

# LOGIA

A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY



# SPIRITUALITY

EASTERTIDE 2009

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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 that reveals Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life—Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, we confess the church, without apology and without rancor, only with a sincere and fervent love for the precious Bride of Christ, the holy Christian church, "the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God," as Martin Luther says in the Large Catechism (LC II, 42). We are animated by the conviction that the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession represents the true expression of the church that we confess as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

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THE ART ON THE COVER shows the Weimar altar painting, by Lucas Cranach the Younger of 1555, above the altar of Sts. Peter and Paul Church. A painting of Lutheran theology, Christ is placed in the center just as the article of justification is truly central to the Christian faith.

Shown are preachers of Law and Gospel: the two chief doctrines that are to be proclaimed. Adam, Moses, John the Baptizer, Martin Luther and the artist himself are all included among those who preach and point to Christ. The Israelites in camp, saved from the serpents' bites by gazing upon the Bronze Serpent, and the shepherds outside Bethlehem, hearing the angel's proclamation of the birth of Christ, continue the same themes.

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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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### CONTENTS

#### ARTICLES

<i>God's Smile: Worship as Source of Christian Life</i> Carl Axel Aurelius .....	5
<i>Flood Logic: Tending the Means of Grace</i> James Arne Nestingen .....	11
<i>Doctrine and Practice: Resisting the Influence of Evangelicalism</i> Klemet Preus .....	13
<i>The Jesus Prayer: A Form of Russian Piety in Theological Perspective</i> Reinhard Slenczka .....	23
<i>The Night Will Soon Be Ending: Jochen Klepper: Lutheran Hymn-writer in Dark Times</i> Holger Sonntag .....	31
<i>Eucharistic Themes in the Gospels</i> David P. Scaer .....	41

#### REVIEWS ..... 49

REVIEW ESSAY: <i>To Live with Christ</i> . By Bo Giertz. Translated by Richard Wood (ed.) and Bror Erickson. Review by Eric R. Andrae	
<i>Exercitium Pietatis Quotidianum Quadripartitum</i> (1612). Lateinisch-Deutsch. By Johann Gerhard. Review by Armin Wenz	
<i>Religion and the Death Penalty: A Call for Reckoning</i> . Edited by Erik C. Owens, John D. Carlson, and Eric P. Elshtain. Review by Peter J. Brock	
<i>Christianity's Dangerous Idea: The Protestant Revolution — A History from the Sixteenth Century to the Twenty-First</i> . By Alister McGrath. Review by Shawn D. Stafford	
<i>My Light and My Salvation</i> . By Kurt E. Reinhardt. Review by Stephen P. Starke	
<i>Social Ministry in the Lutheran Tradition</i> . Edited by Foster R. McCurley. Review by John T. Pless	

#### LOGIA FORUM ..... 59

- A Brave New Church • The Fruits of Revivalism: Death or Resurrection?
- On Glory, Suffering, and the Cross: In the Wake of Shooting Sprees and Massacres
- In Praise of Two Theologians: Norman Nagel and Kenneth Korby
- Elijah and Löhe: Robust Food through the Nourishment of God
- Brudersamt • Divorce Court • Remembering Reed
- Paſtor Klaus Ganzert • Three Poems

#### ALSO THIS ISSUE

<i>Call for Manuscripts</i> .....	22
<i>Inklings by Jim Wilson</i> .....	40

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## AIDS Orphans



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# God's Smile

## Worship as Source of Christian Life

CARL AXEL AURELIUS

Translated by Holger Sonntag



FOR LUTHER, THE IMAGE of the Christian life is most clearly seen in the psalms. The mixture of joy and suffering, lamentation and praise found in them characterizes the life and different affects of a Christian. Some of the psalms allow us to look deeply into the most difficult afflictions. We get a picture of the emotions of this situation, for example, in Psalm 6 or Psalm 13. Both are strange psalms, and they are so in a twofold way. On the one hand, it is certainly noteworthy that they are there at all. The afflicted one is apparently in a situation in which he has to ask himself: Does it really pay to pray? Yet he prays in spite of everything. Why? On the other hand, both psalms are noteworthy due to the sudden change in key. In the middle of the psalm there is a change from minor to major. Lament is transformed into a song of praise. What actually happens there? In his second great exposition of the Psalter, *Operationes in Psalmos* (1519–1521), Luther states:

For the afflicted ones have to be comforted now and then in order to be able to endure. This is why joyful psalms and psalms of lament are mixed in many ways, so that this mixture of different psalms and this confused order, as it is called, should be an example and image of the Christian life that is practiced under manifold grief from the world and under comfort from God's word. (WA 5: 287.16 ff.)

As was said, both psalms show us the most difficult affliction. They are no longer about the grief the world causes. The afflicted one no longer wrestles with man but with God. More and more he sinks down into despair. On the outside, he or she suffers from something not known to us; yet on the inside, we know exactly how this human being regards his suffering. He thinks, "God has rejected me in his wrath forever." This is the greatest affliction. The afflicted one finds himself in chaotic darkness.

As parallels, Luther points to two passages from Scripture, Genesis 1:2 and Romans 8:26, which follow this train of thought: The darkness surrounding the afflicted one is like the chaotic darkness existing before creation "over the deep." The Spirit who once hovered "over the waters" is the Spirit who now becomes active in the afflicted one and who "intercedes with inexpressible groaning" for him.

In other words, Luther understands this last sign of life not as a result of a final effort of the afflicted one, but as an expression of the Spirit's dwelling in him and praying in him. The Spirit helps him to get through the affliction, helps him to endure. It is thus the work of the Spirit that there is prayer at all and that these prayers are gathered in the psalms.

What is more, the Spirit is active in the intercessions of the saints for the afflicted ones. The Holy Spirit is, for Luther, chiefly intercessor and comforter, just as it is said in Romans 8:26. Regin Prenter calls this specific passage Luther's "center of understanding by which all his thoughts about the Spirit are oriented." Prenter adds: "No infused grace can groan for man with unutterable groanings. No one but God himself is able to do that."<sup>1</sup>

The change in both psalms happens by a word from the outside; the word concerning God's presence and mercy; the Word, Christ. Thus begins the song of praise. On the outside, the situation of the afflicted one has perhaps changed very little. He is still being attacked. Yet by the word concerning God's mercy his interpretation of the situation has totally changed. The word ends fear and its rule. It calls forth hope.

Luther thus says that God has changed for the one praying, and now God steps forth as the merciful Father from whom one expects all good things:

Yet now that you have become my Lord and God, turn to me, not only to hear me but also to answer me, and to do nothing else than to save and preserve me, so that I might have a gracious God instead of an angry Judge. (WA 5: 388.19 ff.)

Overcoming affliction is an act of creation that happens, like that first one, in characteristic darkness: out of nothing and by the word. The double exposure of creation and redemption is clearly emphasized and is quite frequent in Scripture. God's redemption means to begin at the beginning, therefore redemption is new creation.

Overcoming affliction is likewise a Trinitarian event. The angry God is replaced by the merciful Father who embraces the

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1. Regin Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, trans. J. M. Jensen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1953; reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001), 18–19.

afflicted one by the inexpressible groaning of his Spirit and the lost love of his Son.

A catechetical text from the same time as the commentary on the psalms narrates how the Spirit opens the way to the Father “through Christ and in Christ.” The wording is highly reminiscent of the explanation of the Third Article in the Small Catechism:

I do not only believe that the Holy Spirit is a true God with the Father and the Son, but also that no one can come in and to the Father through Christ and his life, suffering, death, and everything that is said about him, or gain any of these, without the work of the Holy Spirit, by whom the Father and the Son moves, awakens, calls, draws me and all who are his; by whom he also makes us alive, holy, and spiritual through and in Christ. This is how he brings us to the Father; for he is the one by whom the Father through Christ and in Christ does everything and makes alive. (WA 7: 218.25 ff.)

Luther calls affliction and overcoming the affliction a “play of God.” In this sense it is possible to regard and experience the event as Jacob did at the ford of the Jabbok in Genesis 32. According to Luther’s exposition in the early sermons from the 1520s, as well as in the great Genesis commentary, this account is about the most difficult affliction, just as Psalm 6:13. Perhaps his interpretation of Jacob’s prayer and struggle can deepen our understanding of overcoming affliction and the turn from lament to praise we encountered in the psalms.

---

### ***Luther understands Jacob’s struggle as a story of an answered prayer.***

---

Luther understands Jacob’s struggle as a story of an answered prayer. Jacob called on God to be delivered from the hand of Esau, his brother. In his prayer Jacob reminded God of His promise made to him in Bethel. Yet God’s answer, at least at the beginning, looks like its opposite: God wants to kill him. This is why God’s actions are impossible to grasp with reason — faith, however, grasps it.

Jacob is caught between a rock and a hard place. His chief desire is to avoid an encounter with Esau and so this is his request of the Lord. In answer, he encounters God instead of Esau. Jacob’s opponent is for Luther not only an angel but God himself. During the struggle, Jacob holds on to God’s promise, and in this consists his strength by which he prevails.

How can Jacob overcome God who is almighty? To struggle with God and prevail means for Luther to overcome the angry God, the God who has eternally rejected and forsaken me. Just like in the psalms mentioned above, this is about the follow-

ing: How does a human being understand his suffering while he finds himself in deepest affliction? How does he regard God and all that exists? This is not a question concerning God “by himself,” but one concerning God “in me”:

Thus, this is what overcoming God means: not to overcome his power, but to overcome that which he is, and as what he is felt, in our conscience, just as Scripture says that God is changed when we are changed. He is changeless in himself. (WA 24: 568.28 ff.)

Therefore we see that God is always the same; yet God changes for me when the affliction is overcome.

For this change to happen, it is of critical importance to hear and hold on to God’s word and promise, even if, and especially if, this word becomes doubtful in the darkness of affliction:

When I overcome him in this way in me, then I have overcome God by grasping and holding the word concerning his mercy and by driving away what wants to make him angry. Thus, one does not overcome his majesty, but his work that he does in us. (WA 24: 579.7 ff.)

Luther here speaks of the alien work of God. God kills to make alive; he destroys to create anew out of nothing. This is how God preserves man in faith and in humility. “This is how God acts when he wants to make those who are his completely strong” (WA 24: 578.22).

The Trinitarian movement, which was already noticeable in the exposition of the psalms, is found here as well.

Jacob’s opponent is “God Himself, or God’s Son, who was to become incarnate” (AE 6: 130). Christ is the opponent! Luther compares Jacob’s struggle to the struggle the Canaanite woman had to go through in Matthew 15. Jesus rejects her with harsh words, but she did not give up. She continued to ask him for help. And finally Christ puts down his mask. He begins to speak to her in a comforting way that refreshed her heart: “O woman, your faith is great!”

In such a struggle it is impossible to endure without the presence of the Holy Spirit in our weakness. He intercedes for us in the best way possible with inexpressible groaning. As usual, Luther points to the passage concerning the Spirit in Romans 8:26.

Overcoming affliction is described in almost the same words as in the psalms. God, who, in the eyes of the ones affected, was an angry Judge, now steps forth as the loving Father. (AE 6: 141)

The Trinitarian movement is the same: *With the Spirit — through the Son — to the Father.*

### ***The worship service as place of justification***

The work of the Holy Spirit consists in leading men to the Father in and through Christ. The Spirit mediates the real presence of Christ. Where does this take place? To be sure, the re-

formers thought that God can let this take place whenever and however he wished. Yet they were also convinced that God indicates the time and place. With Regin Prenter I therefore want to speak, in Reformation perspective, about the worship service as the place of justification:

The place . . . where Jesus Christ, God and man, with his vicarious satisfaction is given to faith as the only righteousness of the sinners is the worship service with its word and sacrament.

For if we are to be made righteous before God only on account of Christ's vicarious satisfaction, then this satisfaction has to be distributed by God himself. This happens precisely in the mass, by the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the Lord's Supper. The mass is, so to speak, justification by faith in action.<sup>2</sup>

If this is indeed so, as Regin Prenter says, that the divine service is the place of justification, then justification has found its artistic expression in St. Mary's Church at Wittenberg. I am thinking here of the altarpiece by Lucas Cranach, which actually consists of four pictures.

At the center is the picture of the institution of the Lord's Supper. One of the participants is Martin Luther, the man with the beard who receives the chalice. This is how Luther looked when he — safe from his opponents — lived in Wartburg Castle as *Junker Georg*. It is no accident that it is he who receives the chalice. After all, Luther, like Jan Huss a century earlier, had given the people not only the bread but also the chalice.

On the left-hand side, we see how Melanchthon baptizes a child, with Cranach himself as a sponsor. It is remarkable that Melanchthon baptizes, because he was not ordained. On the right-hand side, Johannes Bugenhagen, the congregation's pastor, uses the keys of the kingdom of heaven. On the one side is a penitent man who kneels; on the other side is an impenitent man who turns away from him in anger.

Bearing the altarpiece, in the predella, we see Luther preaching to his congregation to which belong, among others, Luther's wife, Catharine; his daughter, Magdalena; and his son, Hans. The content of the sermon is Christ crucified.

The interpretation of pictures is a difficult task that is to be done in two steps: the intuitive encounter with the picture that leaves room for contemplation, and then the methodical interpretation. In the second step, one can distinguish four aspects: the material, the verbal, the graphic, and the iconographic aspects. The last is most interesting to us, but something must also be said about the verbal and graphic meaning.

One speaks of verbal meaning when a picture contains written messages or signs. This does not apply to the actual pictures but to the framework. At the top there is a biblical text and underneath it there are two numbers referencing two years. The biblical word crowning the altar is found in 1 Corinthians 3:11:

"For no one can lay a foundation other than the one that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." It is possible that the biblical verse was added later, but without a doubt it fits very nicely with the picture of the crucified One on the predella. The T-shaped cross gives the impression that everything is borne by the arms of the crucified One.

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### *The altarpiece stands as a piece of theology in a time of need.*

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The year 1547 is noteworthy when one considers that the picture is to represent what is central to the Reformation. In the year 1547 everything seemed to be over. Luther had died in the previous year. The elector had been imprisoned after he was defeated in the Battle of Mühlberg. Cranach himself had to give up his office as mayor of Wittenberg and follow his elector into imprisonment. Melanchthon had left the city. The Protestant Maurice of Saxony had made common cause with the party of the emperor and received the office of the elector as a reward. The city was besieged by the armies of the emperor and capitulated on 19 May 1547. The emperor himself stood next to Luther's tomb in the Castle Church.

To be sure, Bugenhagen was still in town, but his position was weakened. His gratitude over the sparing of the city and the university, and his participation in the signing of the various Interim treaties were interpreted as complaisance and a lack of dedication to the cause of the Reformation. The altarpiece stands as a piece of theology in a time of need. It is focused on the one thing needful in a time when the foundations seemed shaken.

The graphic meaning is about the perspective and the play of forms and colors. Here we can state that the altarpiece is a single whole of very homogenous shape. Everything takes place in the same space.

The arches and the window on the right picture have their mirror image on the left side. The middle picture is square and contains the circular table for the Supper. Square and circle are the most perfect geometrical forms. The circular form is found, as a whole or in part, in the baptismal font, in the pulpit, and even in the scene depicting Bugenhagen's pastoral care. A straight line connects the binding key to the loosening key, down to the furry collar of the repentant, kneeling man and up to the sword of the impenitent.

The picture gives a homogenous impression that is nonetheless not closed. The Upper Room is open toward the world. We get the sense of a landscape that art historians consider typical for Renaissance painting. The field, the river, the hamlet, and the castle give depth to the picture. As theologians, we perhaps want to add that life out there in family and society — the

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2. Regin Prenter, "Das Augsburger Bekenntnis und die römische Messopferlehre," *Kerygma und Dogma* 1 (1955): 45.

world's landscape—is the gospel's horizon of understanding. Now we have reached the iconographic meaning.

The altarpiece is not only a whole from a graphic point of view; the same can be said in iconographic perspective. All of the pictures express one and the same thing: the distribution of the gospel to the people. The following words from the Smalcald Articles come to mind:

Now we want to return to the gospel, which gives guidance and help against sin in more than one way, because God is extravagantly rich in His grace: first, through the spoken word, in which the forgiveness of sins is preached to the whole world (which is the proper function of the gospel); second, through baptism; third, through the holy Sacrament of the Altar; fourth, through the power of the keys, and also through the mutual conversation and consolation of brothers and sisters. Matthew 18[:20]: "Where two or three are gathered . . ." (SA III, 4; Kolb-Wengert, 319)

The worship service is the place of justification, just as Regin Prenter says. Everything happens in the context of the worship service, in which man encounters the living God and where God places his coat of justification over man freezing in his sin. Luther's distinctions between the fact of Christ's suffering and its application expresses the relation between what is past and what is present:

We treat of the forgiveness of sins in two ways. First, how it is achieved and won; second, how it is distributed and given to us. Christ has achieved it on the cross, it is true. But He has not distributed or given it on the cross. He has not won it in the Supper or Sacrament. There He has distributed and given it through the Word, as also in the gospel, where it is preached. He has won it once for all on the cross. But the distribution takes place continuously, before and after, from the beginning to the end of the world. (AE 49: 213–214)

Luther sees the distribution that takes place now in line with the humiliation that already characterized the incarnation, where honor is hidden under dishonor and injury, and power under powerlessness. He speaks of the "labor of the Lord's Supper":

But the glory of our God is precisely that for our sakes He comes down to the very depths, into human flesh, into the bread, into our mouth, our heart, our bosom; moreover, for our sakes He allows himself to be treated ingloriously both on the cross and on the altar. (AE 37: 42)

In a description of the altarpiece I purchased in Wittenberg one can read that the four pictures reflect the seventh article of the Augsburg Confession by Melanchthon. However, the altarpiece is hardly an illustration of a dogmatic train of thought. Rather, Melanchthon formulates dogmatically what Cranach designs artistically, namely, the use of the gospel and the communion at the table of the Lord.

The articles of the confession explain the use of the gospel and defend it against every abuse. Nathan Söderblom, the Swedish archbishop who lived a century ago, encouraged the study of the Confessions for the following reason: "The grandiose spiritual work contained therein has as an essential purpose to keep the joy that God gives in Christ from being that the joy God gives in Christ is diminished."<sup>3</sup>

The worship service, with word and sacrament, is our joy—the place where Jesus Christ, God and man, is given to faith with his vicarious satisfaction as the only righteousness of the sinner. The confessions explain and defend this joy.

### *In the Beginning Was Worship*

In 2 Corinthians 4:15 is found a brief description of the basic structure in every service: "For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God."

The Greek word for grace is *charis*; the word for thankfulness and thanksgiving is *eucharistia*. This furnishes the two movements of the worship service. God calls and men answer, with the distribution of the grace among people and their thanksgiving to the glory of God. On 5 October 1544, Luther highlighted this basic pattern of the worship service in his sermon for the dedication of the castle church at Torgau. He said, by way of introduction:

My dear friends, we are now to bless and consecrate this new house to our Lord Jesus Christ. This devolves not only upon me; you, too, should take hold of the aspergillum and the censer, in order that the purpose of this new house may be such that nothing else may ever happen in it except that our dear Lord himself may speak to us through His holy Word and we respond to him through prayer and praise. (AE 51: 333)

When talking about the distribution of grace, Luther does not only mean the gifts God gives. He also speaks of the three-fold self-giving of God. According to the 1528 *Confession of the Supper of Christ*, Luther declares that God gives himself to us fully, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:

These are the three Persons and one God, who has given himself to us all wholly and completely, with all that he is and has. The Father gives himself to us, with heaven and earth and all the creatures, in order that they may serve us and benefit us. But this gift has become obscured and useless through Adam's fall. Therefore the Son himself subsequently gave himself and bestowed all His works, sufferings, wisdom, and righteousness, and reconciled us to the Father, in order that restored to life and righteousness, we might also know and have the Father and His gifts.

3. Nathan Söderblom, *Herdabref till prästerskapet och församlingarna i Uppsala ärkestift* (Uppsala: F. C. Askerberg, 1914), 26.

But because this grace would benefit no one if it remained so profoundly hidden and could not come to us, the Holy Spirit comes and gives himself to us also, wholly and completely. He teaches us to understand this deed of Christ which has been manifested to us, helps us receive and preserve it, use it to our advantage and impart it to others, increase and extend it. He does this both inwardly and outwardly — inwardly by means of faith and other spiritual gifts, outwardly through the gospel, baptism, and the Sacrament of the altar, through which as through three means or methods he comes to us and inculcates the sufferings of Christ for the benefit of our salvation. (AE 37: 366)

In looking at the second movement in the worship service, namely, our receiving the grace and our thanksgiving, we take as a point of departure the same text as earlier: Luther's later commentary on Genesis. In the 1534 edition of the *Luther Bible*, there is a picture that shows God the Father as Creator of heaven and earth. Underneath is seen the earth with Paradise, surrounded by water, with Adam and Eve, trees and rivers, and the sky with the birds, sun, moon, and stars. Everything was finished. God rested on the seventh day, and God blessed and sanctified this day (Gn 2:3). This is how God from the beginning dedicated the seventh day for worship (AE 1: 80).

If mankind had remained in the state of innocence, he would himself have sanctified the seventh day with the order for worship being passed down through the generations. We are therefore created to praise and recognize God.

This is exactly the meaning of the Sabbath: God speaks to us through his word, and we in turn speak to him in prayer and faith (AE 1: 81). Man is created not only for the physical life, but also for the eternal life, the rest in God, into which Adam would have transitioned without dying.

Luther calls the worship connected with the Sabbath an inner and spiritual service consisting of faith and love. Yet God also wants man to practice his worship of God externally and physically (AE 1: 94). This is why God mandated not only a time but also a place where worship was to take place. This is how Luther saw the meaning of one of the two trees that stood in the midst of Paradise: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, whose fruits men were not permitted to eat (Gn 2:9, 16–17). This tree was “Adam's church, pulpit, and altar.”<sup>4</sup>

Here the church is established. *Ecclesia* thus comes before *oeconomia* and *politia*. This sequence means, according to Luther, that man is created for a different purpose than the other creatures. He was created for immortal, eternal life. Here on earth Adam and his offspring are to offer their due obedience to God, come to know his word and will, thank God for all gifts, and call on him against temptation. There in heaven they are to gather after eating from the fruits of the tree of life, to thank and praise the Lord.

Luther finds examples for the concrete forms of such songs of praise and laud in Psalms 148 and 149, where every creature, sun, moon, lightning and hail, heights and mountains, trees and animals, and so forth, is called to praise the Lord. This is worship in its “barest, purest, and simplest” form (AE 1: 106). Nothing else is prescribed, only this one thing: to praise and thank God, to rejoice in the Lord, and to obey him by not eating from the forbidden tree. Christ reestablished this worship for us in part; but it will be perfected first in heaven.

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### *We are therefore created to praise and recognize God.*

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Describing pure worship the way Luther does here, it is interesting to see how he handles the question of sacrifice. He emphasizes that the sacrifices are an expression of faith and thanksgiving to God. The thought is developed in a Trinitarian fashion. Adam and Eve are not only the parents of Cain and Abel, but also have priestly tasks. This is why they, filled with the Holy Spirit and knowing about the coming Christ, are able to kindle in their children the hope of a future liberation as well as gratitude for God's great mercy,<sup>5</sup> which resulted in their offering of sacrifices as described in Genesis 4.

The sacrifice, additionally, is to be understood as the external sign that God always adds to his word to remind mankind of his mercy and to make their faith easier. This is also true for the other signs of the old covenant, as, for example, the rainbow or circumcision. All these were signs of God's grace, just as baptism and the Lord's Supper are signs of the new covenant. The sacrifice after the promise made to Adam had the same function as the sacraments do for us. The old as well as the new signs bear witness to God's ceaseless care for mankind, even after the fall into sin.

These visible signs of God's grace answer the question of where the church is. They are marks: “Where the Eucharist, Baptism, and the Word are, there are Christ, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life” (AE 1: 249). These words are reminiscent of Luther's train of thought on the marks of the church in his 1539 tract *On Councils and the Church*. It is about how a poor, lost sinner is to find a holy Christian people. The means that constitute the church are also its surest marks.

There are additional verses in the opening chapters of Genesis that make Luther talk about worship. Thus the concluding short note in chapter 4 that “men at this time began to call on the name of the Lord” (Gn 4:26). Luther calls this passage the “most beautiful description of what it means to celebrate a right

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4. AE 1: 95: “Here he was to yield to God the obedience he owed, give recognition to the Word and will of God, give thanks to God, and call upon God for aid against temptation.”

5. AE 1: 247: “It is evident that the sacrifices which were handed down had no other purpose.”

worship service,” namely, to call upon the name of the Lord. The “name of the Lord” points to Christ, the promised Seed, who will crush the head of the serpent.

Such a worship service Luther can also call a right service according to the commandments of the First Table. This usage of words we also recognize in *On Councils and the Church*, where Luther speaks of marks of the First and Second Tables. For to call upon the name of the Lord means to preach the word, to believe in the heart, and to confess with the mouth.

All these belong together and follow one after another, just as Paul states it in Romans 10:13–14. Calling upon the name of the Lord comes from faith in the heart, which in turn comes from the preaching of the one sent to proclaim. All this corresponds to what God commands in the First Table. The First Commandment commands to believe that God rushes to our salvation. The Second Commandment demands confession and prayer, that we might call on the Lord in the hour of need and that we might thank God. The Third Commandment demands that we preach the truth and preserve and defend the right doctrine.

The Second Table also is connected to worship, but not as immediately, because what is said there deals with man’s behavior to his fellow men. However, when the demands of the First Table are fulfilled, the other works of the Second Table follow spontaneously as well. They are to be considered as liturgical acts according to the Second Table, borne out of the fulfillment of the commandments of the First Table.<sup>6</sup> They are thus secondary. This means that the works of the Second Table are less reliable as marks, but they exist because a good tree always bears good fruit. This is how Luther regards the entire life of the Christian, the life according to the First and the Second Tables, as worship. It is a life of faith in God and love of the neighbor. **LOGIA**

6. AE 1: 329 (emphasis added): “He demands the First Table, that you hear, meditate on, and teach the Word; that you pray, and that you fear God. Whenever this is done, there will follow spontaneously, as it were, the *forms of worship* or the works of the *Second Table*. It is impossible for him who *worships in accordance with the First Table* not to keep the Second Table also.”

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# Flood Logic

## Tending the Means of Grace

JAMES ARNE NESTINGEN



**I**N A DEATH-DRIVEN WORLD, word and sacrament evoke perennial contention. Proclaimed or administered, they bestow here and now the fruits of Christ's death and resurrection. No wonder preaching, baptism, and the Supper—along with absolution—get swamped with such vitriol. Sin, death, and the devil do not surrender without a fight. So the complaints cascade, the impious and the pious alike protesting Christ Jesus' encroachment on sinners. What chance does a preacher have?

Augustana V with accompanying articles defines the pastor's calling in this context. Preaching, baptizing, serving at the table—with absolution—set the terms of the office. But as Robert W. Jenson once argued, the language describing this combination of responsibilities implies a second: tending word and sacrament, serving their course in the community and beyond. Thus having handed over the goods delivered by the text, having passed along the gifts granted by Christ Jesus through word and element, the preacher wades into the contention that follows. Because they are so counter-intuitive, standing directly in the face of all the usual human assumptions, the means of grace have to be taught, their workings clarified, and the questions they raise addressed.

This said, however, a danger prowls within the second task. Word and sacrament are from faith to faith—the preached and sacramental word embodies the power of the Holy Spirit to create the faith required. The common explanations and defenses invite both preacher and hearer to move from the faith-producing word to a secondary position behind it, in which the explanation or defense displaces the promise and so becomes itself the object of faith. For just this reason, Luther described the old Adam as the original theologian. Asking, "Did God really say?" signals unbelief. The promise of the gospel stands on its own, exposing its theoretical and theological supports as wanting.

Yet, with the danger noted, it may be helpful to take a closer look at the difference between the usual assumptions and the logic of the means of grace. Luther used the term *alien* to describe both the gospel and the righteousness it creates. It is alien in that it comes from without, from outside of the usual structures and systems, and enters our ears extraneously to re-orient, more radically to re-create, those who hear it. Because

of this, the gospel has a logic of its own in which the resurrection makes all the difference.

Subject-object logic, the process of reasoning employed in common forms of thought, assumes the power of death even if it can only acknowledge death's presence implicitly. As Leo Tolstoy wrote in *The Death of Ivan Illyich*, the proposition that Gaius is a man, men are mortal, therefore Gaius will die, always seems true as applied to Gaius but never as applied to myself. Death holds the self loosely, thereby fostering illusions of immortality. But when its grip closes—in imposition and limitation, fear or sorrow, pain and loss—the illusion shatters even as the self hastens to put the remains together again. If everyday logic seeks to keep any contact with the larger human enterprise, it has to acknowledge the power of death as it surfaces in threat and limitation. Failure to register the forces loose in creaturely life turns the reasoning towards enthusiasm. Like a hot air balloon, it rises.

In contrast, the first premise of the logic of the gospel—is the reasoning set in motion by the means of grace—is laid down by Good Friday and Easter. With the words "crucified, dead, and buried," the Apostles' Creed anchors the starting point in the hard realities of everyday. Incarnate, Christ Jesus went under the power of death, becoming its victim. In any other human way of thinking, this would not be the first but the last word. As Cleopas said, speaking in the past perfect for himself and the other disciple on the road to Emmaus, "We had thought he was the one to redeem Israel" (Lk 24:21). In other words, they thought it was all over. But the risen Christ literally turned the tables, making himself known in the breaking of the bread. The crucified, dead, and buried one has become the risen one. Jesus lives.

The reality of the resurrection declared, however, the Gospels, particularly Mark, and the Apostle Paul insist that Good Friday cannot therefore be pushed out of the syllogism. The resurrection does not annul the cross but establishes it. The risen Christ always appears with his wounds. So Paul writes to his enthusiastic Corinthians, "We have this treasure"—the power of the resurrection is present—but we have it "in earthen vessels," that is, under controverted circumstances, "to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us" (2 Cor 4:7). In the present situation, any circumstance prior to the *eschaton*, Easter manifests itself under the sign of Good Friday, in the cross.

Just so, Easter explodes into abundance (Jn 10:10), the lavish overflow of the wedding at Cana or the feeding of the five

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thousand. Marked by the cross, the resurrection cannot be contained but breaks open the cornucopia, bringing a new future in which Christ Jesus pours himself out to overthrow all of the powers—sin, death, and the devil—that have bound, diminished, demanded, and destroyed the creation. Accordingly, loss has lost, emptiness has been filled to overflowing, enough has become wanton excess with no sign of surfeit.

This turns the ordinary thinking about word and sacrament on its head. The logic of death rules out any external source of life or power. In this way of thinking, discussion of baptismal practice focuses relentlessly on the qualifications of the baptized, the pastor, the congregation, or the water itself. One way or another, someone or something present has to energize the sacrament to make it work. In fact, in a strange form of perversity, guarding this requirement gets taken as a hallmark of fidelity. In the logic of the resurrection—which Gerhard Forde liked to call “flood logic,” or the logic of abundance—death cannot contain the risen Christ. He is loose, out there, seeking his own to bestow himself in a death and resurrection like his. The qualifications of the baptized only become an issue in thinking about how to shape ministry most effectively to that particular person or people.

The same thing happens to the absolution. The dead giveaway of the old logic shows up in the protest, “Yes, but there are sinners in the congregation who may not have repented sufficiently.” Once the focus has shifted from God’s word in Christ to the hearts of the hearers, the conclusion follows: therefore, the absolution has to be qualified in favor of those who truly repent.

This protest fails at several levels. Of course there are sinners in the congregation—the risen Christ keeps dragging them into the pews. “Compel them to enter,” he says. Pastorally, it doesn’t work as the protest assumes. The truly penitent are just for that reason confused about themselves, never satisfied with their own repentance, while the truly impenitent are more than ready to offer themselves as models of moral rehabilitation. Further, the idea that the weeds and the wheat can be identified and separated betrays the origins of the objections—once again, hidden under piety, unbelief moves to stave off the crucified and risen Christ so that it can preserve its own prerogatives. Dressed in Sunday-go-to-meeting concerns, sin and death masquerade with the devil as redeemers.

The logic of the resurrection proceeds in an entirely different way. “He who hears you, hears me,” Jesus said; “Whatever you loose on earth is loosed in heaven.” The qualifications of

the hearer may become a pastoral consideration—timing may demand further reflection by the penitent. But Holy Absolution does not depend on the piety of the pious—it bestows the gifts won by Jesus of Nazareth on Good Friday and Easter. Grace flows by the sheer, abounding goodness of the one who could not keep himself away from gluttons, drunkards, and tax collectors—a sordid mess. Of course, they cannot repent—that is not within human capacity. The Spirit of the risen Christ works repentance, tearing us loose from false attachments so that we can live in the freedom of the gospel.

In another strange turnabout, the logic that promotes the disqualification of sinners in baptism and absolution has recently turned into an indiscriminate inclusiveness around the Lord’s Supper. Grace, which Paul describes in Romans as the power of the resurrection, has been reduced to an ideology that follows the logic of death. Since Christ forgives one, the reasoning holds, he must of necessity forgive all. So everything specific, all of the sacrament’s faith-creating relational quality, gets obviated in a generic grease that harks back to the slippery old evasion, “Love is never having to say you are sorry.” By such thinking, even baptism itself is too much to ask. So it goes, round and round. As Karl Barth once commented, we barely get bucked from one horse when we have got our foot in the stirrup of another. So, caught up in ourselves and our own pursuit, we run back and forth between exclusion and inclusion. The one consistency, at either end, is the desire to keep Christ Jesus at a distance.

The logic of the resurrection once again proceeds from a different starting point. The risen Christ’s habits and predilections are apparent in the Gospels. Wherever he goes, he gathers sinners to himself, setting the table in the presence of his enemies, to lay himself out for us. The promises, “This is my body given for you” and “This cup is the New Testament in my blood,” grant what they declare: the presence of the Risen One. In this way, the sinner is exposed as the death-dealing, spiritual pretender intent on self-realization. At the same time, a new self arises, recognizable from the water of baptism and the words of absolution: a sinner now in Christ’s grip.

“This is what makes our theology certain,” Luther once wrote, “it takes us outside of ourselves.” Just so, the logic of death turns us back on ourselves, in the end leaving us empty handed. The means of grace and so the logic of the gospel get set in motion by Christ’s eager joy in taking hold of us to make us his own. **LOGIA**

# Doctrine and Practice

## Resisting the Influence of Evangelicalism

KLEMET PREUS



IN THIRTY YEARS OF PASTORAL MINISTRY, I have had countless discussions—even arguments—with members of my congregations over many controversial topics. Upon reflection, I can say that most of these conversations have not focused on articles of the faith, strictly speaking. I do not regularly argue with my church members about what we believe; rather, my church members tend to argue with me over matters of church practice. For example, instead of disputing the question of infant faith, we discuss the practice of infant baptism. This may lead to the topic of infant faith, but discussions typically begin with the practice. Likewise, we do not argue at a theoretical level over the question of the headship of the man over the woman, or over the nuances of the orders of creation; instead, we talk about the propriety of the practices of women preaching and women's ordination. I do not discuss with my parishioners the subtleties of the *genus maiestaticum* and the implications of the communication of attributes for our understanding of the bodily presence of Jesus in the sacrament; rather, I explain why we treat the sacramental elements with respect through such practices as kneeling when we commune, disposing of the *reliquae* in a dignified manner, celebrating the sacrament frequently, and insisting on the Lutheran practice that those who commune be examined and absolved (AC xxiv, 6).<sup>1</sup>

I have taught the orthodox doctrine of the mystery of the Trinity for thirty years and continue to do so. Yet I have also drawn the conclusion that practices of the church—such as the trinitarian invocation, speaking the Athanasian Creed on Trinity Sunday, and standing during doxological hymn stanzas—teach congregants to confess the Holy Trinity more fully than doctrinal instruction alone. Similarly, I spend little time teaching an orthodox doctrine of the ministry. Rather, I model what it means to be an orthodox pastor: I preach and teach, study God's word and theology, wear my collar, vest for the service, pray with members in their homes, read the Scriptures to them at their hospital beds, and commune them when they are sick or infirm. I practice the craft of being a pastor much as a doctor practices medicine and a lawyer practices law. It is in the practice of our religion that we are most fully known. In short,

members of my congregation seem to understand the Christian religion far more in terms of the practices of the church than in terms of the doctrine. And I do not think that this understanding is such a bad thing.

### TWO IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES

This article builds upon two general principles concerning the relationship between practice and doctrine. First, church practices tend to picture or promote the central teaching of a given theological system. This principle is true regardless of whether a particular theology is orthodox or heterodox. Further, the central teaching of a church usually indicates the way in which its members are thought to receive the benefits from the cross of Jesus. Church practices have a soteriological function, which is why church practices often are not doctrinally neutral.

Every classical theological system of the West—from Lutheran theology to Roman, from Calvinistic to Baptist to Arminian, from Methodistic to Pentecostal—attempts to bridge the gap between Christ's cross and churchgoers. All churches, at least traditionally, teach that Jesus died on the cross and that sinners should receive blessings from his cross and resurrection. Where the churches differ is in their understanding of how the cross of Christ is applied to the sinner. Each of these classic expressions of Christianity has developed a system of church practices (or, at least, allowed one to evolve) that promotes or pictures its unique understanding of how the effects of the cross of Jesus become the possession of the sinner.

In the Lutheran system God bestows the blessings of the cross through the gospel in word and sacrament, so Lutheran practices tend to center on the means of grace. Within New Evangelicalism (sometimes called American Evangelicalism) the gap between cross and the human heart is bridged by the emotional experience of the ardent seeker, so Evangelical practices tend to reinforce the experience of the Christian, "the hour I first believed," as the old revivalist hymn says. Within the Roman system the cross benefits church members through the hierarchy of the church and a system of works within the framework of the organized church; hence, the practices of the Roman church tend to reinforce its system of work-righteousness. In summary, a church's dominant practices will reflect its soteriology.

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1. Quotations from the Lutheran Confessions are from Kolb-Wengert.

If church practices tend to serve a soteriological function within a given system, then these practices have tremendous theological significance. Consequently, the second principle of the relationship between doctrine and practice is that there is a symbiotic connection between them.

The two are more closely related, even interdependent, than is often realized. Doctrine affects practice and practice affects doctrine. The two are so intimately woven together that when you change one you will inevitably change the other and sometimes without realizing what has happened.”<sup>2</sup>

New practices cannot be introduced without changing doctrine; doctrine cannot be changed without introducing new practices.

The reformers knew these two principles well. The Church of Rome at the time of Luther provides an obvious example of the soteriological function of church practices, and at the same time shows the deep theological import of its key church practices. The selling of indulgences and masses and the acquisition and veneration of relics were practical outcomes from Rome’s works-based soteriology, and reinforced that soteriology in the minds of its people. The doctrine of salvation by works and these heterodox practices were interdependent. Because of this, Luther and the reformers responded not just to Rome’s false doctrine, but also to its false practices. The Lutherans abolished indulgences, reformed the mass to emphasize the sacramental rather than sacrificial nature of the divine service, and focused on the means of grace. They developed practices which pictured and promoted their evangelical understanding of the gospel, such as confession in two parts, retention of images in the church but with proper teaching, and especially the development of hymnody that was primarily didactic.

The Lutherans wedded doctrine and church practice in such a way that the two became almost indistinguishable. In fact, the Confessions of the church use the terms doctrine (teaching) and practice interchangeably.<sup>3</sup> Lutherans *teach* the practice of private absolution (AC XI, 1) and the practice of remembering the saints (AC XXI, 1). They *teach* the practice of communing in both kinds (AC XXII, 1) and the practice of infant baptism (AC IX, 1). They also reject as *false teaching* certain practices such as the sacrifice of the mass (SA II, II, 1), the practice of requiring the enumeration of sins in the confession (AC XXV, 7), the practice of indulgences, invocation of the saints (Tr 46–49), and the whole business of relics (SA II, II, 5). The Confessions show that salutary practices are a necessary expression of the doctrine of the gospel, and bad practices can undermine the gospel with as much satanic effectiveness as can false doctrine.

Conscientious Lutheran pastors down to this very day scrupulously avoid aberrant practices of Roman Catholicism, but

many of these same pastors treat Evangelicalism differently. Many Lutherans today—blindly and with hardly a thought about the spiritual and theological consequences—accept and employ practices from Arminian Evangelicalism that promote and picture the false doctrine of that system. This article seeks to demonstrate how careful application of the two principles concerning the relationship between doctrine and practice should lead Lutherans not only to resist influences from bad Roman practices but also to resist influences from certain church practices of Evangelicalism. Reformed Arminianism will be examined to show that Evangelical practices promote the theology of Arminianism with an American twist. This will show that aping the practices of churches that hold to Arminian theology can have dire consequences for Lutherans.

#### NEW EVANGELICALISM AND ITS PRACTICES

What is the theology of New Evangelicalism; what are its practices? Evangelicalism has taken one aspect of Calvinistic theology and made that its central teaching. John Calvin said,

So long as we are without Christ and separated from him, nothing which he suffered and died for the salvation of the human race is of the least benefit to us. And, although it is true that we obtain faith, yet, as we see that all do not indiscriminately embrace the offer of Christ which is made by the gospel, the very nature of the case teaches us to ascend higher, and to inquire into the secret power of the Spirit, through which we enjoy Christ and all his blessings.<sup>4</sup>

This “secret power of the Spirit” became crucial for the Reformed in America. John Calvin believed that the sovereignty of God was the central article of the Christian faith and he defined all the articles of faith by it. Consequently, he believed that God was sovereign over the gospel itself. God’s word was not inherently powerful to Calvin. It became powerful and blessed with the Spirit’s attendance when and where it pleased the sovereign God.

Nothing is effected by the Word without illumination of the Holy Spirit. . . . [The Word] cannot penetrate into our minds unless the internal teacher, the Spirit, makes way for it by his illumination.<sup>5</sup>

This unpredictable illumination of the Spirit was, for Calvin, the “secret power.”

At first, American Protestants embraced the strictly Calvinistic understanding of the “secret power.” Jonathan Edwards, arguably the greatest eighteenth-century American preacher and thinker, claimed that the divine word

2. Klemet Preus, *The Fire and the Staff: Lutheran Theology in Practice* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004), 14.

3. For a further discussion of doctrine and practice among Lutherans see Robert Preus, “Confessional Lutheranism in Today’s World,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 54 (1990): 99–116.

4. John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 1:463. The material in this section was previously published in Klemet Preus, “The Difference between Evangelical and Lutheran Preaching in America,” in *Preaching through the Ages*, ed. John A. Maxfield, The Pieper Lectures 2003 (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Historical Institute, 2004), 107–11.

conveys to our minds these and those doctrines . . . but not the sense of the divine excellency of them in our hearts . . . but that due sense of the heart wherein this light formally consists, is immediately [given] by the Spirit of God.<sup>6</sup>

When the “power of God alone decides the efficacy of the means,”<sup>7</sup> rather than the other way around as in Lutheranism, a certain unpredictability ensues. One can preach the gospel well enough, but God may sovereignly decide that he does not want the gospel to be powerful or authoritative on any given day.

But the spirit of human free will and autonomy, along with the American ideal of individualism, swept the new world in the aftermath of America’s Revolutionary War. Consequently over the next fifty years Calvin gave way to Arminius in America. William Warren Sweet, “the most industrious and tireless fact-finding historian of churches in early America,” claims that two types of Protestant churches existed in Europe at the time of the great emigrations to America. He calls “right-wing churches” those that were the established churches in the old world, and “left-wing churches” those that were not. While both types of churches crossed the Atlantic, it was the “left-wing” churches that “made the greatest contribution of thought and life to the New World.” According to Sweet, the influential “left-wing churches” stressed the “inner, personal character of religion, played down the church’s institutional character and placed much less stress upon creeds and sacraments.”<sup>8</sup> These left-wing churches evolved into American Evangelicalism.

William McLoughlin has defined Evangelicalism as “the story of the decline of Calvinism, the Protestant Counter Reformation against deism, and the emergence of a new theological consensus on Arminian principles which prevailed between the Second Great Awakening and the rise of Modernism.”<sup>9</sup> Paul Conkin adds to the definition the Evangelical “emphasis on the necessity of a crisis-like conversion experience.”<sup>10</sup> George Marsden claims that “revivals marked the beginning of the attempt to build a new Christian community united by intense feeling.”<sup>11</sup> In short, Evangelicalism is a noncreedal, nonsacramental, Arminian branch of the Reformed Church united by a belief in an intense emotional experience of faith. As such,

the practices developed by Evangelicalism are not difficult to predict. Three will be analyzed: the cultivation of personal experience as the assurance of grace, praise worship services, and speaking in tongues.

#### PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AS MARK OF GRACE

New World Protestants could not be certain of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the preaching of the gospel. Unlike Lutherans, who assert that the Spirit is always and inherently present and working in the words and sacraments of Jesus, these divines craved some type of sign that would let them know that their work was not completely in vain. Over time these churchmen began to identify the sureness of the Spirit’s activity through certain recognizable stages of conversion. They carefully tracked the precise manner in which their parishioners experienced what has been called the “morphology of conversion.”<sup>12</sup> Since a person might have the necessary “historical understanding” without having known the “secret power of the Spirit” as Calvin had said, it was necessary for any true church member to be able to testify to having experienced a certain pattern in his conversion. Edmund Morgan has described this “morphology of conversion”:

First comes the feeble and false awakening to God’s commands and a pride in keeping them pretty well, but also much backsliding. Disappointments and disasters lead to other fitful hearkenings to the word. Sooner or later true legal fear or conviction enables the individual to see his hopeless and helpless condition and to know that his own righteousness cannot save him, that Christ is his only hope. Thereafter comes the infusion of saving grace, sometimes but not always so precisely felt that the believer can state exactly when and where it came to him. A struggle between faith and doubt ensues, with the candidate careful to indicate that his assurance has never been complete and that his sanctification has been much hampered by his own sinful heart.<sup>13</sup>

By the time of the Great Awakening in the 1730s, one hundred years after the arrival of the first Puritans, this morphology was completely entrenched in the ecclesiastical and social fiber of New England. The practice of Evangelicalism has always been to cultivate a religious experience as the ground of faith.

In the early 1800s, when the Second Great Awakening occurred, the morphology of conversion had evolved to the point that extreme, emotional experiences were considered mandatory for full assurance of God’s grace. A pastor named Charles Finney codified the type and necessity of such experiences. Possibly the most influential churchman in the history of America, Finney popularized the traveling itinerant preaching of the so-called revivalists and was the most significant preacher in a long line of

5. John Calvin, “The Internal Testimony of the Spirit” in *Theories of Preaching: Selected Readings in the Homiletical Tradition*, ed. Richard Lischer (Durham, NC: The Labyrinth Press, 1987), 311–322.  
 6. Jonathan Edwards, *Selections*, ed. Clarence Faust and Clarence Johnson (New York: Hill and Wang, 1935), 110.  
 7. Conrad Cherry, “Conversion: Nature and Grace,” in *Critical Essays on Jonathan Edwards*, ed. William Schieck (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980), 80.  
 8. Harold Bosley, “The Role of Preaching in American History,” in *Preaching in American History*, ed. DeWitte Holland (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), 26.  
 9. William G. McLoughlin, ed., *The American Evangelicals 1800–1900: An Anthology* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1968), 1.  
 10. Paul K. Conkin, *The Uneasy Center: Reformed Christianity in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 65. Also see Martin Marty, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1984), 470–473.  
 11. George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism 1870–1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 45.

12. Edmund Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963), 68.

13. *Ibid.*, 91. Also see Conkin, *Uneasy Center*, 119 ff.

revivalist preachers including Dwight Moody, Billy Sunday, Billy Graham, and currently, Joel Osteen. Finney lectured extensively on the nature and importance of the conversion experience:

God has found it necessary to take advantage of the excitability there is in mankind, to produce powerful excitements among them, before he can lead them to obey. Men are so sluggish, there are so many things to lead their minds off from religion and to oppose the influence of the gospel, that it is necessary to raise an excitement among them, till the tide rises so high as to sweep away the opposing obstacles. They must be so excited that they will break over these counteracting influences, before they will obey God.<sup>14</sup>

The special working of the Spirit had to be felt in rather dramatic ways. Finney's own conversion experience provided his assurance of salvation. In his *Memoirs* he shares it:

The Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through me, body and soul. I could feel the impression, like a wave of electricity, going through and through me. Indeed, it seemed like the very breath of God. I can recollect distinctly that it seemed to fan me like immense wings. . . . I wept aloud with joy and love; and I do not know but I should say, I literally bellowed out the unutterable gushings of my heart. These waves came over me, and over me, and over me, one after the other, until I recollect I cried out, "Lord, I cannot bear any more."<sup>15</sup>

Touted as indispensable, Finney's dramatic experience became the inalienable right of every Christian. Faith was defined as experience.

The experiential understanding of faith is propagated in America today by what has been called the Church Growth Movement, an amorphous movement within Evangelicalism that began and is centered in Pasadena, California, at Fuller Theological Seminary. One of that movement's chief advocates and proponents is C. Peter Wagner, who served as dean of the Institute for Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary, where many leaders of Lutheran churches have studied. Wagner believes that the ideal sermon

is not intellectual, but emotional; it is not rational, but experiential; it is not exegetical, but allegorical; it is not doctrinal, but practical; it is not directed as much to the head as the heart, [the effect being] not that you learn more, but rather that you feel better.<sup>16</sup>

Notice that sermons are not ideal simply because they are gospel-centered, orthodox, doctrinally sound, or even coherent.

This stress on experience has found its way into some Lutheran churches. Within the Missouri Synod many pastors have been advocating a style of ministry that leads to the emphasis on emotion articulated by Wagner. David Luecke, a Missouri Synod Lutheran and writer for the magazine *Jesus First*, has articulated the difference between Lutheran and Evangelical expectations in his discussion of "village churches" and "camp churches."<sup>17</sup>

- The village church recognizes parish boundaries. The camp church has boundaries determined by the members having a "self professed personal relationship with Jesus," and a "born again" experience.
- The village church looks to its creeds and theology for guidance, confident that these reflect the teachings of the Bible. The camp church uses only the Bible and the people "make up their identity as they go along."
- The village church has members who are born into it and who "belong before consciously believing." The camp church expects its members to have a "consciousness of that life-transforming event" which is their "only reliable basis for initiating fellowship in Christ."
- The village church emphasizes the baptism of infants as the way in which people become part of the church community. The camp church emphasizes initiation through "intense religious experiences."
- The village church expects the Holy Spirit to come through God's Word and sacraments "predictably." The camp church expects the Spirit to come through the Word but unpredictably, "quickly and decisively and right now."
- The village church stresses instruction and confirmation. The camp church stresses the importance of people being "ready to open up their feelings for Him to move them in spontaneous ways to unexpected decisions."
- The village church expects God to work through "prescribed liturgies, lessons, and authorized leaders." The camp church has little use for these "customs."

Luecke queries, "Is there anything inherently wrong with a camp church? I think not." "Which is the right view? I believe the Scripture allows both ways." "Which is the right view? They both can be."<sup>18</sup>

Luecke's comments should be sobering for lifelong Lutherans. The danger posed by this type of thinking should be obvious. Taking Luecke's advice would radically change the practices of Lutheran churches. Gone would be prescribed liturgies, lessons, and authorized leaders. Gone would be the practice of teaching the text of the catechism before a conscious understanding of it is achieved. Sooner or later the practice of infant baptism would be given up because that sacrament clearly initiates a person into church membership before there is a "consciousness of a life-changing event." Gone would be the creeds,

14. Charles G. Finney, "What a Revival of Religion Is" (1864) in *The American Evangelicals*, ed. McLoughlin (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 87.

15. Charles G. Finney, *Memoirs of Charles G. Finney* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1903), 20.

16. C. Peter Wagner, *Look Out! The Pentecostals Are Coming* (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1973), 39-40.

17. David Luecke, *Evangelical Style and Lutheran Substance* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989), 53-56.

18. *Ibid.*, 54, 55, 56.

because according to Luecke, these formal expressions of faith are not the best way to confess the faith:

An alternative used by many other Christians over the centuries is experiential language—expressing faith in terms of personal experience. Such language has phrases like: This is what God did in my life. Here is how I found new peace in the Lord. I found new meaning in the Gospel when . . . When I am getting to know individual Lutherans better, I have found it productive to inquire about when they felt closest to God or what they remember as a mountain-top spiritual experience, or when their faith means the most to them.<sup>19</sup>

In fact, where Luecke's camp-church paradigm prevails among Lutherans, all Lutheran distinctives, all Lutheran tradition, the entire Lutheran ethos, the Lutheran understanding of the means of grace, all Lutheran doctrine, the Lutheran Church itself, and, not to put too fine a point on it, the saving gospel of Jesus are in jeopardy.

Even non-Lutherans recognize this. D. G. Hart, a conservative and traditional Presbyterian says:

American pietism dismissed church creeds, structures, and ceremonies as merely formal or external manifestations of religion that went only skin deep. In contrast, pietists have insisted that genuine faith was one that transformed individuals starting with their hearts and seeping into all walks of life.<sup>20</sup>

When religion is conceived as primarily in the heart, strict denominational lines are blurred in deference to common religious patterns. According to Hart, revivalism “directed mainstream American Protestantism . . . away from the formal and corporate beliefs and practices of the church toward the informal settings and personal affairs of believers.”<sup>21</sup> The result was the increasingly small role the institutional church plays in the religious life of its members.<sup>22</sup> The clash between the established churches and revivalism was inevitable as traditionalist Protestants resisted revivalism because it

undermined the importance of creedal subscription, ordination and liturgical order . . . [and] spoke a different idiom, one that was individualistic, experiential and perfectionistic, as opposed to the corporate, doctrinal and liturgical idiom of historic Protestantism.

To confessional Protestants, the revivalists blurred all denominational distinctives, expecting a generic type of Christianity

of “sincerity, zeal, and moral life”<sup>23</sup> but void of meaningful doctrine.

American Evangelicalism does not simply disparage the Lutheran doctrine of the means of grace. The movement also attacks such ancient Lutheran practices as the use of creeds, liturgies, ordination, confession and absolution, the sacraments, church orders, and the catechism. Why? Because these practices promote the Lutheran doctrine of the means of grace just as effectively as textbooks on Christian doctrine do. And the Evangelical community has at least a tacit understanding that these practices conflict with their understanding of experiences as the indicator of the true church. The entire discussion is soteriological to the core even though it is often expressed in matters of church practice.

### PRAISE WORSHIP SERVICES

With its understanding of faith as a conscious “heartfelt” experience, American Evangelicalism views the function and practice of the divine service in a manner completely different from Lutherans. Luther and the Confessions present the function of the divine service primarily as God's serving Christians with his word and sacraments for the forgiveness of sins. Worshipers certainly respond with thanksgiving and confession, but the service is primarily a gift of God to his people. They are primarily hearers and receivers in the divine service. That is what worship is.

Faith is that worship which receives God's offered blessings. It is by faith that God wants to be worshiped, namely, that we receive from him what he promises and offers. (Ap IV, 49)

The woman [who washed Jesus' feet] came, believing that she should seek the forgiveness of sins from Christ. This is the highest way of worshiping Christ. Nothing greater could she ascribe to him. By looking for the forgiveness of sins from him she truly acknowledged him as the Messiah. Truly to believe means to think of Christ in this way, and in this way to worship and take hold of him. (Ap IV, 154)

The service and worship of the Gospel is to receive good things from God. The highest worship in the Gospel is the desire to receive the forgiveness of sins, grace and righteousness. (Ap IV, 310)

With this understanding of worship the Lutheran Church has always concentrated on preaching the gospel and administering the sacraments. It did not worry the early Lutherans that the word and sacraments were communicated in forms that varied little from place to place and week to week. One American Lutheran theologian of the early twentieth century put it this way:

19. David Luecke, *Apostolic Style and Lutheran Substance* (Lima, Ohio: Fairway Press, 1999), 92–93.

20. D. G. Hart, *The Lost Soul of American Protestantism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), xxiii.

21. *Ibid.*, 23.

22. *Ibid.*, 21.

23. *Ibid.*, xxiv.

It is folly for the servants of the Word to cast about how to reach men's hearts, how to fill the pews, how to bring people to the fear of the Lord; it is folly to suppose they must discover new power, find a new content for their sermons or try this or that new method. The hammer that breaks the rock in pieces has not been cast aside, it needs only servants to carry it among men.<sup>24</sup>

In fact, the Lutherans often extolled the sameness of the liturgy as the proper vehicle for the Holy Spirit.

American Evangelicalism, on the other hand, since it defines faith as primarily a heartfelt emotional experience, must view the Sunday service as an event that brings about the active personal experience. In early Evangelicalism, "the emphasis was on a concrete personal conversion experience and the revival [worship service] was the means employed to bring about the experience."<sup>25</sup> George Barna, a Church Growth advocate and prolific church pollster and analyst, stresses the importance of the worship service in "bringing people to Christ." But he warns that "half of all regular church-going adults admit that they have not experienced God's presence at any time during the past year."<sup>26</sup> He asserts that this lack can be remedied when people are "moved physically, emotionally or intellectually by the worship experience and when they encounter God and have an undeniable sense of his presence."<sup>27</sup> So what can a church do to make sure that its worship services effectively move people to encounter God? Barna answers, "The people who attend a worship service should be ushered into His presence through an intentional effort to make God's presence palpable."<sup>28</sup> Note that it is not unbelievers who lack the experience Barna desires, but churchgoers. According to him, countless Christians may be hearing the gospel and receiving the sacrament on a regular basis yet still lack the presence of God.

Since the function of the service for Evangelicals is to make God palpably and experientially present, a divine service that is the same week after week simply will not do. "Unpredictability" is what generates the excitement necessary for conversion, so there is a strong movement across all churches in America to vary the service radically from week to week. One of the most significant novelties is the practice of singing praise songs for about twenty minutes at the beginning of the service.<sup>29</sup> Easy-listening music allows people

to find a means of expression to God without having that flow disturbed by other forms of activity. . . . It is a mistake to assume that people are ready and prepared to worship when they first arrive on Sunday morning. Usually, they

need to "wake up" first. We believe you wake up the Body by waking up the bodies! So we intentionally choose a song with a strong fast beat and a bright melody that people can move to.<sup>30</sup>

Once the worship leader "reads the congregation" and surmises that the people are integrated into worship, he then "transitions from the music to the next part of the worship experience."<sup>31</sup> The Lutheran practice of preparation through being examined and absolved is out. The Evangelical practice of strong, fast beat and bright melody that "wakes us up" is in.

Another worship practice advocated by many within the Evangelical community is that the language of the service must be in the "heart language of the people who are there." Traditional church language is to be avoided since those who are estranged from the church — often called the "dechurching" — and those who have never been in a church will hardly know the Christian jargon. Kent Hunter, a prolific church growth author and writer for the magazine *Jesus First* declares,

To bring the Gospel to Americans on their level, the communication path will have to take the form of the country-western culture, including country-western songs with Christian content.<sup>32</sup>

Because surveys show that almost 70 percent of Americans enjoy soft rock or country music, the worship service should employ these styles of music. What is popular in the world should be used by the church. Observe that these practices have nothing to do with receiving the word and sacrament and everything to do with creating the mood necessary for the inducement of a religious experience.

This style of worship has created expectations among some Lutherans that produce tragic results. A couple stopped by my church and identified themselves as Lutherans who had just moved into the area. They wondered what types of church services we have. I responded, "We have the type of worship services where every single Sunday you are given the forgiveness of sins because every Sunday you hear the absolution, hear the gospel in the readings and sermon, receive the body and blood of Jesus in the Lord's Supper and are sent home with the gracious peace of Jesus Christ through the benediction." Their faces fell. "We were hoping you had some praise music." Apparently the forgiveness of sins through the means of grace was not their heart language. This is the expectation of churchgoing people who have been influenced by American Evangelicalism. To think that worship style is not a fundamental soteriological question is to do so at the peril of souls.

Obviously, every culture will use language, idiom, and musical forms which are understandable to that culture. That is not

24. M. Reu, *Homiletics* (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1924), 48.

25. David Gustafson, *Lutherans in Crisis: The Question of Identity in the American Republic* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 16.

26. George Barna, *The Habits of Highly Effective Churches* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1999), 83.

27. *Ibid.*, 87–88.

28. *Ibid.*, 87.

29. *Ibid.*, 99.

30. Daniel Zager, "Popular Music and Music for the Church," *Lutheran Forum* 36:3 (Fall 2002), 24.

31. Barna, *Habits*, 99.

32. Kent Hunter, *Confessions of a Church Growth Enthusiast* (Corunna, IN: Kent Hunter, 1997), 175.

the issue. What is at issue is whether popular culture—which is by definition popular, liked by the people, and determined by the people—should determine the content and forms of the divine service.

The conversionism making its way into Lutheran circles is probably seen most obviously in the hymns that are sung. I speak anecdotally here. Recently I was talking with an organist at a Lutheran church. During the upcoming service the congregation was going to sing, “Dear Christians, One and All Rejoice.” She commented that she was unfamiliar with the hymn—one written by Luther, arguably the greatest didactic hymn ever penned, unequalled in teaching the way of salvation, included in virtually every Lutheran hymnal ever published. Yet she, a young Lutheran organist, had never played it. At the same time many polls indicate that Lutheran laypeople in America constantly list “Amazing Grace” as one of their favorite hymns. Consider the lyrics of this hymn. It mentions nothing of the cross of Christ, the sacraments, the forgiveness of sins, or even the name of Jesus. It does, however, contain that quintessential American sentiment: “How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.”<sup>33</sup> This type of hymnody will always be preferred in a system that stresses the conversion experience over confidence in the word and sacraments.

Consider the two songs below, which are typical of the “praise songs” employed by many American churches. They do not focus upon the grace of God in Christ and say nothing of sacraments, word, or cross. Instead they extol the intense feelings of New Evangelicalism.

When we're gathered in His name,  
we will never leave the same.  
Love surrounds, joy abounds;  
We can know the Spirit came,  
in each heart He lights a flame  
When we're gathered in His name.<sup>34</sup>

I can almost see your Holiness  
As I look around this place,  
With our hands raised up to receive Your love,  
I can see you on each face.  
Spirit of God, lift me up, Spirit of God, lift me up,  
Fill me again with Your love,  
Sweet Spirit of God, Spirit of Love, Sweet Spirit of God.<sup>35</sup>

These songs are not merely vacuous. They promote an understanding of the Christian religion in which the Holy Spirit is not identified in God's word but on the faces of people; that the Spirit's “lighting a flame in the heart,” or “lifting me up,” or “filling me with Your love,” is the experience that identifies one as a Christian.

It is remarkable that Lutherans seem attracted to the practices of their Evangelical friends. The constant battle of most confessional Lutheran pastors is either to wean their parishioners from the practices of American Evangelicalism or to inoculate them against them. I am constantly at odds with many in my own church who want to introduce worship innovations which will excite the people or hymns which will “turn us on.” I am forced to guard my people against themselves as they want me to stop asking the young people to memorize the catechism and instead to give them a memorable experience of Jesus. More than once I have had to take aside a member of my congregation and explain why we do not use the textbooks of American revivalists such as Rick Warren and Joel Osteen, no matter how many other Lutherans do. I regularly have to justify my refusal to sing “Amazing Grace” in my congregation even though it is simply not a Christian hymn. These are the practices of American Evangelicalism and I am convinced that if I employ them, then I, or at least my people, will soon accept their aberrant theology as well. For the practices of Evangelicalism promote the soteriological understanding of that system of theology just as word and sacrament promote Lutheran soteriology.

#### SPEAKING IN TONGUES

The Evangelical community engages in altar calls, praise bands, seeker services; it is obsessed with counting converts as proof of God's presence—there are a host of other problematic practices. All of these could be shown to further the understanding of faith as an emotional experience and the service of the church as the studied attempt to effect that experience. But another church practice commends itself for analysis: speaking in tongues.

Throughout Christian history speaking in tongues has been reported only intermittently and sparingly. Until recently, it was a curiosity with little theological value attached to it. All that changed in the early days of the twentieth century when Pentecostalism had its birth. Agnes Ozman, a student attending Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas, spoke in tongues. She describes her experience:

It was as his hands were laid upon my head that the Holy Spirit fell upon me and I began to speak in tongues, glorifying God. I talked several languages, and it was clearly manifest when a new dialect was spoken. I had the added joy and glory my heart longed for and a depth of the presence of the Lord within that I had never known before. It was as if rivers of living waters were proceeding from my innermost being.<sup>36</sup>

The hands upon Agnes Ozman belonged to her pastor, a revivalist preacher named Charles Parham. He interpreted this experience of tongues-speaking as the indispensable sign of the Spirit's blessing with “the baptism in the Spirit.” Immediately he began to preach at revivals throughout Kansas, Missouri, and

33. *LBW* 448:2.

34. Walt Harrah, *The Greatest Hymns and Praise Choruses of Yesterday and Today* (Maranatha Music, 1987), #9.

35. Hanneke Jacobs, *Ibid.*, #181.

36. Klaude Kendrick, *The Promise Fulfilled* (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1981), 52.

ultimately in Texas. There he met a black revivalist preacher, W. J. Seymour, who spoke in tongues and was convinced that tongues were the necessary experiential evidence of God's second blessing. Seymour moved to Los Angeles and spearheaded a three-year revival later dubbed "The Azusa Street Revival."<sup>37</sup> Pentecostalism had begun.

The central teaching of Pentecostalism has always been that people can know that God has blessed them when they speak in tongues. The specific blessing identified by the Pentecostals is the "baptism in the Spirit." Before the rise of Pentecostalism there was little if any theological import assigned to speaking in tongues. Incidents of the phenomenon were rare. After the rise of Pentecostalism, tongues have become a worldwide movement with deep theological significance. Pentecostals believe that

the Scriptures teach us that after we are cleansed with the blood we then need to receive the filling of the Spirit, the baptism with the Holy Ghost, the abiding Comforter, that which was promised by John the Baptist and corroborated by Jesus Christ that on receiving the baptism with the Holy Ghost we have the same evidence that followed Acts 2nd, 10th, and 19th chapters to wit; the speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gave utterance.<sup>38</sup>

In the late 1950s and early 1960s the Pentecostal experience began invading mainline Evangelical churches due to a policy of penetration employed by Pentecostal leaders, directed at Evangelical pastors. C. Peter Wagner, a Pentecostal, made inroads into the church growth movement with his appointment as Director of the Evangelistic Association at Fuller Theological Seminary in 1971. The words of David J. du Plessis, an indefatigable Assemblies of God revivalist preacher, are also noteworthy. In 1960 he was asked to speak to the Commission of Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches. In his address he pleaded that the "great revival of charismatic happenings" would soon be seen everywhere in the world so that in all churches "leaders and people will be spirit-filled and empowered on a scale hitherto unknown."<sup>39</sup> The strategy used by du Plessis was not to convert other Christians into Pentecostals but to encourage them, "Be no more conformed to Pentecostalism, but be ye transformed by the renewal of your mind in your own church."<sup>40</sup> By the mid-1970s Robert Culpepper could truthfully assert:

What is the relation between Pentecostals and the modern day charismatic movement? The current charismatic movement is the offspring of Pentecostalism. Had there been no Pentecostalism probably there would have been no Charismatic movement. Many of the thought forms, worship patterns, and theological ideas of Pentecostalism have been brought over in the movement.<sup>41</sup>

Why share this brief, but intriguing history? Because it is essential to understand the function of tongues-speaking in Evangelical churches today. The tongues movement has spread throughout the world and tongues are spoken by people within almost every major church body. In fact the American Pentecostal churches are universally considered to be part of the Evangelical movement. But speaking in tongues is not a benign practice. It is a practice that is universally interpreted as supporting the craving of Evangelicalism for experience. "Tongues regarded simply as an isolated phenomena, rather than as an initial evidence of the baptism of the Spirit, did not launch a worldwide reform."<sup>42</sup> And tongues-speaking brings with it the worship patterns and practices of Evangelicalism. That is why tongues-speakers universally describe their experience in emotional, superlative, and life defining terms. Consider a few of the earliest charismatic accounts of tongues:

But as I spoke on, something else began to happen. My heart began to get happier and happier. The presence of God that I had so clearly seen in earlier days to be the real reason for living suddenly enveloped me again after the many, many years of dryness. Never had I experienced God's presence in such reality as now . . . The reality of God was something that I felt all the way through even with my body. But instead of being fearful, I felt tremendously happy and elated.<sup>43</sup>

I just went on talking my new language. But that wasn't enough. The charge of energy was like a million volts of electricity looking for motors to turn on and dark streets to light up like day. I threw furniture into the air and shouted . . . I looked at the things around me; the bricks on the fireplace all looked new, each one looked perfect, and each was a window through which God poured.<sup>44</sup>

Something happened. My heart was strangely warmed. I thought if Paul surrendered all his ambitions and lived for Jesus — why can't I? I broke down and wept, and right there in the classroom I surrendered my life to Jesus Christ.<sup>45</sup>

37. For a thorough and sympathetic account of the early days of Pentecostalism and its roots see Joseph Campbell, *The Pentecostal Holiness Church: 1898–1948* (Franklin Spring, GA: Publishing House of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, 1951); W. J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals: The Charismatic Movement in the Churches*, trans. R. A. Wilson (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1972); Klaude Kendrick, *Promise Fulfilled*; and Vinson Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971).

38. Campbell, *Pentecostal Holiness Church*, 247.

39. David J. du Plessis, *The Spirit Bade Me Go* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1970), 29.

40. Cited by Robert H. Culpepper, *Evaluating the Charismatic Movement: A Theological and Biblical Appraisal* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1977), 22.

41. Culpepper, *Charismatic Movement*, 51–52.

42. Frederick Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 77.

43. Dennis Bennett, *Nine O'Clock in the Morning* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1970), 20.

44. Erwin Prange, *The Gift Is Already Yours* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1973), 130.

45. A. G. Dornfield, *Have You Received the Holy Spirit?* (St. Charles, MO: A.G. Dornfield, 1973), 2.

I lived under a yoke of condemnation because I never felt able to measure up to all that my church, my calling, and my conscience demanded of me. To be perfectly frank, I didn't feel loved of God although intellectually I could say, "Yes, but God's Word says you are even if you don't believe it." But when the Holy Spirit flooded my soul with love I felt it. There was no need to keep quoting Bible passages. The Holy Spirit was now ministering that love within my heart and not just through my intellect.<sup>46</sup>

The intellect, however, has an inveterate tendency to categorize and legalize. When the intellect steps aside the Spirit can operate through this gift of tongues with a freer hand, building us up.<sup>47</sup>

The practice of tongues-speaking pictures, promotes, and perpetuates the soteriology of American Evangelicalism. Individualism reigns because the experience almost always happens when one is alone with God. The emotions provide the assurance of God's love, and tongues the assurance of forgiveness. "Quoting Bible verses" has been replaced with the feelings of "love within my heart." Four of the five citations quoted above were made by so-called Lutheran pastors. The policy of penetration was certainly successful among Lutherans.

The effects of tongues-speaking are also telling. Larry Christenson says that speaking in tongues introduces to the church "the 'pneumatic factor,' the non-theological, purely dynamic" element.<sup>48</sup> Others claim that it "lifts one spiritually on to a higher place with regard to assurance, prayer, Bible study, fruits, guidance, help and comfort,"<sup>49</sup> or that "Pentecostals became stronger in the faith in certain ways."<sup>50</sup>

The common denominator in all of these [tongues-speaking] seems to be this; it has intensified the sense of the presence of God—the word of God has become more contemporary, believable—Christ the Lord has become more real—in a word, faith has been strengthened.<sup>51</sup> . . . What has helped me most is that even though I have been a Christian all my life, and have attended church regularly since I was a child, I have never been sure I was forgiven my sins and would be acceptable to Christ. For many years this has been a secret worry, only spoken of to my pastor and most intimate friends. Now I have the assurance that the Lord is with me, guiding me, comforting me in times of need.<sup>52</sup>

The practice of tongues-speaking is virtually indistinguishable from the theology of the movement which promotes it. The soteriological importance of tongues-speaking is obvious. Tongues-speaking as a church practice was invented by the Pentecostals but eagerly adopted and adapted by American Evangelicals half a century later. To those who practice it, tongues-speaking is a means of grace. It is an experience which provides assurance of grace and forgiveness, guidance, happiness, the presence of God, a clear conscience, a stronger faith, relief of worries, and comfort. It replaces the word and sacraments in the life of the church, just as all Evangelical experiences tend to do.

Many Evangelicals do not speak in tongues, and some have been avid critics of the practice as well as the movement which promotes it. Critiques of the tongues movement have usually been made on an exegetical or even scientific basis.<sup>53</sup> But Evangelicalism does not appear to have the capabilities within its system of theology to resist the tongues movement or any movement that extols and promotes an emotional, spiritual experience as necessary to full Christian life. That is why the tongues movement was able so easily to penetrate Evangelical circles.

Lutherans need to be aware of the deep theological import that the practices of Evangelicalism possess. Their style is not a matter of indifference. Rather, the practices of Evangelicalism are profoundly soteriological. Evangelicals (1) extol experience as the essential assurance of God's grace, (2) develop worship patterns which promote experiential Christianity, and (3) practice or tolerate the archetypal experience of Evangelicalism—speaking in tongues. These practices picture, promote, and perpetuate the theology of Reformed, Arminian, American Evangelicalism.

## CONCLUSION

How are Lutherans to respond to all of this? They should learn the lessons of the past. The Roman system of Luther's day promoted its false doctrines through practices: the sale of indulgences, the sacrifice of the mass, and the collection and viewing of relics. Luther attacked these practices and exposed their falsehood. In their place laudable customs were established. Liturgical changes were made, uniformity in worship was instituted, and catechetical instruction was enjoined. Lutherans realized that the Roman practices were false, just as theirs were both true and necessary. The Lutherans, in fact, never distinguished between their doctrine and the practices which promoted it.

46. Rodney Lensch, *My Personal Pentecost* (Kirkwood, MO: Impact Books, 1972), 20.

47. Larry Christenson, *Speaking in Tongues* (Minneapolis: Dimension Books, 1968), 79.

48. Larry Christenson, *Message to the Charismatic Movement* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1972), 22.

49. Ian Cockburn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1971), 46.

50. John Stevens Kerr, *The Fire Flames Anew* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 65.

51. Larry Christenson, *Speaking in Tongues*, 9.

52. *Ibid.*, 77–78.

53. See Robert Gromacki, *The Modern Tongues Movement* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967); Charles Smith, *Tongues in Biblical Perspective* (Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH Books, 1972); and John F. McArthur, *The Charismatics: A Doctrinal Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978). For a report of the psychological or scientific basis for the questioning of tongues see John Kildahl, *The Psychology of Speaking in Tongues* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972); Felicitas D. Goodman, *Speaking in Tongues* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972); and Klemet Preus, "Tongues: An Evaluation from a Scientific Perspective," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 46 (1982), 277–293.

Today Lutherans should respond to the Evangelicals in much the same way. First, they should recognize and believe that salvation was earned once for all by Christ through his vicarious life and death. This salvation is offered and bestowed through the ministry of the gospel and sacraments, which forgive sins and create faith in Christ's salvation. "So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted" (AC iv). This is our soteriology. God creates faith through the same means that he employs to forgive sins. Faith and forgiveness through the gospel and sacraments—this is the key to understanding Lutheran soteriology.

Second, Lutheran practice should reflect its soteriology. Lutherans should rejoice in the divine service of the preaching of the gospel and administration of the sacraments. On the other hand, they should rid the divine service of anything that smacks of human works, preparedness, efforts, openness, striving, seeking, cooperation, emotionalism, enthusiasm, or any other human contribution. The divine service is God's gift of forgiveness to his people. The uniform and historic divine service should be employed, didactic hymns should be sung, and frequent communion should be extolled. Because saving faith does not just happen but is taught, the catechism should be employed. Other salutary practices, not analyzed in this article, should be followed, such as requiring ordination for all preachers, the vesting of pastors, following the pericopal system, closed communion, and limiting pastoral leadership and office-holding to men.

Third, Lutherans must expose the false practices of the Evangelical community. Luther was not content to preach the pure

doctrine in some type of theoretical and platonic manner without applying it. He showed how the true doctrine precluded the false practices of the Roman church of his day. Lutherans today should follow his lead. It is wrong to advocate religious experience as possessing some value in itself. Worship practices intended to produce an emotional experience are simply wrong. It is wrong to evaluate the service by how it affects people. It is wrong to use driving, Christ-less, popular music in order to cause an experience. Tongues—the way they are defined and practiced in our day—are simply not of God. They are wrong. They should be discouraged. Pastors need to warn laypeople against these things with as much ardor as they caution them against the false practices of Rome.

Fourth, Lutherans should be profoundly cynical of any practice that is promoted among them that does not have historical roots in the Lutheran Church. Most such practices are uncritically and unknowingly taken from Evangelical circles. A good rule of thumb is this: one should not do anything new unless he is completely certain where the practice comes from and why it is used. And then the practice should be introduced only after teaching its use to the people of the church.

Finally, Lutherans must continue to study both the Scriptures and the Confessions of the church. These teach the saving doctrine of the Lord and his infinite mercy in Christ. They teach us the way of salvation that God delivers through the gospel. The Scriptures and the Confessions also clearly show the symbiotic relationship between theology and practice, as well as the soteriological function of most church practices.

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# The Jesus Prayer

## A Form of Russian Piety in Theological Perspective

REINHARD SLENCZKA



EVEN WHEN LOOKING BACK on one thousand years of Christian history in Russia, the topic of this article is very narrow, remote, and strange. It deals with a peculiar form of piety that is rooted especially in Russian monasticism. Furthermore, it focuses on theological problems related to it that, at the beginning of the twentieth century, were at the center of an intense, passionate controversy in the Orthodox Church, first on the holy Mt. Athos and then in Russia. This controversy was waged not only with words and publications, but also in actions, and finally even with a military intervention. This disagreement, between 1911 and 1913, about the “divinity of the name” and an ensuing “honoring of the name” was not resolved by theological clarification or ecclesiastical decision, but was cut off by the First World War and the Revolution of 1917. The discussion of this topic was on the agenda for the national council of 1917–1918, but it had to be curtailed. The strangeness, even the incomprehensibility, of the topic and its interrelated controversies, is a result also of the veil of historical forgetfulness. While some items from the archives of Mt. Athos were recently investigated and published,<sup>2</sup> Russian archives, insofar as the material can still be found, have not so far been made accessible. Given this situation, the goal of this article is not to present new sources, but to reflect on certain aspects about what is known.<sup>3</sup> In doing so, we will see that this specific topic of Russian monasticism is by no means an isolated phenomenon and is not limited to the remoteness of monasteries and hermits. This controversy about the reality of prayer as communion with God will also show that the reality of the content of our thinking and speaking is at stake.

To grasp this, however, one first must consider that the distinction, so self-evident to us, between faith, on the one hand, and general human consciousness and experience, on the other, is by no means as self-evident as it might seem under the historical axioms of a “secularized modernity” and a “scientifically oriented” perception and domination of the world. We can recall that during the fascinating and tension-rich phase of Russian intellectual history around the turn of the last century it was repeatedly recognized (and not least in the argument with Marxism and materialism) that the Christian faith should

be defended not only vis-à-vis the movements and problems of the time, but that it has a responsibility for explicating the foundations of knowledge, society’s order, and the law. To summarize it briefly in a word-play coined by Sergius N. Bulgakov (1871–1944), where God’s becoming man (богочеловечество; *bogochelovechestvo*) in Christ is no longer testified to and recognized, there a self-divinization of man (человекобожество; *chelovekobozhestvo*) takes place.<sup>4</sup>

It seems that the question concerning the recognition of the reality of divine being has by and large been eclipsed by other questions that seem to be urgent but that ultimately remain in the realm of what is external and superficial, such as the question concerning the assertion of what is Christian in distinction

1. Published in German as “Die Herzengemeinschaft durch das Jesus-Gebet: Eine Form russischer Frömmigkeit in theologischer Sicht,” in Reinhard Slenczka, *Neues und Altes: Ausgewählte Aufsätze, Vorträge und Gutachten*, ed. A. I. Herzog (Neuendettelsau: Freimund, 2000), 1:192–210; first published in *Tausend Jahre Russische Orthodoxe Kirche: Beiträge von Geistlichen der Russischen Orthodoxen Kirche im Ausland und Wissenschaftlern verschiedener Disziplinen*, ed. W. Kasack (Munich: O. Sagner, 1988), 57–73.
2. Κωνσταντίνος Κ. Παπουλίδης, *Οι Ρώσοι ονοματολάτραι του Αγίου Ορους* (Θεσσαλονίκη: Ίδρυμα Μελετών Χερσονήσου του Αίμου, 1977). From the earlier literature the following deserves special mention: B. Schultze, “Der Streit um die Göttlichkeit des Namens Jesu in der russischen Theologie,” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 17 (1951): 312–94; I. Smolitsch, “Le Mont Athos et la Russie,” in *Le Millénaire du Mont Athos 963–1963: Études et Mélanges* (Chevetogne: Éd. de Chevetogne, 1963), 1:279–318; Георгий Лоровский, *Аути русского богословия* (1937; reprint, Paris: YMCA-Press, 1981), 502–503, 571–572.
3. Some earlier publications on this topic are taken up and built upon in this contribution: R. Slenczka, “Die Göttlichkeit des Namens und die Rechtfertigung des Sünders: Erwägungen zum dogmatischen Problem des Athosstreits von 1910 bis 1913,” in *Unser ganzes Leben Christus unserm Gott überantworten: Studien zur ostkirchlichen Spiritualität: Fairy v. Liliensfeld zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. P. Hauptmann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 417–31; R. Slenczka, “Lehre und Bekenntnis der Orthodoxen Kirchen: Vom 16. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart,” in *Die Lehrentwicklung im Rahmen der Kopnessionalität*, B. Lohse [et al.], ed. C. Andresen, *Handbuch der Dogmen- und Theologiegeschichte* Bd. 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 499–559, esp. 550 ff.
4. С. Н. Булгаков, «Героизм и подвижничество (Из размышлений о религиозной природе русской интеллигенции)» in *Въхи: Сборник статей о русской интеллигенции*, Н. А. Бердяева [и др.] (2nd ed., 1909; reprint, Frankfurt/Main: Posev, 1967), 23–69, here 55–56. Cf. С. Н. Булгаков, *Философия хозяйства* (Moscow, 1912).

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to so-called reality as experienced or as Christianity's relevance for understanding and solving the problems of our age.

This encompasses a vast field. Yet by way of introduction, these indicators show that the strangeness of the topic is by no means exclusively determined by the subject matter itself, but also by our situation, in which we see the Christian faith mostly in isolation, not realizing that the Christian faith is thereby replaced by other faiths and the one God by other gods. It is true, however, that changes in what *a priori* guides knowledge are perceived only *a posteriori*, that is, after the fact — late and, thereby, too late.

### THE JESUS PRAYER

Before looking at the Jesus Prayer as a peculiar form of piety or technique of meditation, its biblical foundation needs to be brought to the fore. The prayer reads: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner" or, respectively, "be merciful to me, a sinner." In the Gospels, we encounter this petition with minor variations in the healing miracles. Diseased people came to Jesus and requested help and healing from him.<sup>5</sup> Strictly speaking, this call is prayer. With "Lord, have mercy" Jesus is called upon as God. This can also be seen in the short petition of the tax collector who, unlike the pious self-aggrandizement of the Pharisee, beats his chest, does not dare lift up his eyes, and says: "God, have mercy on me, a sinner." And Jesus says about him, "This one went down to his house justified, rather than the other."<sup>6</sup> In the divine service we constantly encounter this call of prayer for help. The constantly repeated tenor of the liturgy of the Eastern church's *Господи помилуй* (*Gospodi pomilui*) is paralleled in our Western liturgies where, remarkably, the Greek phrase *Kyrie eleison* is often retained without translation. There is apparently an identity in the language of prayer that remains diachronically constant. An important example for this is the Hebrew *Amen* as the conclusion of every prayer. The meaning of customary phrases and traditional forms are easily overlooked; however, it remains embedded exactly in this constancy of their preservation. The petition for mercy, help, and forgiveness arises from the recognition of one's neediness, and it is uttered trusting in the saving presence of the Lord.

Since the church fathers' teaching on prayer, not just in the East, but also in the West, always focuses on this point, this shows that a central piece of the divine service is at stake and, therefore, the Christian life. This focus then also means that prayer is reduced from the verbose "blabbering like the pagans" to what is simple and crucial, where we as human beings are repeatedly inclined to drift off and to lose the essential in the unessential.

The most significant recent document of the Hesychastic practice of prayer is the *Philokalia* (Φιλοκαλία), *Добролюбие* (*Dobrotoliubie*) in Slavonic, that is, the love of what is beautiful and good, both in the religious and in the moral sense. It is an anthology of writings of monastic fathers from the fourth

through the fourteenth century. It was first published in Venice in 1782 and compiled by Makarios Notaras, bishop of Corinth (1731–1805), and Nicodemus the Hagiorite (1749–1809).<sup>7</sup> It was widely disseminated in the Slavic region by the 1793 translation by Paissij Velichkovskij (1722–1794). By additional translations and abridged editions, this work has found a remarkable level of dissemination in Russia and also in Western Christianity.<sup>8</sup>

The Jesus Prayer is not the only topic in these texts, but it is treated time and again, connected to the "praying without ceasing" in 1 Thessalonians 5:17. It can be spoken and practiced in certain postures and breathing techniques, so that it habitually accompanies the life and work of a person without verbal articulation. However, it is not technical instruction, but the material substance grounded biblically that truly matters. The goal is then, as is said, to receive or, respectively, to find again the divine energy (ἐνέργεια) that, as different texts state, "we have mystically received in baptism."<sup>9</sup> In this sense, prayer is understood as "the constantly moved intellectual-spiritual effect (νοερά ἐνέργεια) of the Holy Spirit,"<sup>10</sup> and in this sense it is a προσευχή νοερά, an intellectual-spiritual prayer, that is, a prayer that is worked by the Holy Spirit. For a proper understanding it is important to recognize the connection between the divine Spirit and breath that is already recognizable as based on the language in Greek (πνεῦμα), in Slavonic (дуч; *duch*), and in Latin (*spiritus*).<sup>11</sup> For with the breathing-in, the name of Jesus Christ is to be implanted in the heart as the center of life:

That the name of the Lord Jesus may descend into the depth of the heart and humiliate the dragon that rules the field, but heal (save) the soul and make it alive. Ceaselessly remain with the name of the Lord Jesus so that the heart may drink in the Lord and the Lord the heart so that both may become one. And, again, do not separate your heart from God, but keep and protect it with the remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ always, until the name of the Lord is inwardly implanted in the heart and it may not entertain any other thoughts, so that Christ may be great (praised) among you.<sup>12</sup>

What at times is thus erroneously described or also practiced as a peculiar technique of prayer, when rightly understood, aims at the reality of the imparting of salvation as a spiritual-bodily event. Again, one must remember the biblical background, for example, Romans 8:14 and Galatians 4:6, where it becomes clear that the address "Father" from the one

7. The quotations are translated from the last complete Greek edition of the *Philokalia*, *Φιλοκαλία των ιερών νηπτικῶν*, 4th ed., 5 vols. (Αθήναι: Εκδοτικός Οίκος "Αστήρ," 1974–1976).

8. For example, *The Philokalia: The Eastern Christian Spiritual Texts, Selections Annotated and Explained*, tr. G. E. H. Palmer, Ph. Sherard, and K. Ware (Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2006).

9. *Φιλοκαλία* 3:250.74; 258.109–10; 4:67.

10. *Ibid.*, 4:68.

11. Cf. *Φιλοκαλία*, 4:222–223.

12. *Φιλοκαλία* 4:221.

5. Cf. Mt 9:27, 15:22, 20:30–31; Mk 10:47; Lk 17:13, 18:38–39; and others.

6. Lk 18:9–14.

who prays is an expression of the received adoption as God's child. Prayer thus grows out of the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is received in baptism and manifests itself in prayer. Understood in this way, this as any other prayer of a Christian is not the means to communion with God but a fruit and sign of this communion, grounded in the gift of adoption as a child of God. Only on this biblical basis can we understand what takes place here. And according to the biblical understanding, it is then precisely the heart, as the physical and psychic center of life, that is the place from where man as a totality is renewed by communion with God. If this background is disregarded, then one arrives, even for understanding prayer and its practice, at a psychologization that leads into totally different directions, and, conversely, can also incorporate other traditions and thereby alien religious contents. The spiritual reality under the effect of God by his Spirit is then perverted into the human techniques of spiritual exercises. Not every meditation arises from a Christian spirit.

#### THE CONTROVERSY REGARDING THE DIVINITY OF THE NAME

To be sure, in the Christian church there have always been harsh controversies regarding certain disciplines of prayer, especially in the Hesychastic tradition. In the early church, in the fifth century, this applied, for example, to the Euchites or Messalians, the "ones who pray." What set them apart, as is indicated in their name, was also what separated them from the churchly communion: the practice of prayer totally replaced the means of dispensing salvation in word and sacrament and led to a separation from the Christian worship service. In the Palamite Controversy of the fourteenth century, the argument was over in what sense certain experiences during prayer, such as the vision of light, the feeling of warmth, and so forth, were to be regarded as an encounter with the reality of God. How is the essence or being (οὐσία) of God related to the working (ἐνέργεια) of God in what is creaturely? One realizes that these controversies by no means deal with theological hair-splitting when one considers how important and difficult it is to distinguish in the Christian life between what is from God and what is not from God, or, to apply it to today, between what is human enthusiasm and what is the work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian congregation and its worship service.

However, it is equally important to realize that such a distinction can be made in the perception of our human life where the Holy Spirit is at work. By formative individuals and a series of publications, Hesychasm found a broader interest especially in the second half of the nineteenth century in Russia, which among the intelligentsia was in many ways sustained by the criticism of state-churchism, of formalized worship services, and of a scholastic theology. The anonymous *Sincere Accounts of a Pilgrim*, published in 1884, has been republished and translated again and again.<sup>13</sup> The revival of monasticism has always been a

kind of awakening; and it is also characteristic of it, at all times and in all churches, that it is not tied to social classes but always leads to new fellowship. However, what in this way moves men in their hearts and joins them together can possibly also separate them from other people. Harsh conflicts result from this. They remain incomprehensible to the outsider and to him who lives after it so long that he himself does not know and experience what grips men in their hearts and can unite them with each other, but what also, contrariwise, can hurt them in their hearts and pit them against each other. The controversy regarding the divinity and the honoring of the name in the context of the Jesus Prayer is a symptom and testament of such a conflict.

To give a brief outline of the external events of this conflict, in 1907, a book was published in Batalpashinsk (today called Cherkessk) that is titled *On the Heights of the Caucasus: Conversation between Two Startsy Concerning the Inner Union of our Heart with the Lord by Means of the Prayer to Jesus Christ; or the Intellectual Activity of Today's Hermits*.<sup>14</sup> The author is anonymous. The title page reads: "Compiled by a hermit of the Caucasian mountains, forests, and gorges." The secondary literature, but in any case not the title pages of the first and second editions, names schema-monk Ilarion as author; but about him only very little is known, not even his family name. Apparently, he was a Russian monk who had come from the Athos to the vicinity of Suchumi in the Caucasus and settled there in the monastery dedicated to Simon the Canaanite (also known as New Athos), a dependency of the Rossikon, the Panteleimon-monastery on Mt. Athos founded in 1876. The book was published with the approval of the spiritual censorship committee in Moscow without any objections. In 1910, a second edition was printed; and the third edition of 1912 was even published by the publishing arm of the Kiev Monastery of the Caves.

Regarding the content, this book represents a simple, but impressive interpretation of the Jesus Prayer:

This book was written with the assistance of God only to furnish an explanation, as complete as possible, of the Jesus Prayer that, according to the unanimous teaching of all holy fathers, is the root and the foundation of the spiritual life and of the perfection that is connected to it and that emerges from it. (v)

What this spiritual theology or inner philosophy (любомудрие; *ljubomudrie*) is, is stated in the beginning in the words of the fathers: "What is one to make of many words? . . . The prayer is God who works all in all" (St. Gregory the Sinaite). "Without ceasing remain in the name of the Lord Jesus so that

*Direction spirituelle en Orient autrefois* (reprint, Rome: Pontif. Inst. Orientalium Studiorum, 1968).

14. Иларіон, *На горах Кавказа: бѣседа двухъ старцевъ пустынниковъ о внутреннемъ единеніи съ Господомъ нашихъ сердецъ чрезъ молитву Іисусъ Христову, или, Духовная дѣятельность современныхъ пустынниковъ* (Баталпашинск, 1907). In part, it has been translated into German as *Auf den Bergen des Kaukasus: Gespräch zweier Einsiedler über das Jesus-Gebet*, tr. B. Tittel (Salzburg: Müller, 1991).

13. *Откровенные рассказы странника духовному своему отцу* (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1973). English translation: *The Way of a Pilgrim*, tr. H. Bacovcin (New York: Image, 1992). See also I. Hausherr,

the Lord may absorb the heart and the heart the Lord: and the two will be one” (St. John Chrysostom).

This word — the name Jesus — as well as the entire prayer grasp and comprehend those who have reached a living communion with God, and they will be filled with an unspeakable joy that is higher than all speaking and understanding. Yet why is this so? Because of the connection of their heart with the Lord Jesus Christ himself (St. Kallistos and Ignatius Ksanthopoulos).

Set in the landscape of northern Caucasus at the upper Urup River and in view of Mt. Elbrus, an encounter with a hermit is described who lives as one of the few practicing the Jesus Prayer that has been widely forgotten. The remote mountainous landscape devoid of humans “as a book of nature”<sup>15</sup> is repeatedly described with its plants and trees as background. Also, the life the hermit so far has lived is briefly discussed:<sup>16</sup> after leading a dissolute life he repented, but then, dissatisfied with studying at a seminary, he withdrew into a monastery and then, finally, totally into solitude. It is the well-known path of turning away from a life of sin and the world. Yet it is also pointed out that the Jesus Prayer currently has not only fallen into disuse, but that, despite the impressive witness of the fathers, no one wants to have anything to do with it, that one regards it as useless and harmful.<sup>17</sup> In this, arguments are suggested that by no means come up only outside the monastic community; they are also heard among the monks. The book is thus not first the cause of the controversy, but such conflicts — even among monks — already belong to its background.

Unfolding and practicing the Jesus Prayer fills the first part of the book. A shorter, second part contains “a short outline of the personality of the Savior.”<sup>18</sup> This too is important. For here is demonstrated how the invocation of the name is connected to the vision of the Person of Christ according to the witness of the Gospels.<sup>19</sup> A third part finally contains “spiritual letters of a hermit *starets* to various persons,” whose contents also pertain to the explanation of the Jesus Prayer.<sup>20</sup>

This entire book is basically a devotional in the sense of a spiritual renewal that arises from prayer and that manifests itself in prayer: “Because the Godhead itself exists in the name, this is why this name is the Savior himself for him who loves the Savior.”<sup>21</sup> Repeatedly it is enjoined that this prayer is not only a mere form, but that it contains and creates a spiritual reality that is founded in Christ:

15. Ibid., 6.

16. Ibid., 36 ff.

17. Ibid., 77 ff.

18. Ibid., 198–257.

19. It is interesting to see that in this section books of the so-called “first quest” for the historical Jesus are frequently quoted, “from the book of a Western theologian”; see *ibid.*, 202, 204, 205, 208, 213, etc.

20. Ibid., 259–329.

21. Ibid., 11.

The name of the Lord Jesus Christ becomes, as it were, flesh; with the inner feeling of his soul, man clearly feels God himself in the name of God. This feeling of the Lord himself and of his name melts into an identity, in which it is impossible to distinguish the one from the other. Yet this, for its part, becomes comprehensible when one considers that, when the Lord Jesus Christ assumed our nature into his divine Personality and with a single name is called God-man, because “in his flesh dwelled the whole fullness of the Godhead” (Col 2:9), that then this fullness of his divine perfections doubtlessly also dwells in the holy name Jesus Christ. One could put it like this: If it dwelled visibly in the flesh — “bodily” — then it dwells in his holy name not visibly, but spiritually and perceptible only by the heart or by the spirit (reference to 1 John 5:10).<sup>22</sup>

Here is where the conflicts start. We will recapitulate briefly the external events of these conflicts according to the book by Constantine Papulidis,<sup>23</sup> in which the last phase of the conflict between 18 January and 31 July 1913 is described according to the protocols of the *Iera Koinotita* (Ἱερά Κοινότητα) — the “Holy Community,” the governing council consisting of the representatives of the twenty monasteries on Mt. Athos — which are in part reprinted in his book: Abbot Jerome of the Andrew-monastery, who rejected the honoring of the name, was deposed. He was replaced by priest-monk David. The protocols of the *Iera Koinotita* speak of fist fights and a reign of terror during which a dissenting minority was driven out of the monastic community.<sup>24</sup> The Russian consul in Thessalonica and the Russian ambassador in Istanbul were drawn into the conflict. At the same time, attempts were underway to restore the monastic peace on Mt. Athos by means of theological opinions, in part drafted rashly,<sup>25</sup> and disciplinary measures. In hindsight, much of this looks unfortunate and helpless, especially in that a commission, formed by the holy synod of the Russian Orthodox Church and under the leadership of Archbishop Nikon, appeared aboard the gunboat *Donets* and finally had the resisting monks carted away by the sailors by force<sup>26</sup> — a political intervention that probably could only be carried out in the power vacuum during the transition of Mt. Athos from Turkish to Greek sovereignty at the time. Despite all gratefulness for the restored quietness, the *Iera Koinotita*, in the last protocol dealing with the controversy, considered it necessary explicitly to distance itself from the military intervention of the Russians. One neither gave the orders to collaborate in this procedure, nor was one called to collaborate.<sup>27</sup> Papulidis underlines several times that only Russian monks were involved in these conflicts.

22. Ibid., 12.

23. See note 2.

24. Παπουλίδης, *Οι Πάσοι*, 79–80, 89.

25. On the opinions cf. B. Schulze, *Streit um die Göttlichkeit*, 365 ff.; and Παπουλίδης, *Οι Πάσοι*, 27 ff.

26. Παπουλίδης, *Οι Πάσοι*, 40 ff.

27. Ibid., 40–41, 114.

First, on 9 July 1913, there are 621 (according to other accounts 415) and then, on 17 July 1913, there are 212 (or 100) more Russian monks shipped from Athos to Odessa. The cause for the decrease of the Russian monastic presence on the holy mountain was not the World War and the Revolution, but this military solution for a conflict over dogma.<sup>28</sup>

### THE THEOLOGICAL PROBLEM

The clash over the divinity of the name presents us with a typical example of a conflict over dogma. However, one must not understand it as mere logomachy or a purely academic argument. Conflicts about dogma have always to do with what shapes the consciousness of men, what fills the heart, whereby a man stands or falls. This is the true reason why people — and this is by no means limited to the Christian faith — are vulnerable and hurt others when matters of dogma are concerned. That “on which the heart hangs” is at stake. Likewise, it is revealing that the material difference here becomes apparent in the names employed. Those honoring the name call themselves in Russian *имяславцы* (*imiaslavtsy*) and in Greek *ὀνοματόδοξοι*. In a more elaborate way they also call themselves “Confessors of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” or “Confessors of the divine dignity of the name of God and of the name of Jesus.” Their opponents called them “name-idolizers” (*имябожники*; *imiabozhniki*; *ὀνοματοκεῖται* or *ὀνομαλάτραι*).

The self-designation *imiaslavtsy* is derived from the glorification of the name that corresponds to, and is based on, the glory of the name. In such an assertion of the divinity of the name, however, the opposing party can only see an idolization grown out of human fantasy and imagination. The decisive question therefore is: is the divine contained in the name and therefore to be honored, or is it transferred to the name based on human imagination and therefore unjustly? Consistently, those honoring the name call their opponents *имяборцы* (*imiabortsy*), those who fight the divinity of the name. At times, one also finds the name “Jesusans” (*ἰησοῦνάοι* or *ἰησοῦνάιται*), whereby the opponents are accused of denying, with the divinity of the name, also the divinity of Christ.<sup>29</sup>

A confession of those honoring the name outlines their position in this conflict as follows:

We, the undersigned monks of the holy *skiti* of St. Andrew on the holy mountain, in unanimity with the Catholic Orthodox Church believe in our true Lord Jesus Christ; we therefore confess also concerning his holy name that it is holy out of itself and that it is God itself, indivisibly from the Lord, as many holy fathers confess it.<sup>30</sup>

In a declaration for the ecumenical patriarchate, authored by one of the leaders in the conflict, the priest-monk Antonij (Bulatovich) (1870–1919),<sup>31</sup> it says:

The name of Jesus is God. The words heard by the apostles on Mt. Tabor are God himself. The words heard by the Israelites on Mt. Sinai are God himself. And every word of the gospel is God himself.<sup>32</sup>

As far as our deliberations are concerned, the Athos controversy regarding the divinity and honoring of the name shows how a form of prayer that is considered to be typical of the Eastern church leads to a far-reaching conflict about dogma. This conflict about dogma, however, takes place not only between Russian and Greek monks, as it at first appeared on Mt. Athos, but also among Russian hierarchs and theologians.

In order to grasp the theological problems that are involved here, it is revealing to see that the question concerning the divinity of the name is by no means a peculiarity of Eastern spirituality. Rather, the whole breadth of the topic becomes visible when one remembers the following three biblical foundations: The First Petition of the Lord’s Prayer, “Hallowed be thy name”; the Second Commandment, “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God”; and finally one of the oldest self-designations of the Christians as those “who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 1:2). These three examples also show that this is not about a certain quality of the name, but about that communion that is grounded and practiced in the revelation of the name and the corresponding invocation of the name. The holiness of the name grounds sanctification and salvation. In this sense we not only encounter this subject matter in all its breadth among the representatives of Eastern Hesychasm, but also in Western piety and theology. A few characteristic examples are offered here in selection.

In Luther’s 1519 Lectures on Galatians, we encounter the topic at the core of the doctrine of justification, in his exposition of Galatians 2:16.

[Yet since we] know that a man is not justified by works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the Law. (AE 27: 218)

Luther expounds what is meant here by referencing Luke 18:13 ff., the narrative of the Pharisee and the tax collector with the confession of the latter, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” This is also a part of the Jesus Prayer. Consequently, it says a little later on:

This [inner] righteousness [of faith] is nothing else than a calling upon the name of God. Now the name of God is mercy, truth, righteousness, strength, wisdom, and the ac-

28. Smolitsch, “Le Mont Athos,” 313; Παπουλίδης, *Οι Ρώσοι*, 40, 112.

29. Παπουλίδης, *Οι Ρώσοι*, 83, 122, 153; cf. 62–63 and 94.

30. *Ibid.*, 90.

31. On Antonij Bulatovich, who previously served as a captain in an

elite cavalry unit and had made a name for himself as research-traveler in Ethiopia, cf. Παπουλίδης, *Οι Ρώσοι*, 22–23; as well as F. Heyer, “Father Antonij Bulatovich: Russian Friend of the Christian People in Ethiopia,” *Записки Русской академической группы в С. III. A. = Transactions of the Association of Russian-American Scholars in U.S.A.* 12 (1980).

32. Παπουλίδης, *Οι Ρώσοι*, 25.

cusation of one's own name. On the other hand, our name is sin, falsehood, vanity, and folly, as is written: "All men are liars" (Ps 116:11) and "Every man walks in a vain show" (Ps 39:6). (AE 27: 220)

What is decisive already here is that, for Luther, the name is not simply a label, but, based on revelation, a disclosing of the divine essence. Luther emphasizes this occasionally by pointing to the Hebrew way of speaking, according to which such designations appear as substantives that are connected to God by a genitive-construction, so that "righteousness of God" in Hebrew is translated in other languages as "the righteous God." The active, working righteousness, accordingly, is the righteousness by which God makes sinners righteous, makes unholy people holy people.

Against this background, the exposition continues:

Calling upon the name of God, if it is in the heart and truly from the heart, shows that the heart and the name of the Lord are one and cling to each other. For this reason it is impossible for the heart not to share in the virtues in which the name of the Lord abounds. But it is through faith that the heart and the name of the Lord cling together (cf. Rom 10:17). Faith, however, comes through the Word of Christ, by which the name of the Lord is preached, as is written: "I will tell of Thy name to my brethren" (Ps 22:22), and again: "That men may declare in Zion the name of the Lord" (Ps 102:21). Therefore just as the name of the Lord is pure, holy, righteous, true, good, etc., so, if it touches, or is touched by, the heart (which happens through faith), it makes the heart entirely like itself. Thus it comes about that for those who trust in the name of the Lord all sins are forgiven, and righteousness is imputed to them "for Thy name's sake, O Lord" (Ps 25:11), because this name is good. This does not come about because of their own merit, since they have not deserved even to hear of it. But when the heart has thus been justified through the faith that is in His name, God gives them the power to become children of God (Jn 1:12) by immediately pouring into their hearts His Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5), who fills them with His love and makes them peaceful, glad, active in all good works, victorious over all evils, contemptuous even of death and hell. Here all laws and all works of laws soon cease; all things are now free and permissible, and the Law is fulfilled through faith and love. (AE 27: 220–21)

The same reality is enunciated in many ways in Luther's interpretations of the Lord's Prayer, as, for example, in the 1519 "German exposition of the Lord's Prayer for the simple laymen":

Thus we Christians, through our rebirth in baptism, became children of God. And if we pattern ourselves after our Father and all his ways, all his goods and names are likewise our inheritance forever. Now, our Father is and is called merciful and good, as Christ says, "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" [Lk 6:36]. He also says, "Learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart" [Mt 11:29]. God

is, furthermore, just, pure, truthful, strong, guileless, wise, etc. These are all names of God and are comprehended in the words "thy name," for the names of all virtues are also names given to God. And since we are baptized into these names and are consecrated and hallowed by them, and since they have thus become our names, it follows that God's children should be called and also be gentle, merciful, chaste, just, truthful, guileless, friendly, peaceful, and kindly disposed toward all, even toward our enemies. For the name of God, in which we were baptized, works all this in us. But we should always pray that the name of God may abide in us, be active in us, and be hallowed. (AE 42: 28)<sup>33</sup>

Among many other things, here it becomes clear how the name as revelation and deed of God works holiness and righteousness and how this renewal of the communion between God and man by the Holy Spirit in the calling upon the name is carried out and manifests itself.<sup>34</sup>

These certainly are elements that also can be found in Western mysticism, and one finds many examples in the instructions for prayer by Johann Arndt (1555–1621) in his *Four Books on True Christianity* and in the appended prayer book *Little Paradise Garden*,<sup>35</sup> also in Jacob Böhme (1575–1624), for example, in the *Christosophia: A Christian Path of Initiation*.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps also known is the fourth stanza of the hymn of Gerhard Tersteegen (1697–1769), "I worship the power of love," where it

33. Cf. WA 50: 300.9 ff. (1544 House Postil on John 16:23–30, see *The Complete Sermons of Martin Luther*, ed. E. F. A. Klug [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000], 6:106).

34. For further pertinent Luther texts, see, for example, AE 27: 220; WA 17.1: 248 ff., esp. 252–253; 254.29–31 (1525 sermon on John 16:23–30). See also G. Wertelius, *Oratio continua: Das Verhältnis von Glaube und Gebet in der Theologie Martin Luthers* (Lund: Gleerup, 1970); A. Peters, "Die Vaterunser-Auslegung in Luthers Katechismen," *Lutherische Theologie und Kirche* 4 (1979), esp. 102 ff. On the meaning and effect of the name of Christ, cf. also Ap. IV, 98 (Kolb-Wengert, 137).

35. The Jesus Prayer is found verbatim in the *Four Books*, for example, in II:35.3; the practice of the prayer and its effect are discussed, for example, in III:3, 19. In the *Little Paradise Garden* it states right away in the introduction "that the continual repentance is the true prayer of the heart." Cf. furthermore prayer no. 91 therein, a "Prayer on the name of Jesus concerning the hallowing of God's name," which reads, in part: "For your name comprehends all that is good, and is all that is good. . . . For in your name I am in God, with God, and remain with him eternally." Also the prayers nos. 140, 141, "Jubilation of St. Bernard concerning the name of Jesus." In every case, the name and the person are identified, and at the same time the union as justification of the sinner by the work of Christ takes place in the act of prayer. Cf. also Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, no. 4, "Contemplation on the name of Jesus."

36. For example, in "A little prayer for divine working, protection, and government": "Thus I flee to you, O holy power of God, because you have revealed yourself with your love in grace in our humanity by the holy name of Jesus and have given us the same to be our companion. . . . Oh, fend off those rays of wrath with the holy name of Jesus in our soul and spirit that they may not touch us. . . . O great, most holy name and power of God, Jehovah" (Jakob Böhme, *Christosophia: Ein christlicher Einweihungsweg*, 3rd ed., ed. G. Wehr [Freiburg: Auum, 1979], 48, 49).

says: "O Jesu, that your name may remain deeply impressed at the center of my life! Let your faithful Jesus-love be stamped on heart and mind. May Jesus and nothing else be read in word, in deed, and in all being!"<sup>37</sup>

Thus, when it comes to the topic of hallowing the name and the Jesus Prayer connected to it, we are by no means dealing with a specific form of Christian piety, but with the foundation of the biblical witness and the spiritual reality of the Christian faith. Yet what, then, do all the harsh conflicts mean that break out in this connection at exactly this spot, not just at the beginning of the twentieth century, but also at other times and at other places?

### THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL PROBLEM

As in other contexts, one can also see in the controversy regarding the divinity of the name, how epistemological problems are deeply religious in nature and have to do with the question of knowing God. In the history of human ideas this becomes apparent, for example, in the context of the so-called ontological argument, which is by no means only a "proof of God," but at the same time always about the question of the reality-content of human thinking. The fact that the highest intelligible being, God, also has a real being forms an essential foundation for the fact that the thinking of man is not coextensive with self-consciousness and thereby limited to itself, but that it can perceive a ground lying outside of itself. Hegel's pointed accusation directed against Kant's destruction of the ontological argument aimed at this, when he speaks of a "total trampling underfoot of reason (*Vernunft*) and the due rejoicing of understanding (*Verstand*) and of finitude to have decreed themselves as the absolute."<sup>38</sup>

However, already at this point the epistemological aspect of the theological controversy becomes manifest. For the opponents of honoring the name right away employed the accusation of pantheism, which they saw in that the distinction between Creator and creature was eliminated, as a natural presence of the divine was claimed. In return, these opponents are shown that those honoring the name represent a realist philosophy that is opposed to Nominalism, Rationalism, and Materialism, in which, in general, the existence of God is eliminated from the presuppositions of thought.<sup>39</sup> Eliminating the distinction between Creator and creature leads to an idolization of nature.

Yet what happens when the names of God are totally separated and distinguished from the essence of God, when they are regarded to be no more than human words, images, ideas, and notions?

In *Faust*, Goethe unfolded the problem in the conversation between Gretchen and Faust in "Martha's Garden" with the famous "Gretchen question": "Now, say, what do you think about religion? You are a man good at heart, but I think you don't esteem it very highly." Gretchen's pointed question takes the worship service and the sacraments as point of departure. Faust's evasive answer, however, is all about the incomprehensibility of God, whose being can neither be proved nor be disproved. God has many names in different languages and different experiences that actually are all about feelings of earthly happiness: "Then call it whatever you please, call it happiness! Heart! Love! God! I don't have a name for it! Feeling is everything; a name is sound and smoke, clouding heaven's fire." Gretchen: "That's all fine and good; that's roughly what the pastor says, just using some other words." Faust: "All hearts say this everywhere under the heavenly day, everyone in their own language; why can't I say it in mine?" In naive clear-sightedness, Gretchen recognizes: "You have no Christianity."

This well-known example shows that where the identity of the name is eliminated by way of relativization, there, basically, not only what is Christian is ruled out, but also pantheism is ruled in, for which nothing and everything is god, especially the positive experiences in life as opposed to the negative ones. Yet epistemologically this also means that the subjectivity of feeling, experience, in fact, even that of historical events and movements gains a theological quality. Differentiation is then only possible under the aspect of subjectivity. The ego becomes the absolute criterion regarding what is known and experienced as god, or better, as divine.

The contradiction in the multiformity and contradictory nature of such experiences made by individuals and groups shows how the uniting knowledge of God under the revealed name is also dissolved into the subjectivity of designations of God and of experiences of the divine. The Holy Spirit is then replaced by enthusiasms and movements; God's becoming man in Christ is replaced by the self-divinization of man.

Not only in theology, but also in widely held public opinion, we today basically hold the kind of Nominalism that assumes that the incomprehensible being of God manifests itself in manifold, historically broken subjective experiences and designations.<sup>40</sup> Even among theologians, one then speaks of "images of God" that are characteristic of a certain time, of a certain theology, or also of a certain form of piety, but which must not be played off against each other.

In the controversy regarding the divinity and honoring of the name this theological-philosophical problem once more came to the fore. Due to external circumstances it then totally disappeared from the radar screen. The only systematic attempt to reflect upon this controversy as to its theological presuppositions and epistemological implications is by S. N. Bulgakov. He was the secretary and presenter of the subcommission that, at the 1917 national council, tried to deal with this problem. Only after

37. In this context, at least a reference is due to the controversy concerning the honoring of the figure of the name of Jesus, which was brought to Silesia by Italian Franciscans and in the background of which is Bernardino of Siena (1380–1444). Cf. on this matter C. Franklin Arnold, "Die schlesische Bewegung über die symbolische Figur des Jesusnamens im Jahre 1427," in *Geschichtliche Studien Albert Hauck zum 70. Geburtstage dargebracht* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1916), 191–202.

38. G. W. F. Hegel, *Glauben und Wissen* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1962), 30.

39. Thus, according to Παπουλίδης, *Οι Πάσσοι*, 19 C.A. Bulatovich in his *Apologija* xi.

40. See, as an example from the more recent theological discussion, J. Hick, *God Has Many Names* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982).

his death were his studies published under the title *Философия Имени* (*Filosofia Imeni*; Philosophy of the name).<sup>41</sup>

This work consists of inquiries into the philosophy of language that cannot be discussed here. However, Bulgakov above all sought to reflect on the conflict among Orthodox monks and theologians in a theological manner. In doing so, he rightly emphasized that the sentence “the name of God is God” cannot be reversed so that God would also be the name of God. As was the case here, problems basically always arise when the anchor in positive biblical revelation is eliminated and the relation of God’s being and designation is generalized. Revelation as God’s word—Bulgakov particularly works this out—is materially tied to the witness of Scripture and can be known and distinguished from here. Then it, by the way, also becomes apparent that the names and designations of God can by no means be arbitrarily exchanged, but that there is a rather distinct “canon.” This does not depend on an interpretation in the context of historical changes and experiences, but is about the identity of the designation of, and calling upon, God over

against a multitude of different designations behind which stand also different contents. Content, however, ultimately signifies the spirit; it thus also touches upon the distinction between the Holy Spirit and other spirits.

Bulgakov writes in conclusion:

Let it be underlined again that God’s name is not only a word, a divine word in all depth and inexhaustibility of its meaning, but also the power and the essence of God. “The name of God is God” in the sense of the presence of God, of the energy of God. In this essential meaning he is to be understood in prayer and in living one’s life. This is carried out in the entire creation of the world and in humanity as well as in the realm of the angels. For (this name) all worlds and their abysses are not covered, the heavenly ones, the earthly ones, and the ones under the earth. He penetrates everything because “through him everything exists and without him exists nothing that exists” (Jn 1:3). He is a designation, a name of God consisting in itself. To him be glory in all eternity.<sup>42</sup> **LOGIA**

41. Paris: YMCA-Press, 1953. For further literature on Bulgakov, see R. Slenczka, “Lehre und Bekenntnis,” 544 ff.

42. С. Н. Булгаков, *философия Имени*, 225.

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# The Night Will Soon Be Ending

## Jochen Klepper: Lutheran Hymn-writer in Dark Times

HOLGER SONNTAG



SIXTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, on the night of 10 December 1942, the German Lutheran writer and poet Jochen Klepper committed suicide with his Jewish-Christian wife, Johanna, and her youngest daughter, Renate, in their Berlin home. Their *Selbstmord* was preceded by frantic negotiations with Swiss, Swedish, and German authorities for the emigration of Renate. An older sister, Brigitte, had managed to leave Germany for Great Britain already in May 1939. On December 9, Klepper had received a final “No” from the German authorities. The gas chambers of some German concentration camp were the all-but-certain destination for Klepper’s wife and her daughter. They chose instead to die at home.

Jochen Klepper’s Christmas hymn, “The Night Will Soon Be Ending,” made its premiere in English via H. G. Stuempfle’s translation in the *Lutheran Service Book* (337). But who was Klepper? What was his theological stance? What led to his suicide? What is the remainder of his work like?

### AN OVERVIEW OF JOCHEN KLEPPER’S LIFE<sup>1</sup>

Jochen Klepper was born in 1903, the son of a Lutheran pastor in Silesia who came out of Moravian Pietism. After graduating from high school, Klepper studied theology at Erlangen and Breslau. While Erlangen’s Lutheranism did not apparently offer much of interest to the young student, at Breslau Klepper found his life-long theological mentor in Rudolf Hermann.<sup>2</sup> Hermann served as professor of systematic theology and was one of the leading figures of the so-called Luther Renaissance in post-World War I Germany.<sup>3</sup> While at Breslau, Klepper was also influenced by the systematician E. Schaeder and his “theocentric theology,” and by New Testament exegete E. Lohmeyer, who possibly helped develop Klepper’s future sympathy for the sufferings of the Jewish people.<sup>4</sup>

Too sickly for the burdens of the pastoral office, Klepper left the Breslau seminary without graduating. He began working for Protestant media (print and later radio) in Silesia instead. Before leaving Breslau, however, Klepper met Johanna Stein-Gerstel, an assimilated Jewess and the widowed heiress of a Nuremberg

fashion house. Klepper rented a room in her spacious villa, where they discovered a shared interest in radio work and fashion. The couple married in a civil ceremony in 1931 — much to the dismay of Klepper’s family — and moved with Johanna’s two daughters, Brigitte and Renate, to Berlin. Much to the satisfaction and joy of Klepper, Johanna and Renate were eventually baptized. In April 1932, Klepper began writing a diary that he later called his “auto-psychotherapy,” in which he reflected on the day’s events in light of a biblical word.<sup>5</sup>

When Adolf Hitler’s National Socialists took over Germany’s national government in January 1933, Klepper’s professional and private life became increasingly troubled. For a short time he had been a member of the Social Democratic Party and he was also married to a Jewish wife. This made any career in the state-run media impossible, but even the privately owned publishing houses had to let Klepper go after a time: as one living in a “mixed” marriage, he was excluded from the Nazi-controlled Imperial Chamber of Publication (*Reichsschrifttumskammer*).

Klepper was granted an exception that allowed him to continue his work as a freelance writer and poet. This was largely due to his *magnum opus* on King Friedrich Wilhelm I of Prus-

1. R. R. Thalmann, “Jochen Klepper,” in *Gestalten der Kirchengeschichte*, ed. M. Greschat (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1983), 10.2:257–269. M. J. Wecht, *Jochen Klepper: Ein christlicher Schriftsteller im jüdischen Schicksal* (Düsseldorf: Archiv der Ev. Kirche im Rheinland, 1998), 353.
2. H. Assel, “Einführung,” *Der du die Zeit in Händen hast: Briefwechsel zwischen Rudolf Hermann und Jochen Klepper 1925–1942*, ed. H. Assel and A. Wiebel (München: Kaiser, 1992), 10–13.
3. F. W. Bautz, “Hermann, Rudolf,” in *Biographisches-bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon* (Hamm: Bautz, 1990), 2:749–50; and H. Assel, *Der andere Aufbruch: Die Lutherrenaissance — Ursprünge, Aporien und Wege: Karl Holl, Emanuel Hirsch, Rudolf Hermann (1910–1935)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994).
4. Wecht, *Jochen Klepper*, 334–349.
5. *Unter dem Schatten deiner Flügel: Aus den Tagebüchern der Jahre 1932–1942*, ed. H. Klepper (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1955). Hereafter listed as *Diary*. *Diary* 15 March 1936: “Whatever can be said against such notes as ‘auto-psychotherapy’ — they have often helped and admonished not to forget any address by God, any station of his guidance according to all its circumstances.” It is noteworthy that Klepper’s understanding of his diary changes in about 1935. First, it was a writer’s “filter of subjectivity,” indispensable for understanding his work (cf. *Diary* 23 June 1933; 26 January 1935), in which he himself chronicled a narration — his own life — as though written by another (cf. *Diary* 6 July 1933). Later, when the Kleppers moved into their new house, it became the “account of the life of the house” that had become “Jeremiah’s field” for him (cf. Jer 32:7–15, 24–27, 37–44 with *Diary* 19, 28–29 September 1935).

HOLGER SONNTAG is a frequent contributor to *LOGIA*. [Ed. note: because of space considerations, many of Pr. Sonntag’s discursive notes had to be shortened. The full article, including the complete set of notes, is available on *BLOGIA*, [www.logia.org](http://www.logia.org).]

sia, *Der Vater: Roman des Soldatenkönigs* (The Father: Novel of the Soldier-King) — published three weeks before his exclusion from the Reichsschrifttumskammer in 1937 — a widely popular book among high-ranking army officers (and the former German emperor).<sup>6</sup> He also wrote essays for several smaller publications during this time. Of particular note is his collection of spiritual hymns, *Kyrie*, which was published in 1938 and that included “The Night Will Soon Be Ending.”<sup>7</sup> This collection immediately became popular. Many of the poems were set to music by young composers in the following years in the word-centered style of the German church music renewal of the day, and are still used in German Protestant churches.

The *Kyrie* collection (by 1940 Klepper had added further hymns to it<sup>8</sup>) led to attempts by the *Bekennende Kirche* (Confessing Church) to win Klepper as a writer and speaker for their cause. Yet Klepper, limited as he was by his personal situation and the conditions attached to the exception that allowed him to continue to publish, refused to accept these offers. Klepper had no sympathies for the Nazi-supporting *Deutsche Christen* (German Christians), but he also had theological qualms about joining the confessional camp. He also remained aloof from the Berneuchen Brotherhood of St. Michael, with which he was in contact through his friend Rev. K. Meschke, despite the fact that its cofounder and coleader, W. Stählin, spoke well of Klepper’s work.<sup>9</sup>

In 1935, while Klepper was still working on *Der Vater*, he decided that his next major historical novel project would be dedicated to Katharina von Bora and the first Lutheran parsonage. This project, to which he gave the tentative title of *Das ewige Haus* (The Eternal House),<sup>10</sup> occupied his last years, yet would remain a fragment. According to Klepper’s own judgment, it had to remain in this condition as long as his real family and house remained fragmented.<sup>11</sup>

Out of patriotic feelings, and in an attempt to ameliorate the situation for his wife and her daughter Renate, Klepper volunteered for the German army in 1940 and participated in the Balkans campaign and in the early stages of the campaign against the Soviet Union.<sup>12</sup> However, by the fall of 1941 he was discharged because of his Jewish wife. As late as 1939 Klepper had had a hard time understanding what he called the “emigration psychosis” of German Jews.<sup>13</sup> However, when the inevitability of the fate of all Jews within reach of Nazi Germany became

clear, he and his family, paralyzed and worn out by their constant dealings with a Kafkaesque bureaucracy that was moving slowly but effectively, realized too late that the doors were closed for them. Switzerland refused to accept Renate, but Sweden did offer refuge in early December 1942. Yet despite a recommendation by Rudolf Frick, the Third Reich’s secretary of the interior, Adolf Eichmann, the high-ranking SS official in charge of granting emigration permits to Jews, rejected the petition.

Having apparently entertained the idea of suicide for some time, Jochen, Johanna, and Renate acted on their plan on the night of 10 December 1942. The family was given a simple Christian burial by their congregation in Berlin-Nikolassee.

#### KLEPPER’S THEOLOGY: LUTHER, PIETISM, CHURCH, ISRAEL, PREDESTINATION, SUICIDE

Klepper studied theology at Erlangen and Breslau<sup>14</sup> during the “Luther Renaissance” spearheaded by Karl Holl (1866–1926), a time of renewed appreciation for Luther in German Lutheran theology. Klepper studied in the years just prior to the 400th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession celebrated in 1930. What were the classes he took during his studies? While at Erlangen (1922–1923), Klepper studied Reformation and Counter-Reformation church history. He also took a class on “Luther’s Psyche” taught by Hans Preuß—an examination of Luther quite in keeping with the Schleiermacherian color of the Luther revival and its focus on Luther’s experience of justification.

During his first semester at Breslau, Klepper continued along this line by attending a class taught by Rudolf Hermann on “Basic Questions of Psychology of Religions.” A year later, he took classes on “Interpretation of Characteristic Texts, Bulls, [and] Decrees of the Reformation Age” under Leopold Zscharnack; “Ethics” and “Anselm: *Cur Deus Homo?*” also under Hermann. Additionally—and this too is relevant due to the roots of the Luther Renaissance in the philosophy of German Idealism (Kant and especially Fichte)—he attended a class on “Immanuel Kant and German Christian Idealism” taught by Karl Bornhausen.<sup>15</sup> In the following semester (winter 1924–1925), Klepper, in addition to a class on “Sources of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century” (Zscharnack), took Hermann’s class on “Schleiermacher’s Theology.” He also attended Hermann’s classes on “Thoughts from Luther’s Interpretation of Scripture for Theology and Life” and “The Dogmatic Systems since Schleiermacher.” Finally, during the winter semester 1925–1926, he attended a class taught by church historian Erich Seeberg (under whom he had studied Augustine in the previous semester) on “Luther’s View of the Sacraments.” Klepper began writing his licentiate thesis under the supervision of Seeberg in 1925; while the exact theme is unknown, the work seems to have centered on G. Arnold and A. H. Franke. In 1928, Klepper left the thesis unfinished and so remained without a theological degree.<sup>16</sup>

6. *Diary* 31 March 1938.

7. It is now available in Jochen Klepper, *Ziel der Zeit: Die gesammelten Gedichte*, 7th ed. (Bielefeld: Luther-Verlag, 2003), 43–95.

8. *Diary* 13 May 1940 and 5 June 1940.

9. *Diary* 14 October 1935.

10. K. Pagel, “Jochen Klepper,” in Jochen Klepper, *Die Flucht der Katharina von Bora*, ed. Karl Pagel (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1983), 8–9. The title, “eternal house,” goes back to a (fictional) Easter sermon by Gabriel Zwilling—a one-time associate of Carlstadt in the 1521 iconoclasm at Wittenberg, but since 1523 the Lutheran preacher in Torgau (with Luther’s commendation).

11. See the *Diary* 1 September and 7 December 1942.

12. Wecht, *Jochen Klepper*, 275–276.

13. *Diary* 29 April 1939, a couple of weeks before Brigitte’s move to England: *Emigrantenpsychose*.

14. Wecht, *Jochen Klepper*, 26–32.

15. M. Wolfes, “Bornhausen, Karl Eduard,” in *Biographisch-bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon* (Herzberg: Bautz, 1999), 15:264–286.

16. Wecht, *Jochen Klepper*, 39, 46–47.

It is apparent that Klepper gained solid knowledge of Luther's theology in the course of his studies, especially through the lens of Hermann's lectures and seminars. His diary frequently mentions Luther as a comforting preacher of the gospel.<sup>17</sup> In view of the heated (ecclesial and political) controversies surrounding Luther in the years after World War I, this solid training cannot be overestimated. On the one hand, and contrary to certain modern myths featuring Luther as the forerunner of Hitler, the Reformer was by no means a natural champion of the religiously inspired followers of Hitler. Following J. G. Fichte and P. de Lagarde, Luther's rediscovery of, and emphasis on, the Pauline gospel of justification was held against him by some because this gospel was seen as essentially Jewish, a falsification of the "German" gospel of the "Aryan Christ."<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, others, who anachronistically celebrated Luther's German nationalism and racially distorted Luther's writings on the Jews, saw in him indeed the German prophet quite in line with the enthusiastic revival of the German nation trumpeted by Hitler. The 450th anniversary of Luther's birth in 1933 — the year of Hitler's ascension to power — was meant as a kickoff to a grandiose national evangelism campaign.<sup>19</sup> A third group, despite its inner theological diversity, was united in avoiding both errors and in seeking to teach Luther as the one who, with the one biblical gospel in hand, reformed the one church of Jesus Christ before whom all nations are equal. To this group belonged H. Sasse, P. Althaus, and R. Hermann.

Via Hermann, Klepper was thus connected to the national-conservative Lutheran opposition to the neo-Germanic distortions and rejections of Luther. But at the same time, one also notices that Klepper, perhaps not atypically at the time, did not take any classes in the Lutheran Confessions (despite the upcoming anniversary of the Augsburg Confession in 1930) and that, beyond an occasional quotation from the Small Catechism, never appealed to the Confessions in his writings. Hermann's view of the Confessions perhaps formed Klepper's own. Unlike Sasse, Lutheran theology for men like Hermann and Holl was defined almost exclusively by Luther and justification. With the addition of a good dose of (the Reformed) Schleiermacher, one can understand why a Luther scholar like Hermann was nonetheless a proponent of the Lutheran-Reformed church union. In a 1930 article, Hermann viewed the Augsburg Confession as a document of Lutheran openness to fellow Protestant church bodies and, emphasizing the invisible church, played justifying faith off against "belief in doctrines and articles," and held to a personal presence of Christ in communion.<sup>20</sup>

This aversion to doctrinal strictness ("legalism") was also one of the factors that gradually estranged Hermann from the Con-

fessing Church in the mid-1930s.<sup>21</sup> Many, no doubt, saw this "strictness" culminate in Bonhoeffer's famous 1936 statement: "[He] who knowingly separates himself from the Confessing Church in Germany, separates himself from salvation."<sup>22</sup> The question of whether to establish seminaries outside of the university exclusively within the church's realm — an idea Hermann rejected — was another factor. The common denominator of these points was Hermann's fear that a "rigid" confessing church would be a church estranged from the people and the nation, which would leave state and nation vulnerable to the influence of other "gods." This was ultimately behind Hermann's reason to decline further cooperation with the "confessionals" and to cooperate instead with the official church. For Hermann, church was the *Volkskirche*, the church in close though critical solidarity with a concrete nation.<sup>23</sup>

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This stance was apparently also Klepper's. It explains, on the one hand, his opposition to the Confessing Church, whose purposes he ultimately rejected as exclusively political despite some early sympathies. It also explains, on the other hand, Klepper's warm admiration for King Friedrich Wilhelm I, who is traditionally viewed as despotic and a meddler in the affairs of the Lutheran Church. Klepper published a two-volume biography of the ruler in 1937 and in the following year edited *Der König und die Stillen im Lande*, a little book on the king's encounters with the leaders of (Lutheran) Pietism in Prussia: A. H. Francke, his son G. A. Francke, J. A. Freylinghausen, and N. L. Count of Zinzendorf.<sup>24</sup> Klepper's editorial work on this volume was an outgrowth of his own work on the king, and perhaps also an attempt to build his research for his unfinished licentiate thesis. In his introduction,<sup>25</sup> Klepper painted a picture of the king as a deeply religious man who sought to increase the number of Christians in his realm, but who was also eclectic in his personal beliefs. The king was personally a Calvinist who

17. *Diary* 26 October 1939 and 22 October 1941.

18. H. Sasse, *Das Volk nach der Lehre der evangelischen Kirche* (München: Kaiser, 1934), 13; K. Scholder, *Die Kirchen und das Dritte Reich* (München: Propyläen, 2000), 1:103–106, 113, 139.

19. Scholder, *Kirchen*, 1:695–698.

20. R. Hermann, "Zur theologischen Würdigung der Augustana," in *Gesammelte Studien zur Theologie Luthers und der Reformation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 89–126, esp. 89, 123–124, 126.

21. Scholder, *Kirchen*, 2:226–227.

22. D. Bonhoeffer, "Zur Frage nach der Kirchengemeinschaft," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. E. Bethge (Munich: Kaiser, 1959), 2:238.

23. Assel, *Zeit in Händen*, 169–177.

24. *Der König und die Stillen im Lande: Begegnungen Friedrich Wilhelms I. mit August Hermann Francke, Gotthilf August Francke, Johann Anastasius Freylinghausen, Nikolaus Ludwig Graf von Zinzendorf*, ed. J. Klepper, 4th ed. (Witten: Eckart, 1962). On the title see Psalm 35:20 and Wecht, *Jochen Klepper*, 324–325.

25. *Der König und die Stillen*, 5–17.

did not believe the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper, but he agreed with Lutherans on (a synergistic understanding of) predestination. At the same time, he had rosaries handed out to his elite regiment, the Potsdam Giants. Because he believed that all Christian churches agree on the main things and because Lutherans and Calvinists were the largest confessions in his realm (and because he viewed worship as "the main pillar of a well-established government"), he continued the union policy of his predecessors that cost Paul Gerhardt his pastorate in Berlin. He forbade "religious polemics" in sermons, had a Lutheran pastor install a Calvinist and vice versa, and favored the irenic theological simplicity of "practical Christianity."

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***Klepper was also quite clear about  
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Jesus Christ to be saved.***

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Because of this, the Prussian king viewed the "quiet ones in the land," that is, the Pietist "evangelists," as his natural allies. These were men like A. H. Francke, who founded the famous orphanage in Halle that promoted a socially active faith that did not threaten the Prussian state's cohesion. These men, while Lutheran by confession, kept the official differences between the various confessions to themselves. They preached simple sermons concerning God's wrath and grace and the Christian life, which the king found personally edifying. Count Zinzendorf, in whose Moravian community the various "evangelical" confessions found peaceful coexistence, was a particularly important example for Friedrich Wilhelm and his religious policies.<sup>26</sup> Count Zinzendorf was also important to Klepper, at home through Klepper's father and at Breslau seminary through the influence of Schleiermacher. This finds expression in Klepper's use of the famous daily *Herrnhut Losungen* (watchwords, also known as Moravian Daily Texts) that, beginning in 1933, typically opened his diary entries.

Klepper's apparent high regard for Zinzendorf and other Pietists possibly also shaped his struggle to come to an appropriate self-understanding as a Christian writer, something that he defined in pastoral terms around the time of his work on the two books dealing with Friedrich Wilhelm and the "quiet ones in the land."<sup>27</sup> It is quite possible that Klepper understood himself at this time as such a "quiet one" since Zinzendorf viewed the "quiet ones" as "living members of the church" and as leaven in the church and world.<sup>28</sup> A paternal letter from Hermann in

1940 directed him away from confusing his vocation as a writer with that of a pastor.

While Klepper thus exhibited a blurring of the lines between the Protestant confessions that cannot be reconciled with Luther (but which has a long-standing tradition in Germany, especially in Prussia), he was quite clear about his reservations over against Roman Catholicism. Even the deep impact that acclaimed Roman Catholic writer Reinhold Schneider had on him could not sway him, and despite numerous conversions to Roman Catholicism among friends and colleagues during the years of Nazism, Klepper remained a Protestant. Here, too, the guidance of R. Hermann is apparent.

Klepper was also quite clear about the need for Jews to believe in Jesus Christ to be saved. While not popular in much of today's Protestantism, engrossed as it is in formulating a dispensationalist "theology after Auschwitz," this alone explains Klepper's heartfelt relief after his wife's and youngest step-daughter's baptisms noted above. In fact, while the baptism of his wife is often acknowledged in passing, his daughter's baptism is often not mentioned at all. The literature on Klepper is filled with head-shaking and hand-wringing over his naive unwillingness or inability to leave the murderous Nazi state, but not much attention is given to the importance of baptism in Klepper's life<sup>29</sup> and in the life of his family. It would appear that an important facet of his theology, life, and self-understanding as a writer is thereby missed. He is criticized for his attitude of "inner immigration," while the radical emigration out of this evil world that baptism afforded him and his family is not appreciated at all.

By his marriage to a (secular) member of the Jewish people, Klepper considered himself to be united to the Jewish people in a special way, especially to their sufferings. Because of this closeness Klepper felt a heightened sense of existential involvement about all the acts of anti-Jewish discrimination, all the rumors and realities surrounding deportations and death camps that swirled around his family. It is what ultimately led them to suicide.<sup>30</sup> Klepper was greatly upset to see his Protestant church abandon its Jewish-Christian members under government pressure. As a result, he became unwilling to pray for these fellow Christians and for the unconverted.<sup>31</sup> In fact, he soberly described himself as being bound to the Jewish fate, and denied his wife's request to divorce him in order to prevent his career from suffering because of their marriage.<sup>32</sup> After all, by marriage he was one flesh with a Jewess.<sup>33</sup>

At the same time, both he and his wife viewed the hardships that befell the Jewish people as a judgment of God in which God was leading his people to their Messiah, the Jew Jesus

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29. See especially the entry for 26 April 1942: "The day of my baptism. Through Hanni's and Rennerle's baptism the day of baptism has, thanks to God, again become a day of remembrance celebrated in the heart; for years, I have not thought about it — that I have been baptized with water from the Jordan River, a present thought up by father's mother from the Moravians."

30. Wecht, *Jochen Klepper*, 95–97.

31. *Diary* 6 January 1939 (Epiphany).

32. *Diary* 19 June and 7 September 1933.

33. *Diary* 15, 25 June 1933.

26. *Ibid.*, 130.

27. E. Araki, *Jochen Klepper, Aufbruch zum ewigen Haus* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 1993), 79–92.

28. Wecht, *Jochen Klepper*, 324–325.

of Nazareth. Klepper saw in the conversions of some Jews to Christianity—like Paul in Romans 11—a sign of God’s ongoing faithfulness to his people from of old.<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile, he considered the majority of Jews standing side-by-side with the Nazis, like inimical twins, as haters of Christ.<sup>35</sup> This made their suffering “so terrible: the suffering of the Jews that is without a ‘for,’ an idea, a faith.” Jewish Christians at least had the Christian faith to die for.<sup>36</sup> Thus, Klepper’s attitude toward Judaism and the Jews beyond his immediate family can be described as one of humane solidarity and Christian compassion and hope for the lost among God’s ancient people.

His marriage to a member of the Jewish race finally also led Klepper to reevaluate his thinking on suicide. He did this in connection with Hermann’s teachings on predestination.<sup>37</sup> It is to these last elements of Klepper’s theological profile that we now turn. In a tract written while still in Silesia in the late 1920s, Klepper rejected suicide as a sin against the Holy Spirit.<sup>38</sup> One of the characteristics of K. Holl’s interpretation of Luther was that he, drawing on Calvin, went beyond Luther and taught a double predestination.<sup>39</sup> At first, Klepper followed Holl in this; later he adopted Hermann’s view.

It was noted earlier that, according to Klepper, King Friedrich Wilhelm I was frightened by the Reformed doctrine of predestination and found the contemporary Lutheran version more palatable since he, as monarch, was used to having everything under his control.<sup>40</sup> Klepper characterized the Lutheran version as synergistic and so no longer faithful to the heritage of Luther. In a 1933 diary entry, Klepper connected (double) predestination with the sin against the Holy Spirit—the “believer believes it as terrifying chief article of the faith, as pivot of reprobation and election”—and stated that his early writing revolved around these two foci, where he also sought “the solution for the mystery surrounding Judaism.” However, in 1933 he noted that he had come to see that suicide was not the sin against the Holy Spirit. Alluding apparently to 1 Corinthians 6:12 Klepper writes, “My view of suicide has changed quickly. All is permitted man, all good, all evil, because the account between God and the believer is settled. How could I make suicide an exception?”<sup>41</sup>

In an entry into his *Wissenschaftliches Tagebuch* (Scholarly Diary), probably from December 1924 (during the time Klepper was studying in Breslau), Hermann took an approach to predestination that was markedly different from Holl’s. Rejecting any notion of eternal decrees, Hermann viewed God’s election as one with his revelation: God predestines, elects, in time, by revealing himself. After rejecting the idea of an annihilation of the damned, Hermann solved the problem of reprobation by

transforming it into a temporal one: all who have been in contact with God’s revelation in Christ will finally be saved, even those who spend some time in hell due to their disobedience in time. For him, therefore, divine monergism went hand in hand with the ultimate irresistibility of grace.<sup>42</sup> According to Hermann, this temporal understanding of predestination was also Luther’s view.<sup>43</sup> This position stopped short of being gross universalism because it remained tied to God’s revelation in the gospel.

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It is obvious how this teaching not only resonated with Hermann’s broadly based ecclesiology of the *Volkskirche*, that is, a church in close contact with a nation where a member might have no actual contact with the church anymore after baptism or confirmation. These ideas also contain a good measure of “comfort” for a suicidal Christian: no sin, not even my suicide, will ultimately be able to separate me from God and his electing revelation in Christ (even if I have to spend some time in hell). It seems that Klepper had come to this conviction in 1933, as seen above. A diary entry from March 1936 is even clearer, although it also hints at Klepper’s struggles with the teaching of the Bible. He—actually his *accusator cor*, his “accusing heart,” pointing to the *Deus defensor*, the “defending God,” who is the “ground” for Christian joy—formulates this “mere hypothesis”:

Lost [after the fall] was the freedom to return to God; now he must come to get us. When will he get all? He cannot lose anything he created, can he? He reserves the hour for himself—but can he let it pass? How can there be eternal damnation? How can there be atonement beyond the death of the One? Should not the death of this One mean life for all? Predestination: for the sake of the “opposition” God gives in this life faith to some—those who inherit the promises to Israel; however, such predestination only extends as far as this life on earth goes and does not yet say anything about the eternal damnation of the others.

Scripture, however, does speak of it. I cannot believe it, yet. I cannot think of a greater atonement than the one that

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34. *Diary* 30 March 1938.

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Diary* 12 and 13 November 1938.

37. Assel, *Zeit in Händen*, 140–144.

38. Thalmann, *Jochen Klepper*, 47.

39. Assel, *Aufbruch*, 151.

40. Klepper, “Einleitung,” 11.

41. *Diary* 23 June 1933.

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42. This document is available in R. Hermann, *Aufsätze, Tagebücher, Briefe*, ed. A. Wiebel (n.p.: 2001), published online at <http://www.uni-koblenz.de/~assel/dokumente/HERMANNR.DOC> (accessed 30 January 2007). It is partially quoted by Assel, *Zeit in Händen*, 143–144.

43. Hermann, *Luthers Theologie*, ed. H. Beintker (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 164.

has taken place. This is all about what is to be believed. And faith has steps. It has begun; it goes on. For me, it is still man and God; and the angels and devils are far away.<sup>44</sup>

If one concedes that Klepper here is not advocating crass universalism, one can understand these lines quite well against the backdrop of Hermann's idea of ultimate salvation for all who, at one point in their lives, have come into contact with God's electing revelation in Christ, though they might have died in unbelief. Commenting on Isaiah 38:17, Klepper writes in his diary for 5–6 September 1942: "This, this is the salvation God promised—promised, to be sure, also beyond suicide." It is noteworthy, though, that Klepper, at least in March 1936, viewed this kind of universalism as a product of man's accusing heart. One could therefore call it a self-made solution to the problem of suicide offered by reason and the law that Klepper knew to be in contradiction to Scripture. Later that year, however, he jubilantly recorded an insight into the meaning of Christ's resurrection after his death on the cross, which he now viewed as "God's suicide."<sup>45</sup> This contrasts with what he wrote about a year earlier: "In longing for death there is something that runs counter to Good Friday."<sup>46</sup>

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***Klepper's diary bears witness to the inner struggles he and his wife Johanna were undergoing in view of their planned suicide.***

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It appears that Klepper's appropriation of Hermann's theology of predestination made it possible for Klepper to sin in view of forgiveness. Klepper's diary bears witness not only to increasing pressure from his hostile environment, but also to the inner struggles he and his wife Johanna were undergoing in view of their planned suicide.<sup>47</sup> On the one hand, they pondered the classical arguments against suicide: it is rebellion against God, a denial of trust in God; it is weightier than murder; it does a disservice to the Christian witness to the gospel and sets a bad example. "But," as Klepper concluded in summarizing a discussion with his wife on 11 January 1942, "it is a sin no different from all other sin. It too cannot separate us from God."<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, Klepper forbade himself to speak in

the church as long as suicidal thoughts raged in his heart, as he noted on 30 January 1942: "I also believe that my sequestration is not yet ended by God: in no way, so long as the decision to commit suicide is not revoked. How should I work under these circumstances—in the church?!"

On 22 March 1942, his thirty-ninth birthday, Klepper noted that his wife had all but abandoned the thought of committing suicide, and added that his daughter was also quite optimistic. Yet, at the same time, he admitted that he, unlike his wife and daughter, had not yet received from God the ability to resign himself "to the most terrible possibilities of life." While Klepper was plagued by the realization that his hesitation in 1939 probably would cost his second stepdaughter her life and wrestled with deriving comfort from death,<sup>49</sup> he was shaken by the fear that he would survive his wife and daughter<sup>50</sup>—a realistic fear, given the threat of state-mandated divorces for mixed marriages, which Klepper thought was imminent at the end of 1942.

On 8 December 1942, he was reflecting on the appointed watchword from 1 Kings 2:2–3, and wondered whether this word could still reach him in the "abyss" that would be opened before him as a result of the refusal for Renate's emigration visa. Soon he would likely be faced with a mandatory divorce, which would end his wife's relatively privileged position in a mixed marriage. If Renate's emigration failed, she wished to die with her parents; if it succeeded, she wanted to remain alive "in all her sadness." Klepper decided for himself that if only his wife and daughter were safe, for example in Sweden, he could endure everything God sent. Yet when contemplating the now very real possibility of their deportation to a German concentration camp, he also confided to his diary that he was bargaining with God and that he was being defeated by Luther's "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God":

God knows that I cannot endure it to let Hanni and the child go into this cruelest and most brutal of all deportations. He knows that I cannot promise this to him, as Luther was able to do: "Should they take body, good, honor, *child and wife*, let it all go." Body, good, honor—yes! Yet God also knows that I want to accept everything from him in trial and judgment, if only I know Hanni and the child to be somewhat protected. . . . If Hanni and the child died, God knows that nothing in me would resist his will. But not *this*.<sup>51</sup>

On the following day, 9 December 1942, Klepper wrote down the results of a meeting with A. Eichmann of the *Schutzstaffel* (SS), in whose hands was now the decision whether Renate might leave Germany for Sweden, which had surprisingly opened its borders. Eichmann stated that he, while not in favor of it, thought the "matter will work out." Klepper, "now in the world of my dreams," also related that Eichmann flat-out denied

44. *Diary* 2 March 1936.

45. *Diary* 4 November 1936.

46. *Diary* 12 September 1935.

47. *Diary* 3 May 1936.

48. On 8 December 1942, a couple of days before their suicide, Klepper noted, quoting 1 John 3:20: "God is greater than our heart." This word shall yet accompany us into death."

49. *Diary* 12 March and 2 September 1942, also 12 November 1942.

50. *Diary* 17 June 1942.

51. Emphasis in the original.

a joint emigration of Johanna and Renate; but he was still hopeful (he quotes Psalm 126:1). The same day he also had his sister, Hilde, come to finalize their last will and testament. The decisive meeting with Eichmann was scheduled for the next afternoon.

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***The hymn thus also reflects the sentiments of Luther's evening prayer.***

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This meeting did not go as hoped. Therefore the last words of his diary on 10 December 1942 read:<sup>52</sup> “We now die — alas, this too is in God’s hands. Tonight we go together into death. Over us stands in the last hours the image of the Blessing Christ,<sup>53</sup> who struggles for us. In his sight, our life ends.” In fact, with the sculpture of the Blessing Christ standing on the kitchen table, the three were found the next day lying on blankets on the kitchen floor, packages of sleeping pills next to them, gas filling the room.<sup>54</sup>

KLEPPER’S POEMS: IMPRESSIONS FROM THE KYRIE

Klepper’s hymn collection, *Kyrie*, was published for the first time in September 1938.<sup>55</sup> It includes pieces published here for the first time, but also poems included elsewhere, for example, in a 1935 collection, *Geistliche Lieder* (Spiritual Songs), edited by his friend, K. Ihlenfeld.<sup>56</sup> At the beginning of 1939, Klepper heard that it was well received. In a typically humble manner, he commented: “What is incomprehensible to me has happened; the ‘Kyrie’ has entered the homes.”<sup>57</sup> Time and again, Klepper registered with deep gratitude and humility that he was permitted to write hymns that were received thankfully by the church and thus became genuine church hymns. This is all the more understandable since even his close associates at times proved to be ambivalent toward Klepper’s poetic output.<sup>58</sup> The last part of this article will take a brief look at this collection to uncover some of what Klepper has to offer the church today. As will be seen, the early popularity of this collection is by no means surprising or undeserved. Often left dissatisfied by empty sermons (and the neglect of the hymnal he so much appreciated),<sup>59</sup> in his poetry Klepper shares with the church the fruit of his own fearful and prayerful meditation of God’s word.

The *Kyrie* collection has basically three parts: The first contains five poems for the three prayer times of the day, morning, noon, and evening. The second is dedicated to the main feasts of the church year. The third is dedicated to the individual life of the Christian: the Christian life as a whole in God’s creation and providence (on Ex 3:2–3), birth,<sup>60</sup> baptism (Jn 12:28; 17:11), confirmation (1 Tim 6:12), marriage,<sup>61</sup> and the Christian’s life-long spiritual warfare of prayer (1 Tim 2:8).<sup>62</sup>

Klepper opens his collection with his 1939<sup>63</sup> poem “Nun bricht des Tages Glanz hervor” (Now the day’s splendor breaks forth), a paraphrase of Ambrose’s famous morning hymn, “Iam lucis ortus sidere.” Klepper thus follows up a quotation from Luther used in the preface to *Kyrie* that makes reference to Ambrose’s hymns. The second morning hymn, “Er weckt mich alle Morgen” (He wakes me every morning), is based on Isaiah 50:4–5, 7–8, and offers a fine meditation on the Christian’s resignation to God’s providence and guidance, the existential sufficiency of God’s word, which is all connected to God’s daily justification of the sinner. These are all important themes in Klepper’s personal struggles. He wrote this hymn on 12 April 1938.<sup>64</sup>

The noon hymn, “Der Tag ist seiner Höhe nah” (The day is close to its height), is a meditation on Deuteronomy 28:1–6, 8, 12 that calls the singer to pause in the restlessness of the day and, on occasion of the noontime meal, look up in prayer and thanksgiving to him who showers upon the singer blessing after blessing for this temporal life and for the eternal life of the world to come. Klepper wrote it as a Pentecost gift for his wife.<sup>65</sup>

The first evening hymn, “Ich liege, Herr, in deiner Hut” (I lie, Lord, in your care), is based on Psalm 4:8 and is a testimony to Christian resignation to the Lord’s care at the end of the day. The hymn thus also reflects the sentiments of Luther’s evening prayer: there is no need for fear and worries since the Lord’s mighty arm protects and guides us by day and night. The second evening hymn, “In jeder Nacht, die mich bedroht” (In every night that threatens me), Klepper, thinking of Jeremiah 15:16, nicely juxtaposes the *accusator cor* and the *Deus defensor*, the accusing heart and the God who comes to the believer in his word of promise to dispel all threat, doubt, worry, and sin. He wrote this hymn in 1939.<sup>66</sup> Truly, in the arms of this God one can rest in peace! Given the countless dark nights Klepper endured during his life,<sup>67</sup> this is another comforting hymn of faith written against oppressive experience.

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52. It is worth noting that this last entry of Klepper’s diary is the first one for years not to be opened by a verse from Scripture.

53. The Blessing Christ is a Gothic sculpture the Kleppers had purchased on their last trip to Bavaria in October 1942. It was meant to be Klepper’s Christmas gift for his wife; see *Diary* 28 October and 5 November 1942.

54. Wecht, *Jochen Klepper*, 315–316.

55. *Diary* 18 September 1938.

56. *Diary* 12 January and 3 September 1935.

57. *Diary* 9 January 1939.

58. *Diary* 4 and 7 October 1937 and 27 December 1937.

59. *Diary* 1 August 1937.

60. *Diary* 10 July 1938. The hymn is prefaced by 1 Tim 6:15–16; Acts 17:27–28.

61. *Diary* 29 Feb. 1940. The hymn is written “on our wedding text” (Phil 4:4–7).

62. Written on 9 April 1938, Klepper called it “my contribution to this day of the new Reich” (9 April 1938 was observed as “day of the *Großdeutsches Reich*” with marches, and so forth).

63. *Diary* 5 June 1939.

64. *Diary* 12 April 1938.

65. *Diary* 4, 5 June 1938.

66. *Diary* 24 July 1939.

67. *Diary* 5 October 1938: “I now try to sleep without sleeping pills. I am experiencing that the most difficult things now are the dreams that are released without restraints: air war, mobilization, being paralyzed by the cultural office, yes, even a bodily wrestling with the devil. A.D. 1938!”

The church-year section<sup>68</sup> of *Kyrie* is opened by a hymn on the church year as a whole, “Du bist als Stern uns aufgegangen” (You arose for us as a star), the individual stanzas setting forth the main christological core of each season. The last stanza ties all this together and offers the star of Advent, the manger of Christmas, the cross of Lent, the rock of Easter, the bread and wine, the cloud of Ascension, the dove of Pentecost as avenues that lead the believer deeper into Christ’s word. Interestingly, the bread and wine of communion are here placed on the same level as star, manger, rock, and cloud. While these are nice thoughts, somewhat reminiscent of Luther’s reflections on the sacramental nature of the rainbow and other items (AE 1: 248), they do fall short of the Small Catechism’s simple teaching on the sacrament of the altar. In fact, the three other references to the Lord’s Supper in this collection, as well as those in his diary, in the last analysis do not go beyond what is stated in this hymn. Does Klepper, the Lutheran writer, share with Wilhelm I, the Calvinist king, the rejection of the specifically Lutheran doctrine of the Lord’s Supper? Given Klepper’s unquestioning adherence to the (Prussian) church of the union, given also R. Hermann’s similar position, this does not seem unlikely. This is all the more unfortunate because in late 1935 Klepper put together a little booklet on Claus Harms, the Lutheran father of the nineteenth century, who had vehemently protested against rationalism and the union church, and commented on his famous 1817 *Ninety-Five Theses*: “There is very much in his Theses.”<sup>69</sup>

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***The bread and wine of communion  
are here placed on the same level  
as star, manger, rock, and cloud.***

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Six Christmas hymns follow. This large number bears witness to the fact that Christmas for Klepper and his family was a highly important holiday with its own set of preparatory Advent rituals. As seen, the family observed these preparations even in 1942. The first hymn of four stanzas, written in 1940,<sup>70</sup> “Wer warst Du, Herr, vor dieser Nacht” (Who were you, Lord, before this night), juxtaposes, on the basis of Hebrews 1:1–3 and 1 John 3:2, the Lord and the “I” of the singer before and after Christmas: the Son is first God by himself and then God with the sinner in his night; the sinner is first by himself in darkness and then with God as his child. This is Luther’s joyful exchange beautifully expressed. The second hymn, “Die Nacht ist vorge drungen” (The night will soon be ending), following Romans 13:11–12, praises the birth of Christ in Bethlehem as an escha-

tological event: now that Christ has come, the final dispersal of this world’s night is at hand. This gives comfort to those who still cry under dark suffering and guilt since their cross is now illumined by the light of the Morning Star. Those who trust in Christ’s atonement in this life will be saved out of God’s coming judgment. The rich original melody for “The Night Will Soon Be Ending,” drawing on historic church modes (with Klepper’s implicit approval),<sup>71</sup> was written in 1939 by a young composer, Johannes Petzold, and is the standard melody in German hymnals.<sup>72</sup> It reflects well the seriousness of the times.

The third piece, “Sieh nicht an, was du selber bist” (Do not look to what you are yourself), gives voice to a basic rediscovery of Luther, the alien righteousness of the believer that is found, not in self-reflective navel-gazing, but in looking to Christ alone.<sup>73</sup> Klepper prefaces this 1937 hymn<sup>74</sup> with Zechariah 9:9 and a quote from a 1528 Christmas sermon by Luther (WA 27: 492.5–6), the first line for the hymn coming from the latter. The hymn itself again offers a variation of the joyous-exchange motif and issues into a call not to lament but to praise God. The fourth hymn, “Du Kind, zu dieser heiligen Zeit” (O Child, at this holy time), effectively contrasts the joyfulness of the world during Christmas time with the judgment the Christ Child endured in the world’s stead to win this joy. His vicarious suffering causes, but also tempers, the Christians’ joy; first in heaven, after the resurrection to eternal life, will their joy be without bitterness. This hymn’s fitting biblical basis is Luke 2:7.

The fifth hymn, “Mein Gott, dein hohes Fest des Lichts” (My God, your high feast of light), biblically focused on the shepherds, Luke 2:8–11, expresses whose Christmas is, and whose it is not: it is for the fearful, the suffering, and the guilty that the cross appears over the manger. The world’s celebration of Christmas, on the other hand, is much too colorful and happy, a reflection of Klepper’s complaint about the busyness of the secularized Christmas season. It was written in 1936.<sup>75</sup> The sixth and final Christmas hymn of the *Kyrie* collection, “Nun ruht doch alle Welt” (Yet now the entire world is at rest), was written during the war with Isaiah 14:7–8 in mind, which also provides the outline of the hymn. The peace and quiet joy that is in the world according to God’s word is contrasted with the experience of war and restlessness, fear and suffering. It is the light of God’s word that lets the singer see the Christ Child, the Light and Lord of the world (Ps 36:9). Even the cypress trees (also known as Christmas trees) rejoice at the counterexperiential message of the angels.

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68. *Diary* 26 April 1937.

69. *Diary* 28 November 1935.

70. *Diary* 23 October 1940.

71. Given Klepper’s own appreciation for early church music (see especially *Diary* 12 July 1938), it is unfortunate that the editors of the *LSB* chose a Welsh folk melody for this hymn. R. Vaughn Williams is a good composer, but is his setting of the tune *Llangloffan* a proper translation of Klepper’s words into music?

72. See the hymnal of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s German sister church, *Evangelisch-Lutherisches Kirchengesangbuch* (SELK: Hanover, 1987), #14.

73. See his comments on repentance’s dangers of self-absorption, *Diary* 10 October 1935.

74. *Diary* 17 December 1937.

75. *Diary* 29 November 1936.

The next three hymns belong to the year-end category. The first hymn, “Ja, ich will euch tragen” (Yes, I will carry you) is based on Isaiah 46:4 and Deuteronomy 32:7. It speaks the Lord’s sure promise on the last day of the year to carry his people until they are old and gray. This hymn grew right out of attending church where Klepper heard a sermon on Isaiah 46:4, and a Paul Gerhardt hymn.<sup>76</sup> The next piece, “Zuflucht ist bei dem alten Gott” (Refuge is with the old God), Deuteronomy 33:27, proclaims God’s unchanging faithfulness and mercy, which not only answer the sorrow and fear in the world but also offer strength and rest to those fatigued by this world. The last year-end hymn, written in late 1937,<sup>77</sup> “Der du die Zeit in Händen hast” (You who hold time in your hands), is based on Psalm 102:24–27 and again takes the change of time as an opportunity to proclaim God’s eternal steadfastness and Christ, the center of time: God’s grace makes rich those whom his wrath causes to perish.

Moving to Lent, Klepper’s Maundy Thursday hymn, “Heut bin ich meines Heilands Gast” (Today, I am my Savior’s guest), is written under the inspiration of 1 Corinthians 11:26 and Psalm 116:13. Klepper draws the singer into the events of the first Maundy Thursday. The Savior offers me bread, wine, and the Passover lamb; he washes my feet; the Lord of the world empties himself and serves me. The cup of the Lord’s Supper is given as a perpetual memorial for the cup of suffering and death the Lord drank for me. At the end, he will return to the joyous meal of his disciples; then even the tree of the cross will blossom.

Klepper’s Easter hymn, “Siehe, das ist Gottes Lamm” (Behold, this is the Lamb of God), based on Revelation 5:12–13, sets out (like Luther’s Easter hymn) not from the empty tomb, but from the Lamb that was slain by God’s wrath over our sin. The second stanza ties together Christ’s resurrection and our resurrection when he returns; the third stanza brings together Christmas, Lent, and Easter and looks forward to his return when his people will become his image. The last stanza, taking up the doxology of Revelation 5, exhorts the singers to praise God, to witness to God’s saving revelation, and to bow to the Prince of life.

The Ascension hymn in this collection, “Gott fährt mit Jauchzen auf” (God ascends with rejoicing), written in 1940,<sup>78</sup> is based on Psalm 47:5–6, 9 and, in its first two stanzas, joins in the jubilant cry of the psalm because in the exaltation of Christ is contained the exaltation of the believer. The third stanza ties together the Crucified and Exalted One who longs to save fallen sinners. His light shines in the darkness of the world: the heavens are opened for all the world.

Klepper’s 1938<sup>79</sup> Pentecost hymn, “Komm, heilige Taube” (Come, holy Dove), is drawn from Luke 3:22 and Acts 2:2–4. The first stanza, however, reaches back to the dove bringing the olive leaf to Noah (Gn 8:11). This dove is called upon to proclaim that faith which goes beyond all chasms. Thus, in the coming

of the Holy Spirit, heaven and earth have become one. The next couple of stanzas then apply individual facets of the biblical account of Pentecost in an evangelical manner to the singers. The remaining three stanzas call upon the Spirit, the Comforter,<sup>80</sup> to remain with God’s people as God’s assurance and sign of his nearness until he, the Spirit, will bring us home into the realm of the Father like an eagle.

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***The Last Sunday of the church year,  
in Protestant Germany traditionally  
(since 1816 in Prussia) is observed  
and known as “Sunday of the Dead.”***

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The next festival in the church’s year in the *Kyrie* is Reformation Day. Klepper’s hymn for this occasion, “Singt Gott, lobsinget seinem Namen!” (Sing to God, praise his name), is a meditation on Psalm 68 and praises God for giving his word. In fact, “in the word, God himself comes down to us,” as the first stanza declares. In his word, therefore, God not only finds those who are distant; in it, he is with his people to defend them like a wall of chariots, to bless them in the world, his chosen sanctuary. He has already established his kingdom over death and hell, even as his people are still embroiled in battle: “his word is life, activity, victory.” God has sent his word down to earth with a great host of evangelists, so that we might ascend to heaven when all earth’s strife is over.

The next festival in the German Protestant calendar is the Day of Repentance, traditionally observed on the last Wednesday before the Last Sunday of the church year. Klepper’s next poem is dedicated to this festival.<sup>81</sup> The poem is a Christ-centered meditation on Daniel 9:5–6, 9, 18–19. In it Klepper leads the singers into confessing their sin and calling upon God’s mercy. However, in the middle stanza of this three-stanza piece, he calls upon Christ as the Savior who disclosed God as the one who mercifully condescends and who saves believers from judgment.

The church-year section of the *Kyrie* collection concludes with two poems on the Last Sunday of the church year, in Protestant Germany traditionally (since 1816 in Prussia) observed and known as “Sunday of the Dead.” Klepper’s first piece, “Mein Gott, ich will von hinnen gehen” (My God, I want to go away from here), is prefaced by verses from Revelation 21 and 22 describing God’s glory illuminating the heavenly Jerusalem.

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76. *Diary* 19 June 1938.

77. *Diary* 30 December 1937.

78. *Diary* 6 May 1940.

79. *Diary* 20 April 1938.

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80. *Diary* 12 May 1940 (Pentecost Sunday).

81. It was written 13 May 1940. This hymn has an important political background in that the Day of Repentance was no longer legally protected after 1937. See *Diary* 17 November 1937.

The stanzas express the believer's longing to be in that heavenly city, even while he is grateful for God's earthly gifts and mindful of God's temporal judgments. Yet, compared to God's heavenly city founded on God's promise and its springs of living water, the cities of earth are pale shadows of the one above, as are earth's lovely wells. God's city is built out of durable precious stones; in fact, God's *Hütte* (Revelation 21:3's *skene*) with man is built out of the tree of life: God's city coming down from heaven afar is man's eternal "city of salvation." Sun and moon will cease, but God's glory will shine in it forevermore. Man's goal was there before he began his life; God's word is sure. We did not seek him; God is the one who seeks and calls home those who cursed him. The second and last hymn for the "Sunday of the Dead," "Nun sich das Herz von allem löste" (Now that the heart loosed itself from everything), written with Psalm 109:21 in mind, in its three stanzas is a trinitarian prayer to God: as the heart is loosed from all things, come now, Comforter, Holy Spirit, flowing from God's heart. As the heart resigns itself to all that is burdensome, come now, Savior, who mildly binds us up, heals the wounds, carries us, and takes care of us. As the heart has lifted itself up to you and knows itself

only to be held by you, stay with us, Father, and our lament will turn into praise. Praise be to you!

#### CONCLUSION

Jochen Klepper is not a writer and theologian who is easily categorized. He is a man who bears the heavy burdens of his physical and theological existence; eventually he breaks down under it. In its evangelical profundity, but also in its human weakness, his poetic and literary *oeuvre* bears witness to this fact. His diary affords the careful reader deep insights into the heart and mind of its author, who proves to be a sensitive reader of God's word, and a keen observer of the world and church in the darkness of Hitler's Germany. Out of his oft-afflicted, but always prayerful, meditation on word, world, and church Jochen Klepper wrote some of the most evangelical poetry of the twentieth century. While "The Night Will Soon Be Ending" is perhaps the first of his poems to be translated and included in an English-language hymnal, it is hoped that it will not remain the only one. There are many treasures to be discovered in Klepper's hymns for the joy and edification of the church in English-speaking lands. **LOGIA**



*Did you really want that pat on the back?*

# Eucharistic Themes in the Gospels

DAVID P. SCAER



SOME YEARS AGO the student association of Concordia Theological Seminary sponsored two presentations of pro and con lectures on the eucharistic character of John 6. In the first series there were four presenters and in the second, two. The issue of which biblical texts are eucharistic cuts across the usual liberal-conservative lines. This forum brought a disputed issue to the surface. *Sola scriptura* recognizes the Scriptures as the source of all church doctrine and proclamation, but the principle itself does not help resolve hermeneutical disputes, including the eucharistic character of John 6 and other texts. A preacher's announcement that he accepts the inspiration and the inerrancy of the text for his sermon does not guarantee that he understands it as the Evangelist intended. In a recent service of installation, the clergy were asked if they would interpret the Scriptures according to sound principles, but this raises the question of what these principles are and who determines them. Eucharistic issues also concern church life, since the Lord's Supper is something nearly all Christian churches do. In a perfect world, biblical interpretation and liturgical practice should influence and be reflected in what the preacher says.

In support of a non-eucharistic interpretation, the one side had Luther and the classical seventeenth-century Lutheran theologians on its side, though their piety perpetuated what their hermeneutic did not allow. Historical Lutheran tradition has not favored a eucharistic interpretation of John 6 and has been content in letting the weight of Eucharist arguments rest chiefly on the words of institution, the *verba*. Another argument for the non-eucharistic approach was that Jesus did not and could not have spoken about the Lord's Supper before its institution on the night of his betrayal. This argument arises from seeing the Gospels as chronologically arranged biographies. Such an approach eliminates potential eucharistic references apart from the *verba*.

Before reading John 6 at First Congregational Church in North Conway, New Hampshire, on 27 August 2006, an elder, Gerry Tilton, gave a brief homily on why John 6 had nothing to do with the Lord's Supper and dealt with a spiritual mystery only. At a light lunch that followed, I asked her if eating manna

was a physical eating, how was it that eating Christ's flesh was only a spiritual eating. For a moment she was convinced by the argument, but concluded by saying that on these matters disagreement was allowed. Ironically, sermons preached in the most conservative Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod (LCMS) churches that same August said hardly anything different.<sup>1</sup>

At the heart of this debate is defining what a Gospel is and whether one definition fits all. Books and courses in biblical hermeneutics set forth principles for interpreting literature, including the Scriptures. These rules are prolegomena in their own right and both predetermine and place limits on what will be discovered in the Gospels. In some sense the Gospels, including non-canonical ones, presume to be lives of Jesus, but each Evangelist had his own intentions. They have biographical data, but apart from the birth and death narratives, their order may not be chronological, though this was the prevalent view until recently. Approaching them as chronological documents allowed finding discrepancies among them. Luke seems to suggest that the events recorded in others' writings — or was it just Matthew? — were in need of rearrangement.

A comparison of one Gospel with the others and references in the post-apostolic literature shows that the individual literary and theological character of each was not grasped by those who came after. Recognizing Matthew's Hebrew character did not mean that its difficult passages were understood. A once commonly held view was that, at the end of the apostolic era, the meaning of the Scriptures was gradually lost until it was recovered by the Reformation. This self-serving defense of the Protestant Reformation carries this grain of truth, that what made one Gospel unique from another was soon lost. One wonders if even the Gospels' first hearers caught their intent, or if the second and third Evangelists grasped the Gospels they had at their disposal. Being inspired does not translate into hermeneutical correctness.

We should consider how a Gospel was written. The Evangelists came upon the materials that they incorporated into their Gospels from their direct experiences, their own and others' recollections, and reflections on these experiences, especially as preached recollections and reflections, and written documents like other Gospels. They all had the one purpose of creating and

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1. The Gospel lessons in August 2006 according to Year B of the Three-Year Lectionary were from John 6.

confirming faith, and doing what the oral tradition or other documents had not done. Our discovery of each Evangelist's unique and perhaps previously unrecognized themes serves the homiletical task. We can actually preach something that we or someone else has not preached before.

In the earliest church Christianity was challenged as a morally inferior and historically suspect religion. Matthew responded to the Jewish accusations about the illegitimacy of Jesus and the disciples' stealing his body. Further fuel for discrediting Christianity came about with the church's allegiance to four Gospels, which allowed the opponents to point out discrepancies in the accounts. Religions with one authoritative book like Islam and Mormonism do not have to face the problem of authority that Christianity does with four books. Apologetic concerns belonged to the oral tradition and were taken over into the Gospels, especially Matthew; however, Luke's precise reference to Roman imperial rulers shows that this was an issue for him also. This apologetic was more of a defense of the Christian message than it was a frontal attack on secular views.

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***We are allowed to follow the  
Evangelists' own clues that they  
arranged what they knew about  
Jesus to suit their purposes.***

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Most of us became acquainted with apologetics in connection with the fight over inerrancy, which is less of an issue in the LCMS than it was in the 1960s and 1970s. In the early church, external assaults on Christianity forced the earliest interpreters to begin seeing the Gospels as chronologically ordered and arranged historical narratives. When this happened, the unique theological and literary aspects of each was lost. For example, since Mark only duplicated materials found in Matthew and Luke, it was ignored. Seeing the Gospels as history was necessary to respond to Gnosticism, which denied that God had come in the flesh, but this came at the price of losing each Gospel's unique character. With the opponents of Christianity citing one Gospel against another, Tatian created his *Diatesseron*, a composite life of Jesus, a Gospel harmony, for which Matthew was taken as the chronological standard for ordering the accounts of the other Gospels.<sup>2</sup> Tatian brought to a logical conclusion that if there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, there should be one Gospel for all.

Epistles were easier to deal with. Their confessional affirmations about Jesus were not encumbered with the historical details of the Gospels and an attempt to put them in the right order. Death and resurrection, humiliation and exaltation set the patterns for Christ's life. Paul replaced Jesus as the church's chief theologian. Jesus is center stage and Paul provides the libretto, so we really know what Jesus wants to say. The habit of attributing the history of Jesus to the Gospels and the theology to Paul's Epistles has persisted to this day. Even without any awareness of what a Gospel harmony is, we all naturally combine the events of Jesus' life and his words to create our own harmonies. Shepherds and magi are placed in one Christmas tableau. Easter events are not sorted out. The four Gospels are shuffled like suits — diamonds, hearts, spades, and clubs — into one deck.

Not that long ago a course on the harmony of the Gospels was offered at the Fort Wayne seminary. William Beck wrote a harmony of the Gospels under the title of *Life of Christ. The Lutheran Lectionary* (1941) provided a harmony of the passion story for Wednesday Lenten services. But Gospel harmonies are not without problems. The cleansing of the temple is placed by John at the beginning and by the Synoptic Evangelists at the end of Jesus' ministry. Positing two cleansings resolves this. A three-year ministry may be constructed from the four Passovers in John, but it cannot be deduced from the Synoptic Gospels, which are agreed only on John's ministry at the beginning and the death and resurrection at the end. No time frame can be determined for the events that fall between these book-ends. As an introduction to his Gospel, the Apostle Matthew (4:23–25) suggests that throughout Jesus' ministry, he repeated his teachings and performed the same kinds of deeds over and over again. We are allowed to follow the Evangelists' own clues that they arranged what they knew about Jesus to suit their purposes. Some events may have been preserved because they were seen as more clearly characteristic of who Jesus was. Other events like miraculous feedings and those composing the final week occurred only once. Jesus informs John the Baptist that the dead are raised up, but Matthew reports only the raising of Jairus's daughter. There must have been more. Harmonizing the Gospels comes from a good motive in answering the opponents' claims that the Gospels contain historical discrepancies, but a Gospel harmony provides for a unified account, fitting for documents received as one inspired word of God. Unstated is that the production of Gospel harmonies makes historical origins, their unique character, and theological approaches of secondary, and perhaps, no importance at all.<sup>3</sup> So traditionally, dogmatics approaches the Gospels as an absolute word of God, that is, a harmony, not taking into consideration their historical origins and the Evangelists' intents.

Questions about the origins of the Gospels are customarily answered by citing post-apostolic fathers and ignoring the documents themselves. We come face to face with a canon,

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2. For a fuller discussion see David Laird Dungan, *A History of the Synoptic Problem*, Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 33–44.

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3. Dungan, *Synoptic Problem*, 112–141. In his debate with the Manicheans, St. Augustine developed this line of thinking.

determined by the post-apostolic church, from which various passages are cited to demonstrate its character and that of the individual books. However, introducing extracanonical references compromises *sola scriptura*. Rather each book's claims should be accepted on their own merits and then, having been recognized as Scripture, each is added to the existing canon. So the New Testament is built from the bottom up and not the reverse. A bifurcated approach that regarded the Synoptic Gospels as history and Paul's Epistles as theology hindered the discovery of eucharistic themes in the Gospels apart from the *verba*.

Allegory, which has been officially maligned in Protestant circles since the Reformation, may have risen from the frustration of having to preach on the Gospels, which were seen chiefly as historical narratives. Allegorical preaching was a hit-and-miss operation, often fanciful, but it attempted to reach beneath the historical surface searching for an undergirding theology. Denial of the Gospel's historical materials during the Missouri Synod controversy of the 1970s accentuated their importance for faith, but it did not change the common view that the Gospels were chiefly historic, while Paul remained the church's chief theologian. For all of its weaknesses, allegory was an incarnational method, recognizing that embedded in the shell of the historical report was the core of what God intended for Christians to believe.

*Sola scriptura*, in its pure form, requires returning to the original documents to discover their intent, but this is easier said than done. The original hearers of the Gospels may have been like the disciples, who did not understand the words of Jesus the first time they heard them. Why should we expect a more informed response to the apostolic writings than Jesus' audiences gave to him? Paul's Epistles created their own confusion, as do our sermons. It comes with the turf. Preaching remains a necessary corrective for not fully formed understandings of the Scriptures and previous sermons. Each biblical author said or clarified what he or someone else had previously said or written. The Evangelists were moved by a sense of dissatisfaction over what they thought was available to their hearers. Preachers are no different than the writers of the apostolic period in focusing and refocusing the apostolic proclamation on today's hearers, but this is not so easily done. I hesitate to describe the Scriptures and preaching as correctives; rather they bring to fuller expression what is *already* believed.

Between us and the apostolic age, layers upon layers of tradition, that is, the early church and the Lutheran fathers, have accumulated, and we have added our own reflections on the apostolic word and the earlier traditions. They stand as angels with fiery swords preventing our return to the pristine message. Even if we could push tradition aside, no one manuscript emerges as the authentic original one. Scribes and then translators adjusted the texts. Some variants were ordinary mistakes, but others were attempts by the scribes to improve the sacred texts. Rare is the preacher who has not adjusted a word in reading the Scriptures here and there or introduced and interrupted the reading to offer a comment.

The production of the Gospels and of pericopic systems consisting of selections from the Gospels was done for similar

motives. Gospels may be described as homiletical, catechetical, authoritative, and biographical. In being written to be read publicly, they are lectionaries. As inspired by the Spirit of the Father and containing the words and deeds of Jesus as preserved by the apostles, they surpass all other biblical books in honor. Michael Goulder attempted to find a lectionary system in Matthew. Others may have done this with other New Testament books. Tomesch has done this with Hebrews. Attempts to uncover a lectionary series in any of the Gospels and then to set it in place in church life cannot be accomplished as long as we are determined to keep our present church year in place. In other words, our intent to keep the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany-Lenten-Easter cycle does not neatly fit into what we have in any of the Gospels. Entire Gospels were the lectionary for one Sunday and then for all Sundays after that.

In *Discourses in Matthew* I argued that 1 Corinthians 15:3–5 presupposes that this church knew Matthew and Luke.<sup>4</sup> Appearances of a second and third Gospel made reading two Gospels each in its entirety impossible. From this frustration our system of a series of pericopes for each Sunday may have come into being. Evidence indicates that in spite of its often unintelligible Hebrew idioms, Matthew had the lion's share of the attention given the Gospels for the first two or three centuries. When congregations put the four Gospels into what is liturgically called "The Book of Gospels," selections were chosen for each Sunday. In the traditional series Matthew predominates with Luke as a close second. John takes the post-Easter season and surprisingly Mark is given Easter. This may reflect the prominence of Matthew and Luke in the first- and second-century church with the church's little regard for Mark, which has never been regularly read in its entirety. John, with the most post-resurrection appearances, predominated the post-Easter season.

When the three-year lectionary series for *Lutheran Worship* was proposed nearly thirty years ago, a former colleague suggested my analyzing it to detect a liberal plot. He was right in recognizing that pericopic series are open to analysis. This applies to the traditional one-year series and the ones now found in *Lutheran Worship* and the *Lutheran Service Book*. Dr. Daniel G. Reuning could be asked why he chose for the 1997 *Seminary Prayerbook* lectionaries of the 1937 *Swedish Hymnal* and the 1982 *Evangelisch-Katholisches Studienbuch*, an ecumenical endeavor of Lutheran, Reformed, and Roman Catholic German territorial churches.<sup>5</sup> Creation of a pericope system is the creation of another Gospel along side not only other series but the canonical Gospels themselves.<sup>6</sup> Like the Evangelists, orga-

4. David P. Scaer, *Discourses in Matthew: Jesus Teaches the Church* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004), 136–142.

5. Normand Bonneau claims that lectionaries appeared in the second century to correspond with the annual celebration of Christ's death and resurrection and points to previous evidences of Old Testament ones (*The Sunday Lectionary: Ritual Word, Paschal Shape* [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998], 4–11). Also see *The Revised Common Lectionary: Includes Complete List of Lections for Years A, B, and C* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992).

6. See Bonneau, *Sunday Lectionary*, 3–4.

nizers of pericopic systems are rearranging prior materials for purposes that they have determined are not being adequately met by current series.

Some have called the traditional pericopic system “the people’s Bible.” *But this is how each Evangelist saw his Gospel.* He attempted to say things differently and to add to or subtract from the tradition or the Gospel(s) at his disposal and to interpret them. Our traditional pericopes cannot carry the meaning that only those sections chosen as pericopes are intelligible, or are superior to portions not chosen, and that the people can understand only those sections deemed suitable for them and so are in need of a pared down *Readers’ Digest* version. As indicated, analyses of any pericopic system are necessary. Should an analysis come up cold on meaningful results, then any random selections can be used. Whether any series catches and preserves the intentions of any or all of the Evangelists is another matter. By mixing and matching Gospels in the traditional one-year series, a disjointed harmony is created. It is like taking parts from Ford, GM, Toyota, Hyundai, and Volkswagen to create a hybrid car.

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***It is amazing that the Disciples of Christ, with a Reformed doctrine of the Supper, see this requiring a weekly celebration.***

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Each pericope is impressed with the “rule of faith” of those who created it. An ecumenically constructed system might emphasize common elements and avoid divisive ones. Churches ordaining women or homosexuals will omit certain Pauline passages. Apart from what might be thought of selections in the two- and three-year series, they come closer to the earliest practice of reading an entire Gospel. These series are modifications of the *lectio continua*, allowing for intrusive exceptions to fit our liturgical calendar.

Monasteries followed *lectio continua* long before Philip Spener made it a part of the Pietistic movement. He did not call for an abandonment of the regular Sunday services, but their pericope readings were for him only bits and pieces of what the Bible had to offer. Reading the entire Bible was assigned to the home on Sunday afternoons. Knowing more of the Bible would increase the people’s spirituality, so he reasoned. For Pietism, the Bible provided regulations of Christian living, and so it followed that as one knew more of the Bible, one knew more of its regulations. This distorted the fundamental Lutheran understanding that any section of the Bible has the same message of God’s saving grace in Jesus Christ. This may have been what the “all theology is Christology” controversy was all about.

A quantitative approach by which the importance of a subject is determined by the amount of its space in the Bible would support those who see the Lord’s Supper as secondary or even unnecessary. For them church cannot be church without faith, but it can be church without the Supper. Parallel to measuring the biblical space devoted to the Lord’s Supper is a reluctance to read the Gospels from a eucharistic perspective. For many the command of Jesus to “do this” in the *verba* provides a sufficient reason for a frequent celebration of the Lord’s Supper, and the *verba* exhaust the biblical support for the sacrament and its celebration. It is amazing that the Disciples of Christ, with a Reformed doctrine of the Supper, in which the earthly elements are not identified with divine things, see this requiring a weekly celebration. Looking beyond the *verba* for references to the sacrament in other parts of the Gospels is seen by some as both unnecessary and an offense against the *sensus literalis unus est*. Hence the opposition to a eucharistic interpretation of John 6. Unsatisfactory is the argument that without John 6 the *verba* provide sufficient support for the Lutheran position, simply because John 6 has a superior description of bodily eating and drinking, to use Luther’s terms. While affirming that eucharistic theology can chiefly be drawn from the *verba*, we should see that it can also be drawn from other New Testament citations.

If apart from the *verba* the Gospels are silent on the Eucharist, then it follows that the consecration of the elements to the exclusion of other parts of the Sunday morning service should be the sole focus of our eucharistic attention. Should references to the Eucharist be identified throughout the Gospels, then other parts of the service serve eucharistic devotion. In the rites of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, the full meaning of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus come to expression for the believer. Recognition of sacramental themes in the Gospel narratives would provide a basis for sacramental sermons. Then the reading of the Gospel and its exposition would be the means of grace in a fullest sense. Reading of the Scriptures, preaching, and the sacramental rites constitute an integrated totality. They are not parts brought together to create the whole. Holding that the reading and the exposition of the Scriptures and the Eucharist celebration constitute one reality is, after all, what is intended by the frequent Lutheran reference to *word and sacrament*. When it is held that the *and* suggests that the sacraments add something that is not inherently in the word, the phrase *word and sacrament* is misunderstood. Should we be able to clarify this in our thinking, we would no longer hear that while Zwingli had the word, Luther had the word and sacrament. Without the sacraments one does not have what the word promises, or better still, one has not understood the word. Luther read Genesis sacramentally and his lectures on this book provide a model for us. Rather than referencing Luther, especially his Small Catechism, in our sermons, we would do better to learn from his method. Catechism quotations are nostalgic for the people, but they do not qualify as “thus saith the Lord.”

It seems that the seminary graduates in the last twenty years or so are more likely to give attention to the sacramental life of their congregations. *Romanizing* is a shorthand pejorative

bandied about by those who do not see the sacraments as belonging to the core of Lutheran theology and practice. Sacramentally orientated ministers may not constitute the majority, but there are more of them than there were two generations or so ago. Renewed sacramental practice may not have resulted from a sacramentally conscious hermeneutic, so it seems to me, but largely from an historical revival and appreciation of Lutheran traditions. This cannot be equated with recognizing the sacramental character of the biblical texts, because it feeds on Lutheran history. Undefined is which period qualifies as the perfect Lutheran era. Recovery of a golden age is the goal, but the crusaders never reach it. Yes, Luther's 1526 baptismal rite has been reintroduced, but with adjustments like giving a role to the parents and by adding parts of the Creed that he excluded. Liturgy preserves the historic faith of the church, but a pure restoration is rare and in some cases artificial. Restorative changes seem to be motivated by a desire to make things more orthodox than they originally were. Here at work is the principle that only those sons who surpass their fathers are successful.

In every period, a church absorbs the cultures of other churches with that of the world. Culture has to do with worship, and cross pollination among liturgies is inevitable and sometimes deliberate. Since culture is the atmosphere we breathe, sermons about its dangers soon ring hollow. Cultures are diverse and so the liturgy of one communion of churches differs from others. Within our own fellowship liturgy differs from congregation to congregation. Pastors who see themselves as liturgically traditional borrow from Rome, the Orthodox, the Anglicans, Evangelicals, and general Protestantism. *Though we deplore creative worship, we all do it.* No one is immune to external infection. My favorite viruses are singing Reformed hymns on Thanksgiving Day and having sacramental elements being brought to the altar with the financial gifts. The *Lutheran Service Book* is an attempt to bring some unity out of this array of Rube Goldberg creations.

Since the Roman Catholic Church belongs to the Western tradition, as Lutheran churches do, its practices will influence ours. Roman Catholic liturgy and doctrine are thoroughly eucharistic and so a common ground with Lutherans emerges. Liturgy can do only so much. If polls are to be taken seriously, elaborate eucharistic worship has had little influence on Rome's rank and file, whose views on the Lord's Supper are Reformed. Whereas Roman Catholics make the Eucharist central, Luther gave this place of honor to baptism, but this did not prevent him from preserving much — perhaps too much for some — of pre-Reformation eucharistic devotion. Luther drew a line in the sand with the Reformed over the Lord's Supper, but his unique sacramental contribution was reformulating the doctrine of baptism, whose place in obtaining salvation in the medieval system had been diminished by the ascendancy of confirmation, penance, and extreme unction. Strange that the one word *baptism* can mean birth and death. By one act we die and are born, a continual process that far outpaces the death and re-birth cycles of Eastern religions.

Luther's differences with Zwingli over the Lord's Supper were the major cause for Protestant division, but baptism, as

it was developed over against the Anabaptists, provided him with the foundation for faith and a safe haven for troubled believers. Christians were always going back to square one, and for him that was baptism. Every day the believer reverted back to where he started before he became a Christian. Rebaptism was not a possibility for Luther, but absent the water Christians are continually baptized. The road between faith and unfaith was not lineal but circular. Any concept of internal moral improvement has to incorporate Luther's view that the sinful self drowned in the morning came to life during the daylight and night hours, so that the miserable fellow had to be suffocated each dawn in baptism.

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***Restorative changes seem to be motivated by a desire to make things more orthodox than they originally were.***

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Baptism provides the birth and death parameters of life. The Lord's Supper is the nourishment for its substance. What is born from the grave of Christ is fed from the cross. A new tactic taken by Arthur A. Just sees the Eucharist embedded throughout Luke in Jesus' table fellowship with his disciples. The eucharistic life of the saints in heaven has already begun on earth. He has introduced the phrase *the never-ending feast*, which is so often used that for some it has been canonized as cliché. In a preliminary and totally incomplete way I have attempted this with John.<sup>7</sup> In my *Sermon on the Mount: The Church's First Statement of the Gospel*, I have argued that the Fourth Petition is eucharistic. In *Discourses in Matthew: Jesus Teaches the Church*, I have argued that the Lord's Supper is the pinnacle of the Gospel, a summit to which the Evangelist is leading his hearers. Eucharistic thought is already found in Jesus' coming out of Egypt, which could only evoke in the memory of the first hearers the Passover Meal, which for the Jews had redemptive significance. Essential to Matthew's eucharistic progress are the two miraculous feedings in which the formulas are first introduced, which are separated by the crumbs in the pericope of the Canaanite woman.

This exegesis presents a challenge to those limiting sacramental references to the *sedes doctrinae*.<sup>8</sup> Romanizing does not

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7. David P. Scaer, "Once More to John 6," in *Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord: Essays in Honor of Glen Zweck on the Occasion of His Sixty-fifth Birthday* (Houston, TX: Zweck Festschrift Committee, 2000), 217–233.

8. Dale Allison, who may be considered the foremost Matthean scholar in the English-speaking world, recognized what I was attempting and said that the *Discourses* "argues at length that the First Gospel embodies a liturgically regulated faith. . . . Particularly provocative (and largely convincing) in his eucharistic exegesis of large portions of the First Gospel."

fit this approach, because it works with the texts themselves and often contradicts traditional exegetical conclusions. It is also an exegesis not known in the Confessions, but which can look to Luther and the Lutheran fathers for support. This exegesis is not exclusively eucharistic, because what is eucharistic is christological. Those who hold that the *verba* are everything that an Evangelist has to say about the Eucharist will not welcome this approach. Whatever a pericope has to say about the Eucharist will have to be imported from outside, most probably from hymns and Luther citations. A eucharistic reading of the texts does not detract from the *verba* but makes them the goal and focus of a Gospel's previous pericopes. Some have rightly pointed out that the *Discourses* is deficient on baptism.<sup>9</sup> It is also deficient in aligning some pericopes in Matthew towards a eucharistic goal. Pericopes on the wheat, vineyard, and unforgiving steward parables need to be blended into the eucharistic presentation. Some of our ministers may have already done this in their sermons. Our inability to exhaust the biblical texts in regard to any topic, including the Lord's Supper, may attest to their divine origin.

One perceived danger of sacramental exegesis and preaching is that the sacraments and not Christ become the objects of faith. Jonathan Trigg notes that Luther in his Genesis lectures held that God allowed himself to be found in rituals and historical and natural events. The biblical world was for Luther sacramentally alive. This can be carried over to the New Testament. Jesus who came in water by being baptized by John, and by blood in his death, is still coming by water and the blood in the sacraments. Incarnation and atonement are not replaced by the Eucharist but continued in it. In going to the Father's right hand, Jesus did not discard his humanity but further clothed it in the earthly elements that grew from the same soil out of which Adam was created.<sup>10</sup> As deity was once hidden in humanity, so the glorified humanity is hidden in earthly elements. As Christ's glory was made transparent by the exaltation of his humanity, so bread and wine will become translucent so that we will see in them the sacrificial lamb. In the sacrament we now see him in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Even now that glory in the sacrament is being revealed to faith.<sup>11</sup>

The proclaimed word, that is, the gospel proclamation, baptism, and the Lord's Supper, follow each in a divinely predetermined order, what Lutherans call word and sacrament. In the Roman system one supplements or is superior or inferior to the other. Ideally the one who hears the gospel and believes, is baptized and participates in the Eucharist. What is ideal with God more often than not fails to translate into reality. For this systemic imperfection the ministry has been established. Our ministry is adjusting the discrepancies, and as much as pos-

sible, living with what resists adjustment. Christ comes in each means of grace and each coming is concentric with and within the others. One is not before or after another, but each exists and functions within the two others, embraces them, and is embraced by them. In each coming Christ is present in a unique way anticipating his coming in the other two. The Lord's Supper is sequential to the gospel proclamation and baptism, but its reception requires a return to the proclamation for the meaning of the Supper and to baptism as foundation of faith. Proclamation in its purest and highest form is found in the *verba*, because for the Synoptic Evangelists no other passage sets forth the atonement doctrine as successfully as the words of consecration. Customarily word and sacrament are spoken of as means, instruments, or vehicles of grace, but they are, as John Kleinig suggested, means of the Holy Spirit or better, Christ's covering. Thus the word that is proclaimed and comes to the elements to make them sacraments is not merely an oral word but Christ himself. Trigg notes that in speaking of the word, it is difficult to determine whether Luther is speaking of the oral proclamation of the Gospel, the Scriptures, or Christ himself. In the means of grace he gives us himself.

Speaking of the word coming to elements to make them sacraments, *verbum accedat ad elementum fit sacramentum*, may allow for the Reformed view of a spatial universe in which the distance between Christ and the elements is overcome by a spoken word delivered over a near infinite space by the Holy Spirit to created things. The Reformed have it right about the Spirit as the *agent* of the sacramental action, but the Spirit is present with Jesus, who is given in the Eucharist and with the Father to whom the thanksgiving, that is, the Eucharist, is offered. The gospel proclamation is not a message from a distant place, no matter how good this news is, but is from Christ himself, who is as much the content of the proclamation as he is the one who proclaims it. Sacramental reality takes its life from the incarnational reality, and one mystery helps to comprehend the other. Just as the divine nature takes the human nature into itself, so Jesus, the incarnate God, clothes himself in water, bread, and wine and identifies himself with them. Baptism is the entrance, foundation, and conclusion of Christian life because Christ is present in the water and before, during, and after the rite, so that he is its content and administrator. The ministers are included in the proclamation and sacramental administration, but their deaths show that they are expendable. Martyrdom is the proper conclusion to the sacramental life, not only for one who receives the sacraments, but for the one who administers them.<sup>12</sup>

Those who are committed to sacramental practice based on a corresponding sacramental reading of the Scriptures have the example of Luther, but the Protestant American climate will frustrate a complete restoration. We are however more of a

9. If more had been said, it would have repeated things said in *Baptism* in the Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics series.

10. See David P. Scaer, "Sacraments as an Affirmation of Creation," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 57 (1993): 241–263.

11. Πρεσβυτέρους οὖν ἐν ὑμῖν παρακαλῶ ὁ συμπρεσβύτερος καὶ μάρτυς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημάτων, ὁ καὶ τῆς μελλούσης ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι δόξης κοινωνός

12. Those with a developed eucharistic theology are under suspicion as followers of Wilhelm Löhe, Bertholdt von Schenck, and Arthur Carl Piepkorn. Historical inquiry will have to decide how these men have influenced current movements, if at all. It is my impression that earlier liturgical movements were isolated and were not fueled by a more sacramental reading of the biblical texts.

sacramental church than we were a century ago. Page 5 of *The Lutheran Hymnal* has given way to page 15, which is enshrined several times in the *Lutheran Service Book*, and chasubles are widely accepted. After years of resistance, communion services are common at conferences, conventions, and synod college campuses. *Officially the church is located in an organized congregation, but in practice the church is not bound by a particular form.* The Eucharist has been rescued from the Babylonian Captivity of a particular church polity. On the negative side individual cups, according to *Forum Letter* editor Russell Saltzmann, are here to stay. A return to the common cup may be effected not by theological arguments but by those saddled with washing the “little glasses.” Reformed and Arminian hymns are favorites with our people, as some are with me. We breathe the Reformed air and many a clergy person has gone to his doom by enforcing a clean air act. No matter how tightly the room is sealed, external materials intrude.<sup>13</sup> Whatever our internal differences may be, the LCMS appears to others as a socially and theologically conservative church body. Problematic is that our biblical interpretation is not as sacramental as our practice and doctrine.

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### *Proclamation in its purest and highest form is found in the verba.*

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At the center of a thorough eucharistic reading of the biblical texts are the *verba* themselves, but with the awareness that these words define the atonement. Pitting a eucharistic interpretation against a christological one indicates a failure to understand the *verba*. Use of the *verba* in our services is a statement that our consecration is a continuation of the first celebration and on that account the words of consecration are also a narrative on the passion of Jesus. The victim of the cross is the agent and content of the sacrament. Here is where word and sacrament can be seen as one reality in that the *verba* can and should be seen as part of the Gospel narrative in which the death of Jesus and its benefits are proclaimed. This narrative was part of the eucharistic celebration in Corinth and presumably also in Jerusalem where it had its origin, but note should be made of the *Didache* 9–10, in which this narrative is missing. One proposal is that some early Christians modeled their celebration of the Eucharist on the Last Supper at a later time.<sup>14</sup> The absence of a

narrative or the *verba* in the *Didache* cannot be so easily overlooked, simply because this document shows so many similarities with Matthew, including the trinitarian baptismal formula. Some have concluded that the communities that received these two documents may have been the same or closely related. Also consider that the nonbaptized are not allowed to come to the Eucharist. This indicates a highly developed eucharistic practice. Just how one gets around the absence of the narrative of the Supper is not easy. It may be that the *Didache* community looked upon the entire service, especially the events in Jesus’ life and his death, in eucharistic context. One moment was not singled out to the exclusion of others.

In the Small Catechism, Luther cited Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul as the source for the *verba* and so he created, or took over, a Gospel harmony in miniature. For him 1 Corinthians 11 was the standard.<sup>15</sup> We face both problems and opportunities in determining the original *verba*. It is unlikely that Jesus used the liturgically formal Hebrew in a situation riddled with the anticipation of his death. The words of dereliction according to Mark were spoken in Aramaic, but they came from the desperation of his soul. Since Matthew and Mark provide Greek translations, Aramaic did not function as church language. The *verba*, like the other teachings of Jesus, were in Greek, and with the spread of the church, they appeared in Latin and Syriac liturgies. Locating the original language was not an issue for Luther. At Marburg he argued from the Latin Vulgate and Zwingli from the Greek. Zwingli demonstrated his academic superiority to Luther in letting him know he was just learning Latin.

This topic provides plenty of work for textual criticism. Textual problems exist in the manuscripts for Luke. Some texts in Luke conclude with “This is my body” with no mention of the value of eating Christ’s body. Also missing are the *verba* over the cup (Lk 22:20b–21). It is difficult to explain their omission and easier to explain its being introduced into an existing text in which it was missing. Such adjustments were common and eventually resulted in the harmonies of the Gospels. Lest we become too judgmental with early scribes, consider that whoever expanded Luke set a model for Luther, who constructed his rendering of the *verba* from four sources. The scribe who made the addition of the cup to Luke may have been familiar with a liturgy that Paul preserved in 1 Corinthians 11. Paul’s churches may have incorporated the words “in remembrance of me” into the *verba*. An argument for their not being part of the original celebration is supported by their absence from Matthew and Mark. Conformity to the liturgical celebration may have been the scribe’s motive for inserting into the books the *verba* about the cup.

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13. More than anyone else Lawrence Rast has traced Reformed and Arminian intrusions into the LCMS, but diagnosis does not translate into therapy.  
 14. Gerard Rouwhorst, “Didache 9–10: A Litmus Test for the Research on Early Christian Liturgy Eucharist,” in *Matthew and the Didache*, ed. Huub van de Sandt (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 154.

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15. 1 Cor 11:23–25: “For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’”

Do the liturgical texts conform to biblical ones, or is it the other way around? One reason for Luke's omission of the cup was that by mentioning only the breaking of the bread, he wanted to draw a direct line to Emmaus where Jesus was known in the breaking of the bread. What began on the night before his crucifixion was completed on the evening of his resurrection. Textual variants give us a window into the minds of Christians to show how they interpreted the biblical texts. Our version of the *verba* is a harmony that draws lines back to the Synoptic Evangelists and Paul, but as a compilation it does not exactly fit any of these sources or the original occasion.

Now comes the opportunity of determining how apostolic writers viewed the Eucharist. Paul and Luke call it the new covenant, stressing that Christ by entering the world establishes a new relationship between himself and those who receive him in the sacrament; they are included in the covenant in which sins are forgiven. Matthew and Mark see Christ's death as a sacrifice satisfying the demands of the old covenant, from which they are released by reception of Christ's blood. Paul and Luke have the Lutheran element in placing forgiveness at the heart and by focusing on Christ's sacrifice with forgiveness as consequence of that sacrifice. Matthew and Mark have the catholic element.

Agreement on which Gospel was the first written does not mean that its account is the oldest. Matthew may be the first Gospel and may more closely preserve the words of Jesus, but at the time of its writing the form found in 1 Corinthians may have been in use from Jerusalem to Greece. Another possibility is that Matthew preserves the *verba* as the earliest Christians

used them and that a liturgical adjustment was made by the Jerusalem church before Paul's second missionary journey. Paul took over the liturgical forms for the Eucharist, just as he did the resurrection doctrine, from the apostles in Jerusalem. If the words "in remembrance of me" belonged to the original *verba*, why did Matthew omit them? More problematic is Mark's omission of them, especially if he knew Luke and 1 Corinthians, or had often participated in the Eucharist in the churches Paul established. Where Paul includes the words of remembrance and excludes the sacrificial reference, Matthew and Mark do the reverse. This poses the question of whether the remembrance has to do with God's remembering Jesus' sacrifice. The defective manuscripts of Luke exclude both themes.

Locating eucharistic motifs throughout the Gospels is a challenge. Other opportunities may be found in looking at them from the different angles provided by the Evangelists and Paul. Matters may not be as simple as we once thought. All pericopic systems need to be scrutinized to determine which best preserves the sacramental intentions of the Evangelists. In the Matthew sequence in the older three-year series the feeding of the five thousand, the Canaanite woman, and feeding of the four thousand are placed on sequential Sundays, and give the preacher an opportunity for eucharistic preaching that the Evangelist apparently intended. Where the one feeding miracle is isolated from the other one and the Canaanite woman, one is more likely to hear a sermon about the creative energies of Jesus to take care of our earthly needs. Sadly these examples do not even scratch the surface of possibilities for eucharistic preaching from the lectionary. **LOGIA**

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# REVIEWS

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

Martin Luther



## Review Essay

**To Live with Christ.** By Bo Giertz. Translated by Richard Wood (ed.) and Bror Erickson. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 2008. 830 pages.

Translator Bror Erickson calls him the best pastoral theologian of the twentieth century. Professor Harold Senkbeil says that he was one of the giants of the past century. There is a Bo Giertz renaissance underway on the North American continent. Though Giertz (1905–1998) is well-known to readers of *LOGIA* and to American Lutherans in general as the author of the beloved book *The Hammer of God*, most of his voluminous corpus of writing has remained inaccessible to the “Swedish impaired.” However, over the past five years several projects making Giertz accessible to English speakers have been undertaken and many completed: the complete English edition of *The Hammer of God* finally appeared in 2005 (with the final chapter translated by Hans O. Andrae); *Preaching from the Whole Bible*, a study of the Gospel lessons from the historic lectionary, was reprinted by Lutheran Legacy in 2007; Giertz’s systematic presentation of law and gospel from his *Kyrkofromhet* (1939) was translated by this reviewer under the title *Life by Drowning: Enlightenment through Law and Gospel* and published by the Lutheran Heritage Foundation and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England in 2008; a full-length feature film based on the entire first novella of *The Hammer of God*, with English subtitles, should be available as you read this; many more articles and shorter translations have appeared in various journals and devotional books; symposia were held in 2005 on the campuses of the Missouri Synod’s St. Louis and Fort Wayne seminaries as well as at the Lutheran Church—Canada seminary in St. Catharines; the Giertz Society of America was established in 2008; and another symposium is planned for Pittsburgh in January 2010 to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the first English-language edition of *The Hammer of God*.

Now Richard Wood and Bror Erickson have also given us the gift of this magnificent devotional book, *To Live with Christ*. Most take it relatively easy in retirement; not Bo Giertz. After serving as bishop of Gothenburg from 1949 to 1970, he translated the entire New Testament and provided a commentary on each

of its books. In addition to holding approximately three hundred annual speaking engagements domestically and abroad in the 1970s, he also authored this devotional, which appeared in Sweden in two volumes (1973–1974). Its main themes are classic Giertz, which is to say unabashedly Lutheran: *simul justus et peccator*, the two kingdoms, the atonement, *Christ alone*.

The opening verse sets the tone: “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Mt 21:9, p. 18). Throughout *To Live with Christ*, Giertz proclaims that it is this Lord “who blots out [our] transgressions for [His] own sake” (Is 43:25); “Christ [is sent] to us, not just as a great teacher and example, but as our Redeemer and Savior” (39). And this is “the most important thing: faith in the Savior, who died and rose so we would inherit eternal life” (384). Indeed, Giertz again and again reminds us to fix our gaze upon Christ—he prays: “Regarding my faith, help me so I see only You and not my works. If I see them, I dare not believe. Regarding my works, help me to see both You and everyone You want me to do something for. Help me to have an eye for You and see You everywhere among people. Then, it will be so much easier for me to do what you want” (629). In this way the law finds its rightful place: “There was a time when it stood between us,” Giertz prays. “When you showed me all my faults, it scared and threatened me and it meant that I could not stand before You as I am. Now You have paved the way and allow me to come for Your own sake. Your Law is behind me; I see it when I turn around to go out among my fellow men . . . , when I make my decisions, do my work, and form my day” (556, see also 635). However, within the church we do not make the decisions, for he is the Lord: “The Church is Christ’s Church, and He is . . . its head. Pastors and laity do not make decisions, Christ does” (390).

Similarly, regarding so-called secular matters, Giertz comments on Christ’s lordship in light of Matthew 6:24: “The [question] is not *how much* mammon we are willing to give away because *everything* should be given into the hand of Christ” (593). Likewise, with Matthew 12:15–21 as the text, Giertz speaks to the political sphere: “How does [Christ] . . . carry justice forward to victory? Not with the usual political means. Christ does not use propaganda, He does not challenge people to debate, He does not send His disciples to demonstrate and shout slogans. ‘Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets . . .’ One can win victories for justice in that way, but [those] victories are relative, temporary, and constantly threatened by our unbelievably imaginative selfishness that can throw its weight around

and win the game in every administration and every political system. For Christ, it is a matter of achieving the victory over evil itself and over our own old Adam. The decisive battle took place on Good Friday” (682–683).

Giertz brings aspects of his many-faceted life’s experiences to his writing desk: his time as a parish pastor and bishop, his exegetical work, even his past as an atheist, and, perhaps especially, his semester in the Holy Land in 1931 as a university student. These all come together to provide the reader with rich insight into the biblical word and world that Giertz expounds for the reader and hearer of *To Live with Christ*.

The book is essentially based on the historic church year and lectionary. Each day has a suggested reading from Scripture, with a verse reproduced, followed by the devotional reading and a prayer, the latter not infrequently drawn from the Psalter. Giertz assumes “that those who use this book will have their own prayer concerns and will accordingly add other prayers for their work, family, and possibly some standard morning and [evening] prayers, the Lord’s Prayer, as well as [the Benediction or something else]” (16). Each week’s devotions usually follow a particular theme, and most of the New Testament is covered. Though the original included appropriate hymn stanza references, many found only in Swedish, these have been omitted from the translation. Likewise, the helpful Scripture index of the Swedish edition was not included in the English.

Two different editions of this work appeared in Sweden (1973–1974 and 1999–2000). Unfortunately the two translators did not use the same edition, so that part of *To Live with Christ* (pages 15–384 and 796–809 [Erickson]) is based on the earlier edition, and the remainder (pages 385–795 [Wood]) on the later edition, resulting in an inconsistency in the lectionary upon which the devotions are based and even causing the repetition of one of the meditations: the exposition for Friday after the Second Sunday after Epiphany (121–123) is the same as that of Wednesday after the Twentieth Sunday after Trinity (670–671), albeit under different translations. Also, misunderstanding of some of the variations between the church year in American and Swedish Lutheranism—in the Church of Sweden, Thanksgiving Day is always the second Sunday in October—causes intermittent confusion regarding the arrangement and naming of days and weeks (see below, and 734–760, 766–778).

There are also idiosyncrasies and even outright errors of translation and editing: for example, *avlösning* means “absolution,” not “atonement” (695); *just* is often translated as “only” when it should be “precisely” (799); sometimes two similar but distinct Swedish words are translated with the same word when another is needed for the sake of clarity and sense. The constant and overly colloquial use of contractions is also a bit disconcerting, and is not found in the Swedish. Giertz at times refers to Satan as *Åklagaren*, a word most fittingly translated as “the Accuser,” rather than “the prosecutor” (652, 661; see Job 1:6). *Sörjer för* (582) should be “care for” or “provide for,” not “mourn for” (*sörjer över*, 504). The confusing last sentence before the prayer on page 569 is a direct reference from Scripture so that the beginning should read, “The one who is forgiven much, loves much.” The devotion on page 762 should be for the *Nativ-*

*ity* of St. John the Baptist (June 24), not the *Martyrdom*; though the information in the footnote on page 800 is correct: “Boxing Day” as such is not celebrated in Sweden. Rather, the feast after Christmas Day is most commonly known as *Annandag Jul* (Second Day of Christmas). Epiphany (804) is the thirteenth day of Christmas (*Trettondedag Jul*), not “after.” Baptism is a “work of election,” not an “act of choice” (95, editorial alteration); *diakoni* should not be translated as “lay ministry” (575), nor is the *Te Deum* part of Luke 1 (66)! Nonetheless, despite these shortcomings, the publishers and translators should be commended for their hard and impressive work, and the book lauded. Overall it is a very readable translation.

Most significantly, it is a prayerbook for the seeker and the novice, as well as the pastor; for the individual, as well as the family or group. It is a catechetical, systematic, and Scripture-saturated work that edifies as it teaches, and shapes as it guides in disciplined Bible reading. In short, it is a work that helps us to live with Christ.

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[For more information on the Giertz Society, translation projects, upcoming symposia, or even a Scripture index for *To Live with Christ*, please contact: ERA@FirstTrinity.net, 412-683-4121.]

*Exercitium Pietatis Quotidianum Quadripartitum* (1612). Lateinisch-Deutsch. By Johann Gerhard. Kritisch herausgegeben, kommentiert und mit einem Nachwort versehen von Johann Anselm Steiger. Mit einem Textanhang: Sämtliche Choräle aus Friedrich Fabricius’ *Praxis Pietatis Gerhardi melica* (1688). *Doctrina et Pietas* Abt. I, Johann Gerhard-Archiv, Band 12. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-holzboog, 2008. ISBN 3-7728-2427-2.

❖ *Oratio, meditatio, tentatio faciunt theologum*—prayer, meditation, temptation make a theologian—this basic insight of the Lutheran Reformation brought forth many beautiful blossoms and salutary fruits in the history of theology and spirituality, as can most prominently be seen in the theological works of John Gerhard. In 1606 the extensive version of his *Sacred Meditations* first appeared.<sup>1</sup> In 1611 he published the *Enchiridion Consolatorium*<sup>2</sup> (the English translation of 1614 rendered this title as *The Conquest of Temptations*). And just one year later Gerhard presented his *Exercitium Pietatis*, a four-part daily prayer book, including prayers of confession of sins, of thanksgiving, petitions for ourselves, and supplications for others.

1. The shorter version of 1603, which the 21-year-old professor wrote while struggling with death, has recently been translated into German for the first time: Johann Gerhard, *Heilige Meditationen*, trans. and ed. Armin Wenz and Wilhelm Höhn (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 2008).
2. Reviewed in *LOGIA* 14, no. 1 (Epiphany 2005), 48–49.

It is to Johann Anselm Steiger's credit that the long neglected or even forgotten original—both Latin and German—versions of this threefold highlight of Lutheran spirituality have now (with the publication of the *Exercitium*) finally been completely reprinted at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In his epilogue on the history of these works, Steiger shows that it was Gerhard's longhand intention to complete this trilogy of devotional literature. Even the early version of the *Meditations* of 1603 had already included chapters designed as *exercitia*. Thus one realizes how Gerhard's devotional trilogy grew over the years as his own faith was challenged by several strokes of fate. His *Exercitium Pietatis* was published one year after the death of his wife. Steiger rightfully calls it a milestone in Christian prayer literature. After Gerhard's *Meditations* of 1606, the *Exercitium* was the most widespread work of the Thuringian theologian. During his lifetime twenty-one editions were printed. It was translated into English, Finnish, Danish, French, Icelandic, Dutch, Russian, Swedish, Czech, Hungarian, and Norwegian.

Gerhard himself wrote the German translation, thus making it accessible to the Christian people of his fatherland. The Latin and the German versions in the present edition are printed in parallel. Steiger adds a huge historical-critical apparatus useful for the reader and the researcher. Unusual German words are explained with the help of the Grimm dictionary. The Bible passages from the margins of Gerhard's Latin edition are printed in the footnotes. Steiger also gives extensive quotes from those church fathers obviously used by Gerhard. The editor names even many more Bible passages Gerhard alludes to implicitly.

The *Exercitium* proved to be a blessing for persecuted Christians. For example, Simon Goulart translated it into French in 1628 as consolation for the tormented Huguenots. Another prominent example of the salutary effect of Gerhard's writing in times of affliction is presented in this very volume: Steiger added as a wonderful supplement the lyrical application of Gerhard's *Exercitium* presented by Friedrich Fabricius under the title *Praxis Pietatis Gerhardi melica* (1688). Fabricius transformed Gerhard's prayers into poems, which he formulated in a way so they could be sung as hymns, using popular Lutheran chorale-tunes. These 46 hymns by Fabricius, printed in this volume (220 pages), make it a most important hymnological source. Fabricius, pastor in the town of Stettin, wrote these hymns while he was imprisoned for having criticized the impending Calvinization of his city by the Elector of Brandenburg (the same Elector who had clashed with Paul Gerhardt in Berlin over the same matter). This makes Fabricius's hymns an even greater testimony of the Lutheran church militant.

One reason why Gerhard's *Exercitium* became somewhat forgotten later on was the fact that Johann Arndt's *Paradiesgärtlein*, which appeared the same year (1612), surpassed it in editions. Steiger offers some important remarks on the theological relationship between Arndt and Gerhard and locates Gerhard's work in the line of Lutheran prayer literature champions such as Andreas Musculus, Johann Habermann, Philipp Kegel, and Daniel Cramer. He also refers to the last English edition by Matthew Harrison (2003) under the title: *Meditations on Divine Mercy: A Classic Treasury of Devotional Prayers*.

In his dedicatory preface, John Gerhard equips his reader with a helpful and short doctrine of prayer, starting with reflections on the benefits of prayer (*utilitas precatationis*). Gerhard here takes up many most beautiful titles of honor for prayer designed by Johann Arndt in his *Bücher vom wahren Christentum*. He then proceeds, discussing the four biblical pillars that Christian prayer is founded upon: God's almighty mercy, his unfailing truth, Christ's intercession at the right hand of God, and the Spirit's testimony. These pillars cast out any doubt and strengthen the Christian's certainty that God will hear our prayers (Gerhard talks about *fiducia* here in the Latin text).

Having displayed all the topics dealt with in the prayers in an index at the beginning, Gerhard explains the fourfold structure. There are four pieces that each Christian should regard every day: His sin for which he needs forgiveness, God's benefits for which we are to give thanks, our manifold needs and temptations for which we need to ask for help and victory, and our neighbor's manifold needs concerning this life and the life to come.

By means of the prayers of the first part, the prayers of confession, Gerhard unfolds a more or less complete biblical doctrine of sin. The basic text of reference is, not surprisingly, Psalm 51. Based on the end of this psalm, Gerhard in almost every prayer of confession explicitly applies sacrificial language. He does so by "offering up" to God aspects in Christ's life and salvation work that in a complementary way relate to aspects in the sinner's existence. For example, when he contemplates original sin and the fact that he himself was conceived in sin (Ps 51:7), he asks for forgiveness by offering up Christ's immaculate conception before God. The sins of his youth, confessed in the next chapter, are related to Christ's holy obedience over against his heavenly Father he showed forth as a twelve-year old. Thus also Christ's obedience is "offered up" as ransom and price for the manifold disobedience of the sinner in his youth (Latin: *Hanc oboedientiam, juste iudex, offero in precium & satisfactionem pro multipli juventutis meae inoboedientia. Amen* [p. 46]). It is also moving to see how Gerhard reflects on the many hostile accusers who attack the sinner: All creatures, the book of conscience, the tables of the law, Satan himself, accuse and condemn him, whereas there is only one defender on the side of the sinner: Christ himself. But his blood, his passion, his obedience are a sufficient remedy against all sins.

In the second part Gerhard invites the reader to accompany him through the pleasure gardens, both of nature and of the church, in order to discover, enjoy, and rejoice in or give thanks for the multitude of fragrant blossoms of divine gifts. Gerhard's thanksgivings begin with the miracle of his birth and continue with the reflection on how wonderful God has ordered everything in creation for the benefit of man. Thirteen out of fifteen thanksgiving prayers are dedicated to man's salvation. Christ's incarnation (which helps Gerhard understand why God created the world for the sake of man: because God himself wanted to become man), his passion, man's calling through the divine word, the Father's patience waiting for our conversion, our very conversion effected by God alone, the forgiveness of sins, the believer's perseverance, the healing effects of God's word both on man's body and soul, the sacrament of baptism, the

sacrament of the altar, the protection of the angels, the promise of eternal salvation. Especially Gerhard's thanksgiving prayer for conversion is most important in our day and age, since he makes clear that someone who is dead in sins can contribute nothing at all to his own conversion. Gerhard's prayers of thanksgiving are a most beautiful practical application of the biblical doctrine of our justification and salvation. They can serve as a fine antidote against many evangelical misconceptions of faith in our day.

The third part, including prayers that reflect on man's needs, shows how nicely the theology of justification and the theology of the cross fit together. If salvation is God's work alone, on the side of man it goes along with self-humiliation, self-crucifixion, according to the words of both Christ and his apostles, which are applied here by Gerhard (Mt 10:38; 16:24–25; Rom 6:6; Gal 5:24). Only if we lose our trust in our own powers and despair of ourselves will we be ready to receive God's mercy and help in each and every aspect of life. Gerhard prays: "*In me nil nisi peccatum, mors, condemnatio, in te nil nisi iustitia, vita, salus, consolatio. Despero igitur in me, sed spero in te, in me collidor, in te erigor*" (pp. 158–160: In me, there is nothing but sin, death, condemnation; in you, there is nothing but righteousness, life, salvation, consolation. I, therefore, despair of myself but hope in you. In myself, I am crushed; in you, I am erected). Only if the sinner, being focused on himself (*incurvatus in se*), is mortified, can he be vivified and the new heart be directed toward God. Thus Gerhard throughout his prayers in this part asks for the mortification of the old man (reflecting on the *simul iustus et peccator*), for the protection and growth of faith, of hope, of love, of humility, of patience, of gentleness, of chastity, for the growth of hatred for worldly treasures, of self-denial. Furthermore, he asks for victory over the world hostile to God, for consolation when bearing the cross, for victory in temptations, for a blessed death and a joyful resurrection. One motif frequently applied, is the prayer that God might implant into us a distaste for sin and a new spiritual appetite for the divine goods, thus turning natural man's natural desires upside down. Another important motif Gerhard frequently dwells upon is the inhabitation of Christ, and the soul's wedding with him as bridegroom, received through faith, and effected by the sacraments.

Part four of Gerhard's prayer book naturally mirrors the petitions of the common prayer in the divine liturgies of the church. In the short introduction to this part, the missionary character of praying becomes obvious when Gerhard emphasizes that the three estates we are praying for—the church, the government, and the house—have been instituted by God for the sake of preserving life and spreading the church. So it is not surprising at all that Gerhard's prayers in this part put forth a short theology of the true mission of the church, following the line of Jesus' parable of the sower (Matthew 13). Thus John Gerhard's prayer for the growth of the church is inseparably tied to petitions that ask for keeping the word of God undefiled, for protection from persecution and heresy, and for protection from falling into the lusts of the world. Only if the doctrine of the church is not darkened can it be the light of the world. Only if the soul's food is

free from poison can man develop the true spiritual taste for it. Gerhard dedicates a special prayer also to the preachers and hearers of the word. He shows that there is no vocation that is as fiercely attacked by the devil as the office of the ministry. The prayer for the government is shaped by the contents of 1 Timothy 2:2. More prayers follow for the house or family, for the acquaintances or benefactors, for the enemies and persecutors, for those suffering in all kinds of emergencies.

The poetical hymns of Fabricius beautifully and faithfully take up the contents of Gerhard's prayer. However, they also enhance the spiritual reception of these prayers by enabling the reader to sing them and meditate on them with the help of well-known tunes. The praying reader and singer thus is equipped with vivid, emotionally involved language, both by Gerhard and by his congenial poet Fabricius. Both texts help Christians even in the twenty-first century to develop spiritually in heart and mind.

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***Religion and the Death Penalty: A Call for Reckoning.*** Edited by Erik C. Owens, John D. Carlson, and Eric P. Elshtain. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004. 294 pages.

❖ The Eerdmans Religion, Ethics, and Public Life Series focuses a broad spectrum of scholarly attention on various contemporary moral debates, each demanding comment from religious, philosophical, and political voices as each are found at the intersection of religious, moral, and political life. The first book in this series, *Religion and the Death Penalty: A Call for Reckoning*, brings together some of the finest theologians of our day, along with respected and serious-minded public figures, to respond to this important intersection in the context of the death penalty debate. Commenting from within their own religious traditions and understandings of the relationship between personal religious conviction and public responsibility, contributors to this volume investigate the moral status of the death penalty by closely examining the many underlying concerns that inform our stance on such gravely impressive public policy. From conceptions of justice to notions of transformational reconciliation, religiously informed considerations influence the death penalty debate. In *Religion and the Death Penalty*, twenty-two serious thinkers from a variety of professions reckon with this solemn junction of religion and public policy.

While each chapter agrees to some extent that debate over capital punishment cannot ignore religious considerations, the diverse contributors vary on the degree to which they appeal to religion and its writings and traditions to substantiate public policy decisions. The three parts into which the editors have organized the book highlight the disparity while also suggesting two beliefs this reader found common to each contributor: (1) that religion and moral consideration necessarily informs one's position on the death penalty and must therefore be deliberately and clearly identified, and (2) that responsible citizens

ought to consider the unique place of government as a public institution and the ways in which private individuals might engage in and relate to such an establishment in a manner consistent with our humanity.

To that end, Part One, “Faith Traditions and the Death Penalty,” offers a survey of religious teachings on the death penalty from Roman Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, Evangelical, and Muslim scriptures and conventions. Rabbi David Novak, for example, places political philosopher Hannah Arendt’s insights on the death penalty in conversation with the “exceptionally rich moral experience and reflection of the Jewish people” as revealed in the Talmud (34). Noting the rabbinic distinction between public and private crime, Novak examines Talmudic discussion to identify the criteria that must be met to warrant a capital sentence and “enable human judges to imitate the divine Judge” (47).

Ethicist Gilbert Meilaender, writing from a Protestant perspective, also emphasizes the distinction between public and private acts, but does so in order to distinguish the private taking of life for personal reasons from the divinely ordained public authority to take life for the preservation of public order. Citing Oliver O’Donovan and Albert Camus, Meilaender wonders whether a society that cannot or will not speak of God—one that is not “genuinely religious”—ought to inflict the death penalty, even if it is permitted by God, since such a judgment removes a person from the one community acknowledged to exist, and therefore has a godlike sense of final elimination about it.

Part Two, “Theological Reflections on the Death Penalty,” invites reflection on specific theological concerns that arise in the capital punishment debate. Political philosopher J. Budziszewski’s provocative chapter closely examines the meaning of justice, punishment, and mercy, concluding that while the demand for justice and the possibility for mercy may be reconciled in public life and policy, categorical clemency undermines both, finding no justification in the Christian tradition.

Richard Garnett and John Carlson each consider the place of moral anthropology in the death-penalty debate. Garnett proposes that the question be decided on the basis of a “truthful vision of the human person,” and Carlson offers a death penalty casuistry that relies upon “a conceptual framework undergirded by strong assertions about human nature and even about the divine” (157, 194). Victor Anderson closes Part Two with the voices of Karl Barth and H. Richard Niebuhr, articulating an account of the human condition from their unique analyses and recommending a Christian social witness against the death penalty as the fitting response to God’s grace and mercy in Christ.

Part Three, “Personal Commitments and Public Responsibilities,” includes the perspectives and personal experience of governors, attorneys, congressmen, and a United States Supreme Court justice, all of whom have stood in the intersection of public office and personal religious conviction. Particularly noteworthy is former Illinois Governor George Ryan’s chapter, which relates his religious background and how he was led from supporting Illinois’s death penalty “in the abstract” to commuting every death sentence in Illinois upon leaving of-

fice in January 2003 (222). In stark contrast, Associate Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia begins his chapter on the morality of judicial participation in the death penalty by noting that his moral argument “has nothing to do with how I vote in capital cases that come before the Supreme Court” (231). So noted, Associate Justice Scalia disagrees with Pope John Paul II’s encyclical *Evangelium vitae*, as well as the revised *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, both of which strongly imply (some, including Scalia, say insist) that the death penalty is morally wrong today. (Avery Cardinal Dulles, against whose position Scalia writes, explicates this in view of Scripture and tradition in Chapter One.)

As a whole, this excellent collection of essays engages the reader in a thorough investigation of the presuppositions and implications that, even if left unconsidered, necessarily inform one’s moral and public position on capital punishment. Moreover, critical readers will find their own views challenged afresh by attention to these essays and therefore, better equipped for responsible citizenship. While the philosophical, religious, and political opinions expressed in this volume are as diverse as they are dynamic, every chapter shares a moral concern for the issue and an appreciation for a proper articulation of the place of government, the pursuit of justice, and the meaning of our humanity as creatures who must exist in tension between private loyalty and public duty. I consider *Religion and the Death Penalty* important for those struggling with their stance on the death penalty and, perhaps especially, for those who consider their position resolute. At any rate, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for one’s moral and religious beliefs on this grave issue to remain unexamined after reading this book. For this reason alone it is well worth our attention.

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***Christianity’s Dangerous Idea: The Protestant Revolution — A History from the Sixteenth Century to the Twenty-First.*** By Alister McGrath. New York: Harper One, 2007. 552 pages.

✦ In *Christianity’s Dangerous Idea*, Alister McGrath takes a unique approach, focusing on one idea and tracing it as a common theme throughout the history of Protestantism. That “dangerous idea is that all Christians had the right to interpret the Bible for themselves” (2). McGrath’s central thesis is that “the development of Protestantism as a major religious force in the world has been shaped decisively by the creative tensions emerging from this principle” (2).

Another unique aspect of McGrath’s approach is the division of the work into three parts: origination, manifestation, and transformation. While the first part of the book is more chronological, the other two parts are thematically arranged. Part II, manifestation, describes basic Protestant attitudes and the manner in which they have shaped values and actions during the last five hundred years. Part III, transformation, tells the history of Protestantism during the twentieth century.

The second part of the book describes Protestantism's interaction with the arts and sciences. McGrath gives interesting analyses of varying Protestant views toward and contributions to poetry, drama, and fiction. To illustrate Protestantism's interaction with the natural sciences, two test cases are used: Copernicus and the biblical interpretation of the solar system and Darwin and the biblical interpretation of the origins of humanity. In these cases, McGrath's evenhanded approach does not support a particular point of view but attempts to describe fairly the various Protestant viewpoints.

The last part of the book, while fascinating in its description of the rise of Pentecostalism, and its spread in the global South—Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America—seems to imply that this is the apex and fullest expression of Protestantism and its future. If this is the case, the future does not bode well for confessional forms of Protestantism—not that we were triumphalists anyway.

How accurate is McGrath's analysis of Lutheranism? McGrath describes Luther's Reformation as a return to Paul and Augustine. He accurately defines what justification is to Luther: "the reckoning of Christ's righteousness to believers" (44). McGrath sees in Luther's doctrine "a conception of salvation as a matter affecting God and the individual" (43). While he is right in saying that in Luther's conception of justification the role of saints as intermediaries and intercessors is no longer necessary, he overstates the case: "There is no necessary role for the church, its sacraments, or its priests in the dynamic of salvation" (44). He views Luther as "reluctant to accept the inner logic of his own thinking," which is why "Luther did not seem ready to abolish the institution of the church or its ministry" (44). Therefore he sees the radical reformers as taking the implications of Luther's writings to their logical conclusions. While McGrath accurately describes Luther's view of the sacrament ("that the bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ" [261]), he uses the term *consubstantiation*—rejected by Lutherans—to label it. He sees Luther's views against female clergy as reflecting his cultural context instead of his reading of the New Testament.

McGrath states that Epitome 1–8 of the Formula of Concord (1577) "insists that no interpretation of scripture can be defined as normative" (233). With regard to the Lutheran Confessions, McGrath writes, "Whereas Lutherans regard only one confession document—the Augsburg Confession (1530)—as having particular significance, most other denominations such as the Baptists and Methodists, define themselves with reference to a multiplicity of confessions" (235). While the Unaltered Augsburg Confession enjoys a certain primacy among the Lutheran Confessions, certainly the rest of the *Book of Concord*, especially the Small Catechism in terms of the laity, is also very significant to Lutherans. In showing the various Protestant views of predestination, he quotes from the Missouri Synod's "A Brief Statement" (1932).

McGrath loses focus on the "dangerous idea" somewhere in the middle but picks it back up later in the book. His study concludes that Protestantism is "a method rather than its outcome—a means by which ideas would be generated and gov-

erned, not a specific set of ideas resulting from its application" (467). This, for him, is the Protestant principal, "grounding matters of doctrine and ethics in the Bible and subjecting these to constant review" (467).

Shawn D. Stafford  
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***My Light and My Salvation.*** By Kurt E. Reinhardt. Fort Wayne, IN: Redeemer Press, 2008. Paper.

✦ Kurt E. Reinhardt was born in Ottawa, Ontario, in 1969. He was baptized at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Ottawa, where he was also confirmed, married, and ordained. He graduated with honors with a Bachelors degree in languages and linguistics from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, in 1993 and from Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary in St. Catharines, Ontario, in 1999. Ordained in August of that same year, Kurt E. Reinhardt was called as the shepherd of Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church of Kurtzville, Ontario, where he serves as pastor.

*My Light and My Salvation* is a collection of poetical verse by Pastor Reinhardt: fifty-three texts that clearly point the reader to Christ and his saving work on behalf of a fallen world. About ten of the poems included in this volume are free verse and more meditative in nature such as "The Sign of the Cross," "Holy, Holy, Holy" and "He Comforts Me." The remaining poems are more tightly constructed and follow standard metrical patterns of rhyme. Among these are "O Lord, My Love, I Have No Rest," Reinhardt's poetical translation of Paul Gerhardt's "Herr Jesu, meine Liebe"; "The Golden City's Great Pearl Gate," his poetical translation of Wilhelm Löhe's "Weit offen steht des Himmels Perlethor"; an additional sacramental stanza for "Beautiful Savior"; and additional sacramental stanzas for "Just As I Am Without One Plea."

Reinhardt's texts are Christ-centered and Lutheran through and through. I thoroughly enjoyed browsing through this initial collection of his poetical work. Many texts are strongly sacramental in nature, reinforcing scriptural teachings about Holy Baptism ("O Dear Child, In Humble Awe" and "Now In Baptism Our God Saves") and the Sacrament of the Altar ("Precious Fruit of Calvary's Tree" and "Behold the Marriage Feast Awaits"). Other poems reflect a deep understanding of the theology of the cross and its comforting application for the lives of sinners ("Lost in the Terror of the Night" and "Behold! In Me the Crucified"). Still others are thoughtful versifications of portions of Holy Scripture, linking them pastorally and evangelically to the life of the reader/singer.

Reinhardt's poetry is well constructed and theologically rich. It will be a blessing to any individual who reads it devotionally or any congregation that uses it within corporate worship. In light of that desire to use Reinhardt's texts in worship (a response that I believe many will have to this volume), it would have been helpful for Reinhardt to have included the meter for his hymn texts as well as his tune suggestions for them. Another helpful

feature for future volumes would be to include a scriptural index for handy reference. Some texts in *My Light and My Salvation* do include a citation to particular Scripture passages; many, however, do not. An index of all Scripture and primary biblical allusions would be beneficial for the pastor when planning worship and desiring to teach the congregation a worthwhile hymn.

I highly recommend Pastor Kurt E. Reinhardt's *My Light and My Salvation*, and I look forward to more of his rich, Christ-centered poetry in the future.

Stephen P. Starke  
Bay City, Michigan

***Social Ministry in the Lutheran Tradition.*** Edited by Foster R. McCurley. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008. Paper. 176 pages.

✦ Foster R. McCurley, an Old Testament scholar who served for twenty years on the faculty of Lutheran Theological Seminary, spent the last years of his career as the board theologian of Lutheran Services in America. His academic and professional backgrounds positioned him well to edit a volume of essays on social ministry in Lutheranism. The book is basically historical in nature, as each author comments on an aspect of the church's corporate life of mercy and justice from the biblical period to the present day with a final chapter posing questions for the future. An epilogue by Martin Marty caps off the work.

The most helpful chapter in the book is written by Carter Lindberg, "No Greater Service to God Than Christian Love: Insights from Martin Luther." Lindberg is a fine Reformation scholar whose 1993 book, *Beyond Charity: Reformation Initiatives for the Poor*, is essential reading for anyone interested in how the reformers developed an ethic of care for those in need grounded in God's justifying work in Christ. In this chapter, Lindberg draws on his earlier works while incorporating fresh research to show how

Luther's doctrine of justification by grace alone, apart from works, cut the nerve of this medieval theology of poverty. Salvation is received—not achieved—and this salvation is the foundation for life rather than its goal. Since salvation is purely God's gift, both poverty and almsgiving lose soteriological significance. . . . By despiritualizing poverty, the Reformers could recognize poverty in all its forms as a personal and social evil to be combated. (56–57)

While painted in fairly broad strokes, the chapter on "The Development of Modern Lutheran Social Ministry" by Eric Gritsch tells the story of Pietism, the Confessional Awakening, and the beginnings of the Inner Mission Movement with special emphasis on Friedrich von Bodelschwingh. Here Gritsch provides coverage of the contributions of Theodor Fliedner, Johann Wichern, and Wilhelm Löhe. Regrettably, Löhe is passed over in only one paragraph. Gritsch mistakenly says that Löhe accepted a call to Neuendettelsau in 1817 (74); since he was born in 1808 that would have made the Bavarian pastor only nine

years old at the beginning of his influential pastorate! Unfortunately the era of Lutheran Orthodoxy is completely overlooked as a backdrop to the modern period. Readers would be unaware, for example, of either Martin Chemnitz's writing *On Almsgiving* or Johann Gerhard's directives on the care for the poor in his *On the Duties of Ministers of the Church*. Both of these works have been published recently by LCMS World Relief and Human Care.

The first chapter by McCurley himself is entitled "The Identity and Work of God: Social Justice in the Bible," and it seeks to set forth a biblical theology for social ministry. As the title of the chapter indicates, McCurley sees justice as a primary biblical category that informs and sustains social ministry. McCurley sees the canonical Scriptures as a variegated witness to the word of God that, nevertheless, has as a unifying theme: the actions of God as Creator and Redeemer to the plight of the poor, a class that includes the oppressed, dispossessed, vulnerable, and suffering. Familiar themes from the Synoptic Gospels relative to Jesus' compassion for the poor are rehearsed as well as examples of the nascent Christian community's concern for the needy from Acts. Less time is spent with material from the Epistles, with the Pastorals and letters of John overlooked completely.

Overlapping with McCurley's essay in some respects is Samuel Torvend's "The Relief of the Needy in Their Distress: Early and Medieval Christian Social Initiatives." Torvend shows how Christians of both the New Testament era and the postapostolic age were not indifferent to the needy, noting the track record both of faithfulness and failure. Unfortunately, Torvend often reveals his own theological bias in a way that transcends textual evidence. For example, his claim that the historical Paul championed inclusiveness in the authentic letters while decades later an early Christian author of 1 Timothy, writing under Paul's name, reversed the egalitarian impulses of the Apostle. We might well ask here if 1 Corinthians (in particular, 14:33–35) is one of the "authentic letters" (46; also footnote 4 on pages 158–159).

The final three chapters traverse the terrain of Lutheran social ministry in America. Carl T. Uehling covers the early years in his chapter "A Sign of God's Grace, a Fruit of Faith: American Lutheran Social Service from 1800–1945," telling the story of Lutheran immigrants caring for their own and, in time, reaching out to the larger community. The chapter by Robert Duea, "Bringing Hope and Life: Lutheran Social Ministry Organizations in America Since World War II," brings the story to the present, documenting the role of Lutheran Services in America (LSA), an inter-Lutheran association of three hundred health and human service organizations with a collective budget of over nine billion dollars serving more than six million unduplicated clients in 2007 (106). Duea tells the story of transitions and funding efforts. He narrates changes in attitudes regarding adoptions and procedures used to place children. Mentioned in this chapter are well-known institutions such as Wheat Ridge and Bethesda Lutheran Homes and Services. Noting that when the Lutheran World Federation was founded on 30 June 1947, one out of ten Lutherans worldwide was a refugee, and one out of three displaced persons in Europe was Lutheran, Duea

shows how Lutherans responded with efforts on behalf of immigrants and refugees. In addition, Duea points to Lutheran services for the aged, the disabled, the homeless, and victims of disasters. Duea's chapter concludes with an overview of current leadership in Lutheran social ministry. Strangely there is no mention of either Matthew Harrison, Executive Director of LCMS World Relief and Human Care; or John Nunes, who heads Lutheran World Relief.

A final chapter, "Where Do We Go From Here? The Changing Context and Commitments in Social Ministry," is a summation of the editor's discussion with "The Future's Group," made up of Evangelical Lutheran Church in American (ELCA) leaders in social ministry. While the discussion affirmed that "Lutheran social ministry organizations live out their Lutheran identities" (143) it is not at all clear what these identities are and how they might be fostered and supported in our pluralistic context. Mark Peterson, CEO of Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota, comments: "Our mission, centered in the love of Christ, is embraced by our workforce, even though our employees look like Minnesota—Muslim, Lutherans, Jewish, Catholic, no religion, evangelical. Even with this diversity in our workforce and among our volunteers, there is a shared conviction about our work" (127). A shared conviction about charitable work is a long way from works of mercy that flow from the Christ who is known and named as the Savior of the world. A Lutheran ethos for social ministry will need to have more density than clichés or slogans about a nebulous "love of Christ."

An epilogue by Martin Marty makes the case for governmental support of social ministry organizations and agencies. Marty says that "Lutherans turn out to be better at mercy than justice, that is, at expressing love rather than promoting justice" (153). He sees as a remedy Cynthia Moe-Lobeda's "justice-seeking neighbor love." Marty does not comment on how Moe-Lobeda's conceptuality is prone to a confusion of the two governments, making the working of justice a function of the church rather than the task of civil authority. Where this is done, both God's working of justice through the structures of this world (law) and his bestowal of the forgiveness of sins through the church (gospel) are perverted.

Given that this book was edited and authored by people of the ELCA and published by Fortress Press, it is focused primarily on issues internal to that body, even though the title makes the claim to be about social ministry in the Lutheran tradition. One would have hoped that a more inclusive approach would have prevailed. As noted above, there is complete silence when it comes to the work of the current Executive Director of LCMS World Relief and Human Care, Matthew Harrison. Harrison has done more than any other single individual in the last fifty years to establish social ministry as an undertaking that is not only appropriate but necessary for confessing Lutherans. His ground-breaking theological work has been widely disseminated to pastors and laity in the church by means of a couple of dozen booklets in the Mercy Series.

More recently, a full-length "dogmatics of mercy," *Christ Have Mercy: How to Put Your Faith in Action*, has served to drive away stereotypical images from the 1960s and 1970s of

social ministry as "liberal" or just another version of the social gospel. Rather than retreating from the inter-Lutheran intersection, Harrison has stood there with integrity, courage, and good humor, upholding the confessional position of his church as both basis and boundary for cooperative work. Harrison's work in recovering and publishing classical Lutheran authors including Martin Chemnitz, Johann Gerhard, Wilhelm Löhe, C. F. W. Walther, Theodore Julius Brohm, and Johann Uhlhorn would have greatly enriched the chapters by Gritsch and Uehling. By limiting itself to F. Dean Lueking's now dated work, *A Century of Caring: The Welfare Ministry among Missouri Synod Lutherans, 1868–1968* (St. Louis: LCMS Board for Social Ministry, 1968), *Social Ministry in the Lutheran Tradition* fails to do justice to vibrant, new developments in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) largely executed under Harrison's watch. His competent, confessional scholarship coupled with deep passion for people in need combine to spell a promising new era for the LCMS in the relief of suffering. It is unthinkable that his bold and innovative leadership was passed over in the writing of this book.

*Social Ministry in the Lutheran Tradition* tells part of the story but not the whole story. It does not adequately deal with the reality that the ELCA and the LCMS are on divergent courses and that this cannot but have implications for inter-Lutheran endeavors. No mention is made of the fact that the LCMS has already withdrawn from some regional cooperative organizations. For example, the Minnesota South District, in spite of vociferous support to preserve the relationship by pastors led by Vernon Gundermann, withdrew from Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota over issues relating to homosexuality and abortion in the mid-1980s. With some Lutheran agencies making provision for adoption by same sex couples, it appears that inter-Lutheran efforts may of necessity be severely curtailed if not doomed altogether. In the 1970s, when the predecessor bodies of the ELCA and the LCMS were at loggerheads over the nature of scriptural authority and hermeneutics, scholars from the various Lutheran bodies contributed position papers that were subsequently published by Fortress Press under the title *Studies in Lutheran Hermeneutics*. Perhaps the time is ripe for a similar volume offering studies in Lutheran *social ministry*.

Given our theological understanding of the two realms of God's work in the world, Lutherans will not retreat from what is called social ministry. We will, however, engage in corporate works of mercy from a christological confession that cannot be separated from the proclamation of the One in whose name alone there is salvation. To some extent *Social Ministry in the Lutheran Tradition* provides a helpful retelling of how Lutherans have done this in the past. It does not offer a theologically substantive way to address new challenges and opportunities. For that readers should consult *Christ Have Mercy* by Matthew Harrison; and *A Cup of Cold Water: A Look at Biblical Charity*, edited by Robert Rosin and Charles Arand, Concordia Seminary Publications Monograph Series no. 3 (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Seminary, 1996).

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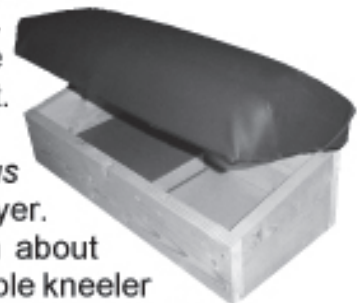
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# LOGIA Forum

## SHORT STUDIES AND COMMENTARY

### A BRAVE NEW CHURCH

A theology of preaching to the baptized and unbaptized (especially the proper distinction between the law and the gospel)? A theology of baptism? A theology of absolution? Of repentance? Of the Sacrament of the altar? Of the holy ministry? Of vocation? All that flows from God's justification of the ungodly for Christ's sake. Such is demonized as "maintenance." As such it apparently will be damned by the Lord Jesus on the Last Day. A Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod (LCMS) district mission executive applies the Lord's words, "Depart from me, you who are cursed" (Mt 25:41), to "maintenance thinking" Lutheran congregations ("Marks and Assets of a Maintenance Congregation," *Issues in Christian Education*, 41, no. 3 [Winter 2007–2008]: 8–13). Who gets the "come, you who are blessed by my Father" words? That's right! You know the drill — the missional thinking Lutheran congregations! "Missionism" governs us.

*Warning!* *Isms* are ideologies. Ideologies are extremely dangerous and destructive. *Isms* fundamentally flow out of the assumption that what "is" is bad. That what "is" must be destroyed and replaced with something utopianly better.

Missionism is the ideology that runs far too many Lutheran congregations these days. As such, it eliminates the "is" of biblical faith and how that has been correctly confessed and practiced in Lutheran congregations for generations according to her Confessions. David Luecke's writings give ample evidence of this (see especially his *Evangelical Style and Lutheran Substance*, 1988). Dr. Robert Newton repeatedly speaks of paradigm shifts (for example, "How Will They Know?" in *Mission Moments*, 26 September 2008). Restructuring according to missionism's model is now the benevolent tyrannical craze of the Brave New Church. An example of the

Brave New Church is revealed in the words of retiring LCMS Northwest District president Dr. Warren Schumacher:

I will be blessed, God willing, to complete fifteen years of serving you as your twelfth District President. As I retire and turn the gavel, car keys, *LCMS Handbook*, and cell phone over to the new President-Elect, I breathe a prayer of thanks for God's gracious care and guidance for the nearly 270 congregations, one-hundred early Childhood Centers, thirty-two elementary schools and four high schools in our vast geographical district. I believe that we will eagerly move forward into this twenty-first century fully aware that we have closely followed the Tracks of the Holy Spirit. We have implemented the goal of making every congregation a mission outpost, built an outreach and sustaining relationship with every family touched by our schools and social ministries, and identified a growing number of evangelical lay leaders who sincerely desire and require their Professional Church Workers to be as equally future oriented and evangelical in their style and substance. There have been some jarring exceptions to that sort of "fit." Fitness for LCMS ministry demands that trained pastors and commissioned ministers are servants who know the Holy Spirit and are able to share Him with others with positive, humble, approachable, and flexible ministry styles. It is becoming increasingly more common that rigid and aloof professionals do not last long in pulpit or classroom. Those who network with equally past-oriented museum-keeper colleagues usually end up being asked to resign or move on to a better "fit." (*Northwest Passage* 7:3 [Fall 2008], 3)

They're watching your every move! "Conform or else! Get with the Holy Spirit Tracks! And we say that with love, peace, and joy in our hearts!" Attend a "missional" congregation these days and you know you are not in your grandfather's Lutheran congregation anymore. The paradigm shift is profound and fundamental. What "is" has been demolished and replaced by missionism. This reflects our sinful desire to take over and control via an ideology of our own making. The polar opposite is the *vita passiva coram Deo* and the "when and where it pleases the Holy Spirit," who promises to do his

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work through the word and sacraments. Dr. Hermann Sasse (1895–1976) astutely noted decades ago, “The optimism and synergism prevalent in America have made such inroads into American Lutheranism that the Augsburg Confession’s ‘where it pleases God’ has for practical purposes been given up.”

He went on to say:

Evidence of this is the uncritical taking over of ideas and programs of stewardship and evangelism from such groups as the Seventh Day Adventists [today it’s the Southern Baptists like Paul Borden’s *Hit the Bullseye: How Denominations Can Aim the Congregation at the Mission Field* (Abingdon Press, 2003)]. The pastor schools his people so that with the right kind of pious talk they will be equipped to win other people for the church. In place of the office of preaching reconciliation comes the training of “soul winners,” teaching them just the right way of talking with people, to make maximum use of the techniques of psychological manipulation. The system admittedly derives from the methods of American business. Thus the people are to be brought into the church, made to feel at home there, be led to make a decision, and then all together they are to carry on their building of the kingdom of God. What the Word of God is no longer trusted to do is achieved with the psychological techniques of such modern evangelization. There is of course talk of the Holy Spirit, but no one any longer knows who He is. It seems He can be measured and quantified. Such evangelism produces results. Thousands are won for church membership. On the other hand we may recall the failure of Biblical prophets and of our Lord Himself. When one considers the latter, one begins to understand the full earnestness of the “where and when it pleases God.” (*We Confess Anthology* [Concordia, 1999] in the third subsection “We Confess the Church,” “On the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit,” 22–23)

Time to pray *TLH* 260 again. Have a blessed *vita passiva!*

BWK

## THE FRUITS OF REVIVALISM: DEATH OR RESURRECTION?

With two “Great Awakenings” and numerous outbursts of religious renewal on smaller scales, Americans are addicted to revivals. There is no better way to fix America’s immorality than through a revival. Unfortunately, of late, no matter how hard one tries to manipulate a revival, they don’t just seem to take. Over the past four decades the American population has doubled, but church commitment has plateaued, even declined. Yet, the illusion that revival can cure our ills remains.

Even Lutherans want a revival. Lutherans are either “Ablaze” or “Book of Faith” people. Surely these movements can light a flame that will shore up churches in decline. Both ventures come across like attempts to engineer revivals. Thereby, they are true to Charles Finney, the revivalist *par excellence*, for whom revival was “not a miracle.” Revival is not a miracle because, if you establish the proper conditions, it can be manipulated.

No doubt revival has been successfully manipulated in various congregations. If manipulating through guilt — “turn or burn (in hell!)” — doesn’t seem to coax as it once did; the flattery of enhanced self-esteem or secure parenting does. Americans do not believe that fellow Americans will end up in hell. If they are to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior, it can only be because he will enhance their self-esteem, social prestige, or parenting skills. Why scare people with hell when you can supplement their self-help? Contemporary revival congregations have done away with the mourner’s bench and the sawdust trail and have substituted slick multimedia presentations in upscale theatre style venues, complete with seats accommodating drinks, and gimmicks such as driving motorcycles into the “sanctuary.” Gone are revival song books. Praise ditties, sung by the “praise band,” are projected onto the ubiquitous screen.

The long, hard struggle for “liturgical worship” against the inroads of Pietism, Rationalism, and Revivalism is brought to naught by the pragmatic assessment of manipulative persuasion. A sermon that could have been scripted by Dr. Phil or Oprah Winfrey touches “felt needs” more than “traditional worship” could ever do.

It is not as if revival is totally foreign to North American Lutheranism. Certainly the heritage of the General Synod was open to the mourner’s bench, and it altered the sacramental theology of the Augsburg Confession in this light. The heirs of Hans Nielsen Hauge fostered a “Lutheran Evangelistic Movement,” that at one time had some religious influence in the upper Midwest. In my first parish, which had been established by the *Haugeaner*, I was told the week before “Baptism of Jesus Sunday” by a devout laywoman, “Pastor, you aren’t going to preach on baptism are you? Everyone in this congregation is baptized but most are not saved!” (Of course, to this woman’s consternation I preached on baptism!) Even The American Lutheran Church (1960), for almost a decade after its origin, officially recognized the “Office of Evangelist,” institutionalizing this very Haugean spirit, until inroads from the Charismatic Movement brought it into disrepute.

What are the fruits of revivalism? The European context is markedly different from that of the American, given that it is far more secularistic. Secularism is no less religious than traditional Christianity, even though it fails to admit this. Secularism bills itself as a “scientific approach” to life. However, its ideal — seek pleasure in moderation, and you need not fear judgment after death since we are wholly composed of atoms, which disperse upon death — is nothing other than Epicureanism revived. In this outlook, truly free,

autonomous men and women are free from the oppressive ideologies and hierarchies of the church. Ironically, revivalistic Pietism perhaps fed such secularism. Revivalism always undermined the institutional church as dead; the institutional church is composed of unconverted preachers, repetitious liturgy, and cold sacraments. God is really present at the prayer meeting, not the church, for the followers of Spener, Hauge, Beck, and Rosenius. Thereby, the church was undermined by those who purported to be her friends.

In a similar way, revivalistic congregations among American Lutherans seldom take in the unchurched, as they so often claim. They usually take in the disgruntled from other congregations. Revival almost never reaches the unchurched. It is not designed to do that. It is always designed, from its perspective, to turn a dead church around. That it historically takes on a national presence in America is because even though Americans do not have an official state church, religion has been deeply one with American culture, due to the Reformed heritage of this country.

Luther sought to reform a corrupt church. His reform centered on the gospel of Jesus Christ as sheer promise in contrast to law as accusation. It was grounded in the objective word of truth, in contrast to both the *Schwärmer* of Rome (the pope as the interpreter of Scripture) or various “spiritualists” who wanted to ground human confidence in spiritual exercises. Luther knew that Adam and Eve were the original “enthusiasts,” and that part of their original sin was bound up in such god-within-ism. Revivalism tries to manipulate the will by making it want to will. As such, it shows that we only ever, as sinners, are bound to our wills and not to God. We are captivated to ourselves. Our piety is part of the problem: it keeps us in charge. And our conscience at its best will have nothing to do with this lie. Revivalistic pep rallies toy with God. And the God of Jacob will have nothing to do with us enthusiasts other than to engage us in a life-or-death struggle. In many senses, spirituality is a disease — God is not here to help me cope but to bring me to my demise, my end. Only in that way can a new person be reborn in faith, as trusting in the words of Scripture.

Blazing or Bible-thumping denominational bandages will not be able to cure our membership slumps. C. F. W. Walther knew that the elect were in God’s hands and that as God is God, the elect would be saved. Since that is the case, the most important part of our ministry is out of our hands. It is God’s church, not ours. It consists of God’s elect, not ours. And we can be quite free in letting God run his church as he pleases. Can we really trust the word that has been entrusted to us?

No amount of manipulation of others’ consciences will save the church; indeed, it will do the church in. True enough, we are to be urgent in season and out of season. But our urgency is not based on a neurotic need to inflate membership roles, but to share, as one beggar to another, where bread is to be found.

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## ON GLORY, SUFFERING, AND THE CROSS IN THE WAKE OF SHOOTING SPREES AND MASSACRES

*For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Gentiles seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. 1 Cor 1:21–30*

Sadly, very sadly, I am not surprised by the recent and frequent shooting sprees of the past few years. In an ultraviolent culture that happily feeds the depraved mind and offers incredibly and immorally easy access to means of bloodshed, to guns; in an academia that teaches the Darwinist lie that you are a meaningless result of chance and the postmodernistic fantasy that there is no objective truth; in a society in which the family “is under siege” and “opposed by an antilife mentality as is seen in . . . abortion, infanticide and euthanasia; scorned and banalized by pornography, desecrated by fornication and adultery, mocked by homosexuality, sabotaged by irregular unions and cut in two by divorce” (Cardinal Francis Arinze in Julia Duin, “Criticism of Gays by Catholic Cardinal Riles Georgetown University,” *The Washington Times*, 30 May 2003). In such a context, this comes as no surprise at all.

But, nevertheless, we must not lose our focus. A “theology of glory” focuses on what we do; and when it does focus on God, it focuses on his power and majesty: his providence and sovereignty are allowed to overshadow, perhaps even obliterate, his mercy and grace. It teaches that Jesus is more-or-less Mr. Fix-It-Man, that the Bible is a manual for happy and successful living, and that when we “decide” to become Christians, all will be right and we will be happy. It is typical “American Christian” religious nonsense — it permeates most churches’ teachings, focuses on our works, and, if logically followed, would finally deny the necessity of the cross.

However, biblical Christians — whether mourning yet another school, mall, or workplace shooting massacre or daily

repenting or clinging to Jesus for life and breath — hold to “the theology of the cross”: that it is only in the weakness and foolishness of the cross that the Lord helps us (1 Cor 1:21–30); through small things like bread and wine, water, words, men — in other words, the means of grace: Holy Communion, Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution, Holy Bible, Holy Ministry, Holy Church. “The theology of the cross” focuses on what the *Lord* does; as the Creed confesses: he creates, he saves, and he sanctifies us. But the Lord does not deal with us as he did with ancient Israel, with armies and by direct revelation. Rather, he deals with us, the New Israel, mediately in weak sinful pastors, through his means of grace.

As such, being marked with the Cross in Holy Baptism, we acknowledge suffering, though *not good*, as a real part of this fallen world and of the Christian’s life in it. But can there be any purpose of suffering in the Christian life? Yes. It mysteriously unifies you with Jesus, who is the Suffering Servant (Is 53); it provides an opportunity for you to give glory to God (Jn 9:1–3); it tests and thus strengthens your faith (1 Pt 1:3–9); it teaches you to love God for his own sake, and not for the sake of prosperity; it conforms and shapes you into the image of Christ (Rom 8:17); it humbles you, reminding you that the servant is not greater than the master and therefore prevents self-righteousness from closing you to his gifts (Jn 15:20); finally, it teaches you that our theology is indeed and ultimately one of the cross, of glory *after* going through suffering, of gospel but only after law, of forgiveness after repentance, of life through death (Lk 9:22–24; Ps 34:19–22; Heb 4:14–16; Ps 22). Suffering is the result of evil, of sin, of satanic temptation and human cooperation. But even out of suffering, even this suffering, God can and does and will bring good. Suffering, punishment, is certainly *not* the way the Lord reacts to our sin; he reacts to sin by offering his Son into death instead of us; he reacts to sin by forgiving the repentant sinner, removing the sin (see especially Ps 103:8–12, Jn 9:1–3, and Lk 13:1–5; also Ps 130 and Jer 31:31–34).

So, we know why suffering happens: because of sin, individual and corporate. But we must also be willing to say “I don’t know” when it is the honest answer, for we do not know why specific sufferings happen to specific people at specific times: We do not know why those specific thirty-three people perished instead of you or me (Lk 13:1–5). As Christians, we need to stick to what the Lord has revealed to us: that the crucified and risen Christ comes to comfort us with consolation, peace, and forgiveness in bread, wine, water, words: the different forms and means of the word that he is for us.

Let us pray for all who are anxious or troubled: Most merciful God, the Consolation of the troubled and the Hope of all who cast their cares on you, may the hearts that cry unto you in their anxiety, distress, and tribulation find rest in your grace and mercy, knowing that all things must work together for good to them that love you and are called according to your purpose. Grant unto us all that peace which passes all understanding, so that with a quiet mind we may view the storms and troubles of life, the cloud and the thick darkness, ever rejoicing to know that the darkness and the light are both

alike to you, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (*The Lutheran Liturgy*, 280–281, adapted)

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work. (2 Th 2:16–17). Amen.

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## IN PRAISE OF TWO THEOLOGIAN NORMAN NAGEL AND KENNETH KORBY

Two men have shaped my liturgical and homiletical theology more than any others: Dr. Norman Nagel and Dr. Kenneth Korby. I have worked closely under Dr. Nagel as a reader, grader, and graduate student for three privileged years, and I consider Dr. Korby to be one of my spiritual fathers in the faith. I still keep contact with his widow, Jeanne, a godly woman in the way of Proverbs 31, if ever there was one.

Nagel as presider was always a sight to behold, and great fun, as he quite innocently ran roughshod over all the fastidious precision of the “liturgiologists.” He would come to the seminary chapel with cassock and surplice rolled under his arm, making it look as though he had just slept in them. A frock of hair would be dangling down over his glasses and a typewritten manuscript with some handwritten “clincher” scrawled on it, likely conceived on his way to the chapel. His disheveled appearance stood in sharp contrast to the “spit and polish” taught in worship classes.

In the pulpit, Norman read his sermon with face buried in the manuscript, occasionally looking up over glasses that were slowly creeping down his nose. These were some of the finest sermons ever preached in the St. Louis seminary chapel. So much for modern communication theory. Nagel’s sermons were intricately woven narratives, often retelling the text in a colorfully embellished way, interweaving the law and the gospel in a taut dynamic tension that was the trademark of his preaching.

I recall a lengthy discussion in Nagel’s office once after a lecture by the sainted Gerhard Forde over the proper distinction between law and gospel. Forde seemed to run these as static categories, and Nagel appeared somewhat displeased by it all. I asked him, “How would you distinguish the law and the gospel in a text?” Nagel replied, “First, one must look for what of Jesus the text is trying to deliver; then one must look for what gets in the way of the delivery.” I have carried that insight with me into the pulpit to this day.

At the altar, Nagel was unpretentious. He despised excessive pomp and ceremony. For Nagel, the office was *causa instru-*

*mentalis*, the instrumental means, by which the gospel and sacraments delivered Christ to the people. He was adamant that the instrument never overshadow the gift. Liturgics that drew attention to the celebrant and away from the gifts of Christ would draw a furrowed frown from the good doctor. One sacristan tells the story of being literally thrown out of Nagel's office for asking him to impose ashes on Ash Wednesday. Far be it from Nagel to soil a man's forehead with the law.

I recall but one amusing attempt by Nagel to wear a chasuble. It was in the old chapel/auditorium at St. Louis, prior to the building of the magnificent Chapel of Saints Timothy and Titus. Nagel abruptly exited to the sacristy after the prayers, and returned wearing a rumpled chasuble, slightly askew, glasses crooked and hair displaced even more than usual from the vesting experience. He never attempted it again, at least not while I was at the seminary.

What I learned from Nagel is to hold the holy things with a rather loose, even dead hand of faith, trusting in the efficacy of the word to do its work of killing and making alive. What matters is Christ and the delivery of his gifts — that the words of Christ go into ears and the body and blood of Christ go into mouths. These treasures are delivered by weak, earthen vessels, and we can, if we are not careful, get in the way and become a distraction. Nagel was unpretentiously and transparently himself in the pulpit and at the altar. His eccentricities were natural — to him — and he taught by example that free men in Christ are not afraid to be themselves as they conduct the stewardship of their office.

At the same time, I acquired a deep and abiding respect for the liturgy as a holy tradition, a trust handed down from our fathers who have come before us. Every paper written for Nagel was an exercise in liturgical theology, as he demanded from us that we examine how the worship of the past handled the holy things and whether they got it “gospel right.” I would never have known of the ancient liturgies, both East and West, were it not for all my Nagel classes. Liturgy is doctrine put into practice, as the gifts of life and salvation won at Calvary are delivered in the present time and place.

Nagel's oft-quoted introduction to *Lutheran Worship* (1982) summarizes well this way of faith's receiving that which is handed down, and handing it on to the rising generation:

We are heirs of an astonishingly rich tradition. Each generation receives from those who went before and, in making that tradition of the Divine Service its own, adds what best may serve in its own day — the living heritage and something new.

In short, Nagel taught and celebrated and lived the liturgy “in the way of the gospel.”

Next, Kenneth Korby and why I wear boots in the chancel.

Beside Norman Nagel, the other great influence in my work as a preacher and presider was the sainted Dr. Kenneth Korby, who now rests from his labors and his works do indeed follow him. Kenneth was a remarkable man, both in the classroom

and in the chancel. The key word is “man.” I recall his saying to a seminary class once, “God ordains men to the pastoral office. Be one.” Anyone who has seen and heard Korby in the pulpit and at the altar knows of what I speak. Korby was a man's man in the liturgy.

Korby as preacher and presider reinforced for me the Lord's wisdom in making the pastoral office a male office. I recall once standing for the Liturgy of St. Basil at Holy Virgin Mary Russian Orthodox Church in Los Angeles. The priest in charge there was a large-statured Scotsman with long red hair and beard and a Scotsman's earthy sense of humor to match. Hearing him chant the liturgy, I whispered to a friend, “This is why there will never be female priests in the Orthodox Church. I don't know any women who could sing so low.” I vastly prefer the baritone range to the squeaky tenor that many of our settings, including *TLH*, impose on the presider, making him sound as though he had just taken a knee to the groin. Korby's voice was seasoned by much speaking, unfiltered Camels, pipes, cigars, and vocal chord polyps, which together lent a certain *gravitas* to everything he said.

What many people don't know is that Kenneth always wore cowboy boots in the chancel, a gift from his daughter and son-in-law. He also had a black Stetson, which Jeanne strictly forbade him to wear east of the continental divide (though he did anyway). I recall picking Kenneth up from Ontario Airport the day before my ordination, where he was to preach. He paused dramatically at the top of the stairway (this was back in the day when Ontario used stairways instead of jet ways and resembled an airport straight out of “Mayberry RFD”), scanned the orange, dusk horizon, and put on his black Stetson. The man had landed in the West.

Where Nagel could preach the gospel as though there were no tomorrow, Korby could preach the law. His preaching of the law left you in the dust, and it was sure to be answered by an equally powerful word of gospel. But it was the law in all its diagnostic, killing severity that I remember most. You tasted the dust of your death when Korby was in the pulpit, and he pulled no punches when it came to his use of the language.

Liturgically, Korby was a man who had no patience with high-church chancel prancing or low-church pietism. He wore his pastoral robes like work clothes, including the black cowboy boots. He was known to scold congregations, my own included, who did not respond to a prayer or blessing with a vigorous priestly “Amen.” He would come out of the chancel to put hymnals into the hands of nonparticipants with an admonition to “open your mouth and sing.” He even called audibles in the chancel like Tom Brady at the line of scrimmage, suddenly deciding by some strange movement of the Spirit to “sing another psalm or hymn,” much to the consternation of organists and liturgical assistants. His wife Jeanne tells of Kenneth's “lining” of unfamiliar hymns in the old American-Shaker tradition. He would speak a line and the congregation would then sing the line alternately through the verses. She also testifies that Kenneth would, for no apparent reason, momentarily leave the confines of the pulpit during a sermon to wander into the chancel or the nave. The word

could not be bound but had to have free course and be preached when Kenneth was the preacher.

This is not to suggest that Korby was sloppy or careless with the liturgy. On a vacation visit to Notre Dame (the one in France), Jeanne and Kenneth attended mass there and discussed what they had seen and heard afterwards. Korby took approving note of the orderly, clean precision of the presider saying, “The way the man moved, you barely even noticed him.” Korby advocated clean and precise liturgics without affectation or pose. You tend not to notice men at work; you take note of their work.

Korby was quite familiar with the old *Una Sancta* crowd and the Society of St. James, the Lutheran liturgical revivalists of the generation before us. He had a full set of their journals in his possession. Korby knew Piepkorn, von Schenk, Kretzmann, and others personally. He embraced their strengths and critiqued their weaknesses. He was a part of the great Lutheran confluence that came together at Valparaiso University in the 1960s; Kenneth was the first celebrant at Valpo’s magnificent chapel. Though he soared in the heights of liturgical theology, Korby never joined in the excesses that inevitably come with “renewal movements.” He was a Lutheran in the most organic sense of that word — earthy, rough, 60-grit — able to conduct the liturgy across cultural boundaries with ease precisely because he handled the liturgy as a skilled workman at his trade. For Korby, clericals were work clothes, and cowboy boots were his favorite work boots. When chasubles became the fashion rage among the liturgical set, Korby too rejoiced. He loved their seasonal colors and how they made the pastor a billboard for the church year, in which Korby, ever the teacher, took great delight.

That is the image I take from the memory of Kenneth Korby as preacher and the presider — a workman hard at his craft. A workman, free in Christ, expertly handling the word of truth in the bold confidence of one who has been ordained to speak and act in the Savior’s stead. I have learned through hard lessons and experience that the church doesn’t always want such pastors, as the expectations of the holy office have become increasingly feminized, psychologized, and soft-edged. People seem to seek a nurturing mother more than a strong, loving, and wise father, perhaps due to the breakdown of our families and the absence of strong fathers in our society.

Korby never cared much for the honorific title “Father.” “Pastor” got his attention quite nicely, thank you. Yet for me, and for many others who had the privilege of studying with him, he exemplified genuine spiritual fatherhood in the pulpit and at the altar — a roll-up-your-sleeves, put-on-your-boots-and-go-to-work kind of father, for which I am forever grateful.

It is for this reason that I wear my boots in the chancel in memory of that great, gruff, sainted man with the black Stetson and gravel voice who taught us all to say a vigorous and manly “Amen.”

*Note: This essay and the material contained therein have been fact-checked and approved by Mrs. Jeanne Korby, Kenneth’s widow, who added some personal stories and observations of her own. It is published here with her blessing and approval.* WMC

## ELIJAH AND LÖHE ROBUST FOOD THROUGH THE NOURISHMENT OF GOD

*February 21, 2008, marked the two-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Pastor Wilhelm Löhe (1808–1872). A considerable series of events in 2008 commemorated his person and work. During a festival service held to celebrate this occasion on February 24, Dr. Wolfhart Schlichting preached in the St. Nikolai Church in Neuendettelsau on the sermon text for Oculi Sunday, 1 Kings 19:1–13a.*

It is all a complete *Lumperei* (trumpetry, a shabby trick)! Thus Wilhelm Löhe once resentfully wrote in good Franconian in a letter.<sup>1</sup> In an unusually open-hearted manner he provided insight in his many letters into his emotional state. It was often depressed. His pen was controlled by the feeling of having achieved nothing, of usually being misunderstood, of being maligned and left in the lurch by his best friends.

At the same time he did not conceal from himself that he was not entirely innocent in bringing it about. His “manner” was probably exceedingly “trying” and his “direction” not easy to communicate.

Vocationally, he felt himself impeded. Sometimes he wanted to quit, to flee. And the desire to be released from the burden of this bleak, useless life would never leave him since the early death of his wife. He once wrote emphatically that he bore “Elijah’s ‘It is enough’ . . . in his heart.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, parts of his life do sound like a chapter from the life of the prophet.

### *Elijah weak, God inconspicuous*

Now it so happens that this text, in which Elijah presents a weak figure and God appears surprisingly inconspicuous, is set as the sermon text for this Sunday. And we ask how such a disappointed man, who when measured by what he had envisaged and by what he had strived for was indeed rather unsuccessful, could become so important to his church that his two-hundredth birthday is not only celebrated with speeches and ceremonies but even in the divine service, where we thank God for him and interweave remarks on his life and work with the interpretation of the word of God.

Do we want to argue that it would be good for the church of today to let itself be directed by his main objective, and that the church should listen to him if it wanted to become spiritually strong and perform that service for which the Lord founded it? What was Löhe’s main objective?

And can anything helpful be gleaned from his conduct for those similarly dissatisfied with their life and the result of their efforts?

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1. Johannes Deinzer, *Wilhelm Löhes Leben*, Part 1, 2:64.
  2. *Ibid.*, Part 1, 2:405.

Let us examine Löhe's life and these two questions in light of the biblical text at hand. Let us take the latter question first!

### *Is God's cause waning?*

Elijah was prosecuted at court. The queen threatened to take the most severe measures against him. Löhe had to experience a complaint against him being submitted to his supervisory authorities, signed among others by members of his own congregation in Neuendettelsau.<sup>3</sup> When his submissions to the synod caused a countrywide stir, the dean of Nuremberg, his former instructor, wrote to the council of the church body that "fanatics" like Löhe should be "removed from churchly offices," and that such "ultra-Lutherans" had been tolerated for far too long.<sup>4</sup>

The high consistory indeed then threatened that if Löhe did not speedily revoke his criticism of the national church, it would see itself "forced to petition His Majesty the King that [Löhe] be suspended from his office,"<sup>5</sup> to wit, explicitly that "the income of his office be terminated."<sup>6</sup> One may imagine what that meant to him as the sole parent of three growing children (he had had to bury the youngest shortly after the death of its mother)!

Elijah became afraid and fled. In the desert, he lay down exhausted under a broom tree. "It is enough. I do not want to go on."

But in contrast to thousands of others at risk of committing suicide, he still considered himself bound to the One who had sent him on his mission. He could not and would not withdraw from this bond. That is why he prayed: "O LORD, take away my life. I am (also) no better than my fathers." I thought I would do better; but I also did not succeed.

Even in a mood that made matters seem darker to him than they really were, he clung to faith's binding conviction that one lives to serve God.

For this reason he was prepared to listen. And although it was an imposition, he did not refuse to drag himself on through the desert on an additional forty-day journey. And he experienced how, during this unforeseen, and in truth, unwelcome, continuation of his travels that God's messenger had urged him on, the flight turned into a pilgrimage, into a pilgrimage to the mountain of God.

Called to account by God, he again gave vent to his resentment: "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts" — but in vain. And now we again observe the same turnaround. Instead of continuing to speak in the third person, in the middle of his complaint, as it were, without prior notice he turns around and addresses God: All of "the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant"; "your altars"

they have "thrown down"; they have "killed your prophets. . . . I am the only one left."

In Löhe's letters I continually find the same turnaround, from disastrously observing that God's cause is waning in the world and possibly soon coming to an end to addressing him, the living God, personally. Löhe elsewhere expresses himself very articulately, but even when he erupts, "It is complete, utter and insufferable *Lumperei*," he rallies at once and continues: "which I nevertheless endure, because thus it has been assigned to me."<sup>7</sup>

If the question is asked from where he drew the strength to do his duty in such a depressed frame of mind, and over and above that continually to develop new projects, the answer is found in a letter: "At times it is a fine art to be joyful, and the crabby evil enemy often whispers at us that we have much cause to be discontent and miserable. But when one takes everything from the hand of God . . . then one gradually becomes calm, then content, then joyful."<sup>8</sup>

### *Refreshment — served by the angel of God*

Exhausted, Elijah fell asleep in the desert under the broom tree. "And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, 'Arise and eat.'" "And he ate and drank and lay down again." To be sure, sleeping well and eating and drinking can help one overcome moments of dejection and despair.

But when an angel serves, evidently something enigmatic is being delineated that goes beyond the refreshment of body and soul. After all, one's own failure, guilt, an unfortunate "manner," and the humiliating insight that I also am "no better" than those whom I have criticized — on the contrary, that I, as Löhe once complained, "have been a perverted human being from an early age"<sup>9</sup> — one cannot get rid of these things simply by eating or drinking. The escapist rush does not eliminate the misery, it only heightens it.

### *The main concern: "Take and eat!"*

When we think of Löhe, the key words "eating and drinking" inevitably lead to his main concern.

Towards the end of his life he wrote: "All our doings, however many or few they may be, have had and continue to have no other intention than to honor the creative words of our most holy consecrator in the Sacrament of the Altar."<sup>10</sup> He meant the words of institution of the Holy Supper. Essentially, for Löhe, everything turned on the Lord's Supper — and it was in this that he was misunderstood most of all.

Because he was very particular with the Lord's Supper and could under no circumstances accept it when others wanted to leave the words of institution open to interpretation, he was labeled a separatist, a founder of sects even;<sup>11</sup> at the very least,

3. 1846, cf. GW 5/1:183–84; GW 5/2:907–8; see also the explanatory note. (All documented quotations are taken from Wilhelm Löhe, *Gesammelte Werke* [GW], Freimund-Verlag Neuendettelsau.)

4. GW 5/2:1277–78.

5. 1852, GW 5/2:1279–80.

6. GW 5/2:1027, 1031.

7. See explanatory note 1.

8. GW 2:369.

9. GW 1:688.

10. 1868, GW 5/2:911.

11. GW 2:90.

it was said of him that he wanted to “make Neuendettelsau catholic.”<sup>12</sup>

It can be asked whether Löhe one-sidedly centered the attention on the sacrament and in so doing—in contrast to the reformers—pushed aside the word. But for him it was all about the words, “the creative words.”

Whether these words of Jesus can be accepted at face value, whether one can therefore, while eating and drinking, truly believe what they say. Just as by means of the absolution, which does in fact consist only of words, I also do not merely receive some information but am transformed by the creative word of God from a guilty into a justified human being. Let no one come cold-heartedly and without any expectation to the Lord’s Table, let no one carelessly pass by when here it is not just an angel placing bread and water but the Lord himself offering: “Take and eat; take and drink,” and when Jesus adds, this is me; me for you. Me, whose body is broken. Me, guiltless victim of bloodshed, that nevertheless counts before God as atonement for everything from which your conscience suffers—for you, you “perverted human being.”

On Oculi Sunday 1836, Löhe preached in his picturesque language in Altdorf: Like “a holy veil,” the righteousness of Christ is spread over the nakedness we have caused for ourselves, like “a cloak, painstakingly woven and cast at us during his ascension, like Elijah’s cloak at Elisha, so that his Spirit may come on us.”<sup>13</sup>

That means: his promise is spread over my disappointment, over my bitterness his transfiguration, over the uselessness of my efforts his rousing power, over my failure his victory—and over our dying, “life and salvation.”

### *God sets no store by pretentiousness*

Christ conjoins himself to his congregation, not through sensational actions but through the most unimpressive thing, which was however commanded by Jesus: “This do in remembrance of me.” And in Christ the almighty God conjoins himself to his congregation, quickens it, elevates it from the world, and makes it a shelter for all who despair.

The end result of this is something Löhe had to spend his whole life learning. Elijah, who had been zealous for God, finally was surprised to experience that God withdraws wherever people think they can open a way for him, and inconspicuously approaches wherever one hardly expects him.

In the middle of Löhe’s career came the Revolution of 1848. “Like a wildfire,” writes a historian, it tore from France through Europe. Many anticipated the fall of the monarchies. Then the national churches, administrated by the states, would also collapse.

Löhe was forty years old and full of zest for action. He bore in himself ideas, plans, and the passion to gather a better Lutheran Church around God’s word and sacraments. This church should be ordered as recorded at the beginning in the New Testament and thus offer itself as an ecumenical model

to reunite all of Christianity. Restlessly Löhe made submissions to the synod and its council; simultaneously he designed church constitutions for new emigrant congregations coming into being in America, free from conventionality, and he also issued calls to form societies.

But with not one of his initiatives did he succeed, at least not in the manner that he had imagined and hoped for. Prof. Delitzsch in Erlangen advised him in a letter to pay attention to “the soft, low whisper in which God is found.”<sup>14</sup> Finally he found confirmed what he had always said and written, which however went contrary to his own nature: that God does not bless “workery,” that it would not be a pretentiousness in the name of God that would celebrate successes, but that the words of the consecrator should be honored.

As a prematurely aged, sickly man he experienced in the last decade of his life in the founding of something unforeseen the realization of what he had always believed in and hoped for. Originally merely a solution to an embarrassment, at first a small framework that would grow in presence, the deaconess community realized his hopes and embodied his beliefs. It was a community cleansed, strengthened, and sanctified in the conscious and believing reception of the Holy Supper—a siblinghood for service to the world. Late in life, he wrote in a letter: “My poor life is yet rich in grace, and I wonder at what my weakness nevertheless accomplishes.”

*Amen!*

*Dr. Wolfhart Schlichting is pastor emeritus of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria and served for many years as chairman of the Association of Interior and Exterior Missions in the Affairs of the Lutheran Church. The translation from the German is by Karl E. Böhmer, Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Gunnison, Colorado.*

## BRUDERSAMT

For decades alien agendas have sought to redefine the office of the ministry into that of CEO, social worker, or therapist. Increasingly, entertainer can be added to that list. A church growth expert recently told me that a pastor’s height carries evangelistic freight: a tall pastor is more effective than a short one. Following this man’s expertise, we now simply need to find ways to stretch seminarians some three to six inches!

At any rate, trends are in place among the ranks of the clergy to remake pastors into ones who can offer “unconditional positive regard” instead of serving as a *Seelsorger*, business managers instead of confessors, social engineers instead of those who comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. In this maelstrom of social redefinition, pastors need to reclaim the task of defining themselves if they are to

12. See, for example, GW 2:373.

13. GW 6/3:497.

14. GW 5/2:1261.

stay sane in their office. And, in fact, the very notion of office (*Amt*)—found in Augustana V—is the best place to start. Pastors are primarily servants of the word and sacraments. And, the only ones who can help laity understand what pastors do are pastors themselves. They will need to teach congregations how they are to be treated and respected. And, this will happen not through lecturing or by directives from church councils or even church bodies, but in simple day-to-day faithfulness in ministry.

When I was a young pastor, congregation members often wanted to call me Pastor Mark or even Mark, but as I said to them, “In the sick room or on the death bed, Mark has very little to offer, but Pastor Mattes is beholden to offer comfort from God’s word.” And, I would leave the matter at that.

Other than preaching the gospel as sheer promise in distinction to the commands and accusations of the law, the single best way to commend the pastoral office to the laity is to visit them in their homes. When one visits, one does not visit as a pal, but as a confessor and as one who blesses. The office itself makes the opportunity for confession and blessing available. Pastors stand in a unique position to offer a blessing to children, youth, elderly, and families. Through no other vocation does God offer such intimacy to those in need of both absolution (or correction) and blessing.

Not only do cultural trends tend to redefine the pastoral office in ways foreign to it, but pastors themselves all too quickly buy into such things that cause them to alienate themselves from each other. Few professionals avoid competition. And that disease, in which we reduce our fellows to competitors, harms pastors’ relationships to each other as members of a *shared* office. The late Ulrich Asendorf was wont to describe the preaching office as a *Brudersamt*, a brotherly office. Presumably those holding this office would treat each other as family—not competitors! Above all, we need to honor the Eighth Commandment with each other.

The natural tendency to decipher who among us is facing congregational conflict or to boast of a raise or standard of living harms our working together. This is important. Who, finally, can console a downcast pastor better than another pastor? Who can mentor a younger pastor better than a mature pastor? Given the intensity and ambiguity of the experiences that pastors often face, as well as serving as an “ear of Christ” in the confessional office, no lay person can fully understand the complex dynamics and confidentiality that pastors need to honor. By building each other up, pastors indirectly help build up the entire church.

While serving as a parish pastor, I sometimes enjoyed the experience of being popular with laity. However, I always saw my work (as one holding the preaching office) as seeking to support even my successors in that office in the congregation. Of course, I had no idea whether my successors would be faithful. But, my job was to uphold the office regardless of whom God would place as my successor.

Retired pastors do best to entrust the office into the care of another, which means that they will decline the request to participate in funerals, even if they view the deceased as

their friend or as knowing the deceased better than the present pastor in office. A retired pastor who truly trusts in God will entrust the congregation into the care of another and thus under all conditions stay out of its affairs.

Our culture does not like authorities. We like to equalize the playing field. At their best, congregation members know that the pastor carries confidences and that he is in a unique relationship with respect both to the congregation and to God. We need to uphold the office with as much integrity as we can muster—with respect to those we serve, those who share the office with us, and those who will succeed us. Retrieving the sense of a “brotherly” office can help strengthen the church in her outreach. This we must seek to do.

The well-being of a confessional identity for the church and the fostering of the church’s mission hinge on the well-being of pastors. Pastors have an important and unique task in the way they uphold each other. This is done best when we take the office that we share seriously.

Mark C. Mattes

## DIVORCE COURT

*Judgment in Marital Dissolution Case No. 1530, Department 3*

In the case of:

*Recent Converts to the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
[LCMS] From American Evangelicalism  
(hereinafter referred to as “Confessors”)*

versus

*Those Who Yearn to Be American Evangelicals  
but Who Will Not Voluntarily Leave the LCMS  
(hereinafter referred to as “Facilitators”)*

The court, after hearing all of the theological and historical evidence marshaled by Confessors, and the sincere testimonials shared by Facilitators, hereby decrees that a divorce based on irreconcilable differences is granted. In short, the parties live in different solar systems. Division of property and assets to be as follows:

1. The *Book of Concord* is awarded to Confessors, where it will be studied. The court notes in passing that Facilitators made no objection with respect to this asset, displaying (to be charitable) a vague knowledge of the content or value of this work in any event. The court points out that witnesses for Facilitators testified at trial that Luther’s Small Catechism had been “shoved down their throats” for years, even though the content of that which supposedly was shoved could not be articulated upon cross-examination by counsel for Confessors. Thus the court finds that an award of the *Book of Concord* to Facilitators would constitute a “waste” as defined under Civil Code paragraph 2929.

2. Facilitators to receive all right, title, and interest to the 1991 clavino piano (with accordion and reggae options) as requested. The court wishes publicly to admonish Confes-

sors for their characterization at trial of said instrument as “in the Las Vegas Kit Kat Lounge style” as disruptive of the court’s effort during the proceedings to maintain judicial decorum.

3. Confessors to retain right, title, and interest to the divine service, the pipe organ, the liturgical church calendar, and the theological section of the pastor’s library. Facilitators raised no objection to these requests, except specially to petition the court for the award of all books on counseling, church growth, and family systems ministries. Receiving no opposition, these works are awarded to Facilitators. Confessors also provided no opposition to the award of all Promise Keepers materials to Facilitators, which this court ascertained to be developed by or for athletes. While the court is somewhat unclear as to Confessors’ intentions on this point, the court does find that Confessors conceded in open court that this material and any and all materials reflecting a theology of glory may be awarded to Facilitators without further notice to Confessors.

4. Confessors conceded to Facilitators (and the court notes to Confessors’ credit that they did so cheerfully) all right, title, and interest in all variations of “youth services” and *Maranatha* praise and chorus books. In addition, Confessors conceded to Facilitators all rights in any songs that (a) have hand or body motions associated with them, or (b) result in applause after being performed. However, the court must note that Confessors are entitled to no credit for this aspect of the marital property division for the value of said items because of repeated admissions by Confessors in court that said items had depreciation value only, with said depreciation alleged by Confessors to have commenced at least twenty years ago.

5. Confessors are awarded the Lutheran hymnbooks (that is, *The Lutheran Hymnal*, *Lutheran Worship*, and *Lutheran Service Book*). The court awards these to Confessors pursuant to the legal doctrine of “adverse possession,” namely, that Facilitators had abandoned an informed use of these same assets for the duration of the five-year statutory period. The court notes, as an aside, that the *Book of Concord* and the terms “catechesis,” “doctrine,” or “*sola(s)*” could also have been awarded to Confessors on the basis of the doctrine of “adverse possession.” While Facilitators vehemently maintained that they had shared certain confessional documents in small nurture groups within the last five years, the court specifically finds that works by Carl George, Tony Campolo, Youth Specialties, Max Lucado, M. Scott Peck, and Frank Perretti are (contrary to Facilitators’ argument) not confessional in nature.

6. With no objection from Confessors, Facilitators are awarded sole right to usage of the following terms or phrases:

- a. “Serendipity” and its accompanying “empty chair” concept;
- b. “Meta, mega, or parachurch model(s);”
- c. “Female elders;”
- d. “Relational” and/or “Care and Share Group Studies” or any variation of the same;
- e. “Contemporary service(s),” “Youth Conventions,” and “seeker-sensitive worship”; and,
- f. “Empowering,” “enabling,” “ownership,” and “share.”

7. Finally the court grants Facilitators’ request for custody of the computer software programs entitled “How to Create a Service in Twenty Minutes on Thursday Night” and “Ten New and Creative Confessions and Absolutions.”

8. In summation, the court notes that the principal real property asset is left unadjudicated by this judgment, namely, the church sanctuary. Facilitators appeared to take contradictory positions on this asset. First they argued that they outnumber Confessors and therefore are entitled to such an award. However, testimony also established that Facilitators’ commitment is directed toward mid-week small group gatherings in homes and assuring young people that they will be “heard and understood.”

9. Though perhaps less in numbers, Confessors’ testimony evidenced a commitment to utilizing certain fixed assets of the church, namely, the pulpit, font, and altar. This court, however, chooses to leave such a division for the future and only suggests that an equitable apportionment might be to award the pulpit, font, and altar to Confessors, with Facilitators retaining what is left, including all the bulletin inserts and the youth room.

Let the judgment issue.

JUDGE OF THE DIVORCE COURT

Mr. Craig Parton

## REMEMBERING REED

For those Lutheran pastors who came through Lutheran seminaries in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and even the 1980s, among the many books used as a standard part of their pastoral education was Luther Reed’s work, *The Lutheran Liturgy (TLL)*, originally released in 1947 and revised in 1959. *TLL* is the embodiment of Reed’s life work, the study of the Lutheran liturgy.

With the release of Lutheran hymnals in the 1980s, 1990s, and the 2000s, along with supporting works like Frank Senn’s *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (1997), the influence of Luther Reed’s scholarly efforts has begun to fade. Nevertheless, there are other types of influence that remain.

Whenever one uses *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941) or the “Divine Service, Setting Three” of the *Lutheran Service Book* (2006) and moves past that place where Lutheran liturgies have traditionally placed “the Exhortation,” Reed’s influence is at work. Whenever one prays the so-called Deacon’s Kyrie as it is rendered in places like the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1979), *Lutheran Worship* (1982), and *Lutheran Service Book*, Reed’s influence is at work. Whenever one prays a Mass Canon or a Eucharistic Prayer during the consecration of the sacrament of the altar, Reed’s influence is at work.

As a means of remembering the man who had and continues to have such an influence on the study and practice of Lutheran liturgy, consider these highlights from his life:

- 1895–1898. Reed studied at the Lutheran Seminary, Mt. Airy. He began his liturgical studies in his last year with Prof. Henry E. Jacobs. Reed considered staying and becoming the first graduate student.
- 1898–1906. Reed helped to establish and was elected the first president of the Lutheran Liturgical Association. This group invited scholars to present essays on liturgy-related subjects at their meetings. After the group disbanded, the collected essays were released as the *Memoirs of the Lutheran Liturgical Association* (1907).
1901. Reed helped produce the first choral version of the Common Service (1888). Up until this time the Common Service was entirely spoken.
1911. Reed was elected professor and chair of the department of the Liturgics, Church Art and Architecture at the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mt. Airy (Philadelphia). This was a completely independent department within the seminary. Reed continued lecturing in this field until his retirement from the seminary in 1945.
1914. Reed joined in the work of the Common Service Book committee. He became president of the committee in 1932 (succeeding H. E. Jacobs) until it was closed in preparation for the *Service Book and Hymnal*.
1947. Reed published *The Lutheran Liturgy*. A revised edition was released in 1959.
1948. Reed was appointed president of the Joint Commission on the Liturgy and Hymnal. This committee is responsible for producing what is later named the *Service Book and Hymnal*.
1958. The *Service Book and Hymnal* is published.
1962. Reed published “New Features of the Recent Lutheran Liturgy in America” in the first edition of the scholarly journal *Studia Liturgica*. His selection reflected his established place in the field.
1973. Reed died a few weeks after his ninety-ninth birthday.

Ian Stewart Pacey

Mission Pastor, Christ Lutheran Church, Marana, Arizona,  
and Campus Pastor, University of Arizona

## PASTOR KLAUS GANZERT

*Pastor Klaus Ganzert, a noble and selfless pastor who devoted his life to editing Löhe's works, died at age 93 in September 2008. The following memorial was read by Dr. Dietrich Blaufuß at his burial service. Translated by Karl Böhmer, Gunnison, Colorado.*

Remembrance and Thanksgiving  
18 September 2008 Church of the Apostles, Weilheim,  
Germany  
4 December 1910 + Klaus Ganzert + 13 September 2008

The following statement was made in the year 2005 during a public address at the founding meeting of the International Loehe Society in Dubuque, Iowa:

We are indebted to a feat of the Society for Inner and Outer Mission in the Sense of the Lutheran Church for providing the decisive assistance in realizing Löhe's desire, namely the commissioning of Pastor Klaus Ganzert on January 21, 1946, with the publication of Löhe's works.

It is evident who bore the burden of that feat: None other than the person commissioned to carry it out, the very Klaus Ganzert.

He told me on a cold slick-street January day (2006), in his distinctly terse and precise manner, during a memorable encounter, what that meant:

First, forty years of having all his pastoral work and service as a dean accompanied by grueling work with Löhe texts.

Second, forgoing the opportunity — offered by Werner Elert — to work towards a doctoral degree in theology (having the prestige of an honorary doctorate in theology withheld from him says little about Klaus Ganzert's achievement, but much about the judgment of the institution deciding on the conferment of this honor, in this case the Theological Faculty).

Third, and finally, certainly also many sacrifices within and for his family, probably also having to sacrifice other plans or projects, which he would otherwise have gladly undertaken.

I stand here on behalf of the aforementioned Society for Inner and Outer Mission in the Sense of the Lutheran Church of Neuendettelsau, and as co-president of the International Loehe Society. It is thanks to Klaus Ganzert that we have the privilege of speaking about the aforesaid “feat” of the Society, and naturally also to many assistants, of which I only mention the longstanding collaborator towards five of twelve volumes: Deacon Curt Schadewitz.

But the engine, the inspiration, the fight for the continued production of the twelve volumes of the *Collected Works*, which was often in jeopardy, was Klaus Ganzert's tenacity, yes, also his rigorousness, decisiveness, and occasionally his unwillingness to compromise. Klaus Ganzert's Löhe documents, which were salvaged on that January day in the Löhe archive, tell a radically eloquent story.

We will now expound on the “Why?”

Klaus Ganzert was absolutely convinced that in the church, *truth may also be clarity*; in short: “Without the no, the yes is not a yes.” He stated this emphatically in 1949 in his important address at the one-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Society for Inner and Outer Mission in the Sense of the Lutheran Church.

Furthermore, Klaus Ganzert was independently convinced that the church lives by the sacrament of the altar. In this he did not copy Löhe, but instead let Löhe send him on a theological and ecclesiastical round-the-world trip — a long life.

Third, Klaus Ganzert clearly understood the deep sense of “community”: sharing and receiving a share in God's goods — for soul and body.

### *Discipline, Sacrifice, Community*

There was an intense back-and-forth between Wilhelm Löhe and Klaus Ganzert — he was critical, willing to learn, highly curious. And it was equally a sacrificial willingness on his part to place himself in service to the commission: Did the fulfillment of that commission lead to the said feat of the Society? Or may I, must I not finally say: to the feat of Klaus Ganzert? He would probably not have wanted it said this way during the divine service, in which the glory of human achievement has no place. I think that I may speak for him: “Please, this was no feat! Rather, it was God’s great grace shown to me, who did this work on Wilhelm Löhe as a service to the church, because Wilhelm Löhe is and continues to be an important dialog partner in our struggle for the church and her commission!”

I am not authorized to declare that Klaus Ganzert should be commended for his commitment to his church; I hope that the proper authorities do so. I am authorized in the name of the Society for Inner and Outer Mission in the Sense of the Lutheran Church, and of the International Loehle Society, publicly to declare that Klaus Ganzert should receive credit for his commitment to the work and legacy of Wilhelm Löhe, with gratitude to God, who gave to his servant the strength, the ingenuity, yes, the enthusiasm for it. As a sign of that — and of him! — I bow at his grave, and the Society, lay a wreath on his grave: *Soli Deo Gloria*.

May our petition hold true for our brother Klaus Ganzert: *Requiescat in pace*.

## THREE POEMS

Kathryn Ann Hill’s first book of poems, *Rich in Grace: The Bible of the Poor for Twenty-first-Century Christians*, was published by American Lutheran Publicity Bureau in December 2007.

### *With Hands Pressed Palm to Palm*

*Matthew 15:27*

With hands pressed palm to palm the faithful nod  
And kneel for crumbs below their master’s table  
And then go forth in joy, as they are able,  
To scatter gospel words and deeds abroad:  
So Christians cast their bread upon the waters  
To nourish Jesus’ other sons and daughters  
While saints and angels give their praise to God.

### *Because We Sinned*

Because we sinned and sinned and sinned  
The strongest arms on earth are pinned:  
See Christ, transfixed, lift up sin’s crushing weight,  
While fastened feet that bled and bled  
Now crush the striking serpent’s head—  
Christ dies, and Paradise becomes our fate.

### *Resuscitation*

*Isaiah 55:11*

The word that leaves God’s mouth produces faith;  
Then faithful mouths receive His word with bread:  
So faith is nourished, yielding holy fruits  
That witness to the firstfruits of the dead.  
Your mouth-to-mouth salvation, Lord, employ  
Until You lead us forth in peace and joy.

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