffling and Franke, 1941), 11–25. Likewise Mark Throntveit writes: “Jesus ‘fulfills’ the Old Testament Passover, but not by instituting the Lord’s Supper in ritual continuity with the Old Testament seder. By dying on the cross, Jesus ‘fulfills’ the Old Testament Passover in the sense

of bringing it to an end, thereby becoming the last paschal lamb, ‘the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world’” (“The Lord’s Supper as New Testament, Not New Passover,” *Lutheran Quarterly* 11 [1997]: 284).

The nature of the Passover does not establish a basis for communing infants and toddlers any more than it provides a basis for a yearly celebration of the Lord’s Supper or making the appropriate setting of the sacrament the family dining room rather than the church. Here also see Luther in the Large Catechism, where he argues that the Sacrament of the Altar is not like the old Passover bound to a special time but frequently where there is “opportunity and need” and not like “the pope (who) perverted it and turned it back into a Jewish feast” (LC v, 47–48; Kolb-Wengert, 471–72).

Thesis 9: Evidence for the communion of infants/toddlers in the early and medieval church is there in some places but it is not clear that the practice was universal or when it was first practiced. Lutheran liturgical practice is not based on historical precedent but on the Lord’s mandates. Not all practices of the early church are to be emulated. Infant/toddlers communion is one of those practices.

That infants were communed in some places in ancient Christianity is not disputed, but to assert that it was a universal practice or that it is normative for historical reasons exceeds the evidence. Marc Kolden writes: “Infant communion was not widely practiced in the early church. Indeed, this practice only became more common later and then for questionable historical reasons. The first mention of it is by Cyprian in about AD 250, but it does not appear to have been well established. Origen, for example, notes that infants were not communed in his church” (“Infant Communion in Light of Theological and Pastoral Perspectives,” *Lutheran Quarterly* 10 [1996]: 249–50). Likewise, Justin and Cyril of Jerusalem cast doubt on the communing of infants (Mark Tranvik, “Should Infants be Communed? A Lutheran Perspective,” *Word & World* 15 [1995]: 86).

The Lutheran Confessions honor the church fathers. When their testimony is in agreement with Holy Scripture, they are gratefully cited as confessing the apostolic faith. However the Confessions also realize that the teachings of the patristic writers are fallible. They can and do disagree with one another. They certainly do not represent an unbroken continuity with the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures, which alone are the rule and norm for church teaching and practice. The fact that one or another or even the majority of patristic writers support the communion of infants does not establish the practice for Evangelical Lutherans. Unlike the Lutheran Confessions, which are received because they are in agreement with Sacred Scriptures, the church fathers are received in so far as they concur with the biblical word.

Thesis 10: Arguments for infant/toddlers communion reveal a problematic hermeneutic of the Lutheran Confessions, undercutting a quia understanding of confessional subscription.

Given the numerous references in the Book of Concord to the nature and benefit of the Lord’s Supper as well as the need for catechetical and diagnostic examination prior to admission to the Lord’s Supper, one cannot endorse the communion of infants/toddlers while maintaining an unqualified subscription to the Lutheran Confessions. To claim otherwise yields a completely ahistorical reading of the Confessions. Such a reading avoids both the meaning of the confessional texts and the actual practices of those who wrote them.

Thesis 11: Luther may not be cited in support of infant/toddlers communion. He knew of the practice among the Hussites, and while he would not condemn them as heretics (those who deny the fundamental christological and trinitarian dogma), he did not accept their practice as correct.

On occasion, Luther’s comments recorded in a “table talk” in 1532 are cited in support of infant communion. Apart from the fact that these comments were made in rather “off-the-cuff” fashion and that they were recorded by auditors at the table, Luther’s words as we have them do not speak of the communing of infants but of children. In response to the question, whether the Lord’s Supper should be given to children, the Reformer replies that “[t]here is no urgency about the sacrament of the altar” and then refers to 1 Corinthians 11: “When in 1 Corinthians [11:28] Paul said that a man should examine himself, he spoke only of adults because he was speaking about those who were quarrelling among themselves. However, he doesn’t here forbid that the sacrament of the altar be given even to children” (LW 54:58). Luther notes that contextually, the 1 Corinthians 11 pericope is not addressing children but adults. However, given the range of Luther’s other statements regarding the need for examination undergirded by teaching, it is quite a jump to conclude from this statement that he endorses the communion of infants. Children are capable of instruction and examination in a way that infants are not.

Luther was aware that the Bohemian Brethren (Hussites) admitted infants to the Holy Communion (Thomas A. Fudge, “Hussite Infant Communion,” *Lutheran Quarterly* 10 [1996]: 176–94). While Luther did not condemn them as heretics for this practice, he clearly did not approve of the practice, as in the same letter he speaks of communicants being examined and responding concerning their faith.

Thesis 12. Infant/toddlers communion is a novel practice in the Lutheran Church. In American Lutheranism, it gained traction only in the 1970s, fuelled by particular aspects of the liturgical and ecumenical movements.

Frank Senn (“Issues in ‘Infant Communion,’” in *A Stewardship of the Mysteries* [New York: Paulist Press, 1999], 155–70) has chronicled the move toward infant communion in the predecessor bodies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, noting the influence of these movements. In regard to the liturgical movement, the work of Eugene Brand, an

architect of the *Lutheran Book of Worship* and chief drafter of its baptismal rite, indicates the connection as can be seen in his essay “Baptism and Communion of Infants: A Lutheran View” (in *Living Water, Sealing Spirit: Readings on Christian Initiation*, ed. Maxwell E. Johnson [Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1995], 350–64). Ecumenically, the World Council of Churches’ consultation at Bad Segeberg in Germany concluded: “If children are incorporated into the body of Christ through baptism, then they belong to the whole body of Christ. As there is no partial belonging to the body of Christ, children must also have a part in the eucharist” (Senn, 164). The dual trajectories of ritual participation derived from early church practices (liturgical movement) and inclusiveness in the one body of Christ (ecumenical movement) converged in providing a platform for a change in Lutheran practice.

Thesis 13: The fact that children who have been instructed, examined, and absolved may be admitted to the sacrament at a younger age than has been the general custom in the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod is not to be confused with the admitting of infants/toddlers to the altar. Churchly and pastoral concerns for unity in practice are important considerations. But the communion of infants/toddlers is not an adiaphoron to be left up to individual parents, pastors, or congregations.

The Lutheran Service Book Agenda makes provision for the admission of children to the Lord’s Supper prior to confirmation with this stipulation: “Candidates for admission to the Lord’s Supper have learned the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer. They have received careful instruction in the Gospel and Sacraments. Confessing their sin and trusting in their Savior, they desire to receive the Lord’s Supper for the forgiveness of sins and strengthening of their faith in Christ and their love toward others”; and “Baptized Christians are admitted to the Sacrament when they have been examined and absolved by their pastor in accordance with the practice outlined in the Augsburg Confession (Article xxv)” (25). Younger children who have learned these texts, know what the sacrament is and why they need it, and have been examined by the pastor may be communed prior to the rite of confirmation. Concern for unity of practice, especially as families move from one place to another, would dictate that a common form of instruction and examination be used by pastors within our fellowship. The material in the *Pastoral Care Companion* under “Guidelines for Pastoral Examination of Catechumens: Before the Rite of First Communion or Before the Rite of Confirmation” (664–70) provides such an instrument. In congregations where children are admitted to the Lord’s Supper prior to confirmation, it is the responsibility of the pastor to see to it that such instruction is given and candidates are examined accordingly.

John T. Pless

THE FOUR CLASSICAL THEORIES OF SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

Tradition 2: Holds that Scripture is supplemented by tradition. The most common way of construing this is to say that the apostles were given tradition that they wrote down and tradition that they did not write down. Also, it is often suggested that the church possesses certain rights due to its inspiration by the Holy Spirit to interpret the body of tradition.

Adherents: Medieval supporters of the popes, the Council of Trent, Vatican I, modern ultraconservative Roman Catholics (think Mel Gibson and Scott Hahn!).

Tradition 1: Holds that all true doctrine is based on Scripture, which is the single source of apostolic tradition. There are no unwritten traditions; rather the apostles wrote down all that is essential to be saved. Subsequent church tradition is impotent because the Holy Spirit guided exposition of Scripture and application to various situations that the apostles did not encounter. Tradition is also important because it gives the church a wealth of wisdom in its application and exposition of Scripture so that it does not have to learn everything anew in each generation. Nevertheless, humans are fallible and can have their interpretations checked against the bar of Scripture.

Adherents: Most Ante-Nicene Fathers, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Philipp Melancthon, Martin Chemnitz, Johann Gerhard, modern confessional Lutherans (LCMS, ELS, WELS) and traditional, orthodox Calvinists.

Tradition 3: Holds that because the church is inspired by the Holy Spirit, it is capable of evolving the truths set down in Scripture and the unwritten tradition over a long period of time. So, for example, the Virgin Mary may not have been paid adoration in the New Testament times or even Patristic times, but the Holy Spirit evolved the church’s doctrine by the time of the Middle Ages in such a way as to establish a cult of Mary. Similarly, Matthew 16 may not envision something resembling the modern papacy, but it gives a seed that may germinate into the modern papacy.

Adherents: John Henry Newman, Henri de Lubac, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Karl Rahner, Vatican II, most modern moderately conservative, moderate, and liberal Roman Catholics, High Church Anglicans.

Tradition 0: Assumes that tradition plays no role whatsoever in the exposition of Scripture. Scripture is a mere series of propositional truths and humans as rational and autonomous observers may understand the truths of Scripture like a scientist can understand the facts of biology.

Adherents: Charles Hodge, Billy Graham, Jerry Fallwell, Pat Robertson, nineteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first-century Anglo-American Protestant Evangelicals, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists, Southern Baptists, and so forth.

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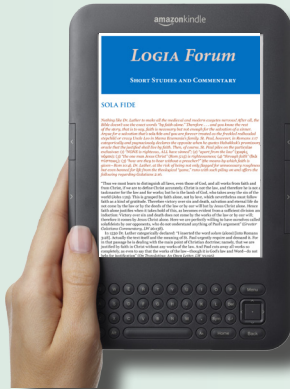
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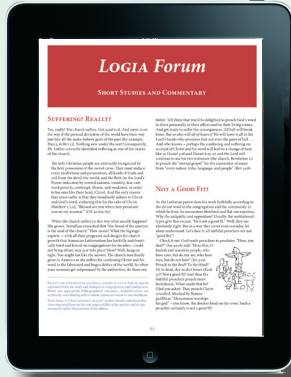
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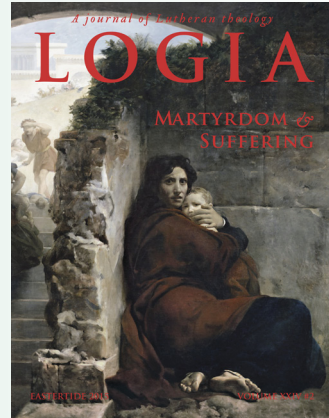
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EDITORS

Aaron Moldenhauer

Senior Editor
Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church
Beecher, IL
moldenhaueram@yahoo.com

Carl D. Roth

Coordinating Editor
Pastor, Grace Lutheran Church
Elgin, TX
revroth@gmail.com

John T. Pless

Book Review Editor
Professor, Concordia Theological
Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN
bookreviews@logia.org

Roy Askins

Web and Blog Editor
Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church
Livingston, TX
blogia@logia.org

John W. Sias

Associate Book Review Editor
Pastor, Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church
Colstrip, MT
bookreviews@logia.org

Brent Kuhlman

LOGIA Forum Editor
Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church
Murdock, NE
forum@logia.org

Richard A. Lammert

Copy Editor
Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, IN
lammertra@ctsfw.edu

James M. Braun

Editorial Associate
Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church
Brewster, MA
jaymbee@mac.com

Charles Cortright

Editorial Associate
Associate Professor, Wisconsin Lutheran
College, Milwaukee, WI
charles.cortright@wlc.edu

Jason D. Lane

Editorial Associate
Assistant Professor, Concordia University
Mequon, WI
jasondaniellane@gmail.com

Paul Lehninger

Editorial Associate
Professor, Wisconsin Lutheran College
Milwaukee, WI
paul.lehninger@wlc.edu

Dennis Marzolf

Editorial Associate
Professor, Bethany Lutheran College
Mankato, MN
dbklmrz@hickorytech.net

Martin R. Noland

Editorial Associate
Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church
Evansville, IN
martin.noland@att.net

Thomas L. Rank

Editorial Associate
Pastor, Scarville and Center Lutheran
Churches, Scarville, IA
thomrank@wctatel.net

Wade Johnston

Editorial Associate
Assistant Professor, Wisconsin Lutheran
College, Milwaukee, WI
pr.wadejohnston@gmail.com

Michael J. Albrecht

Editorial Advisor
Pastor, St. James Lutheran Church
West St. Paul, MN
senioreditor@logia.org

Erling Teigen

Editorial Advisor
Professor, Bethany Lutheran College
Mankato, MN
eteigen@charter.net

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Joel A. Brondos

Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church
Brookfield, IL

Albert B. Collver III

Director of Church Relations
Assistant to LCMS President
St. Louis, MO

William M. Cwirla

Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church
Hacienda Heights, CA

Burnell F. Eckardt Jr.

Pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church
Kewanee, IL

Charles Evanson

Professor, Seminary for Evangelical
Theology, Klaipeda, Lithuania

Ronald Feuerhahn

Professor Emeritus, Concordia Seminary
St. Louis, MO

Paul Grime

Professor, Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, IN

Matthew Harrison

President, The Lutheran Church—
Missouri Synod, St. Louis, MO

Steven Hein

Director, Concordia Institute
for Christian Studies
Colorado Springs, CO

Horace Hummel

Professor Emeritus, Concordia Seminary
St. Louis, MO

Arthur Just

Professor, Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, IN

John Kleinig

Professor Emeritus, Australian Lutheran
College North Adelaide
South Australia, Australia

Arnold J. Koelpin

Professor, Martin Luther College
New Ulm, MN

Gerald Krispin

President, Concordia University College
of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, Canada

Alan Ludwig

Professor, Lutheran Theological Seminary
Novosibirsk, Russia

Cameron MacKenzie

Professor, Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, IN

Gottfried Martens

Pastor, St. Mary's Lutheran Church
Berlin, Germany

Mark Mattes

Professor of Philosophy and Religion
Grand View University, Des Moines, IA

John A. Maxfield

Professor, Concordia University College
of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, Canada

Paul McCain

Publisher, Concordia Publishing House
St. Louis, MO

Mark D. Menacher

Pastor, St. Luke's Lutheran Church
La Mesa, CA

Nathan Mntambo

Professor, Lutheran Theological Seminary
Pretoria, South Africa

John A. Moldstad

President, Evangelical Lutheran Synod
Mankato, Minnesota

Scott Murray

Fourth Vice-President, LCMS
Pastor, Memorial Lutheran Church
Houston, TX

Norman E. Nagel

Emeritus Faculty, Concordia Seminary
St. Louis, MO

James A. Nestingen

Professor Emeritus, Luther Seminary
St. Paul, MN

Oliver Olson

Retired Associate Professor
Marquette University
Minneapolis, MN

Wilhelm Petersen

President Emeritus, Bethany Lutheran
Seminary, Mankato, MN

Andrew Pfeiffer

Professor, Australian Lutheran College
North Adelaide
South Australia, Australia

Roger D. Pittelco

President and Bishop Emeritus,
English District, LCMS

Daniel Preus

Third Vice-President, LCMS
Assistant Pastor, Hope Lutheran Church
St. Louis, MO

Clarence Priebbenow

Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church
Oakley Queensland, Australia

Joseph Randrianasolo

Professor, Sekoly Ambony
Loterana momba ny Teolojia
Fianaranatsoa, Madagascar

Richard Resch

Kantor and Professor of Church Music
Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, IN

David P. Scaer

Professor, Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, IN

Robert Schaibley

Pastor, Shepherd of the Springs Lutheran
Church, Colorado Springs, CO

Jobst Schöne

Bishop Emeritus, Selbständige
Evangelische Lutherische Kirche, Germany

Bruce Schuchard

Professor, Concordia Seminary
St. Louis, MO

Harold Senkbeil

Executive Director for Spiritual Care
Doxology (<http://doxology.us/>)
Waukesha, WI

Fredrik Sidenvall

Rektor-Principal, L.M. Engstrom's
Gymnasium, Gothenburg

Carl P. E. Springer

Professor, Southern Illinois University
Edwardsville, IL

John Stephenson

Professor, Concordia Seminary
St. Catharines, ON, Canada

Erling Teigen

Professor, Bethany Lutheran College
Mankato, MN

Jon D. Vieker

Senior Assistant to the LCMS President
St. Louis, MO

David Jay Webber

Pastor, Redeemer Lutheran Church
Scottsdale, AZ

Wilhelm Weber

Bishop, Lutheran Church South Africa
Pretoria, South Africa

William C. Weinrich

Professor, Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, IN

Armin Wenz

Pastor, St. John Lutheran Church
Oberursel, Germany

Robert Zagore

Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church
Traverse City, MI

SUPPORT STAFF

Sarah Ludwig

Business Office & Customer Service
customerservice@logia.org

Advertising, Chelsea, SD
advertising@logia.org

Patricia Ludwig, Layout

College Place, WA
pludwig0253@charter.net

Jonathan Mayer

Cover Art & Design
Seward, NE
jonathan@scapegoatstudio.com

Trina Tschappat, Proofreading

Westport, SD
trina_tschappat@yahoo.com

Dean Bell

Audio & Video Resources
Pastor, First English Luth. Ch. Fosston, MN
revbell@loretel.net



Serving Lutheran Pastors to the Ends of the Earth

Luther Academy Overseas Conferences

Serving Lutheran Pastors to the Ends of the Earth

In strategic consultation with, and invitation from LCMS World Missions and National church bodies, **Luther Academy** is caring for indigenous pastors globally.

The Vision: Our brother pastors remain faithful and grow in their confessional Lutheran identity and capacity at times of great trial and opportunity.

The Challenge: Indigenous ordained pastors have limited theological training; reside in isolated areas of the globe; feel threatened in some cases by militant Islam; have limited or no access to other pastors or missionaries; and are often quite impoverished.

Luther Academy Conferences are conducted by Lutheran scholars with knowledge of each region and last four to five days. Costs vary due to local economics and the capacity of local pastors to contribute. Luther Academy costs include airfare, visas, local transportation, meals, housing and a small stipend for guest presenters. Additionally, costs of meals, housing, materials and in some cases transportation for attending pastors may be necessary. The conferences provide strength and encouragement to the pastors and unity in confession.

Luther Academy is immensely grateful for your prayers and support.



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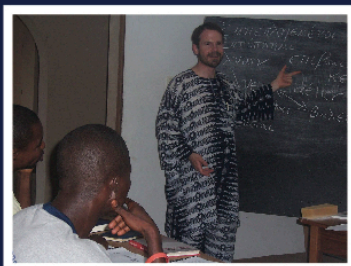
Latin American Conferences:

With scholars from the United States and Latin America (Concordia Seminary Buenos Aires) Luther Academy organizes and plans curriculum for two regional conferences (Argentina and Guatemala) and ten national conferences annually. Luther Academy Fellows Rev. Carlos Schumann of Chile and Rev. Mark Braden of Michigan, and Regional Director (LCMS World Missions) Rev. Ted Krey, who also serves as Missionary to the Dominican Republic, work closely with Rev. McMiller to serve pastors in at least 12 countries. Church leaders and theological educators from under-resourced and small national churches gather for the Regional Conferences. Annual total cost: \$59,250 (partially subsidized by LCMS World Missions)



English-African Conference:

Luther Academy Fellow Rev. Dr. Detlev Schulz of Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, has assembled a team of highly qualified co-presenters to address core theological needs for pastors in Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Malawi and Sudan, where the conferences have been held. Past conferences have touched over 45 pastors representing church bodies of over 300,000 members. Dr. Schulz and Rev. McMiller work to return annually to instruct even more pastors in the region. Annual cost to Luther Academy: \$15,500



French-African Conference:

National conferences have been held in Togo and Regional conferences have been held in Togo and Ghana for both English and French pastors. Luther Academy Fellow Rev. Dr. Ron Mudge of Concordia University Wisconsin, a former LCMS missionary to Togo, will conduct Luther Academy National Conferences for hundreds of ordained pastors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). These pastors shepherd over 100,000 souls in a rapidly growing, war-torn and impoverished Lutheran church. Annual cost to Luther Academy: \$15,500



India Conference:

Luther Academy Fellow Rev. Dr. Michael Albrecht of St. James Lutheran in St. Paul, MN along with the Bible Faith Lutheran Church and Seminary in Guntur, India conduct week-long national conferences held for 400 Lutheran pastors from different backgrounds and even non-Lutheran pastors. A second week of conferences for 40-70 Bible Faith Lutheran Pastors is held if finances allow. Lutherans within India are not only a minority among Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim opposition but also a minority among Christians and an increasingly liberal Lutheran environment. These conferences help strengthen Confessional Lutheranism in the region. Annual cost to Luther Academy: \$8,500



European Conferences:

Over twenty years ago, Dr. Robert Preus began Luther Academy overseas conferences in northern Europe. Today, Director Emeritus Rev. Daniel Preus and Luther Academy Fellow Rev. James Krikava of Maine each organize and / or assist in the teaching at two annual conferences in Europe. Many small confessional congregations have exceedingly difficult ministries in the shadow of extremely secularized national Lutheran church bodies. Europe in general is also a very difficult mission field, but young, brave and orthodox Lutheran pastors are being supported through the Confessional emphasis of Luther Academy conferences and the fellowship they find with other men from neighboring countries. Annual cost to Luther Academy: \$12,000