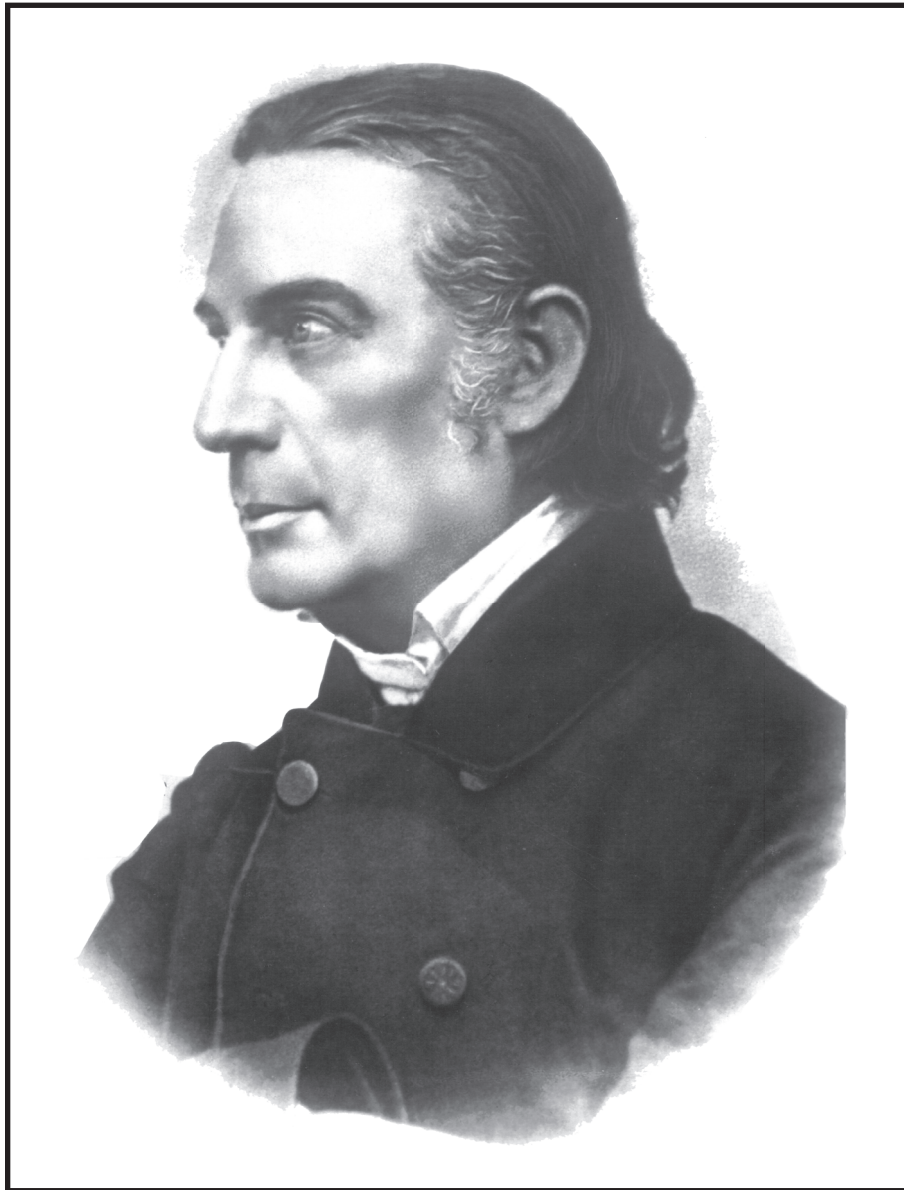


LOGIA

A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY



LÖHE BICENTENNIAL

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εἴ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λόγια Θεοῦ

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

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ON THE COVER is Johann Konrad Wilhelm Löhe, an eighteenth century Lutheran father of works of mercy. Löhe is known for his missionary heart and establishing a deaconess society that lay the groundwork for today's Lutheran deaconess work. Löhe responded to F. C. D. Wyneken's plea for help to Lutheran settlers on the American Frontier, sending teachers and pastors, founding a Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and organizing Lutheran settlements in the Midwest.

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FREQUENTLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

AC [CA]	Augsburg Confession
AE	<i>Luther's Works</i> , American Edition
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>Lutheran Worship</i>
SA	Smalcald Articles
SBH	<i>Service Book and Hymnal</i>
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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Löhe in LOGIA



THE NINETEENTH CENTURY WAS A TIME of dramatic renewal in the Christian church. The sixties and seventies of the previous century had been decades of experimentation. The ideals of an optimistic rationalism gave birth to the revolutionary dreams of the eighties and nineties. In both cases orthodox Christianity seemed to be outmoded in light of a new faith in the rights and possibilities of man. Christian energy, for so many centuries the shaping force in European culture, was eclipsed during the “great upheaval.”

The church, eager to survive within the new culture, conformed her thought and practice to the world. Pragmatism and unionism replaced dogmatism. Truth was experienced rather than known.

This kind of truth is short-lived, however. It is bound to the span of a single life, a single generation. This led to the perennial bloom of the dogmatic church showing itself in various corners of Christendom in the first half of the nineteenth century. Trinitarian orthodoxy blossomed again at Oxford and Solesmes. The invasive weeds of politically expedient unionism and evangelical pragmatism threatened orthodox Lutheranism, but the hearty root would not yield its life and character.

For Wilhelm Löhe true Lutheranism drew its strength from the means of grace. All of mission and preaching and pastoral care had as its goal the encounter with the real presence of Christ in the sacrament of the altar. Löhe knew no greater comfort in this life, and the Supper nourished him in his work as a shepherd. The sweet fellowship of the altar inspired him to explore the rich liturgical heritage of Lutheranism, but his was no empty ritualism. His responsible sacramental practice included sound preaching, thorough catechesis, and a conscientious cultivation of individual absolution, which he viewed as the cornerstone of church fellowship.

Löhe’s work was not just the product of an idealistic Romantic yearning for the warmth of the ancient liturgies and rites of the church. He was a Lutheran who was not ashamed to confess that the brightest light of evangelical catholicism could only be found in a Lutheran Church which knew and confessed its birthright according to the doctrine and practice set forth in the Book of Concord. His personal and public confession of the faith, articulated in “Why I Declare Myself for the Lutheran Church,” was a dynamic Lutheran confessionalism that viewed the *Concordia* as the basis for a lively, ongoing development of doctrine and practice. This view of the Confessions was a source of tension between Neuendettelsau and other centers of the nineteenth-century Lutheran revival, notably the Saxon immigrants in Missouri. His confessionalism, not strong enough for some, was too strong for many in his own regional church. A study of this is pertinent today as we continue to examine our own confessional relationships in congregations and synods.

Löhe rediscovered the vibrant life of dogmatic Lutheranism, and the fruits of that experience continue to color Lutheranism in the United States and throughout the world. It is hard to avoid overstatement of the case, especially when we consider his work with regard to liturgy, mission, pastoral theology, the diaconal ministry of mercy, and the establishment of institutions of care and education. His pastoral genius continues to be felt in Lutheran ministries of mercy as well as in American Lutheran seminaries and colleges. One can hope that an observance of the anniversary of his birth will encourage further scholarship, especially in English, for the benefit of the English Lutheran Church.

Dennis Marzolf
Mankato, Minnesota
Guest editor, Trinity, 2008

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Löhe Preaches the Psalms

DIETRICH BLAUFUSS



THE TWO-HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY of the birth of Wilhelm Löhe was 21 February 2008. It was not to be expected that this date would generate as much publicity as the one-hundredth anniversary did in 1908. Back then dozens of appreciations of Löhe appeared in publications far beyond his native Bavaria. Hermann Bezzel, Löhe's second successor as rector of the deaconess institution, collected a large volume of such contributions, which has been preserved in the archives of the *Diakonie Neuendettelsau*. But Bezzel's collection drew from his own knowledge of sources to present a highly nuanced and unconventional, nearly fictional depiction of Löhe. Driving this was the fact that Bezzel welcomed the rapprochement between "Neuendettelsau" and the territorial church as a milestone event, and contributed much to it: the difficult legacy of Löhe's relationship to his church just had to be dealt with. But even in 1958 — Löhe's 150th anniversary year — this blunt admission was voiced: "The man whose birthday we celebrate this [year] was ignored until his deaconesses were needed."

Is Löhe still needed today — without deaconesses, two hundred years after his birth? To suggest that he is, is at best controversial; many would answer in the negative. But Löhe's accomplishments do not need to be mindlessly copied, eagerly co-opted, or ignorantly condemned.¹ To his credit, Hermann Bezzel at least dealt with the figure of Löhe with an appeal to data. Indeed, Bezzel's unpublished 1908 piece, "Löhe and His Times," is an outstanding text. It includes Bezzel's crucial pertinent texts, along with sources on the celebrations of Löhe's one-hundredth anniversary, and represents an important document in the history of the Neuendettelsau institutions — it will finally be published along with commentary and clarifications in 2008.²

It was not easy for Löhe to become a "figure of church history." For a long time he was overburdened by having to *act* rather than merely to ask questions pertinent to the problems of his time. He had to find his own answers through many struggles and sacrifices. Löhe's independence in his own times in this regard is reason to honor him, but he should not bear the burden of providing quick and easy answers for later generations.

No, Löhe's continuing significance and relevance will be appreciated by better and more widespread historical knowledge of him and his times. What is needed is being provided in new research and new, annotated editions of source materials,³ a biographical portrait of Löhe that generates significant interest, a pertinent collection of texts,⁴ scholarly inquiries⁵ and probing works like the recently published inventory of more than five hundred correspondents of Löhe (more than one-hundred of those from North America).⁶ Anniversaries like the one-hundredth, one-hundred fiftieth, and now, the two-hundredth always provided impulses for further study. The International Löhe Society (Dubuque–Neuendettelsau), founded in 2005, has taken on a challenging task for this bicentennial year by sponsoring a second international theological conference under the title "Setting-Out from Tradition: Wilhelm Löhe — Legacy and Vision." This gathering will focus on Wilhelm Löhe in his historical context as well as his relevance for theology and the church today.

1. On Bezzel's portrayal of Löhe, see Dietrich Blaufuß, "Heiliger und Ketzler: Wilhelm Löhe in der deutschen Historiographie seit 1872," *Kerygma und Dogma* 53 (2007): 252–273, esp. 260–266. The version presented at the founding assembly of the "International Loehe Society" (ILOES) at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, IA, in June 2005 is Dietrich Blaufuß, "Saint and Heretic: Wilhelm Loehe in German Historiography since 1872," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 33 (2006): 105–112, esp. 107–109 on Bezzel.
2. Hermann Bezzel, "Löhe und seine Zeit" (1908), in *Gesammelte Werke: Ergänzungsreihe*, vol. 2, ed. H. Baier and R. Keller (Nuremberg, Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 2008).
3. Wilhelm Löhe, "Abendmahlspredigten" (1866), in *Gesammelte Werke: Ergänzungsreihe*, vol. 1, ed. Martin Wittenberg (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1991); Wilhelm Löhe, *Drei Bücher von der Kirche* (1845), in *Studienausgabe*, vol. 1, ed. Dietrich Blaufuß (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 2006).
4. Erika Geiger, *Wilhelm Löhe (1808–1872): Leben-Werk-Wirkung* (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 2003); Wilhelm Löhe, *Löhe-Brevier: Wilhelm Löhe: Sein Zeugnis und sein Leben, 1808–1872*, ed. Detlev Graf von der Pahlen (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 2008).
5. I mention by way of example Christian Weber, *Missionstheologie bei Wilhelm Löhe: Aufbruch zur Kirche der Zukunft* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1995).
6. See Blaufuß, "Heiliger und Ketzler," 271–272 (cf. Blaufuß, "Saint and Heretic," 111–112); Dietrich Blaufuß, "Löhe-Korrespondenz: Vorläufiges Verzeichnis von Briefpartnern," *Zeitschrift für bayerische Kirchengeschichte* 76 (2007): 204–214.

DIETRICH BLAUFUSS is co-president of the International Loehe Society. He is the editor of a recently published student edition of Löhe's *Drei Bücher von der Kirche*.

THE SERMONS

The year 1929 was a key year for Löhe research with the publication of Kreßel's magisterial book *Wilhelm Löhe als Prediger*.⁷ This work continues to be indispensable because of its comprehensive use of sources and treatment of the massive collection of Löhe's sermons—three thick volumes in the *Gesammelte Werke* alone, and these do not include everything that survives, especially for the period *before* 1837. Indeed, unprinted sermons are referred to in devotional booklets along with excerpts of sermons⁸ that urgently need to be located, collected, and edited (and then published). For our purposes here, a look at Löhe's sermons from his early years on the Psalms are presented.

First, the Psalms hold an important place in Löhe's work in terms of both his religious reflections and of his public statements in his agendas on issues involving the liturgy. For, in addition to "traditional" agendas intended for use by pastors and liturgists, Wilhelm Löhe also dared to write agendas for use by the laity.⁹ These went by the titles "Lay Agenda," "Booklet of Instruction," and "Study Booklet," "by which one could teach young and old to celebrate and pray" (1852, 1853). These were sorely needed, especially for American settlements where pastors were infrequently or not available. These booklets represent an instruction for worship whose importance can hardly be overestimated. In these lay agendas the Psalms play an important role. Löhe included Luther's *Preface to the Psalms* as well, and in another widely disseminated Löhe prayer book, *Seed Grains*, he set up a reading schedule for the Psalms. This schedule covered a four-week interval utilizing a twelve-fold rhythm of reading, and established a set body of Psalms.¹⁰ Naturally, Löhe maintained the place of the Psalms in the daily prayer offices as well. Löhe's agenda for the public service on Sunday draws almost exclusively on the Psalms for the Introit, offering a different Introit for each of the fifty-eight worship days¹¹ drawn from thirty-eight different Psalms. The fact that Löhe also included eleven Psalms among the sacristy prayers underlines once more that for him it was self-evident that the Psalms were important, not only for the individual Christian, but also as the prayer book of the church.

The Psalms occupied a second—obvious—place in Löhe's sermonizing. Was this an inappropriate transfer of the Psalms to a context where they—originally prayers and songs—do not

belong? Or are the few extant sermons by Löhe on the Psalms¹² a subtle exhortation to receive the Psalms in a praying, but not in a preaching, way? We will focus on three early examples of Löhe's sermonic use of the Psalms.

Psalm 107

The first sermon to be considered is based on Psalm 107:1–7. At the outset one needs to ask if there is too much knowledge about Löhe's criticism of, and struggle for, the church for this sermon to be considered in evaluating Löhe's ecclesiology. Is this sermon—asking again in anticipation—too "catholic" to receive a recognized place for the year 1836?

The opening verse of Psalm 107 is very well-known: "Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; his mercy endures forever." Less well-known are the subsequent verses that praise God for delivering out of trouble, for gathering those who are his from every nation, for delivering from their fears those who were lost in the desert and not dwelling in safety, whose souls were in danger of perishing so that they cried to the Lord. On Pentecost Löhe preached on *that* section of Psalm 107, thereby leaving us a seldom-noticed "Song of Songs" on the church.

The church as "mother above all mothers" takes care of all those who are spiritually or physically orphaned.

In a brief introduction, Löhe shows that the subject of the psalmist in these verses can be nothing other than the church. Her rescue from the desert "to a city where they could settle," to the safe pasture of the sheep (Löhe changes the imagery)—what else than "Give thanks unto the Lord . . ." (v. 1) can be said? And how should this not set the tone for the sermon that he—Wilhelm Löhe—was about to preach on Pentecost as the birthday of the holy church?

A brief reference by Löhe to God's gathering of the believers in the Old Testament and New Testament (Acts 2) is conventional, but Löhe quickly cuts to the chase and outlines in a precise and image-rich manner the nature of the church: she is "the bride and wife of the Lord [Christ] according to the Scriptures."¹³ The image of parenthood is clearly delineated: The Lord generates children of his grace by means of the service of his church. As closely as possible Löhe describes the connection between church and Christ and does not shy away from a dar-

7. Hans Kreßel, *Wilhelm Löhe als Prediger* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1929).

8. Wilhelm Löhe, *Lob sei Dir ewig, o Jesu! Abendandachten aus dem geistlichen Erbe Wilhelm Löhes*, comp. Adam Schuster (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1949), 415.

9. See also Wilhelm Löhe, *Haus-, Schul- und Kirchenbuch für Christen des lutherischen Bekenntnisses*, 1st part, 4th (= 3rd) ed. (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1877); 2nd part (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1859); 3rd part: *Der Psalter nach der deutschen Übersetzung D. Martinus Luthers: Für den Gesang eingerichtet von Friedrich Hommel*, 5th ed. (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1907).

10. Wilhelm Löhe, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Klaus Ganzert and Curt Schadewitz (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1951–1986), 7.2:337; hereafter cited as *GW*.

11. *GW* 7.1:111–124.

12. An inventory of sermons currently being worked on shows that sermons on the Psalms are not frequent in Löhe's work.

13. *GW* 6.1:579.

ing comparison: the creation of Eve out of Adam corresponds to the creation of the church out of Christ, which is led to him as his bride. This existence, this birth of the church, can result only in one thing: endless thanks toward God.

In addition to the description of the essence of the church — it receives its nature from its miraculous origins — there is a four-fold description of the work of the church. These passages deserve to be heard out loud. In them Löhe is at his most eloquent.¹⁴

First: As a pious mother, the church loves her children from the beginning, before birth — in fact, even before conception. She knows the life-giving element that comes from her to man condemned to death. Löhe does not shy away from referencing the resurrection of the valley of bones in Ezekiel. This pious mother nourishes her newly born children with the pure milk of the word and sacrament. She furnishes the Bread of life as well as the cup of salvation. She goes after those who reject her, carrying after them their food; she does not give up on anyone until he has “fainted” for lack of heavenly food (v. 5). Her faithfulness does not depend on the respect of her children; “she is more faithful than her children would like.”¹⁵

Second: The church as “mother above all mothers” takes care of all those who are spiritually or physically orphaned. She extends the “Father’s blessing” even to those who have been cursed by earthly fathers.

Third: The church as a good mother is always ahead of her children with her love — also at the end! “She loves us into life and loves us out of life.”¹⁶ On the day of our baptismal death she surrounds us with her faith “so that we might arrive in life.” Her suffering with her children does not make her poor. Also in the last hour she is rich in comfort. Why? Because her Bridegroom, Christ, holds the keys of death: he “leads in and out.”¹⁷

Fourth: This mother, finally, is majestic as she encompasses our path out of time into eternity: here she closes our eyes; there she receives us.

All of this can only be summarized here. One thing, above all, that cannot be readily conveyed in such a summary is Löhe’s enthusiasm, which is discernible throughout the text and that, in every description of Mother Church, exhibits itself in hymnic prayers of thanksgiving: each characterization of “Mother Church” issues into such a prayer. Here is one example:

O good Mother Church,
Also close our eyes, when we go home, and commend us
to the eternal Bridegroom, to life and eternal peace!
Oh, close also my eyes and rejoice over my grace!
O Father and Savior on the throne of heaven,
Thanks, thanks be to you in the name of all the dying,
those who are already dead, those who now are dying
under the comforts of the church, who will die under
its comforts,

Thanks for the comforts which you have granted to our
Mother for our best —
Fill our hearts with faith and the Holy Spirit that we might
be able to grasp them,
and when we can no longer grasp them, let the effect
of what we have heard from her mouth continue,
And may your Spirit intercede for us with ineffable
groaning!¹⁸

We can look only briefly at Löhe’s application to the way in which the congregation ought to give thanks for the gift of the holy church. All this is a gigantic “letdown” in terms of the tension and mood of tone in comparison to the “Song of Songs” of the church. Hearing the sermon, remaining faithful to the church, accepting her discipline, seeking her comfort, praying for the church — all this is actually quite conventional and obvious. And yet again, in an unrelated way, in all this there shines forth a bright reference that lets the possibility of the identity of the church and Christ come very close, as when Löhe describes the mockery done to the church and continues without inhibition: “They placed a crown of thorns on her (!) head.”¹⁹

Löhe’s faithfulness to the psalm text is not limited to his use of quotations and the wider context of Scripture; it is also exhibited in the transition it makes from proclamation to prayer. Indeed, it is precisely this aspect that Löhe’s treatment facilitates: Löhe’s sermon does not merely preach about the text, but lets the text speak for itself, manifest its shape, and reach its goal. This allows the “hearer” to be brought into active movement toward God in prayer. Löhe accomplishes this by his daring take on the “topic” church.

Psalm 133

Psalm 133 consists of only three verses. Löhe’s sermon is based on the well-known opening verse: “Behold, how good and pleasant it is, when brothers dwell in unity.” Two images follow (oil, dew) and the reference to blessing “and life forevermore.” Löhe does not write this sermon with the same intensity that is manifest in the sermon on Psalm 107, written a year later. Löhe begins with a rather lengthy section on fraternal love in the physical-worldly sense, which is followed by words concerning spiritual brotherhood. It goes without saying that Löhe takes the spiritual Zion, the church, as his point of departure. In fact, Löhe specifically mentions the congruence of physical and spiritual brotherhood.²⁰

Everything aims at the fourth part of the sermon which — still speaking figuratively — could not remain silent about “the eternally living Joseph,” about the Brother Jesus Christ. Man’s lost estate and his need for redemption are impressed on the hearer, as well as Jesus’ way to the cross.²¹ We receive the title “brother” from him. His incarnation, the assumption of our corporeal-

14. GW 6.1:579–582.

15. GW 6.1:580.

16. GW 6.1:581.

17. GW 6.1:582.

18. GW 6.1:582.

19. GW 6.1:584.

20. GW 6.1:241–242.

21. GW 6.1:243.

ity, our common Father in heaven—he, the High Priest, who blesses with his hands those who hunger and thirst for God; he who carries out the threefold office of King, Priest, and Prophet, who lives in the midst of the church that blossoms around him, who blesses the workers in his vineyard: all this Wilhelm Löhe expresses in a very compressed way. The blinded world, to be sure, still searches for his paradise to destroy it, but it does not realize that paradise has already begun in what is hidden, whereby it is protected.

The application section reemphasizes Christ's closeness to us, the hearers. In contrast to the elder son in the parable in Luke 15, Löhe states the desire that "each of us convert a human brother to the Brother Jesus and his Father." This will lead to unity in the church of the believers. The vision of all men as God's children briefly shines forth. "This would be the end of all things . . . and the Lord would have to come and lead us home into the eternal Zion."

The blinded world still searches for his paradise to destroy it, but it does not realize that paradise has already begun.

This is the twenty-seven-year old Löhe speaking before his two-year period of "wandering" from vicarage to vicarage. Connecting an Old Testament Psalm effortlessly with the center of Christian theology, namely, the doctrine of Christ, this is not a problem for Löhe.

A look at a third Psalm sermon will round out this article.

Psalm 113:2–3

"Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and forevermore! From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised!"

This sermon was preached on Trinity Sunday—not exactly an easy text for the Sunday! Löhe begins by explaining to his congregation in the Martha Church in Nuremberg the difference between a prayer of thanksgiving and a prayer of praise. There is a qualitative difference between the two: the prayer of thanksgiving (as well as the petition) leaves the one who is praying still by himself: he thanks God for the sake of gifts received (or, he asks for them). The one who praises, however, exists "in complete oblivion of himself"²² and looks to God alone. To see God is something entirely different from knocking at his door (asking) or entering into his house (thanksgiving). This

is not an easy thought, but certainly also not a far-fetched one. Humble adoration is the crown of perfection, the end of servile fear, and holy fear of God as the "highest Good" (!) is the result of the prayer of praise.

The next major thought, however, wishes to lead the hearers fully away from all reflection concerning themselves, concerning their religious work and being, toward God himself. For the "object" of the praise of God is God's nature, his deeds. Here the Sunday of the Holy Trinity demands its due. Löhe unfolds the miracle-enigma of the confession of the Trinity, remains undisturbed by a textually controversial passage, 1 John 5:7, on material grounds, and points to the foundational confession of Israel in Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one." The question regarding the prayer of praise turns into one regarding God himself, undergirded by the *trishagion* of Isaiah 6 and Romans 11:33.

In an entirely conventional manner Löhe then touches on God's deeds in creation and redemption, only in order to add a pastoral concern: "What about the hidden glory, the 'dark guidance of individual people'?" Löhe proclaims here the future Day of Jesus, when the temptation will be ended, a temptation frequently expressed in the Psalms by means of lamentation: the pious and innocent one must suffer, while the sinner can enjoy his life.²³ Here Löhe cannot help but move the final dimension of God's action into the view of the congregation.

Actually no more than a mirror image of what preceded are the pointers that God is to be praised in days of joy and in days of suffering, even "in death."²⁴ Here Löhe probes all the way into the testimonies of extreme temptation by God in Psalm 22, the psalm which tells of the Savior's suffering.

In the concluding passage of this sermon on the praise of God, Löhe reaches the center of theological thinking concerning man. "Who is man?" He is created for God's praise. The inability to do this is nothing else than an expression of our turning away from our Creator. However, the ability to praise God is the fruit of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Löhe then can speak in a very sober and realistic manner about self-praise and the praise of other people:²⁵ shaped by vanity, greed, and sinful habit, this entire realm gets in the way of praising God. Pride breaks forth; in fact, Löhe states, "Whoever praises a man, hates him because he does not grant him the humility without which no one can be saved."²⁶ Consequently, reproaching a neighbor is something that fosters grace. Thus, the sermon ends in a call to know oneself better and to gain deeper insights into the nature of "God in Christ." While not a matter on the same level as some passages in the sermon where Löhe wanted to lead his hearers closer to the mystery of God, it is an observation that he made again some thirty years later in his sermons on the Lord's Supper. Löhe knew about the need for peaks and about the need to withdraw from this experience.

23. GW 6.1:127.

24. GW 6.1:126–129.

25. GW 6.1:129.

26. GW 6.1:129–130.

22. GW 6.1:123.

In the 1866 *Sermons on the Lord's Supper*, this affects the entire structure of the sermon cycle, which, right around the tenth sermon, reaches its peak, from which the remaining sermons lead back down again. Here in the sermon on Psalm 133:2–3, Löhe and his congregation are on the way to the question of all questions, “Who is God?”²⁷ from which the congregation is led back to the plane of one's own life and of the life with God.

CONCLUSION

It is still not easy to identify individual parts of the Scriptures as texts for the sermons in Löhe's work.²⁸ Löhe's extensive literary legacy here continues to pose difficult problems.

Löhe, the Scripture theologian, meanwhile, thought and lived out of the divine service. Seen from here, the central place of the Psalms in Löhe's thinking is beyond question. However, in his preaching, the Psalms noticeably take a back seat. This is the long-standing Protestant tradition which upheld the pre-eminence of preaching on the Gospels and the Epistles.

***Löhe, the Scripture theologian,
thought and lived out of the
divine service.***

The three Psalm sermons presented above are of different dignity: the one on the church is, without a doubt, the strongest one, the densest one; the second on the “brothers” seems to be the weakest of the three. Yet, rather accidentally—or perhaps not so—there is one thing that binds all three 1834–1836 sermons together beyond their chronological proximity, and that is each sermon's orientation towards the Trinity. Wilhelm Löhe basically preached the Psalms “apostolically.” The creed was touched upon in these three sermons: church (first sermon); Christ (second sermon); and God's praise (third sermon).

Perhaps we have here come face to face with a hidden interpretative principle for Löhe's reception of the Psalms. There is no doubt that this is a reception of the Psalms in Christendom with a long tradition. The evaluation of the same in conversation with Judaism is a different matter; yet to trace this conversation in Wilhelm Löhe is a fruitful path.²⁹ **LOGIA**

27. GW 6.1:124–127.

28. See note 12 on the Wilhelm Löhe sermon inventory.

29. A shorter German version of this study appeared in *Homiletisch-Liturgisches Korrespondenzblatt*, new series 25, 92 (Dec. 2007): 17–24.

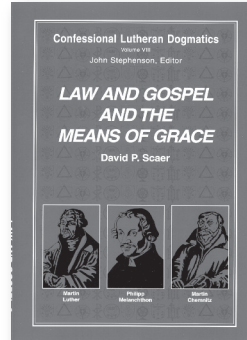
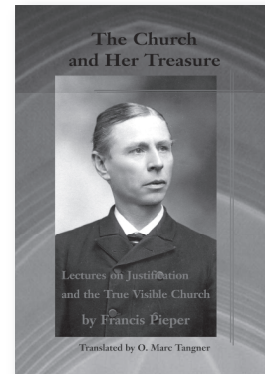


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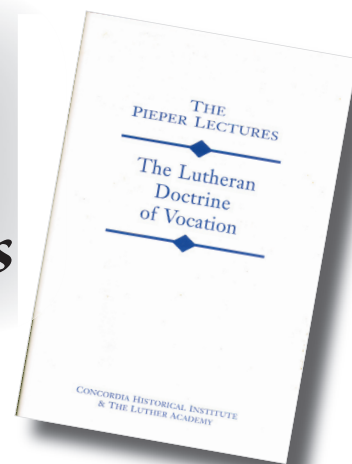
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A Sermon on the Sunday of the Holy Trinity

WILHELM LÖHE

Translated by Nick Prosch



¹There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: ²The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, “Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.”

³Jesus answered and said unto him, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

⁴Nicodemus saith unto him, “How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?”

⁵Jesus answered, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Marvel not that I said unto thee, ‘Ye must be born again.’ ⁸The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

⁹Nicodemus answered and said unto him, “How can these things be?”

¹⁰Jesus answered and said unto him, “Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? ¹¹Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. ¹²If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? ¹³And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. ¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: ¹⁵That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” — John 3:1–15 (KJV)

A PHARISEE, A RULER OF THE JEWS, and a member of the high council named Nicodemus comes to Jesus by night. As he himself insinuates with how he addresses the Lord, Jesus’ miracles had made a strong impression on him, as they were supposed to, inclining him to seek the Lord’s particular teachings and instruction. It may well have been that his coming by night to Jesus indicates a fear of the Jews which prevented him from daring to come by the light of day. But he *comes* nevertheless, and this fear of his was still not strong enough to be able to deaden the Father’s drawing him in toward the Son. This drawing of Nicodemus by the Father toward the Son does not simply reveal itself as a vague desire for instruction. As often happens with the inner emotions of mature men, so too Nicodemus’s yearning for Jesus would become clear and would develop into certain thoughts and questions for him.

Certainly he would have wanted to hear the Lord’s view, particularly concerning those things which at that time affected all Israel and not many Gentiles. He would have wanted

to hear about the kingdom that was to come, and the King of the kingdom, the Lord Messiah for whom they were waiting. We see that, not so much from the abrupt opening question of Nicodemus himself, as from the response of Christ. In lovely conversations, Jesus often revealed and beneficially guided the counsels of the hearts (1 Cor 4:5) of those who were meekly silent before him, who veiled themselves before him, or who still did not completely open up. Whether or not we may infer this much about the question of Nicodemus from the response of the Lord, it still remains certain that the Lord’s address to Nicodemus, and his conversation with him, comprises nothing other than a teaching *on the kingdom of God*.

The Lord talks with the Pharisee Nicodemus about the kingdom of God. It would be better and more precise for me to say, “The Lord gives a teaching on the *entry into the kingdom of God*.” In the entire conversation, there is not any instruction concerning the kingdom of God itself. It is constantly assumed that the “teacher of Israel,” Nicodemus, knew the essentials in order to be able to understand what the Lord was saying. For the time being, it was not the intention of Jesus to refine the Pharisee’s concepts of the kingdom of God. Rather, it was meant to cure him of false ideas about participating in the kingdom. If we try to follow the Lord’s thoughts in this conversation, we will certainly understand the expression “kingdom of God” properly if we take it to be synonymous with “kingdom of salvation.” The Lord’s words will penetrate into our souls most powerfully and beneficially, when we understand them purely as answers to the question, “How is someone saved?”

Nicodemus may have brought to the Lord various conceptions from the Pharisaic train of thought, which the King of Truth did not allow to be tolerated. Perhaps he, like others of his sect, was still too caught up in the delusion that if one wants to inherit the kingdom of God, it depends primarily on one’s own preparation and on a certain way of living this life on earth. Christ’s teaching in our text contends with full force against that idea, and against every form of producing works. Entry into the kingdom of God is made dependent, not on some kind of reformation of the old man, but rather entirely on a *re-birth*. “Unless one is born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God,” says the Lord, and he reinforces it with his illustrious “Verily, verily!”

Concerning the expression *born again* or *rebirth*, we must admit that it is not used in Holy Scripture as often as it has been in a fair number of devotional books and sermons in the last

century. Scripture also has other noteworthy expressions for the same concepts. Through these other concepts, what we are now talking about receives its full illumination and delineation. It must be acknowledged that what the expression *born again* or *rebirth* suggests is not thoroughly exhausted by the various parables of the Lord, which explain in perfect fullness what they mean. Parables borrow their metaphors from temporal, earthly things, for which there can be no perfect counterpart in eternal and spiritual things. The truth portrayed in a parable projects beyond the parable itself. This is the case here too. The Lord would like this Pharisee to perceive that no human preparation and reformation of the old Adam is necessary to enter the kingdom of God, but rather a fundamental transformation of being itself is necessary. The Lord finds no more suitable expression than that of being born again and of rebirth.

Rebirth is a delicate rhyme that foretells blossoms and fruit — a spark that becomes a flame, a spring that can grow into a river — a new, godly life.

Now who would deny that the wonderful transformation Christ speaks about far exceeds the limitations of the terms *born again* and *rebirth*? Who would deny that the Lord, by helping us be reborn, accomplishes with us a vastly sublime work beyond any physical birth? But in spite of all that, who can and would dare to diminish this expression that has not entered into the heart of any man (1 Cor 2:9)? The Lord who formulated it has given it a wonderful depth by applying it to what he describes. Just as in birth a person leaves his peaceful place of refuge and enters into a world that is, and whose life is, completely new and unfamiliar to him, so too the one already born leaves his old existence by being reborn onto limitless paths, and he enters into a completely new existence that he did not know. Just as a newly born child still holds on to much and retains for a while what he remembers from previously being inside the womb, and just as he does not reach complete adulthood all of a sudden, like the wave of a magic wand, but must first get used to the new life little by little, and for that reason is raised and brought up, so too rebirth does not suddenly take someone from the corruption of the old Adam to the perfection of the new.

A great deal of darkness arises even in the reborn, and even he is not a perfect man but only a child who is capable of perfection and is born for that. Just as physical birth does not occur at the end for humans, but at the beginning of temporal life and development, so too the highest human completion possible in the kingdom of God is not meant by the name *rebirth*. This word means only the entry and beginning of what commences on the path to the goal of complete fulfillment. Rebirth is a delicate

rhyme that foretells blossoms and fruit — a spark that becomes a flame, a spring that can grow into a river — a new, godly life, which the omnipotent and omniscient God has made subject to the laws of a continuous striving for growth from inwardly to outwardly. Truly this is an expression worthy of its teacher, and it is one where both God and his angels stand guard around every new rebirth. For what can Satan corrupt in such a delicate beginning, if God does not keep his eyes open and angels do not wield flaming swords against the foe? We know, all the more, that God is gracious to all reborn children of God and preserves their heavenly life for them, when we hear that our old birth, our own diligence and enthusiasm, does not find any grace with God, rather absolutely all of it is up to rebirth and growth for complete fulfillment.

The Lord explains that what is really *necessary* and *essential* is rebirth. Thus the imperative question emerges and warrants itself: “How is that supposed to happen and how do I attain that?” When Nicodemus (v. 4) bursts out in response to the first statement of the Lord about rebirth in the words, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” we see how new to him the teachings of Christ still were at this point. We see how much they surprised and astonished him, and how entirely confused and awkward he felt in understanding them. Yet he took Christ’s words literally. When he was at first amazed, it did not occur to him that they could have another sense, one which — albeit going far beyond the wording — could still completely answer his question and did not have to be taken as lying. If, however, he would have fully perceived the Lord’s sense right away, the question, “How is this supposed to happen and how do I attain that?” would still have remained. In fact, it would have been the case that the more he would have understood the Lord, the more forceful he would have been. The more certainty there is in accepting that rebirth is absolutely necessary to enter the kingdom of God, the greater the desire *must* become to see how it is attained. Even the Lord himself attests to the legitimacy of this question by answering it and by not simply repeating the assertion that rebirth is necessary. Rather he describes rebirth itself as a birth of *water* and the *Spirit*.

Being born of water and the Spirit is the opposite of our birth from flesh. We were born by our mothers as flesh of flesh. The Lord himself describes this birth of flesh as incapable of improvement when he says, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh.” What comes from flesh through birth is not simply the body of the person, which by being called “flesh” does not incur reproach. Rather, it is the whole person, body together with soul. So when the Lord says, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” he is not simply calling the body by the name *flesh* but also the soul of the person coming from his mother. In that there is certainly a reproach against the poor human soul, on account of which it could be frightened in its inmost being when that reproach comes from the mouth of truth. *Flesh*: the soul together with the body. This is *flesh*!

It was not like that from the beginning. In creation it was the living breath of the Most High by which the whole person received the honor of being called a “living soul” (Gn 2:7). And

thus is “flesh”! Has it degenerated so much? Has it changed and transformed itself so much? Thus a rebirth is all the more necessary, and all the more desirable for that poor soul sighing under the curse of the flesh! But because of this, it is a great and joyous gospel for the soul, and must also be true, when the Lord speaks of a second birth that is *spirit of Spirit*, and that brings the person back again to his original condition.

The greater the affliction of our poor souls, the more lovely and attractive the possibility of a new birth promised by the Lord himself is, and the more urgently the question is raised, as to how one could come to this only hope of the soul—rebirth! Our *how* is no longer the question, you brooding, inquiring spirits, who want to penetrate the secrecy of the ways and works of God. Rather, one asks the *how* altogether *in practice*—if it is permitted at this point to use this expression. One only wants to be set on the path to relief, and gladly submits to walking it with one’s eyes closed, if only one really comes to certain relief by it. By our knowing that the new birth is a birth from the Spirit, it has still not become any more comprehensible and attainable for us than before. For where is the Spirit of rebirth and through what does he work? We do not know that yet, and right now that is what we have to know, unless the tidings of the possibility of a new birth are supposed to make us even unhappier than before. For what good does it do to know, while being in utmost need, that there *could* be relief, if the path of the possibility to that realization is locked?

God be praised that we are not turned away with our eager desire! The Lord also calls new birth from the Holy Spirit a new *birth from water*, and with that he relieves us of *all disconcertedness*. For we can have no doubt about what we are supposed to understand by this water of rebirth. It is the *water of baptism*, the gracious water of life (Rv 22:17), and the washing of rebirth in the Holy Spirit (Ti 3:5). This water is attainable. Because we now know that the Holy Spirit works through the water, we know where the hem of Christ’s garment is (Mt 14:36) that makes us recover from all our illnesses.

Or might it be that the water of baptism is not also the baptism of the Spirit? Are those people correct who tear apart what Christ joins together, separating baptism of the Spirit and baptism of water, making the former once again unapproachable and making the latter into a completely useless thing? Or is it the other way around? The Lord says one must be born again of water and Spirit. With that, is he teaching a double method of rebirth, one through water, one through Spirit, so that what is ascribed to the Spirit he also ascribes to the water? What kind of a teaching is that supposed to be? No, it is not solely water, and it is also not equated with the Spirit. On the contrary, the Lord puts water and Spirit together because the subordinate water belongs to the almighty Spirit.

Water and Spirit together constitute a baptism, that is, a gracious water of life and a washing of rebirth in the Holy Spirit. If we are looking for the Spirit who makes us born again, he is at the water of baptism. Where the water is, there the Spirit is. It has nothing to do with any separation between a baptism of water and a baptism of Spirit. There is only one baptism—of water and Spirit. Whoever wants to be reborn has himself baptized.

With that the means of rebirth is plainly described. Out of what was to man an impossible and hidden secret has emerged a delightful and easy way. For what is easier for man than rebirth, when it is baptism? It may be the greatest act of God of which every angel sings, but how easily do we obtain it? Oh how lovely and how gently the Lord moves along with his almighty washing of water, in doing so bringing rebirth and scarcely even waking a sleeping little child from bodily slumber by it!

Even though we know so well how one attains rebirth, to *comprehend* rebirth is not about intellectual comprehension. How the Spirit joins together with the water, how through the water he works on body and soul of the child being baptized, and how three handfuls of water can transform a child out of a birth that is “flesh of flesh” into a birth that is “spirit out of Spirit”: who comprehends this *how*? No one comprehends it, no one can, and no one should comprehend it. Whoever would want to have no rest and peace until he has comprehended God’s secret workings in his sacrament, will have to go without peace and rest.

If one does not believe Jesus when he speaks about the beginning of and entry into the kingdom of God, how much less will one in the process of instruction believe him regarding his revelations of heavenly things?

The Lord himself bluntly disclaims the question of Nicodemus, “How can that happen?” in so far as this question wants to comprehend that. He unhesitatingly explains that wanting to comprehend a born-again child of God, and what is involved with his transformation, is just as infeasible as someone wanting to comprehend the wind with its coming and going. “The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it,” says Christ, “but you cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Everyone perceives the wind when it blows, but how it originates in the air, where it starts out, its path and its destination, and how and where it dies down again, no one knows. With what the experts contemplate, there are merely observations and perceptions, which in the end still do not explain the final *how*.

In nature there are so many incomprehensible and inscrutable things in whose pleasure no person lets himself become troubled by a lack of knowledge in their beginning and end. What should hinder someone from likewise having the same sort of ignorance with the pleasure and joy of rebirth? If only one can *have* it, it may be all the same with respect to the manner and the *how* of its origin, as God wills. Rebirth brings us a

life that is both heavenly and eternal, one that will never again cease, in contrast to the wind which dies down and ceases when it has blown. May God give us this life, and may nothing bar us from that blessed possession!

For all that, we may not hide from the fact that it is a *difficult task* for many people to accept the incomprehensible. Pride, which never wishes to pass away, but rather continually stirs itself anew until death comes, is not easily satisfied once it is intent on grasping and comprehending something. Everything, divine as well as human, is supposed to present itself and lay itself bare to the eyes of pride's spirit in the same manner and degree. Hence in our gospel text, the Lord does not allow for this in his instructing, but instead scolds Nicodemus's and our unbelief. He confronts us (vv. 11–13) with the full power of his *confidence-inspiring appearance*. Jesus does not speak of rebirth like any other person. He speaks as the Possessor of heavenly wisdom, as having joint knowledge of divine secrets, as himself coming from heaven, as still residing in heaven even though also dwelling manifestly and visibly on earth.

***The word is to arouse such faith;
baptism, however, is fully to cause,
fortify, strengthen, and establish it.***

Jesus speaks as one who must certainly know the way to the heavenly kingdom, because that is where he himself has come from because he is the King of Heaven. Thus he speaks about entry into heaven. If he wanted, it would be a small thing for him to reveal even entirely different things that do not involve entering the kingdom of God, but rather concern the highest splendor of heaven itself. That is why faith must be bestowed on him. If one does not believe Jesus when he speaks about the beginning of and entry into the kingdom of God, how much less will one in the process of instruction believe him regarding his revelations of heavenly things?

Imagine how Nicodemus must have felt when this flood of rebuke flowed over him. With each reproachful word he heard, he received new insights into the divine truth and into the glory and majesty of Christ, the King of Truth. Imagine what he must have felt when the explanations of the Lord concerning rebirth, which were incomprehensible to him, were shown to be just the beginning of further revelations of heaven and vastly sublime secrets beyond the rebirth of humans—we can perhaps not even imagine that at all! But in any case, entirely different thoughts about Christ, his instruction, and his kingdom came to him even then, as he had expected. At that time, the foundations of Nicodemus's faith and love were laid, which clung firmly to the Lord on the day of his death, in the hour of his death, and up to being placed into his grave.

At this point my friends, if I were to follow my inclination, I might prefer to bring the explanation of this gospel text to a close and turn to the conclusion. But I chastise myself on account of my inclination since, if I followed it, I would have to leave out two verses of my text. Though these are seemingly only loosely joined with the previous verses, they have a deep inward connection with them. Both verse 14 and verse 15 point to the connection between reconciliation and rebirth. No other picture could, indeed, reveal and explain this connection more perfectly than that of the serpent Moses made in the wilderness out of bronze and hung on the pole. Through the Lord's blessing, the serpent had the power to heal all the Israelites who were bitten by the fiery serpents, if they would only look upon the divine promise with faith and trust (Nm 21:6–9). The serpent hanging on the pole prophesies him who also hung upon a pole and wood, being entirely made into sin and a curse for our sake. The sign of the serpent reminds everyone of the benedictory work which Christ suffered and accomplished on the cross on our behalf, as the wages of our sins were imputed to him and as he bore our punishments.

The picture of the serpent speaks less about the vicarious suffering than about the power that the observation of it exerts on lost and condemned sinners. The entire sense of the picture lies in the words of the prophet: "By his wounds we are healed" (Is 53:5). Just as in the wilderness, the physically sick were given the promise that all who looked in faith upon the image of the serpent were to live and recover, even so for all of us who are born "flesh of flesh"—and thus are dead to the kingdom of heaven—are given the promise of a rebirth and full recovery unto eternal life, if we would recognize and in faith grasp Christ our substitute in the courthouse of death and in the atonement for our sins. The word is to arouse such faith; baptism, however, is fully to cause, fortify, strengthen, and establish it. Word and baptism show themselves to be rebirthing powers of heaven by working in humans this faith, this spring and fountain of all new life, this new life—if we may call it that.

Word, baptism, faith, and rebirth are inseparably joined together. Where word, baptism, and faith are, there is also rebirth. Whoever is baptized and believes in Christ does not need to doubt his rebirth. Faith carries the infant to baptism, pleads in place of the infant for faith, and receives it for that infant. In the unresisting baptismal candidate who is recognized by God and Christ as a believer, baptism effects all new life in being marked and in actual beginning. Everything that Scripture says concerning the blessings of holy baptism also applies to the baptized sinner. For God is true and grants the kingdom of heaven to such infants and children who are brought to his Son through his sacrament, just as he granted it to the little children in Mark 10 through the laying on of hands by his Son.

Thus let each rejoice in the confidence of his baptism and salvation. Let no one be misguided by the drivel of those who separate faith from the baptism of children and only recognize the faith of adults, wanting to elevate faith above baptism and the effect above the cause. You are baptized; you believe. In believing, you possess the pledge for the legitimacy of your baptism, and other abilities, pledges, and proofs will follow. The

fulfillment may be lacking for one who is baptized and believes. It will be that way as well, as long as he is on a pilgrimage here. Many things may displease him that are in and on him, and rightly so. The baptized believer may have much to confess, much to weep for, much to fight, much to gain. But he is no longer dead; he is born again. He lives and is on the path to fulfillment, *for* he believes and is baptized. Let no one who perverts Scripture, mixing and confusing rebirth and sanctification, take that away. The eyes of the repentant and weeping rest upon the Crucified One, just as the eyes of the Israelites who were bitten by serpents rested upon the bronze serpent. Let no eye relent from the Crucified One: there, frightened souls, take refuge; from there comes peace and strength. To there, he who does not want to die takes refuge; from there flows life: whoever wants to can experience it. The Crucified One is life, and all new life of humans is, in its beginning, faith in him, and no progress of new life is without faith! . . .

My brothers! In accordance with the allotment given to me, both by the richness of the gospel text and my short time, I have placed before your eyes what our text teaches about rebirth. All the contents of the text concern you, more than you may have thought at first glance. You all, however, are reborn as children in your baptism and have faith. Along with that, you have new life contained within you, which God creates in his young baptized children. But here is what tends to happen. First of all, most parents have neglected the divine spark of rebirth. They have not nurtured it, as they should have, through the word of God into a great flame which refines the entire being. Being accustomed to that, you yourselves have similarly not regarded the divine spark that was in you, and have so thoroughly covered up the holy embers with the pile of your sins, that one can scarcely notice it under the heap of ashes you have piled up. But it has not fully gone out for any of you. In fact, it does not go out fully for anyone before he dies. The work of baptism, as a work of God, is undone by no work of man. The Lord, the promise-keeping God of baptism, keeps watch over it for as long as the time of grace lasts.

In view of this great faithfulness of our God in his service and mission, I remind and admonish you no longer to disregard the embers that are still in you, the still smoldering coals of your rebirth, but rather to learn on account of it. I admonish you henceforth to awaken it, nurture it, and fan it into flame through meekly taking up the divine word. As soon as you turn your ear to the word, you will become aware that God's word speaks to you as those spirits who belong to him through baptism. The longer you listen, the more like home it will sound to you. The longer you listen, the more it will bring you back to the awareness of your baptism and bring you to humble thankfulness for all the faithfulness with which your God has kept you. According to his promises, he has protected you from a wicked death and furthermore, before you would die, opens to you the gates of youth, through your baptism, your young salvation, which is indeed an eternal youth!

Do not let these words of admonishment be spoken to you in vain. What I have admonished for the moment is nothing difficult. Taking up the word and letting it be at work: that is

all! You should be still, and the Lord will change you. "And put aside the work you do, so that God's word may work in you" (see *ELH* 488:3). That is what you should do.

May the Sunday of the Holy Trinity also stimulate you to render obedience. Even the heavenly spirits, even cherubim and thrones do not ascertain the depths of the divine Substance. The Godhead — to speak in a tiny simile of the Omnipresent — is like the center of a circle. Just as the circle's circumference at every point is the same distance away from the center, so too all creatures' eyes and intellect are equidistant from God. The difference in degrees of various creatures' knowledge of God is in the eyes of God himself as nothing. The cherub, the human — they are both creatures, and in their knowledge they do not cross over the circumference and barrier behind which all creatures view God. In the eyes of the Most High the difference in the

***I admonish you henceforth to
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knowledge of creatures is only very slight. The creatures themselves assess it nevertheless to be far and wide. Indeed, the human must not just regard the difference between his knowledge of God and that of the angels as great. Rather, he also has reason to regard the difference in knowledge of God that he himself has here below and what he is to have thereafter in eternal life as so far and wide that he stretches himself out and, from the depths of the soul, longs for the knowledge that he will find in that other world.

Don't you long for that? The knowledge of God in that other world is a beholding, whereas the one in this world is only a believing. Don't you desire to behold God as humans in that other world can behold him? You would have to be completely dead in sins if the hope of knowing and beholding God more completely were unable to take hold of you, revive you, and make you zealous. On the other hand, if it is otherwise and you do desire to come to behold the Triune God, then hold your rebirth in high regard and let it be renewed in you. Only rebirth — I repeat — only the growth of the newborn man within us lends us the eyes and capacity to behold the glory of God in heaven. Only that enables us to join the blessed choir of angels and the elect singing without end: "Holy, holy, holy is God, the Lord Sabaoth!" (Is 6:3).

So may he then help us, who alone can do all things and to whom is due all honor, praise, and thanks! He never leaves us until we, renewed in the Holy Spirit and dressed in the white clothes of our baptism, come to his throne and behold him! Amen. **LOGIA**

What does this mean?
 We should fear and love God
 that we do not despise preaching
 and His Word, but hold it sacred
 and gladly hear and learn it.

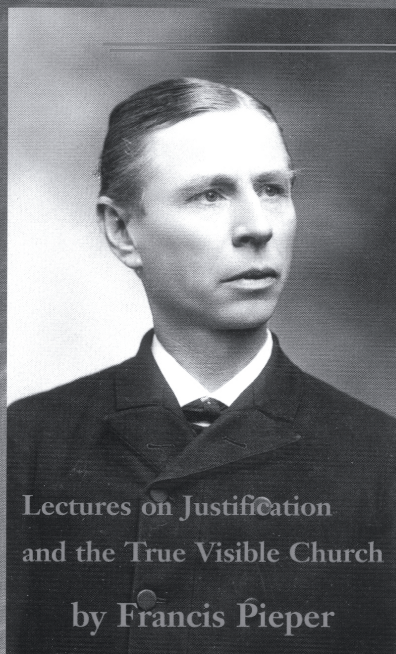


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Löhe in America

Two Historical Trajectories in the Missouri and Iowa Synods

CRAIG L. NESSAN



THE THEOLOGY OF WILHELM LÖHE has been aptly described by David Ratke as an “ecclesial theology.”¹ This core insight goes to the very heart of Löhe’s vision. His theology was oriented toward church praxis. In *Three Books About the Church*, he vividly described the place of the church in history: “Springing up on Pentecost and Calvary, the church flows through the ages like a river, and that same river and no other will flow unchangingly on through the ages until that great day when it will empty completely into the famed sea of eternal blessedness.”²

Löhe entertained a vision of the catholic church through the ages and dared to claim that the Lutheran Church, with its confessional clarity, was the fullest expression of that church. This article compares the reception of Löhe as it unfolded and continues to unfold in two American Lutheran church bodies. As the river named “Church” has continued to flow from the nineteenth century to the present, what has been the influence of Löhe on the historical development of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) and the Iowa Synod (which through a series of mergers became part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or ELCA)? Are there any notable trajectories that demonstrate his influence?

FIVE DIMENSIONS OF LÖHE’S ECCLESIAL THEOLOGY

The ecclesial theology of Löhe has several distinct dimensions that deserve elaboration, for they are themes that inform the influence of Löhe on the churches in America. There are five particularly significant aspects of this ecclesial theology: pietism, confessionalism, liturgical renewal, *diakonia*, and mission.

First, the ecclesial theology of Löhe was *pietistic*. Löhe was influenced by the pietistic revival of his time. His favorite professor at Erlangen, Christian Krafft, was a strong representative of nineteenth-century pietism. Löhe received from pietism a vivid sense of the living God’s activity in human life and a persistent interest in mission. Pietism has always been a motivating force for missionary outreach, and from his earliest service as a pastor, Löhe became notorious for organizing circles of the pious for the purpose of supporting foreign mission.³ Throughout

his ministry, Löhe gave energy to the preparation and publication of devotional materials. This interest continued through his involvement in preparing pastors and teachers to serve the German immigrants in the American Midwest. Löhe is a prime example of how pietism affects the heart to give itself to others.

Second, the ecclesial theology of Löhe was *confessional*. Löhe was deeply convinced that the Lutheran Church most perfectly preserved the essence of Christian teaching.⁴ Reacting against the pressure toward unionism (the unification of Lutherans and the Reformed) placed on the Protestant churches in Prussia and other parts of Germany in the nineteenth century, Löhe became a strong defender of Lutheran confessional identity. He valued the Lutheran tradition for preserving the gospel of Jesus Christ in its purity, and feared the loss of doctrinal purity should the Lutheran Church become forcibly reunified with the Reformed. Moreover, he resisted the imposition of such reunification at the hands of the government.

Third, the ecclesial theology of Löhe was *liturgical*. His scholarly study of the liturgical traditions of the early church became the basis for the liturgical order he developed. This order, commonly known as Löhe’s *Agende*,⁵ was intended for use not only in his own congregation but also was published for use in Lutheran churches in Germany and the United States. Löhe had a deep appreciation for the liturgical pattern of worship and believed this form facilitated the encounter of the worshipping assembly with the living God.⁶ His conviction that God is the primary actor who comes to us in word and sacrament at worship fed his imagination that the same God is at work saving the world. Löhe’s efforts to reconstruct the historic liturgical rite were an original contribution to the renewal of parish life in his time, which included a strong emphasis on the sacraments and the reintroduction of a weekly service of Holy Communion. He

1. David Ratke, *Confession and Mission, Word and Sacrament: The Ecclesial Theology of Wilhelm Löhe* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2001).
2. Wilhelm Löhe, *Three Books about the Church*, ed., trans., and intro. James L. Schaaf (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 55.
3. See Christian Weber, *Missionstheologie bei Wilhelm Löhe: Aufbruch zur Kirche der Zukunft* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1996).
4. Löhe, *Three Books*, 152–155.
5. Wilhelm Löhe, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Klaus Ganzert, vol. 7.1, *Agende für christliche Gemeinden des lutherischen Bekenntnisses* (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1953).
6. Thomas H. Schattauer, “The Reconstruction of Rite: The Liturgical Legacy of Wilhelm Löhe,” in *Rule of Prayer, Rule of Faith: Essays in Honor of Aidan Kavanagh, O.S.B.*, ed. Nathan Mitchell and John F. Baldwin (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), 243–277.

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even implemented the rite of private confession as preparation for coming to the Lord's table.

Fourth, the ecclesial theology of Löhe was *diaconal*. He considered the diaconate a vital dimension of the work of the church in the New Testament and reclaimed it as core to the "inner" mission of the church. Löhe forged this distinctive contribution to the service of the church in the world by building upon the restoration of *diakonia* by August Francke in the eighteenth century, the implementation of a deaconess order by Theodor Fliedner in the 1830s, and the model of his contemporary, Johann Wichern. He founded a deaconess order and charitable institutions that continue to minister in Bavaria to this day.⁷ Through *diakonia*, the church extended its ministry to many persons in need, including the sick, dying, poor, handicapped, and elderly. Neuendettelsau deaconesses were also active in education of the young.

Fifth, the ecclesial theology of Löhe was *missional*. He saw the church of God through the ages as a church in motion:

For mission is nothing but the one church of God in its movement, the actualization of the one universal, catholic church. . . . Mission is the life of the catholic church. Where it stops, blood and breath stop; where it dies, the love which unites heaven and earth also dies. The catholic church and mission—these two no one can separate without killing both, and that is impossible.⁸

Löhe fundamentally viewed all the work of the church as mission—either inner mission or outer mission. His emphasis on inner mission clearly expressed itself in his parish ministry in Neuendettelsau and in his efforts to organize ministry for the German immigrants to the United States. His focus on outer mission came to expression in an exceptional way in his desire to see the gospel proclaimed to Native Americans.⁹ One might assert that other significant characteristics of Löhe's ecclesial theology—the pietistic, confessional, liturgical, and diaconal dimensions—all finally served this interest in mission.

TRACING LÖHE'S INFLUENCE ON LUTHERANISM IN THE UNITED STATES

To identify the influence of any particular figure, especially one from the nineteenth century, on contemporary Lutheranism is a daunting and difficult undertaking. The factors that contribute to the historical development of a church body are manifold, complicated, and mysterious. Moreover, it is exceed-

ingly difficult to document particular influences on something as fluid as a living tradition. Nevertheless, it is possible to note general tendencies and correspondences between what a particular figure represented and distinctive characteristics of a contemporary church body.

A further challenge met when attempting to trace Löhe's influence is that his ministry combined ostensibly contradictory characteristics into a striking, creative synthesis. The five dimensions of his legacy—pietism, confessionalism, liturgical renewal, *diakonia*, and mission—include characteristics that would generally be considered antithetical, but were clearly manifest in his thought and practice. For example, Löhe was genuinely informed both by nineteenth-century pietism and by Lutheran confessionalism, theological tendencies usually understood as opposites. Or, Löhe demonstrated deep interest both in liturgical renewal and in global mission. Again, stereotypical opposites combined in creative synthesis.

Löhe considered the diaconate a vital dimension of the work of the church in the New Testament.

The five-dimensional matrix described above offers a framework for interpreting the contrasting patterns of influence which Löhe exerted in the church traditions to which his work contributed. These five aspects will now serve as an interpretive lens for reflecting on Löhe's influence on the LCMS and the Iowa Synod. After some initial historical background, in each case the author paints a portrait of how the Löhe legacy has informed, first, the LCMS and, second, the Iowa Synod.

LÖHE IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH— MISSOURI SYNOD

Historical Sketch

The impetus for Löhe's material response to the needs of the German immigrants in America was the publication in 1840 of F. C. D. Wyneken's appeal for help. In direct response to this plea, Löhe wrote *Die lutherischen Auswanderer in Nordamerika: Eine Ansprache an die Leser des Sonntagsblattes* ("The Lutheran Emigrants in North America: An Address to the Readers of the *Sonntagsblatt*").¹⁰ Löhe and Pastor Johann Friedrich Wucherer, his colleague and editor of the paper, soon were overwhelmed by donations to the cause. As one response to the need, Löhe began a training program in Neuendettelsau for those who either volunteered or were recruited to serve the immigrant community. Adam Ernst, the first to respond, and Georg Burger were trained as schoolteachers and sent as missionaries to America in 1842.

7. Anne Stempel-de Fallois, *Das diakonische Wirken Wilhelm Löhes: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gründung des Diakonissenmutterhauses Neuendettelsau (1826–1854)* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2001); and Harald Jenner, *Von Neuendettelsau in alle Welt: Entwicklung und Bedeutung der Diakonissenanstalt Neuendettelsau/Diakonie Neuendettelsau 1854–1891/1900* (Neuendettelsau: Diakonie Neuendettelsau, 2004).

8. Löhe, *Three Books*, 59.

9. Gerhard M. Schmutterer and Charles P. Lutz, "Mission Martyr on the Western Frontier: Can Cross-cultural Mission Be Achieved?" in *Church Roots: Stories of Nine Immigrant Groups that Became the American Lutheran Church*, ed. Charles P. Lutz (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), 117–142.

10. Ratke, *Confession and Mission*, 24.

Upon arrival in New York, Ernst and Burger were received by Friedrich Winkler, a recently called professor to the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary at Columbus, Ohio. The critical need for pastors soon led Ernst and Burger to study for the ministry in Columbus. Thus the earliest relations of Löhe's *Sendlinge* (missioners) in America were with a seminary that eventually became a part of the ELCA. After examining the seminary's confessional loyalty, Löhe began sending students, books, and other material support. However, already in 1845 a breach developed between Löhe and the Columbus seminary over the issue of confessional subscription. Löhe perceived the Columbus seminary to be overly subject to the influence of Samuel S. Schmucker's project to forge an "American Lutheranism."¹¹ To Löhe this no doubt appeared as unionism in a new guise, something he emphatically rejected. Therefore, he turned to the founders of the Missouri Synod for partners more aligned with his own confessional commitments.

Through the mediation of Ernst and others sent from Neuen-dettelsau, Löhe briskly entered into the plans for the founding of the LCMS in April 1847. He did have concerns about the foundations of this new church body, as Pless observes:

Loehe had reservations about the constitutional foundation of the Synod from the beginning. He was especially uneasy regarding the notion of equal representation of clergy and laity in church governance. This seemed to him to reflect a democratic form of church life more reflective of American principles than the ecclesiology of the New Testament. Such a democratic approach, Loehe feared, would subordinate the pastor to the will of the congregation. But at this early stage, Loehe was unwilling to protest too strongly, believing that over time the weaknesses of this approach would be realized and appropriate adjustments made in the constitution.¹²

Löhe continued to communicate these theological concerns in his regular correspondence even as he invested energy and financial support into developing the LCMS seminary founded at Fort Wayne in 1846. He is considered the seminary's founder; Wilhelm Sihler, a Löhe missionary, was its first president.¹³ By 1853, when Löhe's formal connection with the Missouri Synod ended, eighty-two additional "Löhe men" had been sent to the Missouri Synod via the Fort Wayne seminary. At the organizing convention of the Missouri Synod, Löhe agreed both to transfer the seminary to the synod and to continue to support it through donations of money and books. The establishment of this seminary belongs to the enduring legacy of Löhe in the LCMS.

Meanwhile, Löhe also took great interest in the formation and development of the four colonies founded in Michigan, in-

cluding Frankenmuth, southeast of Saginaw. He participated in ordering the life of the colonies and in sending both settlers and pastors to lead them. Moreover, Löhe had keen interest in outreach to the Chippewa people.

For nearly a century, the influence of Löhe on the Missouri Synod continued.

In 1852 Löhe founded a "seminary" in Saginaw, originally a teachers' college, which would eventually become Wartburg College. This school, however, was not handed over to the Missouri Synod. Its director, Georg Grossmann (together with Pastor Johannes Deindörfer of the Frankenhilf colony), was a key figure in representing Löhe's views in the controversy which erupted over the doctrine of the ministry. Löhe maintained the divine origin of the pastoral office; on the other hand, C. F. W. Walther held that the pastoral office was bestowed upon the congregation, which transferred its authority to the pastor. Löhe feared that American individualism and congregationalism were exerting undue influence on church doctrine.¹⁴ This controversy culminated in the departure of Grossmann and Deindörfer as members of a band of twenty-two persons for Iowa in 1853, where the Evangelical-Lutheran Synod of Iowa was founded in 1854.

For nearly a century, the influence of Löhe on the Missouri Synod continued, especially in matters of worship practice. In the late 1940s explicit interest in the Löhe heritage began to revive through the teaching, research, and writings of Hermann Sasse, Walter Baepler, Erich Heintzen, John Tietjen, Walter Bouman, and Kenneth Korby.¹⁵ As the two-hundredth anniversary of Löhe's birth is celebrated in 2008, Löhe is being reclaimed as an important ancestor in the history and life of the LCMS.

LÖHE'S LEGACY IN THE LCMS

What is the shape of the Löhe legacy in the Missouri Synod according to the five dimensions of Löhe's ecclesial theology?

Pietism

In his own time and context, Löhe's pietism was a reaction to the failure of the state church to instill a vital spirituality into the life of the congregation. The pietistic impulse drove much of Löhe's interest for a church in mission. While a measure of

11. See John T. Pless, "Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod: Forgotten Paternity or Living Legacy?" *Currents in Theology and Mission* 33 (2006): 126–127.

12. *Ibid.*, 129.

13. Erich H. Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets: The Anatomy of a Seminary, 1846–1976* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1989), 30–41.

14. For a detailed account of many aspects of this controversy, see Pless, "Wilhelm Loehe," 129–135; and James L. Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church: A Study in the History of Lutheran Mission" (doctoral diss., University of Heidelberg, 1961), 121–161.

15. For bibliographical references and elaboration, see Pless, "Wilhelm Loehe," 135–136.

this pietism shaped those trained by Löhe in Neuendettelsau, the influence of his pietism is not visible in the materials documenting his influence on the Missouri Synod. The renewal of interest in evangelical outreach in recent Missouri Synod initiatives bears some family resemblance to Löhe's concern, but there is no direct evidence that Löhe's pietism has in any way fueled this development.

Confessionalism

One of the most prominent influences of Löhe on the theology of the Missouri Synod relates to his confessionalism. In origin, Löhe's strong confessional commitment was prompted by the threat of "unionism" in the Bavarian Lutheran Church of his time. This concern matched that of the Saxon Lutherans who emigrated from Germany in 1838 on account of the forced union of the Lutheran with the Reformed churches. These Saxons settled in St. Louis and Perry County, Missouri, and later founded the LCMS in 1847.¹⁶ When Löhe shifted his support from the seminary in Columbus to the new seminary in Fort Wayne, it was chiefly a consequence of what he perceived to be unionist tendencies under the shadow of Schmucker's "American Lutheranism."¹⁷ In the Missouri Synod Löhe found a rigorous theological confessionalism more in accordance with his own views. Fully half of the founders of the Missouri Synod were missionaries sent from Germany by Löhe.¹⁸ It is therefore somewhat ironic that differences over the confessional interpretation of the doctrine of ministry led to the parting of the ways between Löhe and Walther.¹⁹ Nonetheless, Löhe's strict adherence to the standards of the Lutheran Confessions has been highly valued and affirmed in the Missouri Synod from the nineteenth century to the present.²⁰

Liturgical Renewal

Löhe greatly influenced the liturgical practices of German-speaking Lutherans in America. The missionaries who became founders of the Missouri Synod received training at his hand, which "included drilling in the hymns and liturgical forms that he was trying to restore. In 1844 Loehe published an *Agende* . . . with his 'brethren in North America' in mind, and dedicated it to Pastor Friedrich Wyneken of Fort Wayne, Indiana."²¹ Also, "The practice of every Sunday communion preceded by private confession in Frankenmuth and the surrounding area would continue for several decades."²²

While Löhe's liturgical material had an early and lasting influence on the Missouri Synod, another primary influence was the Saxon Agenda. Luther Reed notes, "In 1856 a revision of the Saxon Agenda was approved and published by the Missouri Synod."²³ The Saxon Agenda, Friedrich Lochner's publication of *Der Hauptgottesdienst* in 1895, and the adoption of the Common Service by the English District of the Missouri Synod in 1899 were the main influences upon the *Liturgy and Agenda*, published in 1917.²⁴ John Pless writes, regarding the influence of Lochner's *Der Hauptgottesdienst*: "What Lochner learned from Loehe in the way of liturgics he transmitted to his students at Springfield and published in his book," which "shows signs of Loehe's historical and confessional appreciation of the liturgy. It remained in print until 1935 and was used as a text in liturgics at both LCMS seminaries into the twentieth century."²⁵ It is through the use of these liturgical materials, including the usage of the Common Service, that the influence of Löhe's liturgical renewal (as embodied in his *Agende*) was transmitted.²⁶

In the LCMS Löhe found a rigorous theological confessionalism more in accordance with his own views.

With the publication of the *Lutheran Service Book and Agenda* in 2006, the explicit influence of Löhe on the Missouri Synod's worship practices is clearly evident. January 2, the day of Löhe's death, is noted in the calendar of commemorations, and the hymn, "Wide Open Stands the Gates Adorned with Pearl," written shortly before his death, appears in an American Lutheran hymnal for the first time.²⁷ Suggestions for daily prayer from Löhe's *Seed-Grains of Prayer: A Manual for Evangelical Christians* are included in the worship book.²⁸ Pless observes: "Loehe's influence is especially apparent in the *Agenda* as the introduction lays out an approach to pastoral care that is centered in confession-absolution and framed by the liturgy. Loehe's liturgical formula for anointing the sick, which provoked both Bavarian and Missourian reaction in the nineteenth century, has found its way into the new LCMS *Agenda*."²⁹

16. Walter O. Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi: The Settlement of the Saxon Lutherans in Missouri, 1839-1841* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1953).

17. Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church," 50-65.

18. Walter A. Baepler, *A Century of Grace: A History of the Missouri Synod, 1847-1947* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1947), 69-70, writes that the *Sendlinge* of Löhe to America were required to make "a pledge of allegiance to the Confessional Writings of the Lutheran Church."

19. See Herman Sasse, "Walther and Loehe: On the Church," *The Springfielder* 35 (1971): 176-182.

20. James L. Schaaf, "Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 45 (1972): 54-59.

21. Carl F. Schalk, "Sketches of Lutheran Worship," chapter 2 in *A Handbook of Church Music*, ed. Carl Halter and Carl Schalk (St. Louis: Concordia, 1978), 86.

22. Pless, "Wilhelm Loehe," 137.

23. Luther D. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy: A Study of the Common Service of the Lutheran Church in America* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1947), 176.

24. *Ibid.*, 176-177.

25. Pless, "Wilhelm Loehe," 137.

26. Reed, *Lutheran Liturgy*, 153.

27. "Wide Open Stands the Gates Adorned with Pearl," *LSB* 639.

28. See Wilhelm Löhe, *Seed-Grains of Prayer: A Manual for Evangelical Christians*, trans. H. A. Weller (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1912).

29. Pless, "Wilhelm Loehe," 137.

Diakonia

Löhe's vision at the founding of the *Lutherische Verein für weibliche Diakonia* in 1853 was to prepare deaconesses for service in congregations. This plan, however, soon gave way to the establishment of a motherhouse in Neuendettelsau in 1854. Jeannine Olson notes: "During Löhe's life, there were 163 deaconesses consecrated. Forty-five percent of them resigned, many to marry."³⁰ Löhe encouraged among the deaconesses a regular participation in community worship, daily private prayer, and private oral confession-absolution.

Two early attempts were made to establish deaconess activity in the United States; the first in 1858 involved sisters in teaching at a school for girls in Ohio and the second involved service in nursing, but both of these were short lived.³¹ Interest in Löhe's diaconate revived in the LCMS in the late twentieth century, especially through the work of Kenneth F. Korby, a student of Arthur Carl Piepkorn. Korby wrote his doctoral dissertation on the theology of pastoral care in Löhe.³² Later, he taught many years at Valparaiso University and in retirement as an adjunct professor at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne. Pless writes, "His instruction of future deaconesses at Valparaiso connected them with the diaconal tradition of Neuendettelsau."³³ The heritage of Löhe continues to influence the training of Valparaiso deaconesses in the present, as does the recently instituted deaconess program at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. A recent sign of Löhe's influence on *diakonia* in the LCMS is the publication in 2007 of a translation of Löhe's *Von der Barmherzigkeit*, under the title *Löhe on Mercy*, by the LCMS Board for World Relief and Human Care.³⁴

Mission

The early history of the Missouri Synod reveals the importance of Löhe's involvement in its first missionary efforts. Löhe was instrumental in the founding of the LCMS, the establishment of the Fort Wayne seminary, and the organization of the four colonies in Michigan. He also undertook efforts to establish outreach to the Native Americans in the vicinity of Frankenmuth.³⁵ Through the ministry of pastors and teachers trained by Löhe, his influence on the development of congregational ministry and theological education in the LCMS was significant. Through the intentional cultivation of the Löhe heritage in the Frankenmuth area and at Concordia Theological Seminary, and through cooperation in international mission in

places that also have a historical relation to Löhe (for example, Australia), the Missouri Synod's connection to Löhe was maintained, though subdued, after the schism with Löhe in 1853. This has changed with the renewal of interest in Löhe's heritage in the latter half of the twentieth century, symbolized by several dissertations on Löhe by doctoral students of the LCMS.³⁶ Löhe's influence on the LCMS has extended into the twenty-first century through Concordia Publishing House's publication of David Ratke's *Confession and Mission, Word and Sacrament: The Ecclesial Theology of Wilhelm Löhe* in 2001 and through the involvement of John Pless and others from the LCMS in the founding of the International Löhe Society in 2005.

LÖHE IN THE IOWA SYNOD

Historical Sketch

Johannes Deindörfer was sent as pastor to the Michigan colony at Frankenhilf in 1851, and Georg Grossmann became director of a teachers' seminary at Saginaw in 1852. As conflict emerged over the nature of ordained ministry between the Missouri Synod and Johannes Grabau, founder of the Buffalo Synod, the defenders of Löhe's mediating position, led by Deindörfer and Grossmann, found themselves in irreconcilable doctrinal controversy with the leaders of the Missouri Synod. This conflict prompted those loyal to Löhe to leave behind the work begun in Michigan and seek out a territory not yet under development by the LCMS. That destination was Iowa.

While Deindörfer and the lay leader G. Amman went to Clayton County, near Strawberry Point in Iowa, to break ground for a settlement, Grossmann immediately undertook the task of reestablishing the teachers' seminary in Dubuque. The initial missionary vision was to establish schools in cities and towns with significant populations of German immigrants. This soon led to the second missionary goal of forming Lutheran congregations in those localities. The course of events rapidly unfolded in this direction, as almost immediately the teachers' seminary became a theological seminary as well. Wartburg Theological Seminary, which formally received its name in 1857, traces its origin to the expansion of the original teachers' seminary to incorporate theological studies for the preparation of pastors in 1854. This same year, Sigmund Fritschel arrived to assist Director Grossmann as a professor at the seminary.

The Evangelical-Lutheran Synod of Iowa was founded at St. Sebald in Clayton County on 24 August 1854 with four charter members: Deindörfer, Grossmann, S. Fritschel, and M. Schueler, a theological candidate. The first missionary endeavor of the synod was inner mission, through the organization of preaching points that would be developed into congregations. While at its founding the synod consisted of only two congregations, at St. Sebald and Dubuque, one year later there were sixteen locations for gospel preaching. Friendly relations soon

30. For this and the preceding, see Jeannine E. Olson, *Deacons and Deaconesses through the Centuries*, Rev. ed. (St. Louis: Concordia, 2005), 222–223.

31. Jenner, *Von Neuendettelsau*, 257–258.

32. Kenneth F. Korby, "Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe with Special Attention to the Function of Liturgy and the Laity" (Th.D. diss., Concordia Seminary in Exile, 1976).

33. Pless, "Wilhelm Loehe," 136.

34. Wilhelm Löhe, *Löhe on Mercy*, trans. Holger Sonntag, with preface by Matthew Harrison (St. Louis: Board for World Relief and Human Care, 2007). This is a translation of chapters 6 and 7 of Löhe's *Von der Barmherzigkeit*.

35. Walter P. Schoenfuhs, "The Story of the 'German Lutheran Chippewa Indian Mission' in the Saginaw Valley," reprint of article in *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 37 (Oct. 1964).

36. In addition to Korby's dissertation, "Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe," consider also John Tietjen, "The Ecclesiology of Wilhelm Loehe" (S.T.M. thesis, Union Theological Seminary, 1954); and Walter Bouman, "The Unity of the Church in Nineteenth Century Lutheranism" (doctoral diss., Heidelberg University, 1957).

commenced with the Buffalo Synod as the Iowa Synod began to provide pastors for vacant Buffalo Synod congregations. In 1857 the Iowa Synod thereby extended its work to Michigan and Ohio. Sigmund Fritschel himself went to Detroit for two years to serve as pastor, taking along members of the senior seminary class to complete their education there.

Pastors who had finished at the seminary went out to form and serve congregations at places as distant as Des Moines, Jonesboro (Illinois), and Pocahontas (Missouri). Meanwhile mission fields were extended to the areas surrounding both St. Sebald and Dubuque. By 1858 there were seventeen pastors, nineteen congregations, and twelve preaching points. In 1864 these numbers had increased to forty-one pastors, fifty congregations in seven states, and innumerable preaching points. Wilhelm Löhe continued to encourage and send candidates for ordained ministry to be prepared at Wartburg Seminary throughout this and subsequent periods. While the greatest gains from the Iowa Synod's early missionary efforts were among the steady stream of immigrants from Germany, the vision for "outer" mission in the form of outreach to Native American people continued to inspire its founders.³⁷

Late in the nineteenth century, the Iowa Synod continued its steady growth. In 1896 the synod roster listed 334 pastors, forty parochial school teachers, 534 congregations, and 149 preaching points. After its merger with the Texas Synod in 1896, the number of pastors swelled to 400 and congregations to 600, with a confirmed membership of nearly 65,000. Although its doctrine came under repeated challenge from members of the LCMS (involving issues as divergent as chiliasm, the anti-Christ, and predestination), the synod maintained its central purpose of extending the ministry of the gospel to the large number of German immigrants continuing to flow into the Midwest.

Wartburg Seminary was instrumental in meeting the synod's need for pastors and teachers during this period. Twice the seminary was compelled to move, due to outgrowing its facilities: to Mendota, Illinois, in 1874 and back to Dubuque in 1889. In both locations, the seminary initiated missions in the surrounding area and prepared candidates for ordained service in the Iowa Synod's congregations. During their years of service on the faculty of Wartburg Seminary, Sigmund Fritschel (1854–1900) and Gottfried Fritschel (1857–1889) prepared hundreds of students for pastoral ministry, nearly all the pastors who belonged to the Iowa Synod. Their influence as teachers of the church was extended through their publications, including two books and the editing of the *Kirchen-Blatt* from 1858 to 1871 (by Gottfried) and many articles in various periodicals, especially the *Kirchliche Zeitschrift*. Beyond their endeavors as educators, both brothers served the mission of the church as synod leaders, preachers, and "ecumenical" representatives to the General Council in the pursuit of confessional faithfulness and unity among Lutherans.

The influence of Löhe on the Iowa Synod continued into the twentieth century through the teaching of J. Michael Reu

and other second-generation leaders (such as Max and George Fritschel). In the 1970s, a renewal of interest in the legacy of Löhe was initiated at Wartburg Theological Seminary through the leadership of William Weiblen as seminary president. He authored a history of the seminary, *Life Together at Wartburg Seminary*, and drew directly on the Löhe heritage in underscoring the liturgical and missional commitments of the school.³⁸ Thomas Schattauer, professor of worship, has in recent times drawn upon the Löhe liturgical tradition for the worship practices of the seminary.³⁹ Paul Chung, professor of Lutheran Confessions and World Christianity, has given attention to Löhe's contribution to the renewal of *diakonia*.

LÖHE AND THE IOWA SYNOD

What was the shape of the Löhe legacy in the Iowa Synod according to the five dimensions of Löhe's ecclesial theology, and how has this legacy become manifest in the ELCA?

Pietism

Löhe's pietism was palpable in the Iowa Synod of the nineteenth century through the vital sense of the activity of the living God in the church, especially through the publication and distribution of his devotional writings. Subsequently, selected devotional materials authored by Löhe were translated into English. The publication in 1912 of *Seed-Grains of Prayer*, which Löhe designed to order private and family devotions, shows that his influence on the piety of the Iowa Synod continued into the early twentieth century. Moreover, the Iowa Synod's impulse toward mission was consistent with Löhe's pietistic commitments.⁴⁰ In the late twentieth century, the fostering of a "communitarian" ethos at Wartburg Seminary has appealed both to Löhe and Bonhoeffer as sources.

Confessionalism

The theologians and pastors of the Iowa Synod considered themselves loyal to the Lutheran Confessions. Compared to some expressions of Lutheranism—for example, the stance of the General Council—the Iowa Synod's position on pulpit and altar fellowship was stringent.⁴¹ However, when compared to the confessional hermeneutic of the Missouri Synod, the Iowa Synod was considered too moderate. For this reason, debates erupted over a series of controversial issues that distinguished Iowa from Missouri: open questions, chiliasm, the anti-Christ,

38. William H. Weiblen, *Life Together at Wartburg Seminary (1854–2004)*, ed. Craig L. Nesson (Dubuque: Wartburg Theological Seminary, 2006).

39. See Thomas H. Schattauer, "'Sung, Spoken, Lived': Worship as Communion and Mission in the Work of Wilhelm Loehe," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 33 (2006): 113–121; and Paul S. Chung, "Confessional Mission and Diaconal Discipleship: The Legacy of Wilhelm Löhe Revisited," Chapter 6 in *Justification and Justice: Diakonia of Reconciliation in God's Mission*, ed. Paul S. Chung and others (forthcoming).

40. G. J. Zeilinger, *A Missionary Synod with a Mission (1854–1929)* (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1929) describes the origin of the Iowa Synod as "the response of sympathetic hearts," 12.

41. P. H. Buehring, *The Spirit of the American Lutheran Church* (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1940), 45–46.

Sunday worship, usury, and especially predestination.⁴² At the heart of this divide was the Iowa Synod's position on "open questions."⁴³ By this the Iowa Synod held that, while agreement on the essentials of the Lutheran Confessions, beginning with the doctrine of justification, was necessary for remaining in church fellowship, there were a number of issues about which Lutheran Christians are free to disagree without these differences hindering fellowship. These were called open questions. Sigmund Fritschel described the confessional hermeneutic of the Iowa Synod:

What the Symbols state and intend *as a confession*, the articles and doctrines of faith, this it is, to which the Synod is bound, not because they are the Church's decisions in controversies that have come up, but because they present the saving truth and doctrine of the Scripture. The Church is bound to accept these doctrines which constitute the Confession in their totality, *without exception*, whilst the demand of doctrinal conformity by no means includes *all unessential* opinions which *are only occasionally* mentioned in the Symbols.⁴⁴

This confessional hermeneutic and the tradition about open questions were two important contributions of the Iowa Synod to the American Lutheran Church and eventually the ELCA.

LITURGICAL RENEWAL

Löhe's *Agende*, published in 1844, became at the Iowa Synod's founding a primary worship book. Published in four German-language editions (the first three printings in Germany), the last edition was printed in 1919 by the Iowa Synod in the United States. Thereby, Löhe's liturgical materials were available for use in the life of the Iowa Synod's many German-speaking congregations into the twentieth century.⁴⁵ Very early, however, the influence of Löhe was also exerted on English-language worship materials, such as the 1860 publication of an English version of the German liturgy of 1855.⁴⁶ Löhe's contributions were valued for helping to recover Lutheran historical materials, based on historic, catholic liturgical practice. Through the participation of Sigmund Fritschel on the General Council

Committee, Löhe's liturgical materials also became a major influence upon the publication of the *Kirchenbuch* in 1877. George Muenich writes:

If [Beale] Schmucker could be called the father of the Common Service of 1888, then surely Fritschel is its grandfather, and Löhe its great-grandfather. Because of the success in reaching the German immigrants, work in English was slow to begin. The use of the Löhe *Agende* or the General Council's *Kirchenbuch* made the transition to the Common Service for English worship quite natural.⁴⁷

Löhe's *Agende* was translated and employed in American Lutheranism in the eastern states already in 1902⁴⁸ and was one of the most formative influences on the widely used Common Service and thereby on the *Service Book and Hymnal* (1958) and *The Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978).⁴⁹ The most recent worship book of the ELCA, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (2006), designates January 2 as commemoration of Wilhelm Konrad Löhe as Renewer of the Church, and also has incorporated Löhe's prayer for church unity.

Diakonia

Olson writes: "In 1857 and 1858, Wilhelm Löhe sent several deaconesses to the Iowa Synod. Of these deaconesses, two in succession became housemother at Wartburg Theological Seminary. . . . In 1859 there were five deaconesses from Neuendettelsau in the United States. A report from Neuendettelsau about 1860 indicated they had all married."⁵⁰ In the 1860s, the Iowa Synod undertook two further initiatives in connection with the Neuendettelsau deaconesses. First, Löhe was encouraged to give his support to establish an Association for Works of Mercy in conjunction with the founding of an orphanage at Toledo, Ohio, in 1862.⁵¹ While Löhe, through extensive correspondence, came to be favorably disposed to the undertaking, his expectation that the institution have widespread financial support eventually limited his involvement, and the plans for a motherhouse connected to Neuendettelsau failed to materialize.⁵² The second initiative involved the founding of an orphanage. Olson explains, "In 1869 Sister Luise Adelberg of Neuendettelsau became housemother of St. John's orphanage near Buffalo, New York, though she eventually returned

42. Sigmund Fritschel and Gottfried Fritschel, *Iowa und Missouri: Eine Verteidigung der Lehrstellung der Synode von Iowa gegenüber den Angriffen des Herrn Prof. Schmidt* (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, ca. 1877).

43. Martin J. Lohrmann, "A Monument to American Intolerance: The 'Open Questions' of Löhe's Iowa Synod in Their American Context" (Ph.D. Seminar paper, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, 2007).

44. Sigmund Fritschel, "The German Iowa Synod," in *The Distinctive Doctrines and Usages of the General Bodies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1893), 66. On page 62, Fritschel describes the Iowa Synod as "a strictly confessional as well as ecumenical Lutheranism."

45. *Agende für christliche Gemeinden des lutherischen Bekenntnisses: Auf Grund der Agende von Wilhelm Löhe*, ed. Evangelical-Lutheran Synod of Iowa and Other States (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1919).

46. Eugene Brand, "The Lord's Supper According to the Lutheran Tradition in North America," Chapter 8 in *Coena Domini 11: Die Abendmahlsliturgie der Reformationkirchen vom 18. bis zum frühen 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Irmgard Pahl (Freibourg: Academic Press, 2005), 362.

47. George Muenich, "The Victory of Restorationism: The Common Service, 1888–1958," in material prepared by Muenich for a chapter in a worship textbook used at Luther-Northwestern Seminary, 1984/1985, 32.

48. Wilhelm Löhe, *Liturgy for Christian Congregations of the Lutheran Faith*, trans. F. C. Longaker, 3rd ed. (Newport, Ky.: n.p., 1902).

49. Brand, "The Lord's Supper," 355–356.

50. Olson, *Deacons and Deaconesses*, 265.

51. Walter Gebhardt and Matthias Honold, "Internationale Beziehungen der Diakonie Neuendettelsau im historischen und aktuellen Kontext 1," in *Tradition und Innovation: Diakonische Entwicklungen am Beispiel der Diakonie Neuendettelsau*, ed. Hermann Schoenauer and others (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2004), 52.

52. Jenner, *Von Neuendettelsau*, 258.

to Neuendettelsau.”⁵³ Regarding the continuing influence of Löhe deaconesses, Olson writes:

Neuendettelsau influenced other deaconess establishments in North America, providing personnel, worship practices, and training. The first full-time training sister recruited for the deaconess training school that opened in Philadelphia in 1889 was Magdalene Steinmann, a deaconess from Neuendettelsau. The liturgy at Neuendettelsau became a model for this Philadelphia motherhouse. Catherine Dentzer, an American who became the second training sister at the Milwaukee motherhouse in 1900, had taken a special course at Neuendettelsau. Just as some U.S. deaconesses went to Kaiserwerth for training, they also went to Neuendettelsau.⁵⁴

Similar to the late twentieth-century developments in the LCMS, Löhe has been one of the key historical figures, and the Neuendettelsau deaconess movement one of the main historical precedents, for establishing a roster of diaconal ministers in the ELCA in 1993.

Mission

The chief dimension of the Löhe heritage that was championed in the Iowa Synod was his commitment to the church in mission. The early history of the Iowa Synod documents its widespread involvement in founding congregations and preparing pastors for ministry in them. At the same time, the Iowa Synod participated in Löhe's interest in outer mission, both through outreach to Native Americans in the 1860s and in Papua New Guinea beginning with the First World War.⁵⁵ At Wartburg Theological Seminary, international partnerships continue to this day with the churches in Germany, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Tanzania, Namibia, Guyana, Brazil, and many other countries. Wartburg Seminary also operates a Center for Global Theologies, and a Masters program in Theology, Development, and Evangelism, both of which underscore the commitment to global mission. When the history of the Iowa Synod was written in 1929, prior to its merger into the old American Lutheran Church in 1930, both F. Braun and G. J. Zeilinger heralded mission as the defining characteristic of the Iowa Synod.⁵⁶ The title of Zeilinger's volume says it most clearly: *A Missionary Synod with a Mission*. Although the Iowa Synod formed only one of the streams that has flowed into the ELCA, the distinctive focus on mission continues to inform the life of that church body through the congregations and institutions that originated in partnership with Löhe in the nineteenth century.

CONCLUSION

Two distinct patterns emerge after employing the five dimensions of Löhe's ecclesial theology as a lens for interpreting his influence on the Missouri and Iowa Synods. In the LCMS, the most prominent aspects of the Löhe heritage are his influence on confessionalism and on worship, with some attention also to mission. The affinity in confessional outlook was especially generated by resistance to the forces of unionism. Löhe's influence on *diakonia* is either confined to the nineteenth century or more theoretical, through appeals to his thought for the present life of the church. The element of pietism is muted.

The two most distinctive aspects of the Löhe heritage impressed upon the Iowa Synod were mission and worship. While the Iowa Synod also claimed solidarity with Löhe's confessionalism, it did so through a differentiated hermeneutic for interpreting the Confessions and its distinctive emphasis on "open questions." As in the Missouri Synod, Löhe's influence on *diakonia* has been either limited to the nineteenth century or theoretical in relationship to the recent renewal of the diaconate in the American church. Apart from the contribution of Löhe's pietism to the church's emphasis on mission, the publication and translation of Löhe's devotional writings influenced the piety of the people of the Iowa Synod.

Although Wilhelm Löhe never traveled to the United States, his influence on Lutheranism there continues to this day, albeit in two distinctive trajectories. In the LCMS, Löhe is being reclaimed as a church father who (1) contributed to a strong emphasis on Lutheran confessionalism, (2) renewed worship through liturgical materials which continue to be used today, and (3) furthered the church's mission. In the Iowa Synod, Löhe was acknowledged as (1) the inspiration for its missionary endeavors, (2) the source of most of its liturgical practices, and (3) a confessional theologian who authorized the possibility of open questions.⁵⁷ In both trajectories, Löhe's contributions to the diaconate have been revived at the end of the twentieth century, while his emphasis on pietism is mostly latent. Given the Iowa Synod's incorporation, through a series of mergers, into the ELCA, the significance of Löhe on the entire denomination is less prominent, although it remains strong in those parts of the church which at one time directly related to Neuendettelsau. In the LCMS, by contrast, while the influence of Löhe is strongest in those churches and institutions founded by his missionaries, his heritage is in the process of being retrieved by the denomination as a whole. No doubt, both of these church traditions stand to benefit by looking to Löhe as their theological and ecclesial ancestor. **LOGIA**

53. Olson, *Deacons and Deaconesses*, 265.

54. Ibid.

55. Craig L. Nesson, "Loeche and His Coworkers in the Iowa Synod," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 33 (2006): 140–144.

56. F. Braun, *Geschichte der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Iowa und anderen Staaten 1854–1929* (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1929), 43–58; and Zeilinger, *A Missionary Synod*.

57. Lohrmann, "A Monument," 16–19.

Why Do I Declare Myself for the Lutheran Church?

WILHELM LÖHE, 1846



THIS QUESTION SOUNDS NARROW-MINDED, and some who hear it anticipate an answer with which they cannot be satisfied. To talk of a “Lutheran Church,” and to do so at a time when one dreams of nothing but progress—leaving behind what is old, engineering a new ecclesial situation—seems to be a reason for concern. “If only nothing wrong comes out of this! If only love is not injured; and if only the hope of a future true unification of the separated ecclesial parties is not hindered!” Relax, dear reader! Fear nothing! Hear the answer and examine the question based on it. If, after a calm examination of the answer, the question seems to be born of a fanatical spirit, you can put aside this sheet of paper, and nevertheless will have peace. My intent is not to sound a noisy trombone. The point here is not controversy, but peace, not offending those who think differently, but only faithfulness to what we have, and the fulfillment of the sacred commandment, “Hold fast what you have so that no one may take away your crown” (Rv 3:11).

This is also not about stubbornly insisting on what is old. We do not wish to cry sadly for the setting of the sun, if there is already morning light on the mountains. We only say and prophesy that the rising sun is no different from the one that set yesterday, even if the new day does not bring any rain and wind like yesterday. “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever” (Heb 13:8). Thus, dear reader, let me answer—and examine the answer.

I declare myself for the Lutheran Church not because it bears Luther’s name. I hold Luther’s name dearly, and I thank God that there was a Luther. I also do not want to be ashamed of his name and will call myself Lutheran as long as I, without causing misunderstanding, cannot call myself what I am: a catholic Christian in the genuine and right meaning of the term. Yet I am not baptized into Luther. I have never pledged allegiance to Luther’s words. Indeed, I know that there are several instances in which the Lutheran Church does not repeat Luther’s words. Equally, one has never failed to notice that the name “Evangelical” is much nicer than “Lutheran.” We also would without hesitation call ourselves “Evangelical” except that here in Germany the members of the union church, and in America the rationalists, have usurped this name. This is why we cannot at all do without the name “Lutheran” right now. And yet it remains true: it is not for the name that I dedicate my faithfulness to the Lutheran Church.

I declare myself for the Lutheran Church not because of the external form it has these days. It has priceless possessions be-

cause of which I cling to it. Yet its form, its appearance before the world is, as I freely admit, a servant form. Because it is so rich in inner possessions, from the beginning it neglected to pay attention to its form. This is why people seek from it least of all what it possesses above all. It is certainly true that people should not look to the external form, but to the inner, spiritual possession. Yet this is how people are, and one must have pity on them and make it easier for them to find the eternal goods. Owing to their weakness, they need human guidance and inviting forms in order to arrive at the heavenly truth. If the Lutheran Church had the structure and form corresponding to its inner dignity, then many noble souls would have come to it from the Roman Church a long time ago; now, however, they know what they leave, but they do not recognize where they are to go. Structure and form are, for those on the outside, like inviting gates to the essential possessions of the Church—and in the end it is true that the holiest and richest Church also has the call to be the most beautiful one on the outside. Alas, it is here where so much is lacking in the Lutheran Church! It is bowed down so much and its garment is so poor! And this greatly interferes with the calling it has to reach out and work for the blessing of the world! I cling to it with all my soul, but only because it has gigantic inner advantages; I can assure you of this, dear reader. Otherwise I would not declare myself for it. Its structure and external form would rather drive me away from it; I would not declare myself for it on their account.

I declare myself for the Lutheran Church not because I was born and raised in its midst, baptized, instructed, confirmed, absolved, fed with Christ’s body and blood, consecrated for the office, and so forth, by its servants. All of these are unutterable blessings; but they, for the most part, are blessings only if the Lutheran Church is the true church. If it is not, then all this cannot bind me to it. Then all this is only proof of the fact that also in it one is not totally forsaken by God; that also in it there is many a spiritual blessing to be found. Yet I do not declare myself for the Lutheran Church because it is not utterly forsaken!

I declare myself for the Lutheran Church for the sake of its treasure. The Lutheran Church lacks many things I would like to see in it, but it has something that lets it be the true church despite all shortcomings, and for the sake of which I find it easy and beautiful to be faithful to it in its outward misery. Do you know what I am talking about? I am talking about its utterly pure confession and its pure doctrine in conformity with its confession. Who has ever proved that its confession is in error

in any doctrinal article? When speaking of its confession, I am not only talking about the Augsburg Confession, but about the entire Book of Concord from the Augsburg Confession all the way to the Formula of Concord. You do not know these writings, dear reader, otherwise you would agree with me. Get to know them and you will agree. What is more beautiful, lovely, powerful, and lively than Luther's catechisms? What is more catholic than the Augsburg Confession and its Apology? What is more thoughtful and bold than the Smalcald Articles? And what is slandered more wrongfully than the beautiful Formula of Concord in its clean but mild definition of all teachings? Dear reader, I repeat, you do not know your Church's confessions of faith. Get to know them in order to know why you adhere to your Church.

I declare myself for the Lutheran Church because it is so united and so recognizable in its unity.

There are people who assert: only that is an article of faith which is found in the confessions of the Church. What is not contained in them verbatim, this they do not want to accept because it is not an article of faith. This is why they declare themselves for the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, but they do not recognize an article of faith outside the Confessions. Yet what the theologians of the best time unanimously teach based on God's word and in agreement with the Confessions, that certainly is an article of faith, even if it is not written verbatim in the Confessions. There is doctrine beyond the Confessions, but for that matter it is not alienated from the Confessions. This is why I do distinguish between Scripture and Confession, between Confession and doctrine, but I rejoice that the doctrine of the Lutheran Church is great, rich, and illumines all aspects of human life. I do not know where in the world God's word has flowed from man's lips in a way that would be fuller, richer, purer, milder, and simpler than in the Lutheran Church, than from the lips of its teachers who lived as contemporaries of the Formula of Concord or soon after. In place of many, I mention only one: the great Johann Gerhard. I confess concerning him and teachers like him that, besides the confession, nothing binds me more to the Lutheran Church than the doctrine of these teachers.

I declare myself for the Lutheran Church because I know from its confession and its history that it did not willfully sever its ties to the church before Luther. It did not want to establish something new, something unheard-of. It only wanted to cleanse what was truly ancient, truly apostolic and catholic from the unfitting additions of earlier centuries. It followed the witnesses of the truth in all centuries before it, especially the

witness of the holy apostles. This is also why it is not a mere three centuries old, but it is the continuation of the true apostolic and catholic church of earlier times, which is why it is older than all the other denominations that now exist on earth. Being established on the age-old truth, it is age-old itself; this is also why I declare myself for it.

I declare myself for the Lutheran Church because, as it followed antiquity, it well distinguished between what the church established and commanded in Christian freedom, based on apostolic practice, or based on explicit apostolic commandments. For example, it observes Sunday with antiquity, but only because it, like the church of antiquity, in Christian charity and freedom chose this day because it reminds us of the most significant events of our faith, not because it desired to reestablish a Jewish Sabbath commandment. Moreover, it rejoices in the degrees of the holy office that are found in the New Testament: angels, presbyters, deacons, evangelists—yet in holy faithfulness to the written word it does not make a divine commandment for all times out of the beautiful apostolic practice. Contrariwise, it recognizes the office itself to be a divine institution; in its doctrine of faith there is an article on the holy office; and it does not let God's servants become servants of men. By means of this sacred distinction it distinguishes itself from the other denominations that only know commandments, that make apostolic practice and decisions of holy freedom into commandments, and that thereby get themselves into many dangers of morbidity and petrification, as could be demonstrated for the Anglican, the Eastern, and the Roman Churches.

I declare myself for the Lutheran Church because it, due to the differentiation between Christian freedom, apostolic practice, and apostolic commandment mentioned previously, enjoys great stability and at the same time great flexibility. It never strays from apostolic commandment and apostolic doctrines; the apostolic word remains its immovable ground for all times. Its stability and its unity with all the children of God in all lands and times consist in this. Yet if it finds something praiseworthy and beautiful in previous times, then it can choose this, according to its freedom; if it finds something in the present or future time that can serve the church and foster its children, then it chooses this too in holy freedom and thus moves along with the times with a calm conscience. Apostolic practice remains dear and honorable to it in its freedom. Where times and circumstances permit, it returns with thanksgiving and joy to this practice; if this cannot be done, it knows that it is in exile and walks in the valley of tears and knows that the church is nonetheless the church, even if it is not permitted to return to the best practice. Firm, zealous, obedient: these are the characteristics that no other church has to this extent; these are the characteristics that should guarantee a future for the Lutheran Church also in the opinion of those who do not think that it has the promise not to be overwhelmed by the gates of Hades.

I declare myself for the Lutheran Church because it is so united and so recognizable in its unity. Only those who are united inwardly, in the spirit, are truly united. Being one in the spirit means to be one in thoughts and in principles. The church is not of this world: its unity consists in heavenly thoughts, and

it acts according to heavenly principles. Heavenly thoughts are God's revealed words; heavenly principles are divine commandments. The church understands these in a single way, and its understanding of heavenly thoughts and principles is manifested in its confession. Different teachings and thoughts, and therefore deep disunity, are found in the Roman Church: between Franciscans and Dominicans, between Greeks and Armenians, and so forth. Likewise, the Anglican Church can, in its diocese of Jerusalem, join the Germans who do not agree with it. Yet the Lutheran Church does not know any ambiguity. Only those who agree with its Confessions belong to it. It insists on the deepest and innermost unity of souls and does not wish its numbers before the world to be larger than they are before God. Who would not see that this is an advantage? And is that in which it agrees not recognizable? Who does not know what is meant by *Confessions* in the Lutheran sense? There is no Reformed Church because there is no generally accepted Reformed confession. Can something similar be said about the Lutherans? Certainly not! It is known with what they wish to be in agreement. They have Confessions that are generally accepted and in force. Its camps are recognizable everywhere by its banners.

I declare myself for the Lutheran Church on account of the power with which it rises out of the dust everywhere despite unfavorable circumstances.

Perhaps you speak of Lutherans who are not Lutheran, and seek to destroy the glory of unity? In that case, however, you would not be a faithful member of the church yourself—and you also would not be very understanding. Lutherans who are not Lutheran are simply not Lutherans. The weeds in the field of wheat are not wheat, but weeds as they are found in every field.

I declare myself for the Lutheran Church because it has become a blessing for all the denominations among which it lives. The Anglican Church is called an *ecclesia lutherizans*, that is, a Lutheranizing Church, and it can be demonstrated how much Lutheran ideas influenced it at first. Also in its *Thirty-nine Articles* you can see here and there that it was schooled in the Augsburg Confession. The Reformed churches in Germany are penetrated by Lutheran ideas in all things. The Roman Church owes more to the Lutheran Church and Reformation than to any pope. Thick books could be written concerning the influence the sacred doctrine of our church has had on all sides. The most recent times would by no means offer the fewest instances of this. Recognizing this, I rejoice all the more in belonging to the Lutheran Church.

I declare myself for the Lutheran Church on account of the power with which it rises out of the dust everywhere despite unfavorable circumstances. Since when does one no longer say that it is finished, that is, its appearance and existence in the world? Ten or fifteen years ago, a person speaking about a serious return to the faith of the fathers was looked at like a miscarriage or a monster. From the far north to the tops of the Alps, from the distant east of the Russian provinces on the Baltic Sea to the distant west of North America the witnesses of the church stand—and this not in an isolated manner, but close enough to each other so that they hear each calling to one another, and many of the people also listen to their call. Who has raised these witnesses and who has given them the people who declare themselves with them for the ancient faith? Who gives them the victory in a world in which it is specifically the witnesses of this church who appeared, and still appear, to be more repulsive, more disagreeable and impossible than anything else? From where has the power to win the victory come? It is the power of the Lord. Here is Immanuel, that is, God with us! And this is why I declare myself for this Church.

Even if the name *Lutheran* should disappear, the Church hidden under this name will remain! It will be born anew and no longer neglect its form and appearance as of old. The Lord will grant it victory and make it a blessing for all nations!

This is how I think and hope; what about you, my dear reader? This is what I wanted to tell you at the beginning in this first supplement. I shall write more and other things at another time. Meanwhile, fare well and ponder my words! **LOGIA**



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Prefaces to the *Agende für christliche Gemeinden des lutherischen Bekenntnisses*

WILHELM LÖHE



INTRODUCTION

THE TWO PREFACES TO Wilhelm Löhe's *Agende für christliche Gemeinden des lutherischen Bekenntnisses* (Agenda for the Christian Congregations of the Lutheran Confession, 1844, 1852) are a window into the state of Lutheran worship in Germany and America in the mid-nineteenth century. Löhe prepared this *Agende* or worship book for the use of the German Lutheran congregations in the American Midwest. He anticipates that his liturgy will be considered "Romanizing" by those for whose use it is intended, which is why he balances arguments that Lutherans and Roman Catholics share the same catholic liturgy of the West with diatribes against Roman doctrinal impurities and liturgical corruptions. The fact that he anticipated that his liturgy would strike Lutherans in America as too *katholisch* indicates that the agendas German immigrants brought with them were far from reflecting the classical Lutheran church orders of the sixteenth century. The age of rationalism had wreaked havoc on the order and content of classical Lutheran liturgy. A tradition of two hundred years was decimated in one or two generations. The rationalistic liturgies of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were the tradition for Lutherans in 1844.

Löhe tries to assess the religious situation in which the German Lutherans find themselves in America. He believes "that matters liturgical are a strong, if not the strongest, weapon of the Romans, who are unfolding a systematic plan of conquest in North America." In this view that the Romans plan to "unfold a systematic plan of conquest in North America" the pastor in Neuendettelsau (which he here calls Neu Dettelsau), Bavaria, seems to be listening to the anti-Catholicism ascendant in the American or Know-Nothing Party, one of whose leaders, Millard Filmore, was vice president in 1849–1850 and president in 1850–1853. Löhe knows further "that the Church of the *Common Prayer Book* does not come close to the Roman Church in liturgical power because its doctrine, especially that of the sacraments, is too poor for a single, simple, deep, rich thought to be able to permeate its liturgy. As for the sects — right now they share the souls with the Romans, perhaps only to leave them to them altogether in the future." Löhe underestimated both the attraction of *The Book of Common Prayer* for Lutherans desir-

ing to worship in the English language later in the nineteenth century and the influence of the "sects" (which were the major denominational groups in America) on Lutherans caught up in American evangelical revivalism. He clearly saw Roman Catholicism as the chief competitor for souls in America and regarded his liturgy, based on the Roman Rite, but purified of abuses, as the strongest counter to Roman influence.

Like the later drafters of the Common Service in the 1880s, Löhe argued that in compiling his *Agende* he avoided the accusation of subjectivism by making use of the Lutheran church orders, and the best traditions that could be found in those orders. He clearly saw the mass with its "twin peaks" of sermon and Lord's Supper as the form of the chief service. In the preface to the first edition Löhe gives a spiritual commentary on the *ordo* that could still stand today as a liturgical theology. The order of worship in word and sacrament is not arbitrary. "Word and sacrament determine the order of salvation, and the latter determines the order of the worship service. As spiritual life is unthinkable without the order of salvation, so is a worship service without order, without a scriptural progress of salutary thoughts."

The second preface, written eight years later for the revised *Agende*, suggests the difficulty of implementing the evangelical catholic liturgy Löhe had proposed. Congregations (and pastors) were simply not ready for it. Löhe's fallback position is that his *Agende* has come to be used as a liturgical textbook and what we today would call a "resource." It was not being used as intended, but Löhe accepted the use it was receiving as a consolation prize (he calls it a "blessing"). On the one hand, he is not backing off his view that word and Lord's Supper are the twin peaks of the service, and that the Supper is a higher peak. He even enriches the chief service with a "harmless" offertory that does not serve the same purpose as the sacrifice in the Roman mass. On the other hand, he recognizes that Holy Communion is not being celebrated every Lord's Day, and so he provides some richer fare for that order without the Lord's Supper. "As for the service without the Lord's Supper, everybody will see that a contribution to the celebration of the same has been made by emphasizing the litany and by recommending many forms of prayer."

Löhe also provided orders of Matins and Vespers in the second edition based on the Roman office. But in doing this he recognizes that he opens himself to the charge of "Romanizing." "The author does not fail to recognize that most of the

FRANK C. SENN, author of the introduction, is pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Evanston, Illinois.

congregations are not mature enough for a richer liturgical arrangement of the worship services. Not only are most parishioners lacking the ability to comprehend the spirit and meaning of an organic, richly detailed service, but, given the almost general prevalence of barren forms of worship, it appears that a richer liturgy cannot be introduced without raising the suspicion of Romanizing.” He hopes to counter this with a “Lay Agenda” that includes a selection of prayers for use in the home that might build a bridge between the liturgy of the church and home devotions.

Truth and simplicity always outshine the lie, even where it is decked out with the adornment of variety.

As we read these prefaces, we might compare Wilhelm Löhe’s proposals and concerns with where we are in American Lutheran worship practices more than a hundred and fifty years later. The “twin peaks” still are not visible in the worship of most of our congregations since Holy Communion is not celebrated on most Sundays and festivals. There is a tendency on the part of pastors to “dumb down” or abridge the liturgy to make it, as is said, “accessible,” if it is not abandoned altogether in the effort to reach the “unchurched.” One wonders if a spiritual commentary on the order of service, such as Löhe provided in his first preface, might not be a needed catechesis once again, and if such a catechesis might not help Lutherans appreciate the spiritual riches of their own liturgy.

Frank C. Senn

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION, 1844

To Mr. Friedrich Wyneken in St. Louis, Missouri

To you, beloved friend and brother, I dedicate this agenda. It was developed in heartfelt love to my brothers in North America, and among these you were the first one whom I joined in the holy work of love which builds God’s Zion beyond the ocean. Please receive kindly my gift and my heartfelt, respectful greetings.

I worked on this book for the sole purpose of serving the brothers beyond the ocean such that I really could have entitled it “Agenda for the German-Lutheran Congregations of North America,” unless the title would have expressed, along with my heartfelt opinion, an immodest arrogance. I know that matters liturgical are a strong, if not the strongest, weapon of the Romans, who are unfolding a systematic plan of conquest in North America. I know that the Church of the *Common Prayer Book* does not come close to the Roman Church in liturgical power because its doctrine, especially that of the sacraments, is too poor for a single, simple, deep, rich thought to be able

to permeate its liturgy. As for the sects—right now they share the souls with the Romans, perhaps only to leave them to them altogether in the future—I do not expect more of them for the kingdom of Christ than what the almighty counsel of the Lord works through them without and against their contribution. Contrariwise, I see that the liturgies of the so-called Lutheran Church—coming from the same historical roots as the Roman ones, Western like them, but not serving false doctrines, not cloaked with trifles like those—in their holy, rich, deep simplicity could become a weapon for the truth—against the Romans—for the salvation of our German brothers in North America. Where they would appear alongside the Roman ones, carried out in a dignified manner, there, I thought, the spell of the Roman splendor should lose its power. Truth and simplicity always outshine the lie, even where it is decked out with the adornment of variety. And thus I developed this agenda—for you, my brothers beyond the sea. I must learn from you whether I offer you something useful or useless—and I must ask you that you let my work be done in vain if it is useless. With the greatest serenity I leave to your judgment and to the blessing that comes from above this my work that I already no longer consider to be my own.

Before you left Europe the last time, you actually voiced the wish to have one of the old agendas reprinted for yourself and our other brothers over there. Instead, you now receive one that is new in its form. I think that you will not lose in this exchange. The liturgies of our fathers were published as a part of the church orders. They would have had to be extracted from them, since the orders change from time to time, and at any rate be published in a new compilation. In fact, the liturgical components would have had to be changed in many ways, if one had wanted truly to serve the brothers in North America. Moreover, none of the older agendas would have offered you the fullness that this one, dedicated to you, offers. In it, I sought to compile from approximately two-hundred older agendas or church orders, what seemed best to me.

While you read this, you perhaps are thinking that my work might express too much of my taste and subjective preference to the detriment of the truly churchly element. This concern can be proved unfounded only by a fair assessment of the work itself. I know that the editor of a liturgy enjoys freedom; yet I also know that my free pleasure has united itself fully to the liturgical school that does not aim for doubtful novelties, but that safeguards the age-old liturgical type of the West against falsification, cleanses it from impurities, carries it on through the ages—and that also in this way indicates and proves the traces of the one holy, catholic church, of one immortal communion of saints on earth. Now, to be sure, I do not at all deny that in this book my subjective being and life will appear, but this will be only in the changeable expression, not in the architecture of the whole, not in the basic ancient thoughts I conscientiously and carefully strove to retain.

Perhaps, however, I need to fear the accusation of subjectivism less than that of an excessive inclination toward what is ancient, even to what is Roman. I would like to respond to this with a few words of counsel. The Lutheran liturgy certainly

emerged from the Roman liturgy, just like the whole Lutheran Church is not a new construct, but the old one, yet cleansed and free from accretions and deformation. Three hundred years ago the Church did not invent new doctrine but, on the contrary, purged the age-old teachings from such novelties; and, likewise, it did not take a new track with the liturgy, but retained the pure antiquity after doing away with horrible innovations. This is why we, for example, in the communion liturgy, have the same basic elements as the Roman Church, and the Augsburg Confession, Article xxiv, can claim that no noticeable change in the public ceremonies of the mass took place; that the mass, without boasting, is observed among us with deeper devotion and seriousness than among the opponents. If one, therefore, wanted to say that this agenda Romanizes, then this ought to be said about all Lutheran agendas, in fact, about the entire Lutheran Church whose being slandered, however, I as a member would have to accept for myself. By the way, one could claim with greater justification that the Roman Church catholicizes in those parts of the liturgy it has in common with the truly catholic church that here on earth is called Lutheran.

I wish to say more yet, and I believe there is no risk. I believe that constitution and structure, liturgy and ceremonies, no matter how useful they can be in the service of the truth, nonetheless do not constitute church in the true meaning of the word. From there the salvation of the church does not come; they are certainly fruits of the church, but not its roots. Much to the rejoicing of the enemy lying in ambush, much to the grief of all the children of God who have eyes to see, there are many today who overestimate the importance of those external matters; and they do not realize that they are at any rate on the road to Rome, if they think they must bring about the salvation of the church by means of organization and liturgy, and so forth. On their path, they forget the important word of the Augsburg Confession that is perhaps its important word for our times, namely, the “It is enough” of the seventh article, and the curse the Almighty pronounces upon those who consider flesh to be their strength [Jer 17:5] and who want to make God’s church, which is carried on the wings of eagles along wondrous paths [see Ex 19:4; Is 40:31; Rv 12:14], walk on man’s crutches. No, the holy church of God which is and remains wholly invisible and visibly appears here and there, depending on its banners flying here and there and its marks in word and sacrament appearing here and there—this church is a miracle of its own Lord and Master, which has proved and will prove to be independent of all that is not called word and sacrament.

You will ask me: Well said, but why do you say this here? I reply: in order to indicate where we must be strict with respect to other churches and where we may learn from them. It is clear that we cannot make any gains in Rome as far as the doctrine and the sacrament are concerned. Here apply strictness and holy watchfulness that also takes seriously even small matters. God did not gather us without a purpose around a pure confession that corresponds to the word. We are to preserve what is entrusted us; and woe to us if we do not do this. However, with the straight edge of pure doctrine and sacrament in hand, we may well wander through the subordinate areas of constitution

and liturgy in other ecclesial communions, test everything, and keep whatever good there is. Constitution and liturgy are, as stated, subordinate areas; yet when one discusses them, when something can and should happen for and by them, we ought to gather all the good that is found elsewhere and not to allow whatever is praiseworthy to perish for the church that flies God’s banners. Here the word applies [1 Cor 3:22; Phil 4:8]: “Everything is yours. Whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is anything worthy of praise, if there is any excellence, think about these things.”

The congregation feels closest to its Lord during worship.

To show you specifically what I have in mind, examine the Roman liturgies. They are filled with terrible accretions, but in the midst of those thorn bushes are remnants, here and there, of better times and a truly Christian mindset. One finds individual prayers that hardly can be replaced in form and content by something different or new; one can say about them in the best sense given above: they catholicize. One ought to liberate these from bondage and introduce them into Lutheran agendas. They belong there just as well as the introits, the *Kyrie et in Terra*, the creed, the most beautiful collects, the prefaces, and so forth which, as you know, have come down to us also only through the impure channels of the Roman Church. To be sure, I altogether refrained from taking anything from the Roman liturgies that is not already found in the old Lutheran agendas. I used caution for the sake of the weak. Yet for the liturgy at the bedside of the sick and dying, for which our agendas have little to offer, I have taken a couple of prayers from the *Pontificale Romanum* and inserted them at the right place. You will easily recognize them. They are the liturgically most perfect ones. In the *Pontificale*, they are found among a whole bunch of impure prayers.



A more careful examination of the agenda will convince you that it is fully built on the order of worship. The congregation feels closest to its Lord during worship; there, in the closest proximity to the Bridegroom, it lives a heavenly life on earth, an earthly life in heaven. Worship is the most beautiful blossom of all temporal life. The agenda is to be expression and picture of this wonderful life of inner unity and harmony, an aesthetic of God’s church not in the abstract but in the concrete. In the inner life and in the worship services of the congregation stand word and sacrament like a rock in the sea. As the sea flows around the rock, so the sacred forms of the liturgy move about the center of word and sacrament. As the sea breaks on the

rock, as its waves and roaring are dependent on the rock, so the liturgical life likewise is not arbitrary; rather, its waves concentrically encircle the innermost circle of spiritual life, which surrounds the core of word and sacrament. Word and sacrament determine the order of salvation, and the latter determines the order of the worship service. As spiritual life is unthinkable without the order of salvation, so is a worship service without order, without a scriptural progress of salutary thoughts.

In the sermon begins the blessed homilein, the communion of saints who here rejoice in the Lord before the Lord.

This is especially true of the congregation's main services for Sundays and festivals. There is something of regular change and diversity about them, depending on whether they take place in this or that festal cycle of the church year. For the cycle of the church year gives to all and every main service its peculiar character. Yet there is also something permanent in all the main services, something that always returns—and this is just the progress of holy thoughts by which all inner life is carried in the change of time.

I would like to compare the liturgy's inner logic to a double-peaked mountain, whose one peak, as in the case of Mt. Horeb and Mt. Sinai, is lower than the other. The first peak is the sermon, the second, the sacrament of the altar, without which I cannot imagine a consummate worship service on earth. One is always rising in the main service until one reaches the table of the Lord, above which there is nothing except heaven; this is why one finds only in the *Nunc Dimittis* an adequate expression for one's inner longing.

Let us now follow as briefly as possible in detail the inner logic of the communion service.

A week lies behind you; a new one lies ahead of you; between both lies the day of communion, Sunday. You wish to approach the Lord with the congregation. What is it that you, whether you are shepherd or sheep, will have to do first? You do what all religions symbolize in their ablutions, that is, you wash your feet that have become dusty from daily life—in other words, you prepare for worship by confession of sins and holy absolution. Your first devotion is thus the *Confiteor*, which cannot have a more beautiful form than that (in which) priest and congregation comfort each other.

The heaviest burden is laid down in the *Confiteor*. The introit begins, and with it the peculiar character of the Sunday or festival enters the consciousness of the celebrating Christian. The peace of forgiveness is joined by festive joy. It will feel to

you like Sunday, Easter, and so forth during the introit, which certainly is most fittingly sung by alternating choirs of men and women, of the young and the old (school and congregation), and so forth.

Cleansed from sins, relieved of the heaviest burden, you enter into the celebration of the Sunday and the feast. Yet on earth there are still other burdens and pains, present and future ones. Life, death, eternity with all the bitter fruits and consequences of sin block your way to the sanctuary in a threatening way. Cares rise—and return again and again. This is why the *Kyrie* is a permanent part, which commends all pains of time and eternity to God's mercy.

In the *Confiteor* and *Kyrie* humanity, as it was before Christmas and as it is and will be without Christ, stands before God. It stands before God in need of help. Without further ado, the Lord of these needy ones draws near under angelic songs of praise. As in the manger, so the Lord comes to the congregation during the *Gloria*. The adoration of the angels sounds forth whenever the Lord comes to the place where he has established the remembrance of his name.

He comes. He is received and praised as the Triune who is approached in Christ Jesus. ("We praise you," and so forth.) There is probably no man-made prayer that is more sublime than this adoration of the Lord who comes down to the praises of Israel.

His gracious face shines, but he is still silent; he still listens to the words of the congregation. This is why it once more summarizes all its needs, joins its requests, and enunciates them in the collect in one sentence and breath. In the collect the changing thought of the feast or Sunday permeates the general needs of the souls more clearly than in the introit. In one lucid thought (this is at least how it is supposed to be) the soul rises up and then, with a believing Amen, prostrates itself and waits patiently before him to whom all flesh comes because he hears prayer.

The congregation is silent. Then he breaks the silence and grants the grace of his word to the congregation. His Spirit bears witness through the mouth of the apostles in the apostolic word.

A jubilant hallelujah responds to him who stoops down to his people. The hallelujah falls silent. Yet he continues speaking. One hears *ipsissima verba* in the gospel. The Lord draws closer and closer to his people.

Again a jubilant hallelujah responds. Yet this is not all. The hearts are set aflame by virtue of the gospel in faith. Adoration becomes the most blessed union with the Lord in the creed. No more do the pangs of sin, no more does the fear of evil, no more do longing groans fill the souls; now they are filled with joyous confidence. One takes a seat before his face, and in the sermon begins the blessed *homilein*, the communion of saints who here rejoice in the Lord before the Lord.

Here one has reached the first peak of the service, as it were, like on Mt. Horeb.

Now the congregation unanimously goes higher to the sacrament.

It feels like the bride of the Lord, rich in him and through him, but also rich through others. In its fullness it remembers

all specific needs and the plight that exists on earth—not begrudging anyone anything that is good, it approaches the altar with petition, prayer, and intercession. Blessing all, it worthily steps to the throne of the richest blessing. In this its heart is enlarged for the great thought, namely, that the church here and there is only one; that the pilgrims here are agreed and united in their prayers with all the saints in heaven; that they, praying with them, hasten the coming of the day of eternal glory.

From petitions the congregation transitions to thanksgiving in the preface, just as the apostle lets thanksgiving follow petition, prayer, and intercession [Phil 4:6]. The thanksgiving, however, melts into the *Sanctus*, the thrice-holy of all heavens. Caught up in the *Sanctus*, the congregation already sees the Lord coming to the sacrament—and the blissful Hosanna sounds forth to greet him.

It cannot rise any higher. A brief but deep silence occurs that is filled with expectation.

Without transition, immediately, the wonderful *Verba Testamenti* begin. He comes in the name of the Lord. God is present and the Lamb. In the dust, on their knees the congregation lies prostrate before the Lord. Not cast down from the height of the *Sanctus* but thoroughly permeated by the *Sanctus*, indeed, elevated to the present Lord, it humbles itself, prays in the choir of angels—in the *Agnus Dei* and Lord's Prayer it commends everything we need in time and eternity to the gracious hearing of the Lord.

Now all the trembling, all anxiety that is awakened anew by the coming of the Lord is fully overcome when the Lord offers peace to his guests. Each proclaims God's peace to his neighbor (*osculum pacis*). Intimate bliss, heartfelt longing permeates the souls—and now one receives the sacrament.

From faith in faith, one has progressed from one step to the next. One has arrived at the most blessed experience. One cannot rise any higher except through death (*Nunc Dimittis*). One goes down to the customary ending of the service—one seeks the transition to what God has laid upon each in the earthly vocation in preparation for heaven.

My exposition of the main thoughts of the communion service may be brief and imperfect, but it will nonetheless teach one to see how beautifully everything is interconnected.



Perhaps you doubt that one can reintroduce today such a service that is so rich in detail. Yet I ask you to make the attempt. Maybe the publishing house will, after the publication of this agenda, print the most beautiful chants of the liturgy in the way they used to be sung. Perhaps you can rehearse the whole thing with a number of better congregants or with your students; or you speak with the better congregants the regular chants. You will be surprised not only by the celebration and the liveliness of such a service but also by the shortness of time in which it takes place, without overly encroaching on the sermon. Making an effort will make one want to do the whole thing.

Generally speaking, I must ask you not to evaluate the agenda based on mere reading and quiet examination. I will not accept any judgment as having merit that is not based on prac-

tice, even if it is only by reading it out loud, which an agenda must have in view. I know that these days one is reluctant to try out sacred things. It seems to be a desecration of the sanctuary when one conducts experiments in it. And yet, this often only appears to be the case. Also for the sanctuary there is no other test than live experience that is only gained in practice.

Intimate bliss, heartfelt longing permeates the souls—and now one receives the sacrament.

I can abstain from everything else after invoking practice and experience.

May God be with you and all the brothers everywhere. May he himself build his holy church, and may he soon let appear the time when all imperfection perishes and gives room to those eternal services of which heaven resounds already now. Amen.

*Rv 4:5.
Neu Dettelsau in Franconia, 4 June 1844.
W. Löhe, Pastor*

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION, 1852

While this agenda has sparked much interest, the editor knows of only a few congregations that have made the first edition *their* agenda. In part, instead of having been used as an actual agenda, the book appears to have been used in order to be taught by it and to get advice from it. The author is so fully content with this blessing that he has worked on the second edition with the sole purpose to make the book helpful for that use. He desired it to become a *handbook and textbook* for those pastors who are inexperienced in liturgical matters and desire to be informed. This explains the introductions to the individual parts, the completeness and richness, which led to the book's being published in two parts, with the notes and references to sources. While the editor kept his eyes on this as his main purpose, he nonetheless believes that his book could be *used* in the congregations and services as it is now, if one wanted to do this. In this case, it only presupposes what every book presupposes for its use, namely, that one is familiar with its structure and contents.

Those who know the first edition of this agenda will admit that this is not a new one but really *the same* one that was published for the first time eight years ago. Far from having been stamped by a different character, it has rather grown in inner unity and execution of the basic thoughts. It is thoroughly Lutheran. Nothing was included without Lutheran precedent. As diverse and rich as its content may be, it serves in all its parts the doctrine of the Lutheran Church and moves about in forms

that, after contemplating and comparing the older Lutheran church orders, commended themselves as the truly Lutheran ones. However, the editor cannot deny that he does not consider any of the Lutheran liturgies known to him to be what the Lutheran Church could have done in this field and could have offered to her congregations. One had grown too tired of the Roman liturgy; another did not really know the ancient liturgies; still another gave too much room for the sermon. At times they were too intent on the didactic to have or get a true, simple, unprejudiced sense for liturgy or to have or gain the necessary ability to make liturgies that are fully worthy of the church. There is therefore still much to do, and if there is any area of our Church where we can move forward on the old basis, then this is especially true for the liturgical area. Here a genuine Lutheran is not he who deems all work to be finished because of the accomplishments of the past and who denies the Lutheran Church the ability to live by taking away from her growth and progress to consummation. Rather he serves the Lutheran Church in the most faithful way, who proceeds on the traditional track while being of one sense and spirit with the fathers. In this sense, the editor of the liturgy has given here and there hints for *progress*, but refrained from imposing on the times more than they are able to bear, enjoy, and digest.

He serves the Lutheran Church in the most faithful way, who proceeds on the traditional track while being of one sense and spirit with the fathers.

In the preface to the first edition, the editor attempted to *interpret* the progress of the Lutheran main service. Yet he does not attribute to his interpretations more importance than they can have. Just as none of the great liturgists of centuries past wanted to offer more than *attempts* at interpretation in his comments on the meaning and integration of the mass, so the editor also did not want to offer something infallible in that preface. After all, he himself was, when he wrote that preface, too much of a novice in understanding the liturgy and he felt his weakness too much even to have *wanted* to say something irreformable. Now, the interest in liturgical matters and insights into the same have grown so much that I would have liked to leave out the preface to the first edition; but some friends considered it better that it remain. The interpretation given in the first preface has become much used and therefore dear to some.

In the first preface I compared the entire worship service to a *two-peaked mountain* and understood the sermon and the Lord's Supper to be the peaks of the worship service. Although I said already back then that one peak is higher than the other, that the holy meal ranks higher in the liturgy, now I would, if I

had to give an interpretation again, assign an even higher rank to the Lord's Supper. For the liturgy of the main service, the Lord's Supper remains virtually the goal to which all individual parts of the service point and aim as to the center. Just as there can be no Lutheran church building, just as all studies and buildings must fail so long as the altar does not rule the whole system, so there is also no Lutheran liturgy so long as one does not recognize the Lord's Supper to be the summary of all liturgy and the consummate climax of the entire worship life.

All the work on the main service in the second edition of this agenda is entirely permeated by this concept. The distribution is carefully edited. Yet here perhaps is still the most difficult subject in the first part. Perhaps one will find this specific form of the distribution to be too purposeful, too much steeped in the confessional argument of that day. However, I was quite calm when I wrote it and it appeared to me that my work was nothing other than a faithful, albeit timely, age-old confession of the truth. Judgment is left to the well-meaning reader and to those who understand it rightly, and if necessary also to the opponent and those who purposely misunderstand since one also learns from the opponent and, if one likes to learn, grows.

The *offertory*, as it appears in this edition, is altogether harmless, the churchly form for the churchly almsgiving of the congregation, for the sacrifices it places before the Lord for sacred purposes. A great moral promotion occurs when one gives a sacrifice, in learning to give by sacrificing. I here readily admit that I do not see consummation in this form of the offertory, but consider the offering of the *primitiae creaturarum*, that is, the prayerful offering of the elements so that the Lord might join his holy body and his precious blood to them, to be the climax of the offertory. It is also much more churchly, liturgical, and beautiful than when the simple arrangement of the elements by the sexton is continued. I hate the Roman offertory and have often marveled at the crass violation of the merit of Christ that not only lies in the unconsecrated host's being offered for reconciliation, but is also enunciated in plain words. The offering of the elements for the sacrament conceded by me above as holy and beautiful does not have anything to do with this. It is also not unknown to Lutheran antiquity, even though it was not used widely and did not become common enough for it to be included in a Lutheran agenda without further ado at this time when innocent words and deeds are prone to be misunderstood and interpreted in a way that disrupts the peace.

As for the service *without the Lord's Supper*, everybody will see that a contribution to the celebration of the same has been made by emphasizing the litany and by recommending many forms of prayer. The pertinent parts have their individual introductions and notes, which makes it superfluous to discuss them any further here, all the more so because below I will again have reason to make some pertinent remarks.

A *major* advantage of this agenda beyond the first one is that it presents the right understanding of Matins and Vespers and the connection of all other public services outside the communion service with these daily services. The author believes to have demonstrated quite clearly to those interested in these matters how the form of Lutheran Matins and Vespers is related

to the Roman office of the hours and how it grew out of it, how Matins and Vespers shape and form the public services outside of the communion service, and how they have absorbed all special liturgical purposes. When working on the first edition, he was lacking this insight himself. After it had been gained, he was able to offer much more unity and inner connectedness and to prevent purely subjective and arbitrary decisions.

The author does not fail to recognize that most of the congregations are not mature enough for a richer liturgical arrangement of the worship services. Not only are most parishioners lacking the ability to comprehend the spirit and meaning of an organic, richly detailed service, but, given the almost general prevalence of barren forms of worship, it appears that a richer liturgy cannot be introduced without raising the suspicion of Romanizing. This is why the author has spent some effort on the plan to include *simpler orders* for services in the new edition of the agenda. What surprised him was that after many diverse thoughts, the age-old sequence of basic liturgical thought, which was known since the Apostolic Constitutions, time and again asserted itself in his judgment. It did not help him to attempt to revive those orders that are at home in the western and southwestern regions of Germany. While there are some parts in these orders that are really well done, for example, the general prayer (and *Confiteor*) before the sermon, I time and again had to realize that they were not permeated by the thought of the communion.

In the attempt to add simpler forms I had to follow the principle that every simple form must be related to the full Lutheran form of the service as an outline is to the drawing, as the draft is to the building. It must be possible to progress from the simple forms to the richer and more complete ones. One must be able to lead the congregations from one to the other as a student is introduced to understanding by means of a compendium. In this I again had the experience that *freedom* and *love* certainly have to be principles of the liturgy in its relation to the order of salvation. This does not mean that there is arbitrariness in the liturgy's own sphere. The more congregations bow under the order of salvation, the more one kind of basic thoughts must prevail and an unsought harmony of liturgies will come about. When properly cared for, this harmony can become an external bond of fellowship and still leave enough room for the most beautiful diversity.

It remains to be seen whether the proposals for simpler orders of service, which are included in this agenda, will be accepted in their place, that is, when the fuller form cannot be given. The editor admits that he does not expect the orders of service to do the most for the liturgical training of the congregations. Perhaps he is preaching to the deaf. After all, good things were expected from the school, then from preaching, then from catechesis, then from private pastoral care; perhaps one will for once now play around with the liturgy and especially its singing, until one also gets off this horse and says: "It does not work." Be that as it may, what is true will remain so.

So it will remain true that a genuine liturgy is not possible and cannot begin without a people that is praying, that is willing to pray, and that rejoices in prayer. This is why the author

believes that above all, as much as it is possible by the service of men, the spirit of prayer has to be kindled among the people. Hearts that are willing to pray have to be schooled in prayer and have to be introduced to its sweetness by instruction and training. The liturgical *cantus firmus* rings forth in praying hearts, without which all liturgy becomes pure bawling and singsong, and through which everything else becomes the priestly work of a royal people. Where the *cantus firmus* resounds, there everything can be ordered and executed. To bring this about must be our first and greatest liturgical goal. In this sense and for this purpose, the second edition of this agenda was richly furnished with the full service of the litany, with collects and prayers, and the manifold kinds of joint prayer. To this end, the editor also had an abridged version of this new edition printed under the title "Lay Agenda" and expressed in its preface his opinion. This lay agenda contains chiefly prayers and is sold for a few pennies as Number 12 of the second part of the writings published by the "Society for Home Missions According to the Lutheran Church."

Some words for those who love to slander the liturgical striving of the editor as pure Romanism . . .

In conclusion, some words for those who love to slander the liturgical striving of the editor as pure Romanism: When the first edition of this work appeared, a faithful pastor, who has since peacefully died in the Lord Jesus, reacted in the same way as those for whom these concluding words are written. He found the whole book repulsive; everything was Roman. This noble soul believed he owed this to his Lord and his Church: he felt *compelled* to sound an alarm when others remained silent. So the blessed man wrote a tract against "Löhe's Agenda."¹ Pastor Wucherer responded in a well-known, well-done, short writing.² Yet this did not help. The good pastor wrote again against the agenda and against its defender. After a while, however, the faithful "opponent" visited the author, gave him the right hand of fellowship, and confessed in a humility, which one was tempted to regard as more beautiful than if he had never erred, that he was wrong, that error fell off his eyes like scales, that a dream had taught him. He offered to withdraw his

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1. G. E. W. Zellfelder, *Gefahr für die evangelische Kirche! oder, Die Liturgie in der Agende für christliche Gemeinden des evangelisch-lutherischen Bekenntnisses, herausgegeben von Wilhelm Löhe, Nördlingen 1844* (Ansbach: Dollfuss'sche Buchhandlung, 1845).
 2. Johann Friedrich Wucherer, *Vom evangelisch-lutherischen Hauptgottesdienste: Eine historisch-liturgische Verständigung mit besonderer Berücksichtigung von Löhe's Agende und Zellfelder's "Gefahr für die evangelische Kirche"* (Nördlingen: Beck, 1846).

accusations in publications, an offer that, it goes without saying, was not accepted.

However, there are only a few who are as noble as this holy, pious soul. Whoever has said something once today generally holds to it, even if in error; it becomes one with him. There is no talk anymore about recognition or repentance. No dream, no reasons superior to dreams and visions accomplish a rectification. Oh, that it would not be so; that we who all fail in many ways would be as humble as this noble pastor of G.-H., for whom the editor, when he wants to remember him and his humility, could not find a better place than the conclusion of this preface to the second edition of his agenda. May God unite my soul with that of the servant who has returned home, with all spirits of the perfectly righteous ones, for those services about which we read in Revelation 4 and 5 and which, above the services of party spirit, do not Romanize, and which, being not earthly but heavenly, blessed, and yet utterly liturgical, are a goal and spur for those for whom the liturgy is and remains poetic above all the poetry of this world, sublime, and holy. **LOGIA**

*Written on St. Wunibald's Day [18 December] 1852.
W. L.*

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Inklings



... So I told him, "Son, if you want to learn everything you need to know about life, join the church choir" ...

Wilhelm Löhe and the Revolution of 1848

WALTER H. CONSER JR.



DESPITE WILHELM LÖHE'S INFLUENCE in North America, South America, and elsewhere, he lived his whole life in Germany. It is important, therefore, to understand him, at least in part, in terms of that German situation and especially in terms of the tumultuous events that transpired in the years before and after the Revolution of 1848. Löhe's response to 1848 was a blend of hope and disappointment, and in this rich and fluid context his doctrine of the church as *Heilanstalt* and his views on the relation of church and state found forceful expression.

The deliberations at Frankfurt and that phase of the Revolution of 1848 signaled a moment of twofold significance. On the one hand, it represented a continuation of the drive for national unification in Germany, that ensemble of nationalist hopes situated within the frustrating reality of a patchwork of some thirty-odd jealous and mutually suspicious political units that made up Germany at the time. On the other hand, the Revolution represented the desire for the political emancipation of the individual, conceived within the confines of constitutionalism. Constitutionalism in this context amounted to the demand for explicit legal norms rather than autocratic whim as the basis for the state. It meant the attempt to free the individual from the capricious interference of the state, and it held out the hope of a "political public," a mature and well-informed populace able to exercise power responsibly without the need for monarchical paternalism. Both the desire for national unification as well as that for constitutional reform with its attendant calls for wider suffrage and greater personal liberty could be traced back into the preceding decades. Yet there was something special about the spring of 1848, an openness and auspiciousness in the historical continuum that flushed liberals with optimism and hope. Carl Schurz, in his well-known autobiography, caught that spirit when he wrote of those days in 1848,

Now had arrived in Germany, the day for the establishment of "German Unity" and the founding of a great, powerful, national German Empire . . . in short, that which was called a "constitutional form of government on a broad democratical basis."¹

The Frankfurt Parliament also had significant deliberations on religious issues. Central here was the call for a new adjustment of church and state relations. Whether it came from those who wanted to safeguard the church from state interference or those who conversely wished to guard the state from contamination by religious influence, support for some sort of separation of church and state was widespread among the Parliament's members. Ultimately, the focus of discussion for these various groups was the much-heralded bill of fundamental rights. In the final version of the bill, Germans were assured of their freedom of belief, the separation of the church from the state apparatus, and their right to form religious organizations, even non-Christian ones. These proposals for religious and secular reform were built on the premise that by unleashing the individual from antiquated restraints, at the same time in which that very individual's energies were harnessed to the building of a unified German state, vast social potentialities would be unlocked and tapped. Here then was both the German liberals' commitment to the emancipation of the individual and a specific context for its applications.²

In an insightful essay entitled "Conservative Thought" published in 1927, the sociologist Karl Mannheim explored the nature of conservative social thought and its relation to early nineteenth-century liberalism in Germany. Liberalism, or "bourgeois-democratic" thought as Mannheim called it, championed the autonomy and self-sufficiency of the individual, an individual now emancipated from the constraints of traditional society and freed from the bonds of geography, caste, and faith. In the view of liberal social theory, Mannheim claimed, the individual was like a social atom for whom all public associations were voluntary in nature and secondary in importance. By contrast, modern conservative thought sought to place all events

1. For a discussion of the Revolution of 1848 see Andrew Lees, *Revolution and Reflection: Intellectual Change in Germany During the 1850s* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhof, 1974), 14; James Sheehan, *German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 7–17. Carl Schurz's remarks occur in *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz* (New York: The McClure Company, 1907–1908), 1:113–114.
2. See Walter Delius, *Die evangelische Kirche und die Revolution 1848* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1948), 43–52; Sheehan, *German Liberalism*, 68–70; Eberhard Amelung, "Die demokratischen Bewegungen des Jahres 1848 im Urteil der protestantischen Theologie" (Ph.D. diss., Marburg, University, 1954).

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within an explanatory framework that was both temporally extensive and spatially and materially specific. The appeal to the concrete over the abstract was the trademark of conservatism, and organic entities such as the family, the state, and social corporations played a prominent part.³

The singular clarity with which the Revolution of 1848 defined the liberals' goals, aspirations so in keeping with Mannheim's description, helps to explain the forcefulness of the subsequent counterrevolution by conservatives in the 1850s. Among these conservatives were the Neo-Lutherans, championed by Wilhelm Löhe, but also led by August Vilmar of Hesse, Theodor Kliefoth of Mecklenburg, and Ludwig Petri of Hannover. Their emphasis upon strict adherence to creedal statements and their view of the church as a divine institution ordained by God marked them off from the theological liberals of the day, just as their animosity to democratizing influences in German society set them off from the political liberals. The life and writings of Wilhelm Löhe illustrate the stance of these Neo-Lutherans clearly. Yet, Löhe's conservatism held within it, particularly regarding the question of church and state relations, an ironic and entirely unintended point of consonance with the reforming forces at Frankfurt.

The influence of this revival experience was absolutely crucial for Löhe.

Wilhelm Löhe was born in 1808 in Fürth near Nürnberg. Although he was one of thirteen children, his mother provided him with enough money to insure his schooling. In 1826 he enrolled in the nearby University of Erlangen, and there came under the influence of the Reformed minister and teacher, Christian Krafft. After graduating from the university and completing his ministerial training, Löhe served in several parishes before accepting a call to the small village of Neuendettelsau in 1837. He remained at Neuendettelsau for the remainder of his life and died there in 1872.⁴

The influence of Christian Krafft should be underscored. For Krafft was one of the leaders of the *Erweckungsbewegung* in Bavaria, that revival experience which reached its height in Germany during the first half of the nineteenth century. The kernel of this revival, according to its participant-historian, Gottfried Thomasius, consisted of "the need of mankind for salvation from sin and death, the belief in the free grace of God through Christ, and the justification from sin by grace through

faith." With its marked emphasis upon the importance of the individual sinner's rebirth to the Christian life through grace and faith, the Awakening shared in that longer pietistic tradition dating in Germany back through the seventeenth century. There was an important difference, however, in the Bavarian phase of the revival. Where revivalists in Baden-Württemberg and the lower Rhine emphasized a broad, nondogmatic appeal that overlooked confessional differences in the name of a common Christian faith, the Bavarian Awakening, particularly in the late 1820s and early 1830s, emphasized the importance of specific creedal orientations. Gottfried Thomasius described the Bavarian experience and, in so doing, described Wilhelm Löhe's own personal experience as well. As Thomasius put it:

We were Lutherans before we knew it. Without reflecting very much on the confessional peculiarity of our church nor on the confessional differences that separate it from other churches, we were Lutherans. . . . As soon as we began to investigate the road along which God had led us, about the testimonies out of which our faith had arisen, and about the historical roots of our church's past and present condition, we became aware of standing in the very middle of Lutheranism.⁵

The influence of this revival experience with its emphasis upon creedal allegiance was absolutely crucial for Löhe and provided one of the bases for his displeasure with the Revolution and its implications for Bavaria. Within this context, three specific political events helped to form his view of religious reform and especially the relationship of church and state. First, in 1837, in Cologne, a serious dispute took place between the Prussian government and the Roman Catholic archbishop over the question of marriages between Protestants and Roman Catholics and the education of the children of these marriages.⁶ The second confrontation occurred in Bavaria itself and occupied ecclesiastical officials for seven years. This was the so-called "kneeling controversy" that began in August 1838 when Ludwig I, the Roman Catholic king of Bavaria, ordered all soldiers, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, to kneel as the elements of communion passed their parade ranks at the festival of *Corpus Christi*. The king had witnessed similar displays by French troops, and now in 1838 with the support of his chief staff minister, Carl von Abel, and the Roman Catholic theologian Ignaz von Döllinger, Ludwig insisted that his troops follow the French example. To the Protestant minority in Bavaria, soldiers and civilians alike, obedience to this order appeared to be a compromise of faith.

3. Karl Mannheim, "Conservative Thought," in *From Karl Mannheim*, ed. Kurt Wolff (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 132–222.

4. The standard biography of Wilhelm Löhe is J. Deinzer, *Wilhelm Löhes Leben*, 3 vols. (Gütersloh: Bertelsman, 1880–1901).

5. See Gottfried Thomasius, *Das Wiedererwachen des evangelischen Lebens in der lutherische Kirche Bayerns: Ein Stück süddeutscher Kirchengeschichte, 1800–1840* (Erlangen: Deichert, 1867), 1, 244–245.

6. For a discussion of the dispute at Cologne, see H. Schrörs, *Die Kölner Wirren (1837)* (Berlin: F. Dümmler, 1927); Rudolf Lill, *Die Beilegung der Kölner Wirren, 1840–1842* (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1962); Franz Schnabel, *Deutsche Geschichte im Neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, vol. 4, *Die religiösen Kräfte*, 2. Aufl. (Freiburg: Herder, 1951), 106–143.

As such feelings grew, frequent petitions ranging from Protestant soldiers to Adolf von Harless, the administrative head of the Protestant church in Bavaria, asked for a withdrawal of the order. The king, however, refused, and when, in March 1844, the Reverend Wilhelm Redenbacher called on all Protestant soldiers to disobey the royal order, Redenbacher was arrested and jailed.⁷ In December 1845 the king finally revoked the order, but not before substantial animosity between Protestant and Roman Catholic sections of the population had been aroused. The third episode was tied directly to the Revolution itself. On 20 March 1848, Ludwig abdicated in favor of his son, Maximilian II. In the immediate aftermath of the king's abdication, the Bavarian lands on the right side of the Rhine, as well as the Bavarian possessions in the Rhineland Palatinate, both demanded ecclesiastical independence from the predominantly Lutheran Bavarian Protestant Church. While the Palatinate Protestants were largely Unionist, the Bavarian Rhinelanders were overwhelmingly Reformed. Their demands were granted by Maximilian and they were allowed to establish their own ecclesiastical administrations on a par with the Lutherans.⁸

These two sets of occurrences—the Awakening, with its concern for spiritual rebirth within the context of confessional identification, and the political confrontations between church and state—played a significant role in forming the theological understanding of Löhe. The result was a volume, *Three Books about the Church*, which Löhe published in 1845. Three broad themes formed the basis of Löhe's book. Against any spiritualist individualism, Löhe first argued that humans were created for fellowship and community. "As long as a man is alone he cannot even be blessed," Löhe stated, for "a desire for fellowship with other men is born in us." The true expression of this fellowship, Löhe believed, was the one found in the divinely established institution of the church. Women and men then were made for the church, but these human needs were not the foundation for the church.⁹ Instead—and here was his second theme—the grounding of the church lay in its divine establishment in the apostolic word.¹⁰

This emphasis upon the establishment of the church through the apostolic word had important implications, for it signaled Löhe's opposition to those who grounded the ministerial office on the will of the congregation or those who emphasized the volitional and associational character of the church. Furthermore, Löhe's insistence upon the church as a divine institution implied that the church should be a spiritually independent body. Löhe admitted that one of the motivations for writing this book had been to reassert the spiritual independence of the church from the state. He had kept a close watch on the events in Co-

logne. Even more significantly, however, Wilhelm Redenbacher was a personal friend and Löhe sympathized entirely with those Bavarian Protestants who regarded the king's order as improper state interference in internal church affairs.¹¹

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In addition to these themes of the importance of human fellowship and the centrality of the apostolic word as the ground of the church, Löhe thirdly emphasized the importance of confessional statements of faith. In Löhe's view, the visible church, though centered in the apostolic word, was still divided into several branches, and these divisions reflected important doctrinal differences. Löhe drew his conclusion in these words: "What distinguishes the church from all other groups in the world is its possession of the pure Word and Sacraments, and that which distinguishes each denomination from all others is the way it understands the Word and administers the Sacraments. Therefore, the distinguishing mark of a denomination must be its confession."¹² From here it was a short step to the assertion that the Lutheran Church was the purest because it possessed the confessional statements most faithful to the apostolic word. By highlighting Lutheran confessionalism in this way, Löhe clearly polemicized against both Reformed Protestants and Roman Catholics in Bavaria. More than that though, he struck anew at state interference in church affairs by attacking Unionist plans as had occurred in Prussia, Nassau, and the Palatinate and by complimenting the Silesian Lutherans whose resistance and eventual separation into a free and independent church "started many others thinking and today from the North to the deep South of Germany there is a great multitude united by its confession and for the sake of its confessions."¹³

Löhe's ecclesiology could be found in this book, and two of its central concepts—that the church should be a spiritually independent body and that the church should be guided by its adherence to confessional standards—were prominently featured in his response to 1848 and its aftermath. When news of the developments in Paris and Berlin during March 1848 reached Löhe in Bavaria, he first expressed a cautious wait-and-see at-

7. On the "kneeling controversy," see Matthias Simon, *Die evang.-luth. Kirche in Bayern im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (München: Claudius Verlag, 1961), 36–38.

8. Matthias Simon, *Evangelische Kirchengeschichte Bayerns* (München: Müller, 1942), 2:634–635.

9. Wilhelm Löhe, *Three Books about the Church*, trans. and ed. James Schaaf (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 47, 50.

10. Löhe, *Three Books*, 62–63, 75, 116, 123, 131.

11. W. Löhe to Chr. Hornung, 16 January 1834, *Wilhelm Löhe Papers* (Löhe Archiv, Neuendettelsau, Bavaria, Federal Republic of Germany.)

12. Löhe, *Three Books*, 106.

13. *Ibid.*, 157, 161.

titude. By April, however, Löhe's attitude had soured considerably. He lamented to one friend, "The entire edifice of new hopes appears to me to be built on shaky grounds. I will have no part of it." Deploring what he took to be the revolutionaries' exclusive concern with temporal affairs rather than spiritual ones, Löhe wrote in his journal, "What sort of Parliament is this, dear God; it seems to me quite clear that we can expect little for the church from this body."¹⁴

Löhe called for strict adherence by all Lutheran ministers to the creeds of orthodox Lutheranism.

In the spring of 1849 the synodical meeting of the Protestant Church in Bavaria was held at Ansbach. With laymen as voting representatives, this would be the first opportunity within official church circles to test the meaning of the demands for a new relationship between church and state. Löhe fully realized the potential of these circumstances, and hoped that some new arrangement would come out of the instability of the present situation.¹⁵ In the spirit of his earlier writing Löhe petitioned the synod and sounded the familiar themes of allegiance to confessional standards and the need for a spiritually strong and independent church. In this context he called for strict adherence by all Lutheran ministers to the creeds of orthodox Lutheranism. Beyond that, Löhe protested against the current situation which found a Roman Catholic king as titular head of the Bavarian Lutheran Church.

Ever since the recognition of the Bavarian Protestant Church in 1818, the king had been acknowledged as the *summus episcopus*. Löhe's objection was thus directed less at the legal relationship of episcopacy than it was at the religion of the ruling family. For how could the Lutheran Church observe its confession in complete faithfulness, when its ruling head did not share its faith, and in fact, as seen in the "kneeling controversy," ordered actions in direct contradiction to that faith? If that were not enough, Löhe pointed out that Lutheran pastors in Bavaria were often expected to serve Reformed congregations or alongside Reformed ministers. Similarly, the ruling administrative body of the Bavarian Protestant Church was staffed in part by Reformed ministers who ought to have no authority over Lutheran pastors, although they obviously did. All of this infuriated Löhe, for the challenge within the church

posed by lax standards and slack discipline, in Löhe's opinion, was equaled by the damage that resulted from state intervention and dictation.¹⁶

Nothing came of Löhe's petition. Indeed, if anything, the conference moved farther in the direction of liberalizing confessional allegiance and relaxing church discipline. To one imbued with a high sense of confessional allegiance such as Löhe, the situation in Bavaria was lamentable. "Here crowd together the orthodox Lutherans, the moderates, the pietists, the rationalists," Löhe wrote to a friend, "all united through one synod and through one church administration. The *summus episcopus* is Roman Catholic, the church administration is unionist, the church is Lutheran, Reformed, Unionist, Rationalist." Spring was breaking out in Bavaria, but for the hopes of orthodox Lutherans, Löhe concluded, "it was still winter."¹⁷

Frustrated in his efforts at Ansbach, Löhe next turned for support to the theological faculty at his old university of Erlangen. Such a move, however, was a desperate one. Löhe's relationship with Erlangen had been ambivalent throughout the 1840s. On the one hand, he had cordial personal relationships with many of the professors on the faculty. On the other hand, the faculty had been exceedingly cool in its response to Löhe's *Three Books about the Church*, and in Löhe's view had been the chief source of opposition to his petition at Ansbach.¹⁸

This resistance by the Erlangen faculty should not be surprising. Since the late 1830s, this faculty had been moving away from its earlier stance of strict confessionalism and towards a more moderate theological position. Two Erlangen professors, Johann von Hoffman and Johann Höfling, illustrate the Erlangen position and suggest the nature of their difference with Löhe. Hoffman, for example, was a collaborator with Johann Wichern and his nondenominational Inner Mission. Hoffman's warm support for Wichern's work with its appeal to Christians of whatever creed stood in sharp contrast to Löhe's position that all missionary work must proceed along confessional lines.¹⁹ Hoffman and Löhe differed in other ways too, most visibly in Hoffman's participation in the Frankfurt Assembly during the "May Days" and his continued support for the work of the Assembly.

The contrast between Höfling and Löhe can be seen in their respective analyses of the nature of the church. Höfling drew

14. Löhe to J. F. Wucherer, 7 March 1848; Löhe to Chr. Hornung, 11 March 1848; Löhe to S. Liesching, 10 April 1848, *Löhe Papers*; journal entry 26 April 1848, quoted by Deinzer, *Löhes Leben*, 2:247.

15. See Simon, *Evangelische Kirchengeschichte*, 2:638; Löhe to S. Liesching, 24 July 1848, *Löhe Papers*.

16. Wilhelm Löhe, "Petition, 1849," in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Klaus Ganzert (Neuendettelsau: Freimund Verlag, 1951–1986), 4:333–349.

17. Löhe to K. Raumer, 2 April 1848, *Löhe Papers*.

18. Löhe to K. Ehlers-Liegnitz, 24 February 1849; 27 March 1849, *Löhe Papers*.

19. On Hoffman and Höfling, see Friedrich W. Kantzenbach, *Die Erlanger Theologie* (München: Evangelische Pressverband für Bayern, 1960): 134–143, 179–208; Friedrich W. Kantzenbach, *Gestalten und Typen des Neuluthertum* (Gütersloh: Güterloher Verlaghaus G. Mohn, 1968), 243–255. For a further discussion of Löhe's views on mission, see Walter H. Conser, Jr., "Moral Order on the American Frontier: Lutheran Missions in the 1840s," in *Ethical Monotheism, Past and Present: Essays in Honor of Wendell S. Dietrich*, ed. T. Vial and M. Hadley, Brown Judaic Studies, no. 329 (Providence: Brown University, 2001), 120–137.

on the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher, especially where Schleiermacher maintained that the church was a society of regenerated individuals joining together through their own vocation for common goals and purposes. Beyond that, the local congregation in Schleiermacher's view was the source of most ecclesiastical authority. Höfling took over both of these themes to construct his own theory of the true church as the invisible collection of all believers through time, as that society was represented in the persons of each and every local congregation. These emphases by Höfling stood in stark contrast to Löhe's view of the church as a *Heilsanstalt*, a divine institution whose authority was grounded in the apostolic word.

Given these differences, it was not surprising that Löhe's overtures to the Erlangen faculty came to no avail. Consequently, in July 1850 Löhe struck out in a dramatic new direction. In a petition to church officials Löhe threatened secession from the church together with those who shared his views, much as the Silesian Lutherans had done earlier. Common celebration of communion with the mixed congregations of the Palatinate was blasphemous, he charged. Thus in November of that year, Löhe served notice to the consistory that he would no longer administer communion to Reformed or Unionist laity, and that he considered any Lutherans who did so to be in sin.²⁰

The controversy over communion coalesced many of Löhe's earlier concerns. Loyalty to confessional standards had led him to a virtual abandonment of his ministerial duties. Similarly, the challenge to the consistory was such that it could hardly be ignored. It came as no surprise when a preliminary report to the consistory in December 1851 concluded that Löhe was no longer fit to perform his ministerial duties and that he should be suspended from office. In April 1852 proceedings were begun and a recommendation of suspension given to the king. No action was immediately taken and so a similar address was again submitted in June. Still the king postponed. On 9 September 1852, however, Löhe's case took an unexpected turn when the king offered Adolf von Harless, formerly of the Erlangen faculty, the presidency of the consistory. Harless had been forced from Bavaria for his part in the opposition during the "kneeling controversy," and had gone to Leipzig to teach. Throughout his years in Leipzig, Harless had kept abreast of developments in Bavaria and had corresponded with Löhe. Thus Löhe could greet Harless's return to Munich with pleasure, sentiments which were confirmed when Harless quashed the suspension proceedings.²¹

Löhe and Harless respected one another, though they shared no unanimity of doctrine. Indeed, as Löhe put it upon hearing of news of Harless's appointment, "Here in Bavaria we wait in expectation of improvement. We wait; however, we do not sleep. We have been too long and earnestly in struggle to do that." Harless's entry into the controversy diminished the antagonism on both sides though it provided no real resolution. Built

on a personal bond, the outcome for Löhe represented more of an accommodation than an accomplishment of his goals.²²

Initiated in response to the ecclesiastical controversies of the 1830s and early 1840s, and sharpened in reaction to the developments of 1848, Löhe's reflections on the church hold a twofold significance. First, as a response to the interaction of religious and political issues that the experience of 1848 represented in Bavaria, Löhe opposed the revolution with classically conservative arguments. Where the religious liberals and moderates, such as Hoffman and Höfling, portrayed the church as a voluntary association composed of born-again believers, Löhe affirmed that the church was a divine institution, not a voluntary society, and that the church existed prior to the establishment of any given congregation. Where the liberals emphasized the union of all like-minded Christians in reform and benevolent enterprises such as the Inner Mission, Löhe admitted the need for social welfare and charity organizations, but insisted that they must be founded on a clear confessional basis.

Thus when, in the summer of 1848, Löhe lamented that "Germany has never been so godless as now," his remarks reflected not only his apprehension with the specific direction of political and ecclesiastical reform pronouncements, but also the fact that they were political in the first place and not more attuned to what he considered the pressing spiritual concerns of the day.²³ Yet if Löhe was a conservative, his was a conservatism with a special twist. For Löhe supported the spiritual independence of the church, and if this meant a policy of administrative, indeed even financial, separation of the church from the state, then he was prepared to accept it. In the end, Löhe's support for the separation of church and state placed him conceptually alongside those at Frankfurt, who out of the very same experiences at Cologne and Munich sought to protect the church from state interference and dictation.

Löhe's response to the Revolution of 1848 consequently was a mixed one, even while he came to oppose it in the main. Recognition of this point returns one to Karl Mannheim's essay, "Conservative Thought." Mannheim observes — and here is the second level of Löhe's significance — that conservative thought in the early nineteenth century often contained within it an ambivalence between what Mannheim called "traditionalist" and "progressive" aspects. Löhe's political stance was indeed conservative; however, his conservatism was never so blind as to be unable to recognize the reality of contemporary social problems and the need for their resolution. Likewise though, Löhe never wavered from the conviction that his liberal opponent's answers to these social problems were wrong. Thus attention to Wilhelm Löhe's specific German situation can provide insights into the background and development of his theology at the same time in which it can hopefully place him into the larger context of nineteenth-century religious life and thought. **LOGIA**

20. Löhe, "Eingabe von 2 Juli 1851," *Werke*, 5/1:514–515; Löhe, "Erklärung," *Werke*, 5/1:609–613.

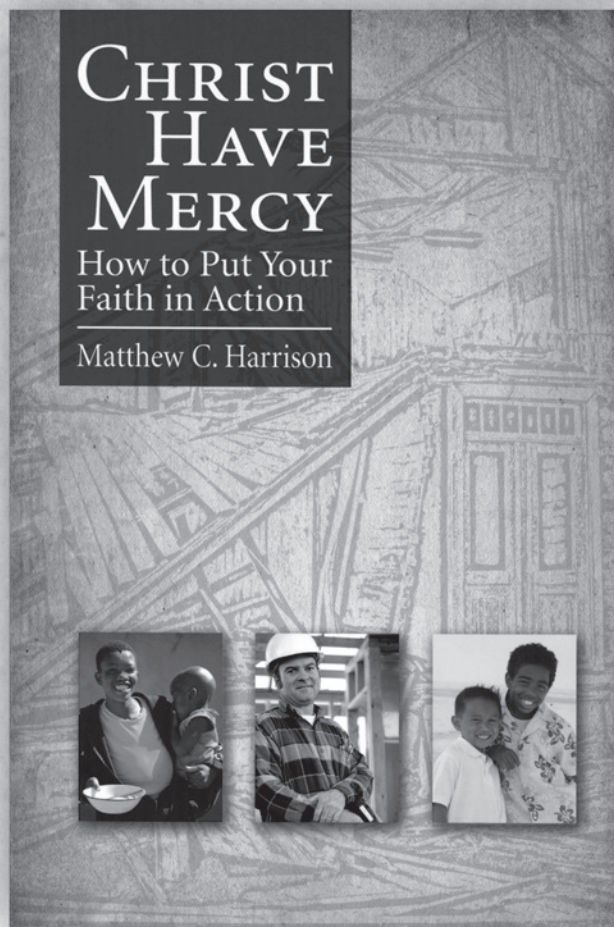
21. See the discussion of the entire episode in Löhe, *Werke*, 5/2:1025–1033.

22. Löhe to U. von Maltzahn, 10 November 1852, *Löhe Papers*.

23. Löhe to K. Raumer, 21 September 1848, *Löhe Papers*.

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REVIEWS

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Martin Luther



Review Essay

Ordinatio Apostolica: Studien zur Ordinationstheologie im Luthertum des 16. Jahrhunderts. Band 1: *Georg III. von Anhalt (1507–1553)*. By Augustinus Sander. Innsbruck-Wien: Tyrolia-Verlag, 2004. 366 pages. €34.

✦ The Last Supper scene of Lucas Cranach the Younger’s Dessau Altar is a familiar piece of artwork inspired by the Lutheran Reformation. Yet while many would speedily recognize the second figure at our Lord’s right and the one immediately to his left as Luther and Melancthon respectively, only seasoned local history buffs and a few specialist researchers would be able to identify the painting’s Beloved Disciple as the coruler of the principality of Anhalt from 1530 till his death in 1553. If a secular prince seems out of place at a table filled, in addition to Christ himself, with early Lutheran clergy and theologians, bear in mind that George III of Anhalt (b. 1507) was early destined for holy orders. Before and after his study of ancient languages, theology, and canon law at the University of Leipzig, George received what the Roman Catholicism of our day regards as minor orders (beginning with his tonsuring in 1516 and culminating, in 1524, in the subdiaconate, which at that time was considered the lowest of the four major orders) from his father’s cousin, Bishop Adolf of Merseburg. George’s lack of major orders (not remedied until the summer of 1545, and then in startling fashion) proved no obstacle to his becoming a canon of Merseburg in 1518 and dean (*Dompropst*) of Magdeburg cathedral in 1526.

By the end of the 1520s the influence of his lifelong friend and teacher George Helt combined with an intense study of Augustine’s anti-Pelagian writings to bring George into the orbit of the Wittenberg Reformation. In 1532 he joined his brothers in summoning Nicholas Hausmann from Zwickau to serve as court chaplain in Dessau; administration of Holy Communion under both kinds on Maundy Thursday 1534 marked the formal beginning of the Lutheran Reformation in Anhalt. A little later George was also instrumental in the introduction of the Lutheran Reformation into Brandenburg; his fingerprints are particularly evident on the electorate’s church order of 1540.

The facts just related are taken from an early section (26–37) of the first installment of a two-volume study now being

completed by a priest-monk of the famous Benedictine abbey of Maria Laach. As an historical theologian with a systematic axe to grind, Pater Augustinus Sander (b. 1961) is my kind of ecumenist, and I suspect he would be Hermann Sasse’s cup of tea also. An informed and committed participant in Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialog, Sander takes pains to steer clear of the twin pitfalls of clinging to bitter memories with a view to permanently justifying the status quo of ecclesial division, on the one hand, and of dismissing the past in the interests of doctrinal meltdown (and hence of reunion on easy terms) on the other (11, quoting with approval a 1977 essay by Joseph Ratzinger). Having studied not only Roman Catholic but also *evangelisch* theology during his student days, Sander’s field of vision is broad enough to encompass those few Lutherans in his homeland who still refuse absorption in the pan-Protestant union. In his foreword he pointedly thanks his Erlangen teacher Prof. Reinhardt Slenczka and the Bishop Emeritus Jobst Schöne of the Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche [SELK—Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church], “who have left a permanent mark on [me] by their respective witness to Lutheranism’s catholic dimension” (9).

Sander points out how two factors worked together to consolidate George of Anhalt’s allegiance to the Wittenberg Reformation. On the one hand, this diligent student of the history of church, dogma, and liturgy (33, 35) acknowledged the Vincentian Canon as he sought and submitted to a “catholic consensus” (34, n. 45) that stretched beyond George Calixt’s later exclusive focus on the first five centuries. On the other hand, George simultaneously recognized the priority of the apostolic gospel over subsequent tradition (35) and hailed Luther as the third of a series of doctors of grace that began with Paul and continued with Augustine (32, n. 37). In his view, the church’s continuity in time and space goes hand in hand with her ongoing need for reform: for George, “catholic consensus and catholic reform form an indissoluble unity in all ages” (36).

George’s stress on ecclesial continuity is apparent in the liturgical traditionalism of the Dessau and Brandenburg church orders that he influenced, and also in the so-called “George Agenda,” which he produced in Saxony in 1549, but which remained unpublished until centuries after his death. Sander demonstrates (38, n. 58) that the last of these documents did not arise from any pressure exerted by the “Leipzig Interim” but rather consisted of a summary of preexisting Saxon liturgical practice. The rich liturgical life of eighteenth-century Leipzig

may well attest George's abiding influence in this part of Germany (42, n. 77). Moreover, George's liturgical traditionalism was no matter of mere aesthetics, but reflected his deep agreement with Luther on the effective consecration and on the adorability of the temporally extended real presence in the Eucharist (43, quoting Tom Hardt's *Venerabilis et adorabilis eucharistia*). "The shape of the divine service successively received in the catholic consensus, such as the basic structure of the mass and the offices of the hours and likewise the Latin prefaces, hymns, and responsories, the vestments and gestures, for example, the elevation as a sign of confession of the somatic real presence of Christ in the consecrated gifts, are for him obvious givens that rightly claim a firm place also in the reformational liturgy of the sixteenth century" (36–37).

Any attempt to dismiss George as a misplaced Anglo-Catholic or as one who really belonged on the Roman side of the aisle breaks down against the wall of three hard facts. First, according to Franz Lau, Luther regarded him as "the purest and most pious man of his age" (29). Second, as he refuted in 1555 John Freder's misconception that laymen may legitimately celebrate the Holy Eucharist, the Pomeranian general superintendent John Knipstro appealed to George as a theological authority, especially to his 1552 *Treatise on Ordination* (44). Third, in 1579 no less a figure than Nicholas Selnecker, a coauthor of the Formula of Concord, republished the 1570 Latin translation of George's work on ordination, making clear his own agreement with George's theology of office (181). Thus we may not marginalize this figure deemed worthy of artistic identification with the Beloved Disciple and who lived on in the memory of North German Lutheranism as "George the Pious" and "George the Blessed" (*der Gottselige*).

Sander performs a useful service to his Lutheran readers by showing how the earliest advocates of the Wittenberg Reformation regarded themselves as involved in a process of internal Catholic renewal rather than in a Protestant breakaway movement consciously aiming at the formation of a new church (19–20). On aligning himself with the Lutheran cause George therefore saw no need to lay down his offices at the cathedrals of Magdeburg and Merseburg. When confronted with a growing clergy shortage in his principality of Anhalt in the late 1530s he made every endeavor to procure a fresh supply of priests at the hands of the appropriate diocesan bishop, namely, Matthias von Jagow of Brandenburg, whose authority stretched over much of Anhalt, parts of which belonged to the neighboring dioceses of Magdeburg and Halberstadt. In taking this approach George was at one with the Wittenberg theologians, whose institution of centrally-administered presbyteral ordination of candidates in their university city from 1535 onwards was an emergency measure rendered imperative by the necessity of ordination for the filling and administration of the pastoral office (47). Through detailed quotation from the *Reformatio Wittenbergensis* composed by Luther and his colleagues in 1545, Sander proves that Apology XIV's embrace of episcopacy was not a mere sop toward the Roman side superseded by the innovation of 1535 (48, n. 94). Rather, acceptance of the normative quality of episcopacy remained the Lutheran position in the period sur-

rounding the issuance of the Formula of Concord (for example, in the sermons of Luther biographer John Mathesius and in Nicholas Selnecker's publication already referred to).

As he covers the correspondence that passed between Prince George and Matthias von Jagow in 1539 and 1540, Sander pictures the former as insisting that the bishop accept married candidates and not force Roman doctrine on them, while the latter steered clear of questions of confession but was initially reluctant to ordain other than celibate men (50–69; oddly, while George observed celibacy, von Jagow himself lived in concubinage). Only when von Jagow failed to respond positively to the request that he ordain Antonius Öltze, a married man, did George send this candidate to Wittenberg to receive ordination (56). Yet von Jagow soon began to intimate openness to the Reformation, pointedly communing Elector Joachim II in both kinds at the All Saints' mass of 1539 (57) and consenting to the Brandenburg church order of 1540 (61). So while von Jagow circumspectly declined to ordain Severinus Prinz at George's request, ostensibly because to do so would involve intrusion in the diocese of Halberstadt where Prinz resided (61), he did accede to George's petition that he ordain Jakob Steyrer to the office of court chaplain in Dessau (67–68). As we shall shortly see, George's next bout of correspondence with the bishop of Brandenburg would be conducted on his own behalf (71).

Although Peter Brunner pictured George of Anhalt as sharing with the hymn-writer Paul Speratus the distinction of being "the most significant Reformation-era embodiment of a Lutheran episcopal office-holder" (27), the common description of him as "bishop of Merseburg" from 1544 to 1548 needs careful qualification.

Until well into the sixteenth century the city of Merseburg did not form part of any neighboring principality but had the quality of being what the third edition of *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* terms *reichsunmittelbar*, that is to say, the bishop's only overlord within the empire was the emperor himself. Yet already in the fifteenth century the bishops of Merseburg had shown little interest in attending sessions of the Reichstag, being content to be represented there by the princes of Saxony.

After the death in the first days of 1544 of the bishop of Merseburg, Duke (after 1547, Elector) Maurice of Saxony swiftly proposed his own brother, Duke August, a layman, as the next "bishop," albeit on the understanding that he would simply undertake the secular administration of that portion of the diocese which legally formed a distinct territory within the empire. On May 16, with the consent of the cathedral chapter, Duke August named Prince George, a cleric, as his *coadiutor in spiritualibus*, in which capacity George would exercise the episcopal office over the whole diocese, much of which reached into the Saxon lands.

Von Jagow promptly agreed to perform George's needed consecration into the episcopate, but died before he could do so, whereupon George eventually turned to Luther himself, who carried out the episcopal consecration in the cathedral at Merseburg on 2 August 1545. George remained August's *coadiutor in spiritualibus* until the latter's resignation of his position as secular administrator of the diocese in the early fall of 1548

(as compensation for the loss of episcopal office in Merseburg George was appointed cathedral dean at Meißen, 39). Since the arrival of a new Roman Catholic bishop in the person of Michael Holding was delayed until December of 1550, George continued — with the approval of the cathedral chapter — to discharge some episcopal tasks (not including ordination, 180) for a further two years, after which he remained for another year (marked by deteriorating relations with Holding) the senior canon of the cathedral (29–30). For the closing eighteen months of his life, George withdrew to his castle at Warmsdorf.

Upon von Jagow's agreement to George's request to afford him the needed episcopal consecration, George approached Luther with a series of questions on the holy office in general and on episcopacy in particular. Although Luther's consecration of Nicholas von Amsdorf as bishop of Naumburg in 1542 was public knowledge, George deliberately sought the consecrating services of a regular bishop while ardently seeking the Reformer's theological counsel. Detailed treatment of the content of Luther's "opinion" (*Gutachten*) delivered at George's request (70–90) would exceed the limits placed on a single review article and must await another occasion. Suffice it to say, though, that George proved eager and willing to follow Wittenberg practice by introducing a formal examination of candidates (the Dessau archives contain the earliest ascertainable form of the *examen* as given in Wittenberg, which was supplied to George by Melanchthon at the end of 1547, 75). Moreover, he resolved to observe Wittenberg's custom of ordaining candidates collectively at a single location rather than ordaining each candidate separately in the place of his first call (76).

Luther gave a reserved affirmative reply to George's question whether he might proceed to bishop's orders "in a leap" (*per saltum*), without receiving the intermediate orders; the Reformer regarded such a procedure as permissible, but not obligatory (80). Interestingly, in view of Augsburg Confession v's profession of a single, dominically instituted office, on the one hand, and of medieval theology's considering the relationship between the presbyteral and episcopal offices as an open question, on the other, Luther made no bones about deeming George's upcoming episcopal "consecration" as an ordination in the true sense, a liturgical rite that should be carried out even if George had already been in presbyteral orders (81–90). Significantly, in the last year of his life George would recall how "Dr. Martin Luther wrote with his own hand, 'I do not desire the ruin, but the reformation of the bishoprics [*Non opto ruinam Episcopatum, sed reformationem*]' (232).

As already noted, the sudden death of Matthias von Jagow placed George in the unenviable quandary of contemplating an episcopal consecration without an ordinator of unimpeachably episcopal status. He considered seeking the services of "our especially dear lord and friend, the archbishop and elector of Cologne" (92), Hermann von Wied (who is usually regarded as Reformed rather than Lutheran!), or of bishops in faraway Prussia. Remarkably, he made no move to seek the services of Nicholas von Amsdorf, still reigning as bishop in nearby Naumburg (Amsdorf was on the wrong side of disputes between the rival Saxon princely houses, and there were already per-

sonal and theological tensions between him and George, 93, n. 287). The invitation extended to and accepted by Luther was not George's ideal solution to his predicament, but the best remedy for an emergency situation, a procedure rendered thinkable by the apparent ancient identity of the offices of bishop and presbyter (Gratian's *Decretum* quoted Jerome to this effect) and by the papal dispensations sometimes given in the Middle Ages allowing presbyters to confer presbyteral ordination in certain cases (100–102). Sander, who always has an eye for the import of historical data for churchly practice, tells how in an emergency situation in the Ukraine in 1921 two candidates were consecrated to the Orthodox episcopate by fellow presbyters (108, n. 340).

Sander offers a lengthy account of George's episcopal consecration at Luther's hands, carried out in the setting of a eucharistic celebration in the Merseburg cathedral on 2 August 1545 (91–160). It is unclear whether the preacher was the Reformer or the local superintendent Antonius Musa or even George himself, for a document has come down to us that purports to have been delivered at the consecration by the bishop-elect (98). George's "address" is an important resource for his theology of office (97–111). Whereas a few months earlier, Bartholomew Suawe had been invested with mitre and crosier at his consecration as Lutheran bishop of Cammin (103, n. 319), George and Luther had agreed to reduce the core of the episcopal consecration to the word of God, prayer, and the laying on of hands, so that George was neither anointed with oil nor invested with crosier and mitre.

George's unique situation as the recipient of episcopal consecration at Luther's presbyteral hands causes Sander to spend several pages demonstrating early Lutheranism's willingness to consider the holy office as encompassing the distinct grades of episcopate and presbyterate. Interestingly, he shows from its *Agenda* of 1876 that the SELK's predecessor body in Hesse took just such an approach in the nineteenth century (115, 361). But Sander's principal focus is on George's understanding of regular, that is, presbyteral ordination, which is made clear from three sources: (a) the Brandenburg church order of 1540's section on ordination, for which George was chiefly responsible; (b) his own conduct of presbyteral ordinations during the years of his oversight of the Merseburg diocese; and (c) the *Treatise on Ordination*, which he published in the last year of his life in response to attacks launched by the Roman clergy who had taken over the leadership of the Merseburg church.

While George always viewed ordination as necessary for the assumption and exercise of the pastoral office, already in the Brandenburg church order he parted company from contemporary Rome by denouncing what Sander terms the "mediatorial-*anabatic* constriction" of the office (64). That is to say, presbyters are not actively to *procure* Christ's mediatorial merits by offering his really present body and blood in propitiatory sacrifice; rather, their task is the *catabatic* role of distributing his already perfectly procured gifts through the ministry of word and sacrament (see also 194).

As he undertook 81 presbyteral ordinations during his stewardship of the Merseburg diocese (161), George held to the posi-

tion first authoritatively articulated in the sixth canon of the council of Chalcedon that no one should be ordained except to a “title,” so that he was an advocate of “relative,” not of “absolute” ordination (162). Among George’s prerequisites for ordination, two are worthy of note. First, the candidate must undergo examination. Second, although the laity’s role in the candidate’s “vocation” was formally limited to the patron’s right to present him to the bishop, George insisted that the candidate deliver a “trial sermon” before his prospective parishioners. Should the congregation deem the candidate unacceptable, the patron must propose another candidate within a month; his failure to do so caused the right of patronage to revert to the bishop (162). There is thus an echo of 1 Clement 44’s “with the full consent of the church,” or, to put it differently, an embryonic Walthesian dimension, in George’s understanding of the holy office. The rite used by George for presbyteral ordination was similar to that used by Luther to consecrate him to the episcopal office, but omitted the Reformer’s explicit conferral on him of “*authoritatem alios ordinandi*—the authority to ordain others” (255).

In the earliest stages of Michael Holding’s episcopate in Merseburg, both the former and the current bishop bent over backwards to accommodate one another, with Holding promising moderation and George meekly asking that no changes be introduced and that no discrimination befall married priests. Yet both Bishop Michael and his newly appointed cathedral canons soon went on the offensive, and George could no longer remain silent when the Dominican Nicholas Kramer attacked the validity of Lutheran ordination and of the sacraments administered by Lutheran clergy (192–193). George planned a comprehensive reply to this assault, but penned only some “provisional” remarks that were published as his *Treatise on Ordination* the year before his death. According to Sander the dogmatic bottom line of the work is George’s insistence that due criticism of the Roman “anabatic sacerdotalization” of the office does not in any way diminish his acceptance of the necessity of the office itself or of ordination as the means of bestowing it (195–196). George confesses that, in the ordination contested by his Roman opponents, the Holy Spirit is effectually bestowed and received “through word and prayer with laying on of hands” (210).

If his opponents would disparage a Lutheran episcopate such as his own, which was forged in the crucible of an emergency situation, George saw fit to rattle the skeletons that abounded in Rome’s own closet. He did so by pinpointing the incongruities of the system of “auxiliary” (known in Anglicanism as “suffragan”) bishops, who at that time exercised no ecclesiastical jurisdiction but functioned as mere confirmation and ordination machines, doing the work neglected by diocesan bishops who majored in the role of princes of the empire (196–207). Apparently auxiliary bishops were at this time a mainly German phenomenon: between 1198 and 1431 five such bishops are recorded in Italy, six in Spain and Portugal, eleven in France, but hundreds in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (197–198). George relished a potshot at the papal “monkey game” of transferring bishops from nonexistent auxiliary sees to real bishoprics (202; Michael Holding had been titular

bishop of Sidon until his elevation to the see of Merseburg!). For George, real bishops go together with real flocks: “For *Episcopus and Ecclesia* are correlative, where the one looks and is geared to the other and neither can be or exist without the other, just like Father and Son” (199). If Rome could delegate the episcopal mandate to ordain from diocesan to fictional, auxiliary bishops, then, in George’s view, it had no cause for complaint when a state of emergency obliged Lutherans to seek presbyteral ordination from the Leipzig superintendent or from himself as *coadiutor in spiritualibus* (207). George’s defense of Lutheran ordination echoes Tractatus LXXII (212–213, especially the beautiful words quoted 213–214). Sander nicely points out that a variant of George’s impassioned Jerome-based argument that genuine *Apostolica Ordinatio* exists among Lutherans (221) was successfully proposed by the archbishop of Rossano on 20 October 1562 in the closing stages of the Council of Trent (218–219)!

In this context we can pass over George’s defense against Roman charges of Lutheran wrongdoing in omitting to confer the minor orders, including even the diaconate (221–228), while highlighting his closing account of George’s firm stress on Lutheranism’s location within the “Catholic consensus” (228–232). So far was George from intending to found a rival church body that he made it clear that clergy ordained by the Roman bishops would not be reordained on taking up appointments within the sphere of the Lutheran Reformation (231). In this review I have unavoidably used the word “Lutheran” to describe the church body that grew out of the Wittenberg Reformation, but Sander more appropriately describes the Reformer and his confreres as “reformational Catholics” (*reformatorische Katholiken*), and he employs an untranslatable neologism when he urges that George regarded the Augsburg Confession and its Apology as “an authentic model of *konfessorisch[er]* Catholicity” (40).

The first volume of Pater Sander’s monumental work, which has earned him his *Promotion*, deserves to become widely known among English-speaking Lutherans as (along with Tom Hardt’s *Venerabilis et adorabilis eucharistia*) it rescues from oblivion a significant early Lutheran father who enjoyed the full confidence of the Reformer himself. Since his elegant German style would stretch the resources of even the most competent translator, and since no publishing house is likely to take the risk of sponsoring this book’s appearance in English, the great majority of those who would pay due attention to Sander’s findings will unavoidably be dependent on the work of specialist researchers to grant them access to the rich gold mine offered by the German Benedictine. I wish Pater Sander well as he currently continues and consummates his researches in pursuit of his *Habilitation* by working on the second volume of *Ordinatio Apostolica*, which will explore the understanding of office of two other early Lutheran fathers, John Mathesius and John Knipstro. Remarkably, all three subjects of Sander’s research, who were close associates of the Reformer himself, were completely free of the functionalist blight that poses so grave a threat to the integrity of world Lutheranism in general and of North American Lutheranism in particular. Since, as Sander puts it, liturgics is “a systematic sister discipline of dogmatics”

(9), and given that Selnecker saw fit to append to his republication of George's *Treatise on Ordination* a copy of his ordination rite, I pose the question whether the hour has struck for Lutherans to heed Selnecker's plea on the title page of the latter that the rite devised by George the Blessed (and hence the doctrine it transmits) be "piously retained" (*sancte retinetur*)?

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Common Objects of Love: Moral Reflection and the Shaping of Community. By Oliver O'Donovan. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002. 72 pages.

✦ In the Large Catechism, Luther describes the *communio sanctorum* as "a holy little flock and community of pure saints under one head, Christ. It is called together by the Holy Spirit in one faith, mind, and understanding. It possesses a variety of gifts, and yet is united in love without sect or schism" (Kolb-Wengert, 437–438). With these words, Luther taught and confessed that a real community on earth has been created and appointed by the Holy Spirit "through which he speaks and does all his work." In his book *Common Objects of Love*, Oliver O'Donovan (currently Professor of Christian Ethics and Practical Theology at the University of Edinburgh, though O'Donovan wrote this book while still at Oxford) explores the place and posture of such a community in the midst of a modern liberal society that has forgotten how to be secular. Along the way, O'Donovan provides wonderful, and at times unsettling, insights into politics and community, proving as he does so how Augustine's belief that we know only as we love informs our understanding of organized community—including even political community. Finally, society must recognize both that redemption is needed and that such redemption will not be found from within. These considerations will necessarily inform how the "holy little flock" understands its situation and accompanying dangers as it waits in faith for the Last Day when its members will be made "perfectly and eternally holy."

The book is a series of three essays delivered by O'Donovan at the 2001 Stob Lectures at Calvin College. His first essay begins by puzzling over two challenges to the task of teaching ethics that demonstrate the inadequacy of Aristotle's doctrine of reason—that reason always operates as either theoretical or practical reason. The challenges concern collective reasoning and deliberation about history, neither of which are accounted for by the Aristotelian model. The author corrects the model by insightfully working his moral thought backward, opposite to the ethicist's usual course from truth to action, and finds a knowledge more fundamental than the dichotomized reason of Aristotelian doctrine. He is aided along the way by Augustine's insight that we know only as we love, and concludes that "practical and theoretical reason are each one-sided elaborations of

a primary affective knowledge"—a contemplative love "which gives rise to various actions without being wholly accounted for by any of them" (11, 16). Insofar as this loving is always primarily done with others, it has effect in community. That is, moral reasoning—the identification, as Augustine puts it, of objects of love—builds community.

From this premise, O'Donovan's second and third essays focus on how exactly community and, moreover, political society are formed by such love, how they mediate this love and knowledge, and how the reality of plurality, error, and sin affects this mediation. Words mediate such knowledge, and words give the beloved goods cultural meaning with the aid of a "special kind of signification"—representation (28). Representative signs are the means by which a community attains coherence (tradition), but are undermined by a plurality that proves, by the very existence of competing traditions, that one's tradition is somehow not exclusively and exhaustively true. To be sure, plurality is not itself the problem. Rather, the love out of which community arises is not yet the holy love that "bears all things and believes all things" and is therefore also in need of redemption. O'Donovan prudently observes that this redemption is thwarted when a political society forgets how to be secular, forgets that it is not itself the holy city. When this is forgotten, society is tempted into idolatry, tempted, that is, into an effort at self-redemption by grasping for ultimate meaning in its own representations and traditions. O'Donovan advises patience instead—a control of faith that recognizes a meaning in society that the society itself does not provide entirely on its own. For this a critical ascesis of idolatrous social representations is needed in the form of "modernity criticism" (45). For O'Donovan, this means a stinging critique of the mediating function of publicity, modernity's most distinctive form of representation, which impatiently seeks to universalize and unify. Attempting to create for itself representation and meaning without acknowledging, at least passively, the source of such meaning or its ultimate representative, modernity's mediation through publicity fails to notice that there is such a reality as *the* word and thereby fails to acknowledge *the* visual image amidst the distraction of misused, poorly situated icons.

The ascesis itself requires an acknowledgment of a universal society, a kingdom of heaven. To be sufficient this community must be real, and Jesus Christ—the "double representative," he who is truly God and truly man—is the means by which such community is created. Without such belief, a society will lose coherence as it recognizes the need for meaningful representations while at the same time finding itself incapable of providing such meaning in the face of plurality. Without a believing patience, O'Donovan concludes, society forgets how to be secular, forgets how to understand itself as a community not wholly devoid of the meaning which will be fulfilled in the *eschaton* yet not itself the fulfillment of that meaning. Such patience arises out of this eschatological hope. Thus, O'Donovan advises what John of Patmos advised at the universal kingdom's appearance—alertness, patience, and worship.

O'Donovan's short work masterfully critiques the symptoms of Western society's disease, commenting on a history of social

thought from Ezekiel's prophecy to September 11, 2001 (these lectures having been written in the months following that day's events). Given the distractions and displacements Western society has created for itself, it seems much easier now to forget that government and society are not God, but rather institutions of God, which function as a kind of means of grace by which God himself continues to care for his creation. O'Donovan's call for a *real* community, however, and not "the mere imagination of a universal society," seems to require a real, tangible means by which it is created (44). Given O'Donovan's insightful description of our corruptible communication and tendency to misinterpret and misuse our own representative signs, a communication coming from outside of our fallenness seems necessary. That is, this universal society must be created by some means not dependent on our corrupted bonds, even as it is united by a common object of our love. Indeed, in this regard O'Donovan does mention worship, the posture of the community, as the focus on Jesus, the sustaining representative of this community, and in this worship the praise of God's revealed judgments by those who themselves reflect the one representative image.

The judgments of God which have been revealed include, among other things, how he has chosen to create this community, his church. "It is called together by the Holy Spirit in one faith, mind, and understanding. It possesses a variety of gifts, and yet is united in love without sect or schism" (Kolb-Wengert, 438). O'Donovan well explains how communities find coherence around representative signs, and points to Jesus as that "double representative" for the universal society. Perhaps a specific word of corporeality would more accurately describe how this community finds coherence and hope around this real and present image. For "everything in this Christian community is so ordered that everyone may daily obtain full forgiveness of sins through the Word and signs appointed to comfort and encourage our consciences as long as we live on earth" (438). These signs are the means of grace by which *God the Holy Spirit creates this community* by forgiving sins and creating the one baptized to be a child of God, heir to his kingdom, member of the holy catholic church on earth. This means is outside of our corruptibility and thus trustworthy and real, not devised or invented by our human caprice and therefore not undermined by our frailty and sin. These tangible means of grace are that to which the community of faith clings, and in the word and these sacraments, the community has eschatological hope—the only way, O'Donovan notes, a community might find the patience to remember how to be secular. For, Luther writes,

creation is now behind us, and redemption has also taken place, but the Holy Spirit continues His work without ceasing until the Last Day, and for this purpose he has appointed a community on earth, through which he speaks and does all his work. . . . Then when his work has been finished and we abide in it, having died to the world and all misfortune, he will finally make us perfectly and eternally holy. Now we wait in faith for this to be accomplished through the Word (439).

Of course, it is easy to criticize by noting what could have been said but was not, and O'Donovan's words are by no means undermined by the comments above. *Common Objects of Love* is a valuable read and especially important for a society that seeks to forget the law of God that is already in place. Moreover, it provides an important message for the church—the call to remind itself and the world, by its presence and word, that there is a Creator who gives meaning and order to his creation, a Savior who has won redemption for it, and a Sanctifier who creates the community of his kingdom with the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the dead, and life everlasting.

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Women in the Lord's Service: Essays on Women in Parish Work. (*Kvinder på Herrens mark: Essays om kvinder og menighed.*) Edited by Hans-Ole Bækgaard, Henrik Højlund, Flemming Baatz Kristensen, Inge Munk Møller, and Anne Illeborg Riis. Højbjerg, Denmark: Forlaget Hovedland, 2007. 272 pages.

☛ This book is thus far available only in Danish. Why, then, a review in an English-language journal in America? I believe that the intention of the editors in asking me to review this book for *LOGIA* readers is to make fellow confessional Evangelical-Lutherans in the United States and indeed throughout the world more aware of the current situation in the Evangelical-Lutheran Folk Church in Denmark (*Den Danske Folkekirke*, DDF).

Such an awareness is already accomplished among English-speaking people here and elsewhere just by being informed about the existence of this remarkable book. This book of twenty-seven articles is authored by no fewer than twelve women (six with theological training, six with degrees in other fields) and 10 men (now active either as parish pastors or as teachers of theology). That the confessional movement within the DDF has been able to produce this document is a very impressive achievement. It shows their fellow Danes and the rest of us that the classical biblically founded view that the Lord did not intend women to serve as pastors remains alive in Denmark.

"Why Raise the Issue Again?" is the title of the introductory chapter by Flemming Batz Kristensen, parish pastor and one of the foremost leaders within the confessional movement in the DDF. He points out that only a few women were ordained during the first decades after 1948, when the government granted access to ordination for women. Now a majority of the pastors are women. Of the students at the University School of Theology in Århus in October of 2006, 66.5 percent were women. Kristensen writes, "If one does not accept women pastors, one is regarded as weird, obdurate, hostile toward women, male chauvinist, and totally out of touch with modern reality." Thus it may seem impossible to gain support for the original view that women should not serve as pastors. Then remember the words of Kaj Munk, "Never, never, never ask if it is worth it." One should always do that which one believes is true.

While it is good and well that church and society acknowledge that men and women have equal value, Kristensen sees signs that there is now an increasing readiness to look at how men and women differ and how they complement each other. He has noticed that congregations, while accepting women as pastors, now are asking for more men. Even women members resist the feminization of the church. The issue of women pastors influences how we perceive the very essence of God.

The Father loves the Son, the Son receives this love and gives himself in love under the Father. He is subject to the Father, as the Spirit is subject to the Father and the Son. In that way the perfect love lives in the essence of God, and in this love man is created as male and female precisely in order to mirror this love. Therefore the man unconditionally loves the woman, and the woman receives this love and gives herself freely under the man in joyful love. The Spirit creates a corresponding structure between men and women in the congregation and in marriage.

Kristensen goes on to show how ordination of women is in conflict with the church as the bride of Christ, with Christ's choosing only men as apostles and with their subsequently ordaining only men as pastors ("shepherds and teachers," Eph 5:11). These subjects are dealt with at length in other sections.

In the first main section, titled "Student of Theology, YES! Ordination, NO!" four women devote a chapter each telling us how and why they give this answer to the possibility of becoming pastors, "Thanks, but no thanks!" By accepting the "head" structure in church and marriage (Eph 5:21–28), Anne Illeborg Riis describes her surprising emancipation in Christ based on his having "atoned for all my sin on the cross." Having a position on the ordination of women, embraced only by "a dying-out race," is a cross for Anette Ingemansen, especially when so many even in the Inner Mission movement ignore what the Bible says on this issue. Ulla Hindbeck reports how an article by Gustaf Adolf Danell, one of the most prominent confessional leaders in Sweden, caused her life to be "a reverse story": eight years after her ordination she resigned from the pastoral office. "I am an oddity" in Finland, says Soili Kaarina Haverinen. It is odd that a woman with a degree in theology would be opposed to the ordination of women. She points out that if our view is not presented together with all that which the Bible says about the equal value of men and women, it is not surprising that it would appear very patriarchal.

"Hurrah for the Little Difference" is a section where three women lift up the difference between men and women as a gift to the human race. Hanne Frøkjær-Jensen presents an excellent article on "Women in the Bible." Inge Munk Møller helps the reader to avoid many common "Misapplications of the Bible." For example, when God gives the woman as "a helper" (Gn 2:18) for the man, we should remember that David uses the same word for helper when he says, "God is my helper" (Ps 54:4). Just as God is not David's slave but his helper, so the woman is not man's slave but his helper. The title of Vibeke Sode Hjorth's contribution says it all: "Woman — Know Your Value!"

While it would be a great asset to have all the articles in this book available in English, it is especially true of the contributions from Hans-Ole Bækgaard and Gunnar Johnstad. Each

is represented with two comprehensive papers, brilliantly explaining the theology of the biblical understanding of the pastoral office. To give within the space of this review even a brief summary of these articles is impossible. In "Does Luther Say Anything on This Issue?" Bækgaard explains that while the Reformer taught, referring to 1 Peter 2:5–9 and Revelation 5:10, that all the baptized are priests, he makes clear that in the pastoral office "there shall be a called and elected man . . . to preach, baptize, absolve, and administer the sacrament" (On the Councils and the Church, 1539). The heart of the book is Bækgaard's twenty-three-page paper "Two Special Texts," a penetrating exegesis of the most relevant texts on the teaching aspect of the pastoral office, 1 Corinthians 14:33–40 and 1 Timothy 2:8–15.

Gunnar Johnstad presents in "The Man Is the Head of the Woman" one of the best expositions of one of the most sensitive and most misunderstood statements in the Bible, recorded in 1 Corinthians 11:3 and Ephesians 5:23. He argues that "just as it is nothing inferior or humiliating for Christ to have God as his head, neither is there anything inferior or humiliating for the woman to have the man as head (or for the man to have Christ as head)." I wish Johnstad's "Twenty Fast Answers to Accusations" (sixteen pages in this volume) would be available in a booklet. Here is accusation number thirteen: "Is not Paul's argument against women as teachers in the pastoral office an example of male chauvinism?" The answer, "Paul sees in the creation order man-woman a God-given design that is not annulled in the New Testament, where the apostle teaches that woman has the same value, rank, and status as man."

There are several contributions that discuss how the minority and the majority on the issue of women pastors should relate to each other as they live together in the congregations. Just one example: Ingelise Holm (R.N.) can accept a woman pastor as her children's catechism instructor but she wants a man to preside at the confirmation. The situation is very different from ours in the United States and Canada, because here we have strong church bodies for either position on "Women in the Lord's Service." In Denmark and the other Nordic lands (including my native Sweden), most adherents of the traditional biblical position have not joined any of the new very small Evangelical-Lutheran churches but have chosen to remain members of the church, where they were baptized and confirmed (and ordained), as were generations of their ancestors.

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Revelation. Edited by William C. Weinrich. Vol. 12 in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005. 454 + xxxii pages.

✦ William C. Weinrich, academic dean at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN, has completed *Revelation*, the twelfth volume in the New Testament section of the emerging series *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* (ACCS).

The stated goals of the ACCS are, first, the revitalization of Christian teaching based on classical Christian exegesis; second, more in-depth study of Scripture by lay persons who want to think with the early church about the canonical text; and third, the stimulation of Christian historical, biblical, theological, and pastoral scholars toward further inquiry into scriptural interpretation by ancient Christian authors (xi).

The volume is comprised of the following parts:

- General Introduction, by series editor Thomas C. Oden (xi–xii);
- Guide to Using the Commentary (xiii–xiv);
- Abbreviations (xv–xvi);
- Commentary (1–409);
- Appendix: Early Christian Writers and the Documents Cited (410–413);
- Biographical Sketches and Short Descriptions of all the authors and works cited in the ACCS series to date (414–425);
- Timeline of Writers of the Patristic Period (426–431);
- Bibliography of Works in Original Languages (432–435);
- Bibliography of Works in English Translation (436–438);
- Authors-Writings Index (439);
- Subject Index (440–449);
- Scripture Index (450–454).

Hence, the bulk of the volume (409 pages) has been devoted to the commentary itself.

Weinrich and the editors at InterVarsity have divided Revelation according to the pattern set by Andrew of Caesarea in the sixth century A.D. First appears the canonical text of Scripture in the Revised Standard Version; then, for each pericope, Weinrich has prepared an overview that tracks a cohesive thread of argument among the diverse patristic comments; then appear topical headings which summarize the essence of patristic comments on each verse; then the identification of the patristic text, by book, section, and subsection; and finally, footnotes which direct the reader to minuscule notes at the bottom of the right-hand column of a page, where in addition to other notations (clarifications or biblical cross references) appear information on English translations or standard original-language editions of the work cited. Weinrich was obliged to translate afresh from the original languages several of the fathers whose commentaries appear in this volume. Elsewhere he updated now antiquated renderings into English, or utilized already well-rendered versions. Weinrich's own "Introduction to the Revelation to John" (xvii–xxxii) considers the original authorship and canonicity of Revelation, the type of commentaries that came to be published in late antiquity, leading schools of interpretation, and criteria used to select the materials that appear in this volume.

Although Revelation was read and used by the church from the second century A.D. onwards, the fathers whose commentaries were selected for regular citation are eight in number, spanning some 450 years: (1) Victorinus of Petovium (d. 304), (2) Tyconius, (3) Primasius, (4) Caesarius of Arles, (5) Apringius of Beja, (6) Bede the Venerable (d. 735), (7) Oecumenius, and (8) Andrew of Caesarea. Four other fathers whose names appear often are

Gennadius of Constantinople (d. 471), Augustine, Jerome, and Cassiodorus (d. 590). Nor are all the fathers as orthodox as moderns typically suppose: Victorinus of Petovium and Irenaeus were given to millenarian tendencies; Tyconius was a Donatist; and Origen denied the physical resurrection of the body.

Why read the fathers at all nowadays? While a number of modern theologians provide eloquent answers to that question (i–iv), a reason that occurred to me while reading the volume was that patristic exegesis works against the idiosyncratic interpretation that all too often dogs one's appreciation of Revelation. It is helpful to realize that one is not alone while grappling with a difficult passage, but that others—indeed, many others—have traversed the same paths and thus delivered the gospel to the church in every time and place.

Take, for example, the identity of the woman in Revelation 12:1 ff.: she is clothed with the sun, has the moon under her feet, wears a crown of twelve stars on her head, and cries out in anguish to be delivered of her birth pangs. On one's own the struggling exegete may guess that the woman represents the Virgin Mary, and that the woman's male child (Rv 12:5), for whom the great red dragon waits, represents the infant Jesus. Contrast this guess with the way the fathers of the church link the passage to similar images scattered throughout the Scriptures and to the exegetical renderings of earlier fathers in the church. Based on this broader perspective, then, Methodius of Olympus suggests (*Symposium* 8.5–6) that the mysterious woman actually represents several interrelated concepts: Jerusalem, the Bride, Mt. Zion, the Temple, God's Tabernacle, and ultimately, the church herself

whose children by baptism will swiftly come running to her from all sides after the resurrection. [The church] it is who rejoices to receive the light that knows no evening, clothed as she is in the brightness of the Word as with a robe. Surely having light for its garment, what was there more precious or more honorable for [the church] to be clothed in as befitted a queen, to be led as a bride to the Lord, and thus to be called on by the Spirit? (173)

Nor are there fathers lacking who suggest that the woman is indeed Mary, "the mother of our Savior" (so Oecumenius, 175; Quodvultdeus, 180). Still, that position too reflects a catena of Scripture passages (confer the exegesis on 175 and 180), not mere whimsy.

One is constantly impressed by how the fathers of the church endeavor always to ground personal assertion upon the solid rock of Scripture and in league with still other witnesses who share the one true faith (*fides quae creditur*). A father never writes, "God told me this image means x . . ." but he strives always to connect his contribution to what the Holy Spirit has revealed in the Scriptures of earlier ages, and to the great consensus expressed by men otherwise far removed from each other in time and place.

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The Anonymous God: The Church Confronts Civil Religion and American Society. By David L. Adams and Ken Schurb. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 2004. 287 pages. Paper. \$16.99.

☞ In the aftermath of 9/11 many said, “Now everything has changed.” But the writers of these essays note that everything has not changed. There still is only one true triune God; all human beings are still sinful and continue to be born that way; Jesus is still the only Savior from sin for all human beings; God’s word still contains absolute truths; and so forth.

There were events that totally changed the world. Jesus’ incarnation, suffering, death, and resurrection changed the world and give sinful human beings eternal hope (162–163).

This book “is about American civil religion and the relationship of the church to the broader society” in the post 9/11 era (15). These essays deal with such questions as, How do religious pluralism, polytheism, American civil religion, and secular culture impact the Christian church’s witness to the gospel in the public square?

David Adams’s first essay, “The Anonymous God: American Civil Religion, the Scandal of Particularity, and the First Table of the Torah,” speaks about American tolerance for the anonymous god of civil religion, and the genesis of this idea in Rousseau. The anonymous “god” does not tolerate particularity. The triune God’s particularity as revealed in the Law’s first three commandments tolerates no other gods. There is particularity in Jesus—there is no other Savior from sin. The gospel’s scandal is that it proclaims salvation only to those with faith in Christ. Thus Christianity is labeled intolerant by those who favor American religion’s “anonymous god.”

David Liefeld’s essay, “Civil Religion and the Early Church: Syncretism and Doctrinal Integrity in the Apologetic of Athenagoras of Athens,” is a rigorous study of one early church father’s interaction with a religiously pluralistic world, an antagonistic Roman government, and its civil religion. More studies like this will assist the church today as it struggles to speak the exclusive Christian message of salvation in Christ to today’s American society with its civic religion and anonymous god. Such speaking needs to be done in both realms, the religious and the secular. Athenagoras was an apologist for Christianity to Roman government and society. His apologetic addressed the political realm and was not a theological treatise for the church. Lutherans struggling to speak to the 9/11 world need to keep a proper distinction between the Two Kingdoms, and to understand that there is appropriate language for speaking to each.

Cameron A. MacKenzie writes about “The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the Public Square in the Era of C. F. W. Walther.” Though Walther did not speak specifically about American civil religion, his biblically based words about church and state are food for thoughtful reflection in our religiously pluralistic circumstances today.

Ken Schurb studies Martin Marty and Sidney Mead and their interaction with Robert Bellah’s 1967 essay on American civil religion. Marty’s concepts of “ordering faith” (religious

essentials sufficient to order governments) and “saving faith” (what saves souls) are discussed (126–130). Mead, one of Marty’s professors, followed some of Paul Tillich’s views on civil religion. Mead was scandalized by the particularity of most religions, Christianity included. Yet he believed that all religions were necessary to the civil religion of the nation. Both of these men profoundly influenced American civil religion.

“In ___ We Trust’: American Religion and Biblical Christianity” says that many Americans are “spiritual” but not “religious” and have moved from being religious “dwellers” to spiritual “seekers.” Dwellers find religious homes in congregations and denominations. Seekers seek spiritual “truths” wherever they might be found: in Christianity, meditation, neo-Paganism, yoga, higher powers, prophecy, astrology, Eastern and new age religions, and so forth. Their lives are a journey which seeks spiritual experience. Their beliefs are often pluralistic: “I am a Christian Buddhist.” This reviewer read of a female priest at an Episcopal church who was also a Wiccan practitioner. She could be classified as either a “dwelling seeker” or a “seeking dweller.”

Author Joel Okamoto is concerned that seekers have a theology of glory because they do not always call things what they are. Theologians of the cross will respond to 9/11 tragedies by saying that they do not know about the faith of all who died, but will confess the truth that all who died with faith in Christ are saved. These are not popular words in a pluralistic spiritually seeking society.

Ronald Feuerhahn examines “the history of the civic use of the church” for governmental purposes as well as the use of the state by the church for its purposes (169). He examines this interplay in the early church, at the time of the reformers, and today. He defines “syncretism” and “unionism” and warns the church that it cannot live its mission in a way that is against its clear confession. The mission of the church is to confess Christ and the truth of his word clearly to the world. As the church proclaims Christ, there are times when it must say “No!” to activities that would mute its gospel witness. It must also say yes to life in the public square.

Alvin J. Schmidt sets forth the polytheistic, pagan, deistic, and Masonic nature of American civil religion (“Polytheism: The New Face of American Civil Religion”). He describes civil religion, which is devoid of Christ, and the exclusivity of the gospel, which alone saves sinners from their sins. Just because something is religious does not mean that it is good. He looks at the early Christians’ refusal to participate in the civil religion of Rome, and notes the positive effect this refusal had on its mission outreach (209–211).

David Adams’s second essay, “The Church in the Public Square in a Pluralistic Society,” was distributed to attendees of the first Model Theological Conference of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). It shares ten theses about the relationship of American civil religion and the mission of a confessional Christian church in a pluralistic culture. These theses reflect Adams’s service as the former Executive Director of the LCMS’s Office of Government Information in Washington, D.C. Adams also wrote the “Afterword: *Quo Vadis?*” which

places five challenges before the church as it confronts civil religion in American society today.

The "Appendix: Two-Kingdoms Theology, Civil Righteousness, and Civil Religion," by Mark Sell, expounds the classic Lutheran understanding of the Two Kingdoms to help Christians live their faith in America's religiously pluralistic society. Daily Christians live in both kingdoms, and must distinguish between "promoting morality and identifying sin; a bad person and a damned sinner; a respected civil servant and a holy child of God; civil righteousness and spiritual righteousness; and, the kingdom of the left and the kingdom of the right" (283).

In the aftermath of 9/11 the church has struggled to identify ways it can best share the gospel of God's love in Christ in America's religiously pluralistic, polytheistic, semipagan public square without damaging its message. How can the church to-

day, like Paul, share the true Savior with those who believe in an unknown or an anonymous god? What can Christians today learn about how to live and witness in a secular pagan public square from early Christian apologists like Athenagoras of Athens? More books and essays examining this topic are needed to help the church continue to witness to Christ's salvation in the world's public square. Perhaps a future book will examine the interaction of Jesus and the Apostles with the polytheistic civil religious environment of Roman culture.

Daily, souls are going to hell. The church needs to be in the public square, boldly evangelizing in ways that neither mute its message nor damage its theology.

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The Lord's Supper in the Theology of Martin Chemnitz

Bjarne Wollan Teigen



Shortly before Bjarne Teigen's death, his children suggested that his book be republished on the Internet; he was able to conceptualize the process and understood that by this means his book might reach scholars worldwide at low cost. When he gave his consent, the process of having *The Lord's Supper in the Theology of Martin Chemnitz* republished electronically was begun. The cost of the project was kept low only because of LOGIA's generous offer to place the book on its website.

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LOGIA Forum

SHORT STUDIES AND COMMENTARY

C. F. W. WALTHER: ABSOLUTION, PART II

We continue with the series from Dr. Walther. The following is the second part: "Holy Absolution Rescued from the Slander of the Methodists" (Die heilige Absolution, gerettet gegen die Lästerungen der Methodisten), Der Lutheraner 2 (1846), 62–63. Translated by C. Matthew Phillips, Ph.D.

As we have seen in the previous entry, the doctrine of holy absolution is clearly founded in Holy Scripture. Nevertheless, there is hardly a doctrine that has found such general opposition in this time of unbelief and enthusiasm. Now, indeed, one would like to think that since the Scripture speaks so clearly, it would not be necessary to waste a word concerning the objections that some raise against the previously explained doctrine. For whoever would reject this doctrine cannot believe in the Scripture. Therefore, one may be unable otherwise to help such a person, other than to attempt to convince him of the divine inspiration [Göttlichkeit] of Holy Scripture. If that would happen, then every doubt over the divine inspiration of absolution spoken by a human apostle would fall away by itself. However, it is certain that most of those who rise up against the doctrine of absolution, even the so-called "believers," do so because they still do not believe from the heart that the Bible is God's word and the Lord Jesus is the true God and eternal life (1 Jn 5:20). Indeed, the word of God says to us that heretics "easily also seduce innocent hearts with sweet words and splendid speech" (Rom 16:17–18), and "move their minds from the simplicity in Christ" (2 Cor 11:3). For the sake of such easily seduced and misled innocent hearts and simple souls, it is therefore necessary to deal with the objec-

tions. It is necessary to shut the mouths of those who speak against [this doctrine of absolution] and to counteract their poison of seduction, and if nothing else to render them harmless for those that do not want to remain in error and thereby be condemned.

The manner in which one proceeds against the doctrine of the holy absolution varies greatly. The most ungodly and disgraceful way used by the so-called believers is the same one that the Methodists of our day and now particularly Mr. Nast and Mr. Mulsinger employ. Presumably, they deny not only that the Christian church does not have the authority to forgive and retain sins now, they even maintain in defiance of Christ's very clear words that the holy apostles themselves would neither have had or used it. They conclude quite rightly, if they could persuade Christians of this, that thereby they would have eradicated the doctrine of absolution entirely (root and branch) from every heart. In order to achieve this goal, they twist the words of Jesus Christ in such a way that it must deeply enrage the Christian heart.

Indeed what Mr. Mulsinger writes for example: "The verse: 'If you forgive the sins of any . . . and so forth,' appears at first look to be favorable to absolution." After this, however, he explains that according to this verse the absolution is only the "authority to preach the requirements of reconciliation and the forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus." We would not place this garbage of puffed up, unintelligent newcomers here if Mr. Nast did not declare it as very "basic and foundational" and offer that [statement] as proof that also a "great German theologian" of our time says: "The power of the keys is nothing other than the explanation of the requirements under which God saves or damns human beings."

Truly, what then could open the eyes of anyone who does not see from this examination of the Methodist exposition of Scripture that the Methodists take the peculiar nature of their religion not from the Bible but rather from their hearts and their reason? Consider, dear reader, if our Lord Jesus Christ instructs somebody to forgive the sins of another, as much as it is stated according to the Methodist method of biblical exposition, one should demonstrate to the same person the requirements of forgiveness. Although Christ demands that believers should forgive their offenders, according to the Methodists, he does not demand that they really

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pardon the offenses of the offenders orally so that the same [offenses] really may be forgiven and forgotten and assert with certainty that the same [offenses] in the heart should be considered as if they did not happen. According to the Methodists, Christ only demands that Christians should have the power to show their enemies what they would have to do in order to obtain forgiveness. Is that not a fine interpretation of Scripture? Indeed, it is horrible to say, is this not like treating the words of Christ as the words of a fool who did not know how he should have expressed himself? Is that not like leading the Holy Spirit to school? If one may interpret God's word in this way, on what word can the sinner still depend? What word then still stands firm? Which doctrine of Scripture can one not exegete or explain out of Scripture if this manner [of exegesis] is valid?

It is undeniable with this [type of exegesis] that the Methodists prove that they, as the offspring of the Reformed, stand essentially on the same ground and foundation as the rationalists. For someone should ask Mr. Lichtfreund once whether he also believes that Christ has redeemed human beings as the Bible says? So the designated gentleman will answer, "Oh well, for I have nothing at all to do with the less than genuine, confused writer in New York who rejects the Bible as a book of lies and Christ as a deceiver. However, of course, one should not think that Christ has really redeemed human beings. No. He did this only insofar as he demonstrated to human beings the requirements that had to be fulfilled in order for them to be redeemed." Is the Methodist way of explaining the forgiveness and retaining of sins really a hair better than this? Does it not seem that the Methodists and the rationalists are like two peas in a pod? Therefore, whoever still believes in God's word, be warned of the Methodist spirit. It is a spirit that is not afraid of God's words.

The words about the office of the keys are not the only things that reveal this among them. Likewise, the Methodists lightly and wickedly treat God's words that deal with holy baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the reckoning of the active obedience of Christ and similar things. And one would like to come across this shameful contempt of the written word only among the leaders of the Methodist congregations! However, unfortunately this plague has infected the poor souls that they lead almost without exception. For if one speaks with a Methodist or Methodist-minded evangelical, pseudo-Lutheran, then one sees that they have no respect for the word of God.¹ If a clear utterance of Scripture is put forth that testifies against them, so they act, as Luther says, as if they had roasted a goose. Indeed, that truly does not testify to the right Holy Spirit. For this [Spirit] testifies rather "that the Spirit is truth" (1 Jn 5:6). This [Spirit] has an effect on a broken heart that "cowers before the Word of God" (Is 66:2) and believes firmly that "man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from

the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4). We repeat that a Christian enlightened by the Holy Spirit follows his Savior. He does not let himself be driven from God's word. He refers to it whenever an argument arises and says: "It is written! And the Scripture cannot be broken!"

Your Word stands as a strong wall,
Which no one can tear down,
Even though he may be quite clever.

We have now shown that the Methodist exposition of verses that deal with holy absolution rests on principles that topple the truth and certainty of the entire holy Scripture. Now we want to examine the other objections that one takes from the analogy of faith (Rom 12:17).

The most common objection is that the Scripture indeed clearly teaches that God alone is able to forgive sin (Lk 5:21; see Is 43:25). We answer that this is true. However, this is also not denied with the right teaching of absolution. There is entirely no argument over the fact that God alone is able to forgive sin. This the Lutherans deny much less than the Methodists and all groups in Christendom. The question is really whether God may forgive sin through men. Lutherans alone maintain this and in fact according to the Scripture. For it is not only written, "If you forgive the sins of any, and so forth" but the preachers of the gospel are presented also generally in God's word clearly as "God's coworker and assistant" (1 Cor 3:9; 2 Cor 6:1). Therefore, St. Paul says to the Corinthians, "I gave birth to you in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (1 Cor 4:15). He speaks to the Galatians, "My dear children whom I bore with anxieties" (Gal 4:19). Yes, the same apostle even ascribes to bishop Timothy the saving of his hearers and states: "Pay attention to yourself and to your teaching, continue in these things. For when you do such things, you will save yourself and those who hear you" (1 Tim 4:16).

The Methodists of course will quickly take such verses and say that all these expressions may be a bit exaggerated. God alone is able to give new birth and save. Clearly the apostle wants to indicate with such expressions that the preachers of the gospel are able to explain the requirements of new birth and salvation. However, that is the distortion of a verse in order to justify that one distorts other [verses] also. That is not to interpret but rather to empty Scripture, not to sharpen it but to make it blunt. If such a scriptural exegesis is valid, then investigation into the Scripture is an absurdity. Then the exposition of Scripture is nothing other than the effort to stretch and bend the words of Scripture until one has brought a tolerable sense for the common human understanding. Then the job of an expositor is to save the same [words of Scripture] through sophistry from suspicion as [Scripture] may not be able to remain before the judgment seat of reason. However, we observe the same thing with all reasonable Christians for a good expositor of Scripture, who in the special manner of expression of the Scripture just discovers the ever greater depths of wisdom and ever sharper demarcations of truth. However, whoever handles the Scripture like this, as if it has

1. Translator's note: The word *after* in German can also mean "anal." Walther's point is that these are false Lutherans who think like Methodists.

many words but little sense, as if it uses special expressions, however it hides under this insipid content, as if it would give itself the appearance of a mysterious depth, is still quite shallow. The devil thanks such an expositor of Scripture for his effort. That is the way that Rosenmusser, Dinter, and Lichtfreund refute the Scripture under the cover of interpreting.

What is it that the apostle teaches us when he says concerning the preachers of the gospel that they are coworkers and assistants [and] that they are spiritual fathers and save their hearers? As a result he teaches us that God himself is powerful and effective through the Christian office of preaching that was established by him. He teaches that the voice of the evangelical preachers is no mere human voice but rather the voice of God so that God works through the same things as through his instruments on human souls (Acts 9:15). According to Scripture, as God alone calls, enlightens, gives faith, gives new birth, and saves, so also God alone, through the office of the word, forgives sin through the office that preaches reconciliation. Therefore, St. Paul writes: "If anyone is in Christ, so he is a new creation: the old is gone, behold, everything has become new, but that is all from God, who reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ and gave us the office, that preaches reconciliation; for God was in Christ and reconciled the world to himself and did not count their sins against them and has established among us the word of reconciliation. So we are now ambassadors in the stead of Christ, for God exhorts through us; so we now entreat in the stead of Christ: be reconciled with God" (2 Cor 5:17–20).

Whenever an ignorant and therefore irreligious person objects, "How can a man, a wretched priest, be so bold as to want to forgive sins? By doing this he makes himself out to be God!" this may not surprise us. However, should not men who want to be scriptural authorities and teach others be ashamed of such an objection? At the very least should they not be aware of the difference between the landlord and the steward and so decrease all difficulties for them (Heb 3:5, 6; see 1 Cor 4:1)? Certainly the one who made himself into God, who wanted to forgive others sins in his power as a Lord over hell and heaven, condemnation and salvation, does so out of his own assumed authority and in his own name. However, a true Christian preacher absolves, as everybody knows, always according to the essential thing: "by the power of my office as a called and ordained servant of the word, in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ and in the name of the triune God."

As the poorest person can distribute the greatest treasures of a kingdom if the same person has become a steward over it, so also a sinner [can distribute] forgiveness that is a spiritual treasure of the rich, heavenly father of the house if the sinner has been appointed by this one. This is the way in which the absolution of a human apostle should be considered. The first objection, therefore, is frivolous. The Methodists certainly seek to persuade their people that the doctrine of the Lutheran Church is this: God has removed from himself the power to forgive sins and handed over the same things to the Lutheran preachers, who could now admit into or expel from heaven

whomever they want. The gentlemen prove through such distortions that they know it themselves whenever they wanted to attack the true doctrine of the Lutheran Church concerning absolution. Consequently they would prove Christ himself to be a liar. Therefore, they would have to impose a doctrine that they detest to Christ, whom they make out to be a liar. [To be continued.]

OBSERVING CATHOLICISM

After teaching for thirty-three years with the Jesuits at Marquart University, Dr. Kenneth Hagen here relates what he observed about the Catholic Church.

For some time I have thought that after thirty-three years I should be able to say something about how Roman Catholicism looked from this set of Lutheran eyes. I think I gained some insights on how Catholics think and behave.

As was my custom at the end of the Luther class (upper division), after grades were set and all requirements completed, I would ask the class what they really thought about Luther. In one class there was a conservative Catholic and a conservative Lutheran from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS). The Catholic said if he were living in the sixteenth century he would have joined up with Luther; but then he added "of course it [the Lutheran system] doesn't work." The Lutheran responded "it ain't easy." There you have it: the complexities and differences of perspective.

The concept of church is very different in the two communions. When you say "church" to a Lutheran, what comes to mind often is the communion of saints of all ages, and maybe the church back home. When you say "church" to a Catholic, what comes to mind is the Eucharist, the universal institution, the hierarchy (especially the bishop), church as a bedrock of stability and salvation, and maybe the pope (pro or con). For a Catholic, church is home; not only where the heart is, but, more importantly, where the soul is. The church is there from cradle to grave.

For the Catholic the sense of church is very different. The church defines the Catholic's essence as catholic. There is something almost mystical about Catholicism, "mystical" in the root meaning of the word *silence*. It is inexpressible. At least that is the way it seemed to me from the outside. My time at the university was to me an academic enterprise. While I pursued academic excellence, I always felt I was not on the inside. It seemed to me that MU had an identity, extra academic, that I could never share.

As I look back at MU and the Catholics there, what I remember is that the church is security for them. It really did not matter what one thought or did, the church was always there for them. This sense of security was always a fallback, a safety net. It was also a whole context within which the

Catholic lived. I don't know if I dare compare and say that what Christ is for a Lutheran, the church is for the Catholic. An example of the church as security is a Jesuit's comment to me one day: without a context, he declared that he did not have to worry about being saved. I suppose with the Lutheran focus on justification it might well give the impression that we do worry a lot about being saved.

Lutherans will never understand catholic ecclesiology (and vice versa) and Catholics will never understand the Lutheran teaching of justification by faith alone.

Faith for Catholicism is part of a lifelong process, hence the lifelong faithfulness I observed. Faith is never complete, never over until one's life is over. The sacrament of penance and the weekly obligation carries the penitent along the way of faith being fulfilled by acts of love (*fides formata caritate*). Certitude of salvation during the process is impossible except for a special gift of grace given to a (very) few. You might say that what the certitude of salvation is for Lutherans the certitude of the church is for Catholics. Grace perfects nature, said Thomas Aquinas.

Devotion to the church among the Jesuits took and takes the form of saying the daily office, day in and day out. I traveled in Germany and Norway with one of my best friends, and, yes, there he was with book in hand every day.

Catholic theology can in no way accommodate the Lutheran *sola fide*. Catholics say justification by faith, yes, but justification by faith alone? No. For Catholics faith is never alone; faith is to be formed by hope and love. Nor is Christ ever without his mother. Nothing is ever "alone."

Much of Catholic theology is predicated on wholeness: the wholeness of creation, redemption, the individual, and the church. It all hangs together. The Lutheran tendency toward dialectics, the "alones," and the doctrine of sin jar Catholic sensitivities. The Lutheran dialectic of sinner/saint for the Catholic comes out both sinful and saintly.

Organic categories abound in Catholic theology: creation, revelation, salvation, church. All is a process of growth: faith formed by works of love, the church as the extension of the incarnation.

A good (Catholic) friend pointed out to me that Catholicism is a culture, social and ethnic. To be Irish is to be Catholic. Catholic culture is a way of life, it weaves and holds everything together. It is not the same for Lutheranism. Lutheranism is a way of faith amidst a variety of cultures — independent, really, of culture. A convert to Catholicism is never truly an insider. One Jesuit who was a convert to Catholicism was to me such an example. When discussing some Catholic practice, another Jesuit said to him that he would never "get it" since he did not have the total Catholic practice (from the cradle). In other words, Catholicism is more than a set of beliefs. It embraces all aspects of life, cradle to grave, centered in the Eucharist.

Living and teaching among Catholics for thirty-three years, I found that Catholics think about Catholicism the way I think about being an American. For Catholics Catholicism is a matter of identity. The fear of John F. Kennedy's becoming president was based on the belief that Catholicism was

answerable to a higher authority. I found that Catholics were proud to be Catholic. In class I always asked how many were Catholic; the Catholics always raised their hands very high. Not so the Lutherans. I remember one discussion in the theology department among the faculty about the identity of theology classes. The discussion was going in the direction of Christian identity until one older Jesuit spoke up and pleaded for Catholic identity.

I found that there was a tremendous variety of belief and action among Catholics. This is different for Catholics because the core of Catholic belief is defined as the *depositum fidei*. Outside of the core (Trinity, Christology, sacraments on the eve of the Reformation) freedom of thought was allowed. This is based on the medieval definition of theology as faith seeking understanding. In one seminar that included a liberal Catholic and a conservative Lutheran of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, as the discussion went back and forth, the Lutheran said to the Catholic "I don't think the Catholic Church has ever taught what you say [along the lines of Hans Küng]."

To put it another way: to use the (Aristotelian) categories of substance and accidents, the *depositum fidei* is the substance of Catholic faith defended by the magisterium, and theological explorations are the accidents. The variety of Catholic schools of thought does not change the substance. The substance is "what everywhere, always, and by every one is believed."

A distinguished Jesuit told me that the Lutheran theological challenge during the Reformation was no problem but that the "split" was not acceptable. The key is the papacy, the teaching office of the church. Not to accept the teaching office is to deny Catholic faith. Luther's theology was not the problem; his views of the papacy were. To put it in perspective, Luther's theology could be classified as right-wing Augustinian. His views of the papacy were Hussite, hence the problem.

In my undergraduate classes on Luther the one area of Luther's theology that met consistent (initial) rejection was his teaching on predestination. I always began this discussion with a question: "How many believe in predestination?" Nobody raised his or her hand. The only time I remember someone raising his hand was a fine ELS student. The "p" word raised red flags. Then I would spend most of the hour explaining the teaching (God has chosen us by grace), after which I asked the same question. Then most of the hands went up.

The main problem with predestination was that it seemed to curtail freedom. Anything that smelled of a denial of free will was not given even a fair hearing by the students. Luther's main emphasis was that salvation is entirely in God's hands. The idea of no human cooperation was unthinkable for the Catholic. Lutheran exclusive categories like faith alone were incomprehensible. Human cooperation, I found, was seen by Catholic theologians to be grounded in Jesus Christ; the human nature cooperated with the divine. The first time I caught wind of this, I was shocked.

Human-divine cooperation seemed to be a basic principle, not only in soteriology but also in ecclesiology, Eucharist, penance . . .

I must admit that over the course of my years among Catholics I came to appreciate Catholicism. It is a massive structure. It is a coherent whole. Its logic is tight. The teachings of the Catholic Church are sure and clear. It must be a comfort to be Catholic since there is no doubt about what to believe and do. *Ganz anders* with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). From time to time I must have let this appreciation show since one colleague surmised that I wanted to become a Jesuit. He told me that I first had to become Catholic. Another time a Jesuit tried to put a little pressure on me by trying to present the “argument from history,” by which I presumed he meant that the length and breadth of the “catholic tradition” demonstrates its truthfulness.

“The one and the many” (*Confutatio to Confessio Augustana*). The working out of salvation is a collaborative effort by Christ, Mary, and the Saints in Catholic theology. So, any talk about Christ alone is okay since, in the Catholic mind, Christ alone does not exclude Mary and the Saints. Christ is never without his mother. It is a whole different mindset.

The matter of Mariology never came up in any of my classes. One discussion panel of graduate students did discuss Mary. A few of the students on the panel reported recent literature about squaring the Trinity (can you believe?). The group present did not really discuss the point. For all the discussion in the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue about Mary (including that by a rabid Mariologist), never did the point about increasing the number of the Godhead come up (thanks be!).

Like Mariology, the papacy never came up in any of my classes. Now I must admit that I did not dwell on Luther’s view of the papacy. A few times the pope did come up in comments by faculty. The ones I remember were all negative (by a laicised priest).

Whenever the matter of grace and merit, faith and works, came up with graduate students, Augustine’s dictum “When God rewards our merits, he crowns his own gifts” seemed to close all discussion. The dictum seemed to head off any Catholic disagreement with Luther. On the face of it, both the dictum and Luther gave priority to God in matters of grace and salvation.

In fact, I found that graduate students were not interested personally in rehearsing the controversies of the sixteenth century: faith alone, grace alone, Christ alone, the papacy, eucharistic presence, predestination, Bible and tradition, biblical canon. The only time I had a real personal discussion, that is, a disagreement, was with the Evangelicals present on the matter of free will. I made the mistake on the first day of saying something to the effect “I can’t imagine anyone being so stupid as to believe in free will.” The Evangelicals responded forcefully in the affirmative. It ruined my entire semester.

In discussions with graduate students, I found that on a given topic the Catholics spoke on behalf of “the church” whereas Protestants spoke on behalf of Scripture or themselves. Catholicism is a point of departure for Catholics more strongly than is Lutheranism for Lutherans. You might say that Catholics wear their Catholicism on their sleeve. The

Lutheran situation is partly due to the fact that Lutheranism is fractured into many synods. Besides, who cares what Lutherans think; they want to know the truth!

I do not think it too simplistic to say that Catholics need the church whereas Lutherans need Christ. This came to mind from a recent article in the local paper by the Archbishop who spoke of the need for Catholics to remain close to the church. This Lutheran feels the need to “go” to church (often), but that is different from needing the church. For Catholics to remain “close to the church” means to adhere closely to the church’s teaching, especially on the moral issues, and to live a sacramental life. The teachings of the ELCA are so loose that there is nothing to adhere to.

For all my admiration of “Catholic,” I found it confusing and puzzling when a very good friend of mine (a Jesuit) said one day: “We say we are ‘catholic’ but we’re not,” pointing to all the fractured denominations (the separated brethren).

The above are some thoughts about what I experienced at Marquette. It is in no way a comparison of Catholicism and Lutheranism. I must say that during my thirty-three years at Marquette I felt like I was an outsider looking in at Catholicism in practice. I was not a part of Catholic culture even though thirty-three years is a long time and even though our best friends were Catholic (and still are). This is not unlike Luther’s view of our relationship with God: the closer we come to God the greater the distance we see between ourselves and God.

I WILL MAKE YOU FISHERS OF MEN

This sermon, based on Matthew 4:12–15, was preached on the Wednesday of Epiphany 3, 30 January 2008, by Dr. Naomichi Masaki of Concordia Theological Seminary.

INI

Peter and Andrew left their net and followed Jesus when Jesus said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” James and John also left their boat and their father to follow him when they were called.

Notice it is in the future tense when Jesus said “I will make you fishers of men.” When did he make them fishers of men? Going through Matthew’s Gospel, we observe first in chapter 10 that Jesus sent the Twelve to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It was a temporary mission and with a limited scope. Then, at the end of the Gospel, the Eleven — including these four men — were made fishers of men as Jesus sent them to all the Gentiles to make disciples by baptizing, teaching. Until that time, Jesus continued to instruct them, as he accompanied them with his teaching, preaching, and healing.

How fitting is our text for our seminary community, especially for those who are studying for the Holy Ministry? You came to the seminary by giving up your jobs. Many of you left your family to come here. And you are not boasting about your level of dedication by saying, “I have surrendered more to the Lord than those who want to stay at home and still want to become pastors.” You do not qualify yourself before the Lord, or compare yourself with your classmates. You know that someday, in the not-so-distant future, the Lord willing, you will be made a fisher of men. You do not claim that you have a right to become a fisher of men because of knowledge, skills, piety, or passion that you have gained. Jesus says that he will make you a fisher of men. Only what he does is most certain and sure.

Yet, after ordination, there may be a time when you regret that you have been put into the Office of the Holy Ministry. Your congregation is not growing as it should. Your members are not loving and caring for each other as they should. All my efforts and labors seem to be in vain. Or there is a controversy in your congregation, so that you must feel like quitting the ministry. As faithful as you are in the ministry, still in the congregation under your care, a division and hatred toward one another or toward you may emerge. You may become a target of personal attacks. Since no respect for you and the pastoral office is left among the members, you may begin to grow weak both physically and spiritually.

Recently, I was reminded of the story of Isaac’s blessings on Jacob. He laid his hands on the wrong person. Not on Esau but on Jacob. When Esau found out about his father’s having blessed his younger brother, he became furious and pleaded for his father to reconsider. But Isaac’s reaction was not to Esau’s liking. Isaac stood firm with what he had done. The blessings that he had given to Jacob he could not take away from him.

Now I am not suggesting that when you feel like quitting the ministry in the future, if that happens, it is because you were the wrong person to get ordained in the first place. But what we can learn from this incidence is that when our Lord blesses you with his words, he has committed himself to his words and promise.

You do not undo your baptism or ordination by your deceitful actions and thoughts. Our Lord is committed with what he did. Isn’t this a comforting thought? Just as the Lord does not leave you with any doubt that salvation is yours in your baptism, so the Lord will not leave you with any doubt about your ordination. They both take place passively. Luther in his Genesis Lectures, therefore, teaches baptism, holy absolution, the Lord’s Supper, and the ordination in connection with this story of Isaac’s blessings. Then he says: “The laying on of hands is not a human tradition but it is God who makes and ordains ministers. Nor is it the pastor who absolves you, but the mouth and hand of the minister is the mouth and hand of God.”

Jesus has committed himself to his words. This morning, we see this in action once again, as Jesus speaks his words of testament, and bestows on you his body to eat and his blood

to drink. Here is the gate of heaven, where the approach to the kingdom of heaven that Jesus preached in our text is open for you. Just as Jesus came to these four men, and not they to him, so it is Jesus who comes to you with his body and blood.

Direct your step to the place where the Lord’s words resound and his body and blood are given out. Who can adequately marvel at or comprehend this heavenly life? Come and see that the Lord is good! Repent and receive forgiveness from your Lord, for his kingdom has come. And when you are made a fisher of men, then rejoice in serving out such a great gift of the Lord to his holy people! “If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared” (Ps 130:5–6). Amen.

SDG

OPPONENTS OF WOMEN’S ORDINATION SENTENCED IN FINLAND

*In the fall of 2007, Tapani Simojoki, in an article for *Lutherische Beiträge* titled “Verfolgung bekenntnisgebundener Lutheraner in Finnland,” mentioned the fact that three members of the Lutheran Church in Finland had been reported to the police for violating the country’s antidiscrimination law.² On 30 November 2007, Finnish theologian Martti Vaahtoranta (the letter he and Anssi Simojoki wrote to the cathedral chapter of the archdiocese of Turku was also documented in *Lutherische Beiträge*)³ reports on what happened next in an electronic mail to fellow pastors:*

Dear Brothers, now it has come true, although I would not have believed this before — or would not have been prepared to believe this: in the district court of Hyvinkää, two pastors (the vice-senior pastor Tauno Tuominen and the missionary Ari Norro) and a laywoman (Ms. Pirkko Ojala, the president of the local chapter of the “Finnish Lutheran Gospel Association”) were sentenced to fines because of violations against the antidiscrimination law. Rev. Norro, who is a committed opponent of women’s ordination, had refused to officiate together with a female pastor. She would have helped with the distribution of the Lord’s Supper, but her appearance in the sacristy before the service was reportedly a surprise for Rev. Norro and Ms. Ojala.

2. See *Lutherische Beiträge* 12 (2007): 204.

3. *Ibid.*, 205–210.

Rev. Norro had offered to stand back, but the female pastor had already decided to leave. Rev. Norro was sentenced because of discrimination. Rev. Tuominen, who is not an opponent of women's ordination, was sentenced because of discrimination in his supervisory office, and Ms. Ojala was sentenced because she — as a representative of the employer of Rev. Norro — did not want to prevent the leaving of the female pastor or, respectively, approved of it. (This information is based on news in the online version of the paper *Helsingin Sanomat* from 30 November 2007. See www.hs.fi.)

I do not know whether the three will appeal the sentence. I very much hope they will. Otherwise, today's decision will represent a precedent which could be applied to every church and even every Christian association.

May God help my church and my fatherland!

Martti Vaahtoranta

This sentence raises a number of questions we will have to deal with more intensively also in this journal,⁴ especially because there are those in Germany who seek to intimidate opponents of women's ordination by the argument that ecclesiastical law limiting ordination into the office of the church to qualified men is in contradiction to the antidiscrimination law. The three Christians in Finland, who are now considered to have a criminal record, were reported to the police by an elder of the congregation. Vaahtoranta, on a U.S. blog, additionally points out that it is apparently the policy of at least some Finnish bishops to have secular courts decide through the backdoor the ecclesial dispute concerning women's ordination that is still going on.⁵ In the background of these events lies the fact that there is still in effect a formal protection for the consciences of opponents of women's ordination in the Lutheran Church in Finland. If now the state moves against these people, then the protection of conscience — repeatedly affirmed (and also ecumenically significant) — can more easily be taken back in the church.

It must give much pause to every observer that, after all the painful experiences in the relationship between church and

state in the twentieth century, there is again a meddling between the two realms that is motivated by those in the church. This is all the more so as one gets the impression that here is taken seriously neither the Finnish ecclesiastical law that protects the opponents of women's ordination,⁶ nor the secular law that explicitly exempts the churches from the regulations of the antidiscrimination law, especially in view of the regulations concerning the churchly office. In both realms one finds an erosion of legal protections. And it remains to be seen whether what now appears to be a sentence motivated by the private convictions of some is not in reality only a step toward a tightening of the antidiscrimination laws at the expense of those churches that are holding on to the apostolic prescriptions concerning the office. This is why the churches in the long run will have to monitor carefully how the secular legislation develops also on the European level.⁷ This is why the Finnish decision has quickly caused some concern also among Roman Catholics.⁸

In the short run, there is the question how we can help the persecuted brethren in Finland. Rev. Norro was sentenced to a fine of €320; Rev. Tuominen, as a senior pastor, has to pay €600; Ms. Ojala, as employee of Rev. Norro, has to pay €120. Add to this the legal fees of more than €9000, to be paid by the three defendants. Meanwhile, there is word that the three have indeed appealed their conviction. Yet also this appeal will be an expensive matter.

The Finnish brethren need above all our prayers, and perhaps also solidarity by means of gathering signatures, letters to the Finnish embassy, or similar steps. But we also do not want to overlook the financial needs. This is why two members of the Independent Lutheran Church in Germany

4. For the time being, a reference to the documentation by Jürgen Diestelmann may be sufficient: <http://www.luther-in-bs.de/Dokumentation.pdf>.

5. "Generally speaking, however, I consider it to be outrageous in a country that is so proud of its modern ways and its democratic tradition, that a secular court takes steps against the religious convictions expressed in the day-to-day life of the church without the church's resisting it; in fact, the church — at least the bishops — look forward to having the courts finally decide who is right and who is wrong in this lengthy churchly dispute. And this is why the lay-activist, Ms. Ojala, is probably only charged because she asked beforehand who was to serve at the altar on the Sunday in question! Women can therefore also discriminate against women! One really wonders when a regular secular-churchly thought police will be established that reliably finds out every 'discriminating' thought and a 'conservative' attitude and right away drags the suspects into court" (<http://cyberbrethren.typepad.com/cyberbrethren/2007/09/more-on-the-fin.html>).

6. The Evangelical Church in Germany has already eliminated this protection of consciences; now criticizing women's ordination is considered a heresy (see A. Wenz, "Der Streit um die Frauenordination im Luthertum," *Lutherische Beiträge* 12 (2007): 103–127, here 122–125).

7. Stefan Mückl, an expert in state-church law, points, for example, to a resolution of the European Parliament on "Women and Fundamentalism" that is, to be sure, not binding, but whose development into legally binding documents is also not impossible to imagine (see his *Europäisierung des Staatskirchenrechts* [Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2005], 471–477). Mückl also mentions the inquiry of a Greek member of parliament as to "whether the refusal of the Greek-Orthodox Church to consecrate women as priests violates European law" (476 n. 274). Mückl talks about the danger of a formal-technical application of the law (419), when priests in recent legal texts are improperly perceived as self-employed or employees, so that the exclusion of certain persons from the spiritual office appears as a contradiction to the European secondary law (applied law). Such tendencies contradict the primary-law (basic-law) principles of religious freedom and autonomy of the church as well as religious neutrality of the state, which so far have been in unchallenged effect also on the European level. The European Union "does not have any powers either to regulate the worship and administration of the sacraments, religious instruction and proclamation or to influence the ecclesiastical law concerning the offices and the ecclesiastical structure of offices" (417–418).

8. See, for example, <http://www.kreuz.net/article.6311.html>.

have set up a special account. We would like to encourage the readers of this journal, and the many friends beyond, to take up this cause and give a visible expression to fraternal love beyond political borders.

The account has been established by Lutz and Regina Piesbergen, account-no.: 580 903 037, Sparkasse Schaumburg, routing-no.: 255 514 80, for “Pastoren Finnland.”

Check out Concordia Publishing House’s *Women Pastors? The Ordination of Women in Biblical Lutheran Perspective: A Collection of Essays* (2008). Superbly done! Very timely and most helpful.

Armin Wenz

FINLAND, PART II

And while we are at it, here is another report from Finland. Watch out, you confessional Lutheran pastors! Don’t you know that only the state church can dish out the “charisma” to do valid ministry? Never mind the Lord Jesus. Matthew 5:11–12 comes to mind. So does Löhe’s nightmare in which he dreamed of the Lutheran Church’s funeral where Lutheran pastors preside and shovel the dirt on the coffin. Read about the nightmare again in LOGIA Reformation 1992 (1:1, 77). Note that the professor who holds such a view is a world-renowned Lutheran and Luther scholar. Better check to see if he is reaching for a shovel or has dirt on his hands.

A Finnish professor questions the validity of ‘schismatic’ baptisms.

In an interview by the Finnish ecclesiastical weekly *Kotimaa*, professor of Ecumenical Theology in the University of Helsinki Risto Saarinen questions the validity of baptisms performed by confessional pastors, whose ministry is not recognized by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. Pastors ordained in the Mission Province in Sweden lack the civil servant rights required to add children and adults they baptize to the membership of the Church of Finland. According to Saarinen, for a baptism to be valid it must be performed with an intention to baptize into the membership of a local church. Since these confessional pastors are unable to do this, their baptisms do not fill the prerequisites for a valid baptism.

The question about the ordination of women has divided the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. The church accepted the ordination of women in 1986, but until 1999 men not willing to work with female pastors were still ordained and were allowed to work in congregations. In 1999 an organization [sic] called Luther Foundation was founded in order that people who do not accept women conducting the divine service could attend worship services within the Church of Finland.

Luther-säätiö is growing fast and has organized into congregations (“worship communities”) in fifteen towns around Finland. Since men who are not willing to work with female pastors are no longer ordained by the Church of Finland, a Swedish bishop of a conservative diocese, the Mission Province, has ordained six pastors for Luther Foundation since 2005. The Finnish Lutheran Church however does not recognize the ministry of these pastors, and people baptized by them must first be added to the civil registry before they can join the Church of Finland.

The validity of baptism is an important ecumenical question. Currently, Lutheran churches have widely accepted all baptisms conducted in the Trinitarian faith, using water and the Trinitarian formula, “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.” If the Finnish Lutheran Church accepts the propositions stated by Professor Saarinen, it will result in a new ecumenical dispute concerning the minimum prerequisites of a valid baptism.

Wille Huuskonen, student of theology, Helsinki

Link: http://www.kotimaa.fi/kotimaa/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4369&Itemid=38

FYI

In 1847, twenty-one of the forty-one pastors of the Missouri Synod were Löhe men. In 1851 the synod had eighty-one pastors and ninety-five congregations, and by this time Löhe had sent eighty-four men to serve as pastors and teachers! C. F. W. Walther wrote:

Next to God it is Pastor Löhe to whom our synod owes thanks almost exclusively for the joyful blossoming and rapid strengthening which it enjoys; it must quite properly honor him as its spiritual father. It would fill the pages of an entire book if one were to narrate in only a brief outline what that dear man has been doing for a great number of years with inexpressible zeal and in the most noble magnanimous way for our Lutheran Church, and especially for our synod” (*Der Lutheraner* 8 [17 February 1852], 97).

MEMBERS ONLY

So when did we no longer consider baptized members of the church to be disciples of the Lord Jesus? Some make this false distinction quite boldly and without apology. One congregation has devoted itself to shape people into being “more than members — they are disciples, and they understand the difference. They do more than just work for the church, they

are in the ministry of the church” (stluke@stlukecabot.org). I know I am getting older (and my children cannot wait until they can put me in the nursing home, and my wife may vote in favor of that, too), but I still have enough brain activity left to remember that disciples are made by being baptized in the Name of the Triune God and taught what the Lord commanded (Matthew 28). One becomes a member of the body of Christ through baptism. Member . . . disciple; it is the same thing. Disciplined in the life of contrition, faith, and love by the shepherding of the church through word and sacrament. So it goes without saying that when the baptized (member-disciple) goes to church he or she always expects to receive care. Primary care. Forgiveness-of-sins care from the pastor and from the congregation through the word and sacrament in the liturgy. After all, the last time I checked, the scriptural teaching of *simul iustus et peccator* still holds true. Consequently, the care that the baptized (member-disciple) would always receive from the church was a life of daily repentance (contrition and faith) worked by the divine word preached and the life of love carried out in one’s vocations for the sake of the neighbor that flowed from the sacrament of the altar. And then as you carried out your daily vocations in the world, the Lord would bring you back (*via meditatio, oratio, and tentatio*) to the divine service to receive his Calvary-won forgiveness for the strengthening of your faith in him and for fervent love towards the neighbor.

However, such tending is now in jeopardy. How can this be? Well, in today’s trendy and timely Lutheran congregations once you have really become a committed “disciple” and not just a “member,” all bets are off. The pastoral and congregational care you expect can potentially be taken away when push comes to shove. And when push comes to shove the shepherding of the baptized gathered around word and sacrament can be put on the back burner. What is the push that does the shoving? Mission. Saving the lost. Now don’t misunderstand. We are not against mission. Who is? And where we have been lazy and apathetic let us repent.

But the following is just a tad bit over the top where a congregation’s devotion focuses on “making the unbeliever the primary target, of making the unchurched who may believe, but who are disconnected from the Church, the primary mission. Nothing is more important than that—not even the members who are already here.” That is a part of the courageous vision cast in a Lutheran congregation (stluke@stlukecabot.org). Who knows how many more? Check it out for yourselves. All this, of course, is a shepherding model after the likes of Amway International. The pastor multiplies disciples so that the disciples can multiply even more. Disciples do the ministry! And if you are not producing (some at CNBC would call it “pimping”), then you are “just a member.” But quite ironically, that is when you will finally get the ultimate care. So if you really want to be gutsy (my tongue is firmly planted in cheek), resign your “disciple” status and backslide into the fringe as a “member” who just goes through the motions and fakes it. Perhaps you could renounce your baptism and declare yourself an unbeliever again. Then you

will be guaranteed the “nothing is more important than that” “*Seelsorge-ing*” you deserve.

That is the *Seelsorge-ing* of today. No wonder the burnout rate among the clergy is so high (not to mention the members of Christ’s body). What pressure! What a burden! Of constantly making sure that the baptized move from the lower status of member to the more spiritual and higher estate of disciple in order to be like a coredeemtpix by “saving” the lost. But then there is the timeless and tested “vision” (before pastors ever thought of such things) cast by a truly courageous village church model pastor Wilhelm Löhe. Might want to give that a try. Might want to really think outside the box for a change. After all, Löhe learned from the Scriptures and the Confessions that the center of pastoral care is in the liturgy, where the Lord Jesus gathers his church around his voice in word and sacrament. In the divine service faith is created and strengthened. Then faith (like a fertile woman) gives birth to numerous works of love that are carried out in one’s vocations. This is the church in mission. Löhe writes:

Our age, a time of one-sidedness and experimentation, has set its hopes on many things. It has been hoped that the narrow way might be made broad, either through preaching or through the schools or through the care of souls. Without the care of souls, it was finally said, nothing could be accomplished. Then began such a running and racing and caring of souls that it became evident in a very short time that even this could not make the way broad. It was forgotten that preaching, sacrament, catechization, and also the liturgy take care of souls in a truly magnificent way. The care of individual souls is dependent on the rapport that results from sermon, sacrament, and catechization.

It was also forgotten that the care of souls presupposes great virtue, wisdom, and gifts, and not everyone who undertakes the care of souls is fit for the task. Running, racing, and talking do not make up for a lack of wisdom, or for a lack of gifts and virtue. This is why many mistakes were made and the goal was not reached, partly through the fault of the pastors.

The main difficulty was that men overlooked what is central in pastoral care: the confessional. . . . All other methods of individual care of souls have proved unsatisfactory and often impractical substitutes for private confession. Pastoral calling in the homes, citations, etc.—all lack the advantages of the confessional. . . .

[Our church] does not consider it an insult, nor is it eager to interpret it as an insult, when someone says, “This pastor thinks it is enough if he preaches, catechizes, administers the sacraments, hears confessions, and comforts the sick!” It knows that even the most faithful pastors do not do enough of this. It has little use for multiplying pastoral duties but treasures those which are commanded in the Scriptures and have been recognized since ancient times. To many people it is something novel that a man should not be a jack of many trades but a master of the

few precious means, yet this is what the church has always thought. In a word, it accomplishes much through a few means. . . .

It is . . . more than enough, if a man just carries out the ancient duties of a pastor. Superfluous and even a hindrance is the officiousness of *modern* pastors. Here the slogan should be, "Not many, but much." The poverty of our fathers is richer than the wealth of our opponents. It is . . . through persistent use of Word and sacrament, through giving of a quiet but full measure, through modesty and steadfastness that the Lutheran Church attains its goals. . . .

The church has various activities, therefore, even though the means through which it performs them and encourages all good things are always the same — Word, sacrament, the holy office of the ministry.

Few means — many good works! That is the way it is with the church.

(*Three Books About The Church*, trans. James L. Schaaf [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969], 173–175, 165–167). For the latest with Löhe's *Three Books About the Church*, google the following: *Drei Bücher von der Kirche*. 1845. Studienausgabe 1 — Herausgegeben von Dietrich Blaumuß.

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WHAT WOULD LÖHE SAY?

An alarming number of pastors are being dismissed by the congregations they serve, divine call notwithstanding. They are being "fired" or "put out" of office by a simple majority vote. Church officials who find no biblical cause for such "firings" discover that they can do little or choose to do little or nothing about such votes because of polity. I know of one pastor who was commended by the dual parish he served via a letter for faithfully preaching God's word, administering the sacraments, and visiting the sick and shut-ins. However, in the same letter that praised him for his faithful service, he was given two week's notice. Was he leading an immoral life? No. Was he persistently teaching false doctrine? No. Was he a bully? Lording himself over the people? No. Was he apt to teach? Yes. And yet he was given his walking papers. Perhaps Löhe's warning to Walther should be given another look at least (Quoted in James L. Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church: A Study in the History of Lutheran Mission" [doctoral diss., Heidelberg, 1961], 119).

We note with regret in our hearts that your synodical constitution, as it now is established, does not entirely agree with the pattern of the first [apostolic] congregations; and we fear, certainly with full justification, that the foundational, strong admixture of democratic, independent, congregational principles in your church structure will give rise to great harm, just as the interference of princes and authorities has brought to our home church. A precise knowledge of the many instructions of the holy apostles about the organization of the church and the care of souls would have been able to teach the dear brothers something else about the laity. Structure [Verfassung] is a dogmatic, but not a practical, adiaphoron.

MEETING NOTICE: INTERNATIONAL LOEHE SOCIETY

The Second Triennial Meeting of the International Loehe Society will take place in Neuendettelsau, Germany, in the two-hundredth anniversary year of Löhe's birth. The meeting will take place beginning the evening of Tuesday, 22 July, and conclude midday on Saturday, 26 July 2008. The Reverend Professor John T. Pless of Concordia Theological Seminary will be one of the main presenters. For more information go to: http://www.wartburgseminary.edu/uploadedfiles/PressRoom/2005/AR_LoehesSociety.Pdf.

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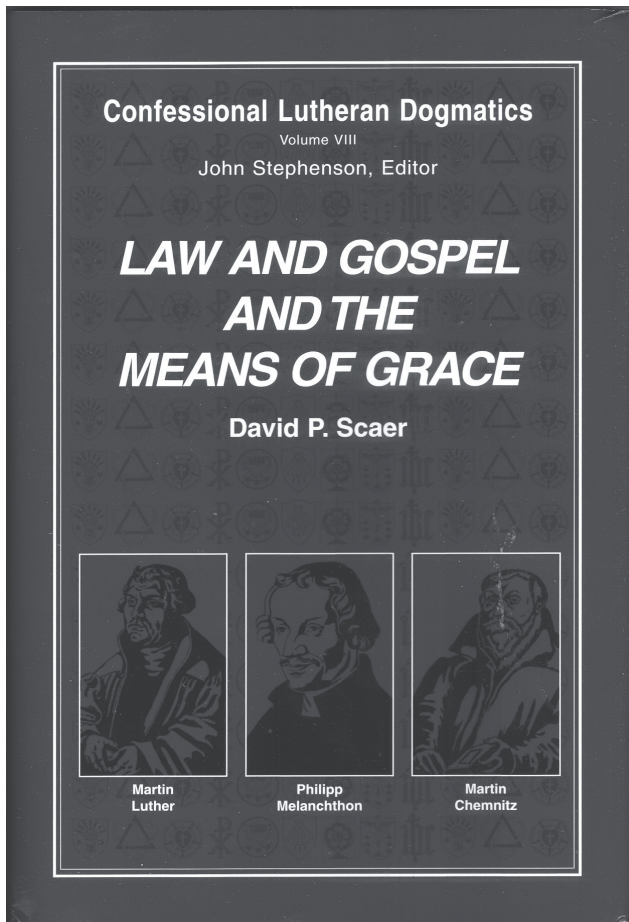


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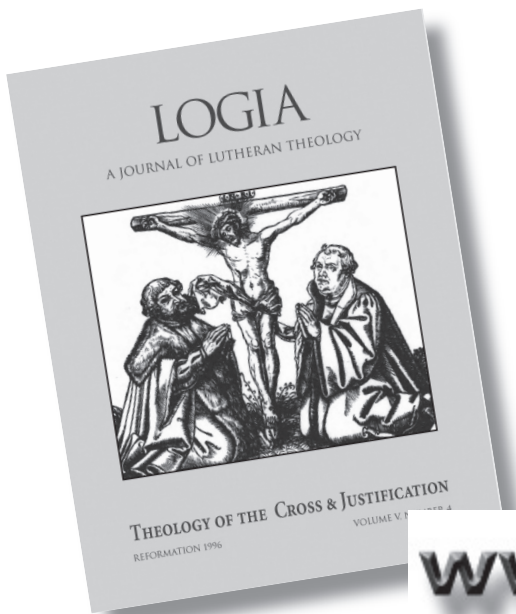
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