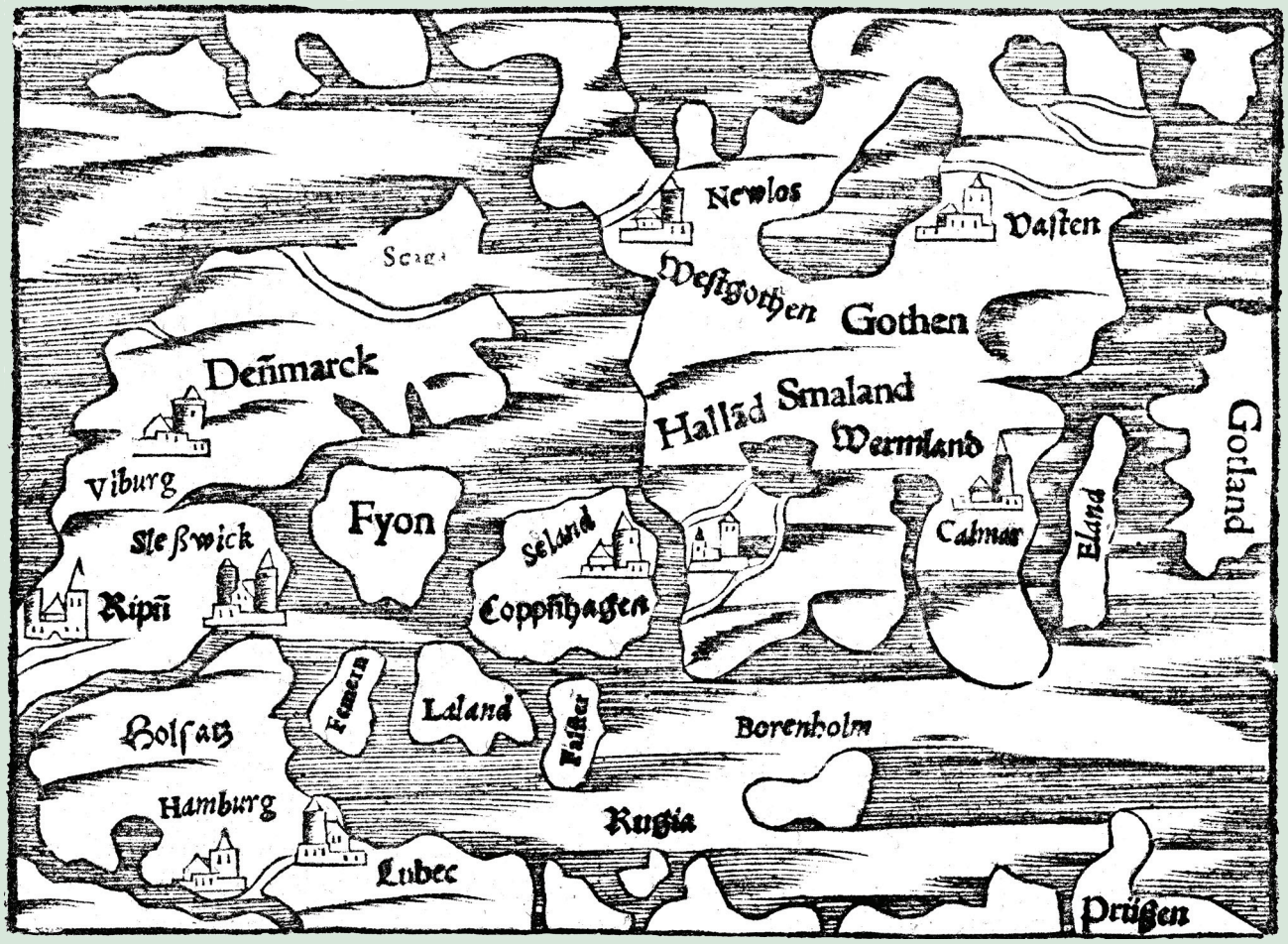
LOGIA

A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY



LUTHERANISM IN SCANDINAVIA

EPIPHANY 2012 VOLUME XXI, NUMBER 1

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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COVER ART shows a map of Denmark and Sweden from 1571.

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FREQUENTLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

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

HOW TO CONTACT US

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Phone ▲ NEW—605-324-3453

E-mail ▲ customerservice@logia.org

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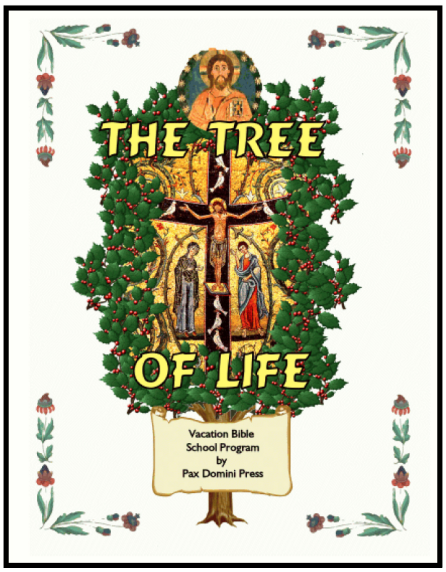

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Confessional Fidelity

Bo Giertz

Ruben Josefson[1] takes the designation "confessional" from those in the current debate concerning women pastors who have incorrectly taken the title for themselves, and gives it back to those who deserve to wear it.[2]

So says Ingmar Ström[3] in *Woman, Society, Church* concerning Ruben Josefson's essay, "The Evangelical-Lutheran Position," in the same book. Thus, those are truly "confessional" who find no opposition in the Bible or the Confessions to opening the office of the ministry to women. One who honestly desires to be faithful to the Confessions naturally listens with interest. More so, his own faith and work as a pastor stand endlessly in debt to the Confessions. If it is true that it can be shown with good reason that our Confessions represent a view of Christianity and biblical interpretation that naturally leads to introducing women pastors at an appropriate time, then this whole controversy can be ended—certainly a relief for all parties involved. What are the reasons, then?

I. Luther's View of the Bible

Josefson first presents the Lutheran view of the Bible. At all essential points, the view presented is in line with "Neo-Protestantism," for lack of a better term. Luther, it is said, not only claimed Scripture as the authority against Rome, but also gave rise to a new understanding of the Bible: one that signifies a radical break with the view that the Bible is a formal authority. Scripture's authority is contingent upon the content of the message about Christ as the Lord of forgiveness. The Bible and individual parts of the Bible have no authority simply because they can be traced to the prophets and apostles as authors, but rather they become apostolic and foundational for the church by conveying the message of Christ. "Whatever preaches Christ, that is apostolic."[4]

One comes across the above-mentioned Luther quotation in modern attempts to make Luther the spokesman for a "Neo-Protestant" view of the Bible. Therefore, it must be stressed once again that this quotation is out of context and misinterpreted. It comes from Luther's "Preface to the Epistles of James and Jude," where he puts forth the thesis that James's epistle has wrongly come into the canon and in reality cannot be an apostolic writing.[5] He finds evidence for this in that it does not witness to Christ. In conjunction with this, he says that everything that is an apostolic witness to Christ, but "does not teach Christ, it is not apostolic, not even if St. Peter or St. Paul teach it."[6]

This last remark has given rise to the misunderstanding that Luther would create a boundary within Scripture which makes it possible to distinguish between what is apostolic and what is not (and thus is not a message from God); however, this is an obvious misunderstanding. Luther teaches that all biblical writings testify to Christ and, needless to say, also Peter and Paul when they speak in the Bible. He says this even in this context. The criterion that an authentic biblical writing should preach Christ is upheld, "because all Scripture points to Christ" (*sintemal alle schrifft Christum zeiget*). Luther here refers to Romans 3, and apparently has in mind Paul's words that the Law and the Prophets testify concerning the righteousness from God, thus about Christ.

What Luther here establishes is, therefore, the rule according to which one can distinguish a genuine biblical book from a false one and an inspired text from one that is not. However, that one could distinguish between certain parts within a prophetic or apostolic text that are God's word from others that are not is a totally foreign thought to Luther, whose writings are full of examples of his unlimited trust in the biblical word. I present only one from the "Theses Concerning Faith" (*de fide*), 1535. Here one finds the often-quoted expression "to set Christ

Bo Giertz (1905–1998) was Bishop of Göteborg in the Church of Sweden. This essay originally appeared as "Bekännelsetrohet" in *Kvinnan och ämbetet enligt skriften och bekännelsen* [*Women and the Office according to Scripture and the Confessions*] (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses bokförlag, 1958), 114–34. The essays collected in this volume were published mere months before the acceptance and approval of women's ordination by Sweden's Church-wide Assembly (kyrkomötet) of the same year. It was translated by Weslie Odom, a fourth-year student at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. The translator thanks Kristina J. Odom, Eric R. Andræ, and others for suggestions regarding the translation.

1. Ruben Josefson (1907–1972) was Archbishop of Uppsala from 1967 until his death.
2. Ingmar Ström, "Kvinnan–samhället–kyrkan" [Woman–Society–Church], in *Kvinnan, samhället, kyrkan* (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses bokförlag, 1958), 192.
3. Ström (1912–2003) later became Bishop of Stockholm (1973–1975).
4. Ruben Josefson, "Den evangelisk-lutherska ståndpunkten" in *Kvinnan, samhället, kyrkan*, 168.
5. WA DB 7: 384; AE 35: 395–96.
6. Josefson, "Den ståndpunkten," 170.

against Scripture," which is used even by Josefson.[7] However, this word of Luther is abused. As the context shows, Luther claims that his opponents twist and misinterpret Scripture, and that they appeal to this perverted Scripture contrary to the doctrine of justification by faith. It is against this misinterpreted Scripture that Luther now says he appeals to Christ himself. In this context there is no inkling that Christ could be or needs to be referenced against anything that is really in the Bible. Next, Luther says that all the prophets and fathers have proclaimed everything contained in Scripture through the Holy Spirit (*spiritu Christi omnia sunt locuti, quae habentur in scripturis*). Since we do not have the same measure of God's Spirit as they had, because our flesh strives against the Spirit, and because of the many deceiving spirits, it is necessary that we hold to the apostles' trustworthy commands and writings. It is these apostles who have been sent to us by God as infallible teachers (*infallibiles Doctores*), and cannot, therefore, unlike us, err.[8]

One approaches the Bible with the conviction that God speaks to us precisely through this word as it is given to us.

That the Bible is not a "formal authority" is quite true, if one by that means it is not an authority immediately accessible to reason. Or that anyone at any time, regardless of his attitude toward God, would be able to look up instructions for a moralistic life or be guaranteed sufficient secular history or scientific enlightenment. It is just as true that the Bible remains a closed book to the one who approaches it with the false conviction of the "piety of the law," namely, that the most essential thing in life is to discover God's commands and do them. Josefson rightly stresses the great importance in Luther's finding the key to Scripture in the doctrine of justification by faith. There he has found the center from which the Bible in all its parts must be understood. It is equally important and necessary to warn against a legalistic view of the Bible, but one must then also make clear to himself what a legalistic view of the Bible is. It means to make the law a way to salvation and the fulfillment of the law a condition of salvation. However, it is not "legalism"—as modern man often means—that one stresses the law and makes the law still valid. In that regard Luther was terribly legalistic according to modern thinking. One of the things that probably strikes a modern reader most in meeting Luther is the intractable severity with which he lays claim to God and Christ's demands. In doing this, he time and again brings forth the written word, just as it stands, and sets it stubbornly and unavoidably before us. Luther had to fight many of the hardest and most bitter conflicts in his life because he would not abandon the literal understanding of a clear and authoritative biblical word, for example, concerning the right of the governing authority to bear the sword (with regards to the Peasants' War) or the testimony of the words of institution that Christ really is present in the Supper's bread and wine (in the conflict with Zwingli).

So far the view of the Bible. A Lutheran way of reading and understanding the Bible must first and foremost mean that one truly approaches it with the conviction that God speaks to us precisely through this word as it is given to us. Every attempt to find a first principle that makes it possible for us to sift out the supposed dross from the Bible and take from it what is really God's word is incompatible with Luther's whole way of looking at and dealing with the word. This does not mean—as we are so often accused of maintaining—that everything in Scripture is on the same level, that the biblical word is simply mechanical, and so forth.[9] Certainly one of Luther's great gifts to Christianity is that he taught us to see that Scripture has a center, core, and star, namely, the Redeemer. All else must be seen in light of him, since they are put in the appropriate place only in their right relationship with him. When this happens and Scripture says what it is supposed to say in the greater context of the Bible, then it is the clear and pure word of God.

II. THE CONFESSIONS' VIEW OF THE BIBLE

Let us move on to the Confessions. The decisive question here is in what way a Christian church is bound by God's word concerning her external forms, offices, and such. As is well known, the Reformation made the Roman church the object of harsh criticism because it had created a variety of institutions, offices, and forms for the divine service that contended with God's word. Constantly appealing to Scripture, the reformers demanded a change. They tried to shape their reforms so that the church would better correspond to God's will as we meet it in the Bible.

"Neo-Protestantism" (if I may still use that term) now wants to see the Reformation's lasting contribution, not in that it claimed Scripture's authority, but rather that it took on a new, principally liberated stance toward the biblical word. Rome wanted to build canon law directly on the biblical word and so read the Bible as a law book containing regulations given by

7. Ibid.
8. WA 39, I: 47 f.; AE 34: 105–32.
9. For example, Erik Sjöberg makes the following accusation against those opposed to women's ordination: "The New Testament prohibition against women speaking in the church . . . cannot possibly be seen as binding for the church at all times. . . . The opposite position would mean a legalistic and mechanic biblicism that is untenable and incompatible with an Evangelical-Lutheran view of the Bible, a reality to which we have already called attention" (SOU 1950:48, 41 f.; emphasis added). SOU 1950:48 was one of the official proposals from the Swedish governmental agency Statens Offentliga Utredningar that recommended women's ordination. Many dioceses rejected this proposal, though ten years later the measure would be approved.

God, which could immediately translate into practical regulations. The Reformed, for their part, have made similar attempts at creating a church structure after New Testament examples, which they perceive as binding for all time.

It is both right and important to stress that Lutheranism does not treat the Bible as a "formal authority" in that way. It is precisely because God speaks here that it is necessary at each point for one to seek to understand what God means, to whom he speaks, what the purpose of his word is, how it fits into the greater context, and, therefore, how it should be understood and applied today. There are a series of commands and regulations in Scripture that have limited validity because they have been given in a specific situation and indicate the will of God there. This is not only the case with the Mosaic ceremonial law, but also with certain clear and definite commands in the New Testament such as the prohibition concerning blood (Acts 15). What determines if a command of God has limited validity is always the Bible itself. God's word, read in its whole context and understood rightly in light of Christ, clearly shows that this prohibition regarding blood was never intended to apply other than as a *modus vivendi* in a time of transition when the Jews and Gentile Christians had to live side by side in the same congregation.

Further, Luther always stresses that an example in the Bible is in itself not binding for us to act in the same way, unless it is connected to a command. For example, we are not bound to a life of celibacy following Jesus, but we are bound to pray for our enemies and persecutors. Applied to church regulations this means that we are not bound to emulate everything that happened in the New Testament church. But where there is a command, as in the case of the sacraments, we are unconditionally bound, under the condition, of course, that this command is given to all of God's church in all times. I may here insert that *this* is what makes the question of women pastors a truly serious matter for the church. Here there is both an example and a command. Jesus and the apostles acted in a very specific way, and Paul tells us that this happens according to God's command. He appeals to all the authorities early Christendom understood as holy: God's word in the Old Testament, Christ's command, and the witness of the Holy Spirit. It is quite obvious that he intends this ordinance to continue to stand for all Christian congregations because it is founded on God's will.

The errant claim that, despite this, changing the church's ordinances concerning this matter is compatible with our confession, is due to a particular view concerning what is by divine right[10] and therefore must always be binding. These arguments must be examined, and Josefson summarizes them clearly. He refers to Wilhelm Maurer's *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis*,[11] and says:

> It is likely that the Lutheran view of ecclesiastical order developed under a conscious confrontation with the Roman Catholic doctrine. According to the Lutheran view, divine right cannot be directly based on individual Bible passages as the Roman doctrine of the church presupposes. Certainly Bible passages are quoted here and there, but a closer examination of the context where this is done shows that divine right only exists when the divine command coincides with a word of promise. So the administration of the sacraments is based on divine right, because God's promises are connected to it and thereby it is an expression of the gospel. One may also say that there must necessarily be a connection to justification for a command to have legitimacy. What is by divine right, included in the gospel and binding for the church, is thus not identical to biblical law as the earlier doctrine of canon law designed by Gratian[12] claims. Maurer notes that 'the Lutheran Reformation has, against Gratian, determined that divine right does not consist in the law literally understood or in the gospel legalistically understood, but becomes known to faith as God's creating command."[13]

An example in the Bible is in itself not binding for us to act in the same way, unless it is connected to a command.

Josefson here concisely reproduces Maurer's main thesis, which argues that only a certain kind of biblical passage can be a foundation for ecclesiastical regulations, and introduces the term *das göttliche* (or: *schöpferische*) *Mandatwort*. For a biblical word to be such a mandate does not depend on its form, consisting of a command from God, but on the content: it must be a word of promise. If it does not contain a promise, it does not have creating power and effect. Thus, it cannot be a creating mandate, and is not binding for the church.

One must now ask what Maurer bases this distinction upon, as this has enormously significant consequences. The distinction is not directly expressed in the sources. The term itself, creating mandate, was coined by Maurer to make his theory more precise, more particular. The Confessions in their terminology do not make such a distinction in God's word. This does not negate, of course, the fact that it may still be there.

Maurer provides as proof four passages from the Confessions.[14] After noting that one seems to find in our Confes-

10. *Gudomlig rätt* is closely related to *jure divino* in Giertz's usage throughout.
11. Wilhelm Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis: Über die Bekenntnismäßige Grundlage eines Pfarrerrechtes in der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1957).
12. Gratian of Bologna, twelfth-century jurist often referred to as the "Father of Canon Law."
13. Josefson, "Den ståndpunkten," 175 f.
14. Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht*, 97.

sions statements that base ecclesiastical regulations directly on specific biblical passages, he says that these remarkably rare instances are shown to have another meaning upon closer reflection. Certainly monasticism and the mass for the dead are rejected because they are not scriptural, but in what way is monasticism "without support in God's word?" It is because one wants to earn the forgiveness of sins and justification by it. When is rejection of the world without God's call and command (*sine vocatione, sine mandato Dei*)? When it is a self-chosen act of worship and of no avail to salvation.

It is certainly no small sin to establish such services in the church without any command of God or some example in Scripture.

We will pause here to look at the proof passages. First Maurer refers to the Apology (XXVII, 58) where Melanchthon polemicizes against Rome's reference to Nazirites in the Old Testament as an attempt to defend monasticism. He points out that Nazirites did not take their vows to earn forgiveness of sins before God. One cannot compare monastic life, created by men without any support in God's word (*sine verbo Dei*) to earn salvation, to a Nazirite vow supported by God's word (*qui habebat verbum Dei*) and not instituted to earn the forgiveness of sins. According to this passage the sole determining factor is actually not that a command be a "mandate" that includes a promise. The Nazirite vow was founded on God's word, even though this word was not a creating word of promise. The problem with monasticism is not only that—on a wrong path—it desires to earn grace before God, but, just as much, that it is created without any support in God's word. According to the Confessions, one of the most serious arguments against a doctrine is that it tries to win God's grace with the help of works. This cannot be compatible with the word, yet one need not necessarily conclude that only such doctrines conflict with God's word or that this is the only viewpoint with which ecclesiastical law must be concerned.

Maurer's second proof passage is found in the same article in the Apology (XXVII, 41) dealing with forsaking the world. Melanchthon says this can happen in two ways. One way is without a calling, without God's command (*sine vocatione, sine mandato Dei*). This displeases Christ because the deeds we invent for ourselves are useless worship. The opponents here wrongly appeal to Jesus' word about the one who has forsaken house, brother, children, and so forth. We know that God's commands (*mandatum Dei*) forbid us from abandoning our wife and children, but there is another way of abandoning property and family in accord with God's command (*mandato Dei*): such as when a tyrannical power makes us choose between denying the gospel or being driven from the land. Here we have God's command rather to suffer wrongs (*Hic habemus mandatum*) and deprive ourselves not only of possessions, wife, and children, but even life; we should give even our life for the sake of the gospel. It would be ridiculous, however, to say that one way to serve God would be to kill oneself and so forsake one's life without any command of God (*sine mandato Dei*). In the same way it is ridiculous to say that there is some service in abandoning possessions, friends, spouse, or children without any command of God (*sine mandato Dei*). Here in the Apology the word mandatum is used no less than five times, and each time it concerns God's command—binding for both the church and the individual. It is not a word of promise when God forbids us to forsake wife and children, or even when he commands us to abandon everything for the sake of the gospel. We do not win forgiveness of sins in either way. Both are part of life as it takes shape lived in faith. Thus monasticism is against God's word not only in that it is a false way to salvation, but also, first and foremost, that it cannot honestly appeal to any ground or reason in the Bible. Rather, it contradicts commands given by God. Conversely, the correct forsaking of everything worldly can be founded on clear commands given in God's word.

At the risk of tiring the reader, I must refer also to Maurer's two remaining proof passages. "Why can the mass for the dead not be founded on Scripture?" he asks. For Maurer it is not because a corresponding biblical passage does not exist, but because it makes God's gift into a work of man so that his name is abused and the Second Commandment is broken. The testimony of God's word is missing everywhere man establishes his own work to earn the forgiveness of sin. Though one can assent to this with one's whole heart, an objection must be raised when Maurer claims there is no binding and obligatory word of God for the church except where it promises the forgiveness of sins and is, thereby, a creating mandate. The objection becomes even stronger the deeper one delves into the Confessions; but let us look at the remaining proof passages.

This third one, concerning the mass for the dead, is again taken from the Apology (XXIV, 89, 92). There it asserts that the opponents' attempt to defend the mass for the dead has no support or command in Scripture (*nulla habent testimonia, nullum mandatum ex scripturis*). It is certainly no small sin to establish such services in the church without any command of God or some example in Scripture (*sine mandato Dei, sine exemplo scripturae*) or to allow the Lord's Supper, which is instituted as a remembrance and proclamation for the living, apply to the dead. This breaks the Second Commandment and abuses the Lord's name.

It cannot be said much more clearly that the decisive thing for the reformers was what was really in Scripture and what was not. The mass for the dead is rejected, of course, because "there is no corresponding biblical passage." This argument is as weighty as the following: the essence of the mass for the dead contradicts Scripture's teaching on the meaning of the Lord's Supper. Here too there is no support for Maurer's distinction, since, for the Confessions, the Bible has unconditional author-

ity, whether it speaks in the form of command or promise. Melanchthon repeats this a little later (Ap XXIV, 92): *Nec tutum est in ecclesia cultus instituere sine auctoritate scripturae* (It is not safe to institute an act of worship in the church without the authority of Scripture).[15]

The fourth and final proof passage remains (Ap XV, 14). It says: "Now if someone wants to institute certain works for the purpose of meriting the forgiveness of sins or righteousness, how will that person know that these works please God without God's word? How will they make others certain about God's will without God's command and word?" Here again Scripture stands at the center. This and only this can give a reliable answer concerning what is pleasing to God. Of course it is correct that Maurer says, "The testimony of God's word is missing everywhere man establishes his own work to earn the forgiveness of sin." How could this be otherwise? Of course God's word cannot confirm what is completely contradictory to the heart of the gospel! But this does not mean that God's word has nothing to say as soon as it does not speak of the forgiveness of sins or contain a promise of grace. The promise of the forgiveness of sins for everyone who believes in Jesus is without doubt the main purpose of everything in the word, but this truth does not limit God's right to speak. What he may have to say in addition to this is also his word, and the church has no right to say: "This does not concern me, because it contains no promise."

We also see in the Confessions that divine right is not limited to that which contains a promise. What is by divine right is truly all that God has ordained for his church. Therefore the Supper must be distributed under both types simply because Christ has commanded us to do it so and not because there is some specific promise connected with the chalice; the gift is the same in the bread and in the wine. The Confessions stress time and again that the church does not have the right to change Christ's command. Further, there are no conditions wherein obedience would only apply when a promise is connected to a command. It is true that the command to baptize is connected with the most wonderful promises, but that is not *why* it must be obeyed. On the contrary, it says:

> Thus we have considered the three things that must be known about this sacrament, especially that it is God's ordinance and is to be held in all honor. This alone would be enough, even if baptism were an entirely external thing. . . . In the same way, even if we had nothing more than these words, "Go and baptize," etc., we would still have to accept it as God's ordinance and perform it. But here we have not only God's commandment and injunction, but the promise as well. (LC IV, 38)

Can it be said any more clearly that the command in and of itself is sufficient? If the command is given by God and directed to us, it must also be carried out. We have no authority to determine first if we would classify it as a mandate connected to a promise or something we have invented ourselves. Even such distinctions can become "human regulations, without any foundation in Holy Scripture."

Even the home and the state are founded upon divine right according to the Confessions.

Finally, even the home and the state are founded upon divine right according to the Confessions. Maurer insists quite rightly that even the word here is a creating, life-giving word, which has the character of a promise. This expresses God's love to the fallen world, which he, despite everything, maintains and allows to live on with the help of marriage, family, the legal system, and other beneficial orders. But this is only one side of the issue. Everyone who knows Luther's writings on governing authority knows that he just as strongly insists that the state and legal system are also expressions of God's punitive righteousness, which "carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer," as it says in Romans 13:4, which Luther cites in this context time and again. If one takes seriously "that nothing else can create a foundation for authority, and nothing else can require permanent obedience than *das schöpferische Mandatwort,*" then one must eliminate this whole aspect of the authorities' task. The reformers would no doubt call this a forbidden intervention into God's orders. We see, then, that God's commands are valid regardless of whether or not we find in them a promise.

III. THE SWEDISH DEBATE

Now, it is possible that Maurer has meant this whole presentation only as an illustration of an important tendency in the Confessions. As such it has value, for without a doubt most of the lasting commands and ordinances that God has given his church can be seen as a direct reflection of his good will to grant us the forgiveness of sins. If one digs deep enough into the context, the same will stands behind them all even if one sometimes has to believe without seeing. But in the Swedish debate, Maurer's thesis has been used as the norm according to which one can distinguish a confessional view of ecclesiastical law from a deluded one.[16] Against this it must be said that this distinction is not in accord with the Confessions. For them it is not the character of a promise that makes a command valid, but the simple fact that it is God's word and directed to us.

15. All English citations from the Confessions are from Kolb-Wengert.

16. Josefson, "Den ståndpunkten," 176 f. See Gustaf Wingren, *Kyrkans ämbete* (Lund: Gleerup, 1958), 12–15.

Above all, due to an important addendum Maurer himself makes to his thesis, one wonders if he can rightly be appealed to as he has been in the Swedish debate. Specifically, he notes that according to the Confessions there is also a divine mandate that calls for fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, rightly understood, because these are the fruits of faith, "and good fruits have God's command."[17] But for these there is no word of promise. The purpose is not justification; they are fruits of the forgiveness of sins. Thus there are true commands of God that cannot necessarily be connected to justification, but that the Christian willingly and gladly performs—not to earn the forgiveness of sins—but because he loves God and knows that this is God's will. He does it, as it says, "*propter gloriam et mandatum Dei*," (Ap XII, 139) on account of the glory and commandment of God.

It is very dangerous to speak of things that have to do with God differently than he does.

This is an important addendum because it is also said thereby that life in an evangelical church is not only regulated by mandates that promise forgiveness. There are also divine regulations for other things, and these can only be deduced from the word. Even obedience to the ordinance determined by God in the matter of division of duty between man and woman in his church belongs to what a Christian willingly and gladly accepts. This obviously is not to earn the forgiveness of sins, but simply "to God's glory and because he has commanded it."

There is a tendency today both in questions concerning the Bible and the Confessions to limit their scope by setting up theories concerning a correct evangelical attitude toward them. I have had occasion to point out a few such attempts. When it comes to Scripture, the theory is that only what preaches Christ is God's word. When it comes to the Confessions it is the attempt to limit what is binding to "the creating mandate." I have tried to show that such attempts, however many correct observations they contain, are not in line with the Bible and the Confessions. Here one has reason to recall another word of Luther: "It is very dangerous to speak of things that have to do with God differently than he does or with other words than he himself uses."[18] In other words, we always have reason to be cautious when presented a theory or principle that makes it possible to give the correct evangelical reply to all questions concerning the office of the ministry or evangelical church regulations. There is especially reason to be cautious when such a theory experiments with terms and distinctions that are not the Bible's own. It is far safer to do as Luther says. Certainly he had a much clearer and uniform evangelical ethos and perspective than most. In concrete matters, however, he still always goes to Scripture and views all available material; he summarizes it, tries to understand it, examines God's meaning, and so finds the answer.

In the debate concerning women pastors, one too often encounters attempts to determine the whole matter according to a previously determined "evangelical" principle.[19] So we often hear that according to an evangelical view the office of the ministry in itself certainly is according to divine right, but its external forms can be regulated according to human right.[20] Thus, one concludes, we are well within our full right to introduce women's ordination. As if this matter was only a question concerning the external forms for the church's office! As soon as one goes to the Bible itself one finds that it is inseparably connected to the question of creation and God's intention for man and woman in relation to one another. Here the whole matter of the division of roles is set forth: the distribution of services and gifts that God has bound to the distinction between man and women both in marriage and in the congregation. The desire to decide such a question by referring to the notion that the Christian church has full freedom to arrange the office's external forms according to its discretion is not to let the Bible be heard.

It seems to me that the discussion concerning women pastors has so far given rise to at least *one* valuable result. There seems to be a consensus that the New Testament (if one sees it as a whole and takes into account all that it has to say) really says "no" concerning women pastors. Even Erik Sjöberg[21] and Krister Stendahl, who support the proposition, note that, for the New Testament authors, obstacles existed that were of fundamental significance and were seen as founded on God's will.[22] Additionally, Stendahl says concerning this that there is fundamental consensus among exegetes. The question is not what is actually said in the New Testament, but rather "it is the view of the Bible that matters."[23] Stendahl has since declared—with an admirable desire to speak clearly and openly—why he is of the opinion that we cannot make the New Testament position ours, but must build on some other tendencies he claims also exist in the New Testament and appear to be leading to the annihilation of its foundational perspective. It is not my goal here to scrutinize this view of the Bible further. I only note that one who shares this view cannot reasonably claim to be "faithful to the Bible." The words must be allowed to keep their meaning; to be faithful to the Bible, if it is to have any real meaning, must

17. Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht*, 100.
18. WA 15: 43.
19. See Eva-Gun Junker, "Till debatten om kvinnliga präster," *Kristen humanism* 20 (1958): 42.
20. Here especially *gudomlig rätt* and *mansklig rätt* are used in the same way as *jure divino* and *jure humano*.
21. Erik Sjöberg, b. 1907, was Associate Professor of Exegesis at Åbo Academy and Lund University.
22. Erik Sjöberg, *Exegeterna om kvinnliga präster* (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses bokförlag, 1953), 65f. See Krister Stendahl, "Bibelsynen och kvinnan" [The View of the Bible and Woman], in *Kvinnan, samhället, kyrkan*, 139.
23. Stendahl, "Bibelsynen," 140.

mean that one holds fast to the message that the Bible truly contains when examined as factually and conscientiously as possible. To note as an exegete that the New Testament writings say one thing, and for particular reasons be convinced that the church in our time must say something else, cannot in any case, according to plain language, be said to be faithful to the Bible. It can mean faithfulness to a new approach or developments one claims are in the Bible. From a personal point of view, it can mean a deep, serious faithfulness to the Lord Christ, if one assumes some kind of progressive revelation. But it is not what one with good, unambiguous language should call fidelity to the Scriptures. And this is no injustice to those who have aligned themselves with the problem's solution maintained by Stendahl and with him the Diakonistyrelsens Sociala Utskott [Diaconal Social Committee]: for it would not be unfair if one says that one cannot accept the claim that this is only a matter of two different interpretations of Scripture and that faithfulness to the biblical word in both cases are equally unconditional. It is not only a question of two different interpretations of the same biblical word, but also a question of two fundamentally different views. In one view, the biblical word is God's word and can never cease to be. For the other, it is a matter of trying to find something of lasting value within time-conditioned messages. It is this fact that justifies seeing the battle over women pastors as a battle also for faithfulness to the Bible.

The battle over women pastors is a battle also for faithfulness to the Bible.

Something similar could be said of the Confessions. I have attempted to show that there is no real foundation for claiming that the title *confessional* should now rightfully belong to those who want to have women pastors. If the word *confessional* is to have any meaning, it must first and foremost mean an internal loyalty and affinity with the whole way of viewing the Bible and God's way of working through his word as expressed in our Confessions. Our church is a church of the word to such a high degree that every change in precisely this point necessarily has consequences for all that follows. One cannot substitute faith in the Bible and the will to listen to the whole biblical message, in its correct evangelical meaning as the Confessions testify, with some theological principles, however good and correct they might be. The question is about God himself and his will. According to an evangelical conviction, one cannot know anything concerning these except through the biblical word.

Finally, it is fitting that Luther himself speak:

> Now we have taught so often that we should do nothing unless we have the express approval of God's word; God himself has nothing to do with us, nor we with him, except through his word, which is the only means by which we recognize his will, and according to which we have to govern our actions. Whoever has a god but not his word has no god, for the true God has included our life, being, estate, office, speech, action or inaction, suffering, and everything in his word and shown us by example that we must not and shall not seek or know anything apart from his word, even of God himself, for apart from his word he does not wish to be understood, sought, or found through our invention or imagining.[24] LOGIA

24. WA 30, III: 213–14; AE 46: 276.

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The "Mystical Union with Christ"

The New Finnish School Compared with Early Twentieth-Century American Theology

David Jay Webber

The "New Finnish Interpretation" has been making a significant impact on Luther studies for the past couple decades. This movement, led by Tuomo Mannermaa, Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Helsinki, is taking note of certain aspects of Martin Luther's theology that were minimized or ignored by many influential Luther scholars in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In particular the Finns are noticing, and commenting on, the "union with Christ" themes in Luther's writings, and are pointing out the deficiencies of those interpretations of Luther—especially in German circles—that had not properly taken this "participatory" component of Luther's theology into account.

Mannermaa and his colleagues blame this weakness on the influence of certain neo-Kantian assumptions that had come to be embraced by many if not most German theologians by the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Simo Peura, a colleague of Mannermaa, observes:

> Characteristic of neo-Kantian theology is the radical separation of God's being (*esse*) and his effects (*Wirkungen*) from each other. This means either that only certain effects (of God) exist or that God is in no way present in the effects he produces. Because of this separation, such theological ideas as the union of God and the Christian (*unio cum Deo*) become impossible. The neo-Kantian theological school has had a wide and comprehensive influence on Luther research until now.[1]

On this point the Finns are correct, especially in regard to the state of European Luther studies over the past several generations. For example, while the influential nineteenth-century theologian Albrecht Ritschl did acknowledge that the Lutheran dogmaticians of the seventeenth century taught a mystical union of God with the believer, he rejected the legitimacy of this doctrine. Adolf Hoenecke, in epitomizing Ritschl's position, notes that, according to Ritschl,

> this doctrine entered the Lutheran theology of the seventeenth century by means of false mysticism and neoplatonic metaphysics as a worthless and unhealthy construct. It did not come from Luther. . . . The mystical thoughts one finds in Luther are pre-Reformation, and all members of the Lutheran church who cling to a mystical union of the believers with God for that reason do not belong to the followers of Luther but, rather, to the followers of Zinzendorf.[2]

The seventeenth-century teaching that Ritschl and others like him so disdained is summarized well by Abraham Calov when he explains:

> The mystical union of Christ with the believer is a true and real and most intimate conjunction of the divine and human nature of the theanthropic Christ with a regenerated man, which is effected by the virtue of the merit of Christ through the Word and Sacraments; so that Christ constitutes a spiritual unit with the regenerated person, and operates in and through him, and those things which the believer does and suffers he appropriates to himself, so that the man does not live, as to his spiritual and divine life, of himself, but by the faith of the Son of God, until he is taken to heaven.[3]

The Finns likewise acknowledge that in the pre-Kantian era, Lutheran theology in general did acknowledge a "participatory" union of Christ and the believer. Contrary to Ritschl's assertion that a theology of mystical union was brought into Lutheranism only in the seventeenth century, the Formula of Concord of 1577 teaches that "God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who is the eternal and essential righteousness, dwells through faith in the elect, who have become righteous through Christ and are reconciled with God. (For all Christians are temples of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who moves them to act properly)" (FC SD III, 54 [Kolb-Wengert, 571–72]). The Formula immediately goes on to say, however, that

David Jay Webber is Pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Scottsdale, Arizona, and is a *Logia* contributing editor.

1. Simo Peura, "Christ as Favor and Gift," in *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 46.
2. Adolf Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, trans. James Langebartels (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1999–2009), 3:388.
3. Abraham Calov, *Systema Locorum Theologicorum* (1655–77), X, 526; quoted in Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. Charles A. Hay and Henry E. Jacobs (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1889), 487.

> this indwelling of God is not the righteousness of faith, which St. Paul treats and calls *iustitia Dei* (that is, the righteousness of God), for the sake of which we are pronounced righteous before God. Rather, this indwelling is a result of the righteousness of faith which precedes it, and this righteousness [of faith] is nothing else than the forgiveness of sins and the acceptance of poor sinners by grace, only because of Christ's obedience and merit. (FC SD III, 54 [Kolb-Wengert, 572])

The Formula explains that the Christian's righteousness before God is not rooted fundamentally in the *indwelling* of the divine-human Christ, but instead is rooted fundamentally in the obedience of the divine-human Christ. We are pronounced righteous, and the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, because of the perfect life that Jesus led on our behalf, because of the innocent suffering and death that he endured for our sake, and because of the victory over death that Jesus won for us in his glorious resurrection (FC SD III, 14–17 [Kolb-Wengert, 564]). But according to the Finns, these clarifications in the Formula are actually distortions—or at least they are distortions of what Luther himself had taught in regard to the indwelling of God, and the relationship between this indwelling and the justification of the Christian. Peura argues that in Luther's actual teaching, "the righteousness that stands in front of God is based on the indwelling of Christ. The indwelling Christ in the heart of the Christian is the necessary condition for God's favor as well as for the renewing gift. The heart of the Christian is holy because of the indwelling of Christ."[4] In contrast to this supposed position of Luther, Mannermaa observes that "justification and the indwelling of God in the believer are conceptually separated from each other in the Formula of Concord. Justification is only the forgiveness of sins. The indwelling of God follows in a logical sense after justification."[5]

In developing his thesis on the "disconnect" between Luther and the Formula of Concord, Mannermaa posits a Melanchthonian intrusion into the theological life of the church as an explanation for this "disconnect." He writes that

> the FC's definition concerning the relation between "justification" and "divine indwelling" is different from that found in Luther's theology, at least as far as terminology is concerned. Thus, in the FC, "justification by faith" merely denotes the forgiveness of sins that is "imputed" to Christians on the basis of the perfect obedience and complete merit of Christ. At the same time the *inhabitatio Dei* is made a separate phenomenon, logically *subsequent* to justification. . . . In its argument that the presence of the Trinity in faith is not the same phenomenon as the "righteousness of faith," the FC draws on the later theology of [Philip] Melanchthon, on which much of Lutheran theology after Luther has relied.[6]

Of course, while the mystical union was held by classic Lutheran theology to be *logically* subsequent to justification and forgiveness, it was in actual occurrence acknowledged to be *simultaneous* with justification and forgiveness. Johann Andreas Quenstedt explains, "Regeneration, justification, union, and renovation are simultaneous, and, being more closely united than the ingredients of an atom, so cohere that they cannot be separated or rent asunder. Yet, according to our mode of conceiving of them, justification and regeneration are prior in order to the mystical union."[7]

Quenstedt explains, "Regeneration, justification, union, and renovation are simultaneous."

In the early twentieth century, the theology of the Lutheran churches in America was much more conservative than that of their European counterparts. Neo-Kantian ideas had little if any influence. The Americans were essentially reading Luther with "uncorrupted" eyes. What did they see? Were the American Lutherans aware of the "union with Christ" Luther passages? If so, how did they interpret these passages, especially in relation to the important question of the sinner's justification before God?

Francis Pieper was a professor at the Missouri Synod's Concordia Seminary in Saint Louis, Missouri, from 1878 until his death in 1931, and was the president of the institution from 1887 to 1931. His reading of Luther's views on justification was not the same as that of the Finnish scholars of our time. In volume 2 of his *Christian Dogmatics*, first published in 1917, he states that

> God's method of justifying men by faith is indeed a wondrous one. We may easily lose sight of its wonderful character, since it is so familiar to us. But Luther is right when he says: "It is a great thing to hold and believe in sincere faith that *all my sins are forgiven* and that through such faith *I am righteous before God*. That is certainly a wondrous justice and far different from the justice of all jurists, all learned and wise men of this world" (St. L. XIII:2495; emphases added).[8]

4. Peura, "Christ as Favor," 66.
5. Tuomo Mannermaa, "Justification and Theosis in Lutheran-Orthodox Perspective," in *Union with Christ*, 38.
6. Tuomo Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith: Luther's View of Justification*, ed. Kirsi Stjerna (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 4.
7. Johann Andreas Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica* (1685), III, 621; quoted in Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, 486.
8. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950–1957), 2:505.

With reference also to other statements by Luther, Pieper claims that "the forgiveness of sins constitutes the entire justification, not merely a part of it. . . . Luther . . . says time and again that the righteousness of the Christians before God consists in 'the forgiveness of sins' (St. L. XI:1730 f.; V:594; XIII:771)."[9]

One of these references (St. Louis edition of Luther's Works, 5: 594) directs our attention to Luther's 1532 exposition of Psalm 51. In opposition to the scholastic notion that the "righteousness of God" is that by which God judges and condemns sinners, Luther points out here that it is necessary for a troubled conscience to remember instead "that the righteousness of God is *that by which we are justified*, or *the gift of the forgiveness of sins*. This righteousness in God is pleasant, because it makes of God not a righteous Judge but a forgiving Father, who wants to use His righteousness not to judge but *to justify and absolve sinners*" (AE 12: 392; emphases added).[10]

There is an ecumenical dimension to the work that the Finnish researchers are doing, since they believe that they are finding in Luther a teaching on justification that is more broadly catholic than the position of the Formula of Concord.[11] But Luther himself, as Pieper cites him, turns this ecumenical agenda on its head. Pieper quotes Luther to say that in the final analysis, all true Christians in the history of the church actually believed—implicitly if not explicitly—that their righteousness before God consisted in the forgiveness of their sins for Christ's sake, and not in anything else:

> That all Christians of all ages and all lands are one in the article of justification is thus set forth by Luther: "The faith that *we obtain the forgiveness of sins solely for Christ's sake by faith* has been the faith of the Fathers and prophets and all saints from the beginning of the world; and it has been the doctrine and teaching of Christ and the Apostles, who were commissioned to spread it in all the world. And it is to this day, and will be to the end, the unanimous understanding and voice of the whole Christian Church, which always in one mind and with one accord has confessed and fought for this article, that only in the name of the Lord Jesus forgiveness of sins is obtained and received. *And in this faith they have been justified before God and saved*" (St. L. XII:494 f., emphases added).[12]

In his dogmatics, Pieper does not include any Luther quotes in his discussion of the mystical union, which basically recapitulates the teaching of the Formula of Concord and the seventeenth-century dogmaticians. But Adolf Hoenecke does include such material in his *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, published posthumously in 1909. From 1878 until his death in 1908, Hoenecke was the Director and Professor of Dogmatics in the seminary of the Wisconsin Synod, a sister church of the Missouri Synod. Before dealing with the topic of the indwelling of Christ, Hoenecke states, in regard to justification as such, that

> the imputation of the obedience or righteousness of Jesus is correctly called the essence of justification. But Scripture also says that we are justified by the remission of sins (Romans 3:24, 25), by the acquittal from sins in Christ (Acts 13:38, 39), or by the nonimputation of sins (Romans 4:6–8). Thus according to these passages we must say that justification is complete if sins are forgiven to a person, or not imputed to him, or the essence of justification is the forgiveness or nonimputation of sins.[13]

When he comes to his discussion of the mystical union, Hoenecke quotes Quenstedt to say, "The moment of this union is altogether the same as the moment of regeneration, justification, and renewal. For all these *apotelesmata* occur at the same time."[14] Things can exist together without thereby becoming the same thing. The justification of the sinner for the sake of Christ's obedience, and the mystical union of Christ with the justified believer, do indeed exist together. And they *always* exist together in the faith and life of a Christian; never one without the other. They are never separated. But they *are distinct*.

Luther says time and again that the righteousness of the Christians before God consists in the forgiveness of sins.

Justification strictly speaking, and the mystical union strictly speaking, are not the same thing. And according to Hoenecke, the forgiveness of sins through Christ is always *logically* the source and basis of the union of Christ with the forgiven sinner.

When Hoenecke examines Luther's various pronouncements on justification and the mystical union, he does not see any evidence of a blending-together or homogenizing of these categories, in such a way that the forensic "edge" of justification would be dulled or softened. But in Luther's writings, Hoenecke does see some helpful testimonies to, and explications of, the mystical union in its own right. These are the statements by Luther that Hoenecke marshals as evidence of Luther's—and Lutheranism's—properly ordered "union with Christ" teaching:

> The third incomparable benefit of faith is that it unites the soul with Christ as a bride is united with her bridegroom.

9. Ibid., 2:537–38.
10. For another highly illustrative statement from Luther on this point, see AE 26: 231–32.
11. Peura, "Christ as Favor," 68.
12. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 2:517–18.
13. Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, 3:330.
14. Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica*, obj. dial. I, 3, 629; quoted in Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, 3:391.

> By this mystery, as the apostle teaches, Christ and the soul become one flesh ("The Freedom of a Christian," AE 31: 351).
>
> Thus the true Spirit dwells in the believers not merely according to his gifts, but according to his own substance ("Psalm 51," AE 12: 377).
>
> Faith takes hold of Christ and has him present, enclosing him as the ring encloses the gem ("Lectures on Galatians" [1535], AE 26: 132).
>
> "Not I, but Christ lives in me." Christ is my "form," which adorns my faith as color or light adorns a wall. (This fact has to be expounded in this crude way, for there is no spiritual way for us to grasp the idea that Christ clings and dwells in us as closely and intimately as light or whiteness clings to a wall.) . . . This attachment to him causes me to be liberated from the terror of the law and of sin ("Lectures on Galatians" [1535], AE 26: 167).
>
> But faith must be taught correctly, namely, that by it you are so cemented to Christ that he and you are as one person, which cannot be separated but remains attached to him forever. . . . Thus Ephesians 5:30 says: "We are members of the body of Christ, of His flesh and of His bones," in such a way that this faith couples Christ and me more intimately than a husband is coupled to his wife ("Lectures on Galatians" [1535], AE 26: 168).[15]

Both Pieper and Hoenecke taught and wrote in German,[16] and served predominantly German-speaking Lutheran constituencies. But the mystical union was also a topic of theological reflection among the English-speaking Lutherans in early twentieth-century America. During his long tenure as professor and later president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Henry Eyster Jacobs was the most influential leader in the English-speaking Lutheran Church. In 1905 his theological *magnum opus*, *A Summary of the Christian Faith*, was published. In this work, which is arranged in a catechetical question-and-answer format, Jacobs begins his chapter on "The Mystical Union" in this way:

> Besides the righteousness of Christ and the gifts which it has purchased what else does faith receive?
>
> Christ Himself who dwells in a peculiar way in every regenerate and justified soul.
>
> Galatians 2:20—"It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." John 15:5—"I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit." John 14:23—"My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Ephesians 3:17—"That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." 1 Corinthians 6:17—"He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."[17]

And how does Luther treat the mystical union? Jacobs answers that question as follows, with these words from the reformer's 1535 Lectures on Galatians:

> "Christ thus inhering and bound up with me" (literally, "glued to me," *conglutinatus mihi*), "and abiding in me, lives in me the life which I am living; yea, the life by which I thus live, is Christ Himself. . . . This inherence frees me from the terrors of the law and sin, takes me out of my own skin, and transfers me into Christ and His Kingdom, which is a kingdom of Grace, righteousness, peace, joy, life, salvation and eternal glory. . . . Because He lives in me, whatever grace, righteousness, life, peace, salvation is in me is that of Christ Himself, and, nevertheless, it is mine through that union (*conglutinationem*) and inherence which is by faith, and whereby Christ and I are made as it were one body in spirit." . . . "You are so bound up with Christ, that from you and Him there is made but one person, which cannot be separated, but so perpetually adheres to Him, that you can say with confidence: 'I am Christ,' i.e., Christ's righteousness, victory, life, etc., are mine; and Christ, in turn, says, 'I am that sinner,' i.e., his sins, death, etc., are mine, because he adheres to me, and I to him; for by faith we are joined into one body and one bone (Ephesians 5:30). This faith joins Christ and me more closely than the husband is joined to the wife" (On Galatians 2:20).[18]

Jacobs does not think that these statements by Luther are statements about the sinner's justification before God, strictly speaking. They are statements about the justified Christian's intimate and gracious union with Christ. The forgiveness of sins, and the Christian's mystical union with the Lord, are nevertheless both received in and by faith. The assurance of faith is therefore of great importance in any consideration of either topic.

Elsewhere in his book, Jacobs asks and answers this pertinent historical and theological question:

> What was Luther's advice to [Johannes] Brenz when [Brenz was] troubled by doubts concerning the assurance of faith?
>
> "I am accustomed, for the better understanding of this point, to conceive this idea, that there is no quality in my heart at all, call it either faith or charity; but instead of these I set Christ Himself, and I say, '*There is my righteousness*.'"
>
> The highest achievement of faith is to be so absorbed in looking to Christ as to forget itself. The children of Israel, who were bitten by serpents in the wilderness (Numbers 21:6–9), were healed upon the condition of looking upon the brazen serpent. Their attention was occupied, not with an analysis of the act of looking, but with the object of their gaze itself. So, important as self-examination is, Luther warns against its abuse, and seeks to turn morbid habits of introspection away from their ordinary channel

15. Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, 3:389–90.
16. Their respective dogmatics works have been quoted in the present essay from English translations.
17. Henry Eyster Jacobs, *A Summary of the Christian Faith* (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publication House, 1905), 244.
18. Ibid., 245–46.

to the righteousness outside of and above man in the merits of his Redeemer.[19]

This 1531 letter from Luther to Brenz was cited by Jacobs in at least three of his writings. The section of the letter that he cites here focuses on the forensic aspect of justification, and on the fact that it is the alien righteousness of Christ, coming to the Christian from outside of himself, that justifies him. But in a lengthier excerpt from the letter that Jacobs had included in an earlier book, *Elements of Religion*, the intimate connection that exists in Luther's theology between forensic justification and the mystical union is clearly evident. As quoted more fully in that earlier work, Luther writes:

> I am accustomed, my Brentius, for the better understanding of this point, to conceive this idea, that there is no quality in my heart at all, call it either faith or charity; but instead of these I set Christ Himself, and I say, *There is my righteousness*. He is my quality and my formal righteousness, as they call it, so as to free me from looking into Law or works; nay, from looking at Christ Himself as a teacher or a giver. But I look at Him as gift and as doctrine to me, in Himself, so that in Him I have all things. He says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life"; He says not, "I give thee the way and the truth and the life," as if He were working on me from without. All these things *He* must be *in me*; abiding, living and speaking *in me*, not through me or to me; that we may be "the righteousness of God *in Him*" (2 Corinthians 5:21); not in love, nor in the gifts and graces which follow.[20]

A Christian is justified by faith in Christ, and not by the working of an infused grace that is *detached from* Christ. And the faith that justifies is a faith that is filled with the life of Christ himself. It is not a sterile and merely intellectual thing. But the reason why such a faith justifies is not to be found in the faith itself, but is to be found in the *object* of faith. Faith justifies because it embraces Christ and receives the extrinsic righteousness of Christ. In yet another place where Jacobs cites and comments on the letter to Brenz, this important aspect of the letter is teased out and emphasized:

> "I am accustomed to conceive this idea," wrote Luther to Brenz, "that there is no quality in my heart at all, call it either faith or charity, but, instead of these, I set Christ himself before me, and say: There is my righteousness." In thus doing, he was simply performing an act of faith, for faith is simply saying: "There," i.e. outside of myself, "is my righteousness."[21]

Jacobs clearly knew that in the lines that followed these quoted lines, this letter went on to speak of Christ as living and abiding in the believing Christian. Jacobs never denied or minimized the mystical union. But the righteousness of Christ that justifies me is not a righteousness for which I am to look by means of introspection or inner contemplation. For justification, my faith always looks to a righteousness that is "outside of myself,"

Christ Himself is my quality and my formal righteousness.

in Christ, and in the message of his cross. Jacobs would not, therefore, have had much sympathy with *this* reading of Luther, from within the "New Finnish Interpretation," by Peura:

> Christ is completely holy and pure in the eyes of God. Where Christ is, there God directs his favor. Moreover, Christ indwells in the Christian's heart through faith. So, according to Luther, *the righteousness that stands in front of God is based on the indwelling of Christ. The indwelling Christ in the heart of the Christian is the necessary condition for God's favor* as well as for the renewing gift. The heart of the Christian is holy because of the indwelling of Christ.[22] (emphasis added)

There are a few places in Luther's writings were he uses the term *justification* in a less precise fashion, when he is not really seeking to make an important point about justification as such. The Finnish scholars are drawn to these places in the reformer's writings, and make liberal use of this material. An example of this broader usage of the term can be seen in Luther's 1535 Lectures on Galatians, where, in commenting on St. Paul's statement that "Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:21), Luther says that

> my old man (Ephesians 4:22) remains outside and is subject to the Law. *But so far as justification is concerned, Christ and I must be so closely attached that He lives in me and I in Him*. What a marvelous way of speaking! Because He lives in me, whatever grace, righteousness, life, peace, and salvation there is in me is all Christ's; nevertheless, it is mine as well, by the cementing and attachment that are through faith, by which we become as one body in the Spirit. Since Christ lives in me, grace, righteousness, life, and eternal salvation must be present with Him; and the Law, sin, and

19. Ibid., 204–5; emphasis in original.
20. Martin Luther, Letter to Johannes Brenz (1531), quoted in Henry Eyster Jacobs, *Elements of Religion* (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publication House, 1894), 285; emphasis in original.
21. Henry Eyster Jacobs, "Justification," in *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, ed. John A. W. Haas and Henry Eyster Jacobs (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), 258. It will be noticed that Jacobs tweaks his translation of this letter, to one degree or another, each time he quotes from it.
22. Peura, "Christ as Favor," 66.

> death must be absent. . . . Paul seeks to withdraw us completely from ourselves, from the Law, and from works, and to transplant us into Christ and faith in Christ, so that *in the area of justification* we look only at grace, and separate it far from the Law and from works, which belong far away. . . . *When it comes to justification, therefore, if you divide Christ's Person from your own, you are in the Law; you remain in it and live in yourself, which means that you are dead in the sight of God and damned by the Law.* (AE 26: 167–68; emphases added)[23]

We would note, however, that Luther says explicitly that he is speaking here of what obtains "in the *area* of justification" (*in ratione iustificande*). It is not too much of a stretch in logic to think that what is included "in the *area* of justification" are justification itself; that is, the imputation of righteousness and the nonimputation of sin as well as those things that necessarily accompany, and flow out of, justification strictly speaking, such as the believer's union with Christ and all that this entails.

Luther even goes so far as to say that there is a sense in which *all* the doctrines of the Christian faith are "included" in the doctrine of justification. He states, in the Galatians Lectures, that

> the doctrine of justification must be learned diligently. *For in it are included all the other doctrines of our faith;* and if it is sound, all the others are sound as well. Therefore when we teach that men are justified through Christ and that Christ is the Victor over sin, death, and the eternal curse, we are testifying at the same time that He is God by nature. (AE 26: 283; emphasis added)

This comprehensive *inclusion* does not mean that all other distinct articles of faith, besides that of justification, cease to exist. Each of them still deals legitimately with its own proper *locus* of Biblical revelation. But what this *does* mean is that all the articles of faith find their proper, organic relationship to each other—as far as human salvation is concerned—when they are understood according to their connection to the "chief article."

Instances of Luther's broader and less precise usage of the term *justification* need to be read in light of those places in his writings where he speaks clearly and carefully on the specific meaning of justification itself, narrowly defined. And there is such an axiomatic statement in these selfsame Lectures on Galatians:

> But the doctrine of justification is this, that we are *pronounced righteous* and are saved solely by faith in Christ, and without works. *If this is the true meaning of justification—as it certainly is*, or it will be necessary to get rid of all Scripture—then it immediately follows that *we are pronounced righteous* neither through monasticism nor through vows nor through Masses nor through any other works. (AE 26: 223; emphases added)

Elsewhere in these Lectures, Luther as it were paraphrases God's justifying message to humanity, and puts these words in God's mouth:

> "If you wish to placate Me, do not offer Me your works and merits. But believe in Jesus Christ, My only Son, who was born, who suffered, who was crucified, and who died for your sins. *Then I will accept you and pronounce you righteous. And whatever of your sin still remains in you, I will not impute to you.*" (AE 26: 231–32; emphasis added)

And in a very telling discussion of faith and the object of faith—also in these Galatians Lectures—Luther lays out a logical sequence of salvific realities that puts justification first and foremost, and that then goes on to mention the indwelling of Christ as something that is "also" in effect:

> We must turn our eyes completely to that bronze serpent, Christ nailed to the cross (John 3:14). *With our gaze fastened firmly to Him we must declare with assurance that He is our Righteousness and Life* and care nothing about the threats and terrors of the Law, sin, death, wrath, and the judgment of God. For the Christ on whom our gaze is fixed, in whom we exist, and *who also lives in us*, is the Victor and the Lord over the Law, sin, death, and every evil. (AE 26: 166–67; emphases added)

Of the American Lutheran theologians in the first half of the twentieth century whose writings on the theology of "union with Christ" we have examined, Joseph Stump is the most thorough in his treatment. Stump served as professor at the Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary in Maywood, Illinois, from 1915 to 1920, and then as professor and president of Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary in Minneapolis from 1920 to his death in 1935. In his book on *The Christian Faith*, when he discusses the doctrine of the sinner's justification by faith as Luther confessed it, Stump states that in Luther justification is indeed equated with the forgiveness of sins. But he also acknowledges that the faith which justifies is a lively and Christ-filled faith. Several statements from Luther's 1535 Lectures on Galatians are presented to illustrate this vibrant doctrine of justifying faith:

> In opposition to the Roman doctrine that justification is an infusion of righteousness, he [Luther] taught that it is nothing else than the forgiveness of sins. To apprehend Christ by faith and to have him in our hearts is righteousness. "Faith apprehends Christ and has Him present and holds Him enclosed, like the ring the gem; and whoever is found with this faith apprehending Christ in the heart, him God

23. In his *Christ Present in Faith: Luther's View of Justification*, Mannermaa does in fact cite these words of Luther as a definitive summary of the reformer's actual but previously misunderstood teaching (40–42). According to Mannermaa, this section of Luther's Lectures on Galatians shows that "the believer's real participation in Christ is an essential part of Luther's theology of justification" (41).

> counts righteous." Erl. Ed. Com. Gal. I, 195. "Hence there is only this one way of avoiding condemnation, namely, to believe and say with certain confidence, 'Thou, Christ, art my sinful and cursed one, or rather, I am Thy sin, Thy curse, Thy death, Thy wrath of God, Thy hell; Thou on the other hand death, etc. are mine, because he adheres to me and I to him, for we are joined through faith in one flesh and bone.'" *Ibid*., I, 247. "We do not acquire that divine righteousness except through gratuitous imputation." *Ibid*., I, 16.[24]

The differences between Luther's more exuberant and colorful form of teaching about this, and Melanchthon's more staid and systematic approach, is not seen as a substantial difference. According to Stump, "Melanchthon's statements are similar, but are set forth in a more didactic manner."[25]

The mystical union, then, is more like a bridge between justification and sanctification.

Mannermaa states at one point that "at least on the level of terminology, the distinction, drawn in later Lutheranism, between justification as forgiveness and sanctification as divine indwelling, is alien to the Reformer."[26] Elsewhere Mannermaa opines that in the Formula of Concord, contrary to Luther's understanding, "justification is defined only as the imputation of the forgiveness of sins, whereas *inhabitatio Dei* is defined as a separate phenomenon and part of sanctification or renewal."[27] It is seriously to be questioned, however, whether it is in fact an accurate reflection of classic Lutheran teaching to speak without qualification of "sanctification as divine indwelling," or to say that the divine indwelling is simply "part of sanctification or renewal." Stump delineates the relationship between sanctification and the mystical union of Christ with the justified believer in a much more nuanced and careful way when he writes:

> There is a mystical union of God and the believer, which is taught in the Scriptures and experienced by the Christian, but which is difficult to describe. Chronologically its beginning coincides with regeneration and justification; logically it follows upon them, and forms the next stage in the order of salvation. It is not to be interpreted simply as an activity of God in us, but possesses the nature of a personal fellowship (1 John 1:3). God lives in the believer, and the believer in God. *It is the starting point and living source of that progressive sanctification which begins in the justified man and continues to the end of his earthly life.*[28] (emphasis added)

Stump also notes:

> *The union is established when the sinner comes to faith and is justified*, and grows more close, intimate and strength-giving as his sanctification increases. The spiritual life which he leads has its source and vitality in Christ. Believers live in Christ, and He in them, and His life flows into and through them. Without Him they can do nothing (John 15:5).[29] (emphasis added)

The mystical union, then, is more like a bridge between justification and sanctification—conceptually considered—and is not simply to be equated with, or subsumed under, sanctification. The faith that receives God's pardon in Christ also receives Christ himself—and with Christ the whole Trinity. And since the Triune God is the living God, his presence invariably brings life and renewal to the believing Christian who is indwelt by the Lord.[30] When the Finns imply, therefore, that the believer's union with Christ must be conceived of either as a species of justification or as a species of sanctification, they have veered into the logical fallacy of a false alternative. Strictly speaking, the mystical union is neither justification nor sanctification. Conceptually, it flows out of the former, and into the latter. But again, in actual experience, the mystical union is simultaneous with justification, and is likewise simultaneous with the inauguration of the Christian's new life of holiness.

Stump's conviction that the mystical union as such should not be confused with justification as such does not in any way mean that, in his thinking, the mystical union is not an essential aspect of the gift of salvation that God bestows on us in Christ. In finding the proper place for the Bible's "union with Christ" teaching in the larger scheme of Christian theology, Stump would not say, as do the Finns, that justification includes more than the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of righteousness. But he *would* say that the Lord's *salvation for sinners* includes *more than justification*. He describes the profound importance of the mystical union for the Christian's salvation in this way:

> The source of all spiritual life is in God through Christ. By faith the believer is reunited with God from whom he was separated and cut off by sin. Thus he who was spiritually dead is now made spiritually alive. As the severed branch which is grafted back into the tree lives again because of its new union with the tree, so the believer lives again because

24. Joseph Stump, *The Christian Faith* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1932), 234.
25. Ibid.
26. Mannermaa, "Justification and Theosis," 38.
27. Mannermaa, *Christ Present*, 42.
28. Stump, *The Christian Faith*, 272.
29. Ibid., 273.
30. In *The Christian Faith*, 272–73, Stump cites and summarizes various passages of Scripture that form the basis for this teaching.

> of his union with God through Christ. The branch grows and puts forth leaves and fruit; but it does so only because and as long as it is vitally united with the tree from which its life comes. The believer lives and bears fruit in holy living; but he does so only because and as long as he is united with God by faith. Through this mystical union life comes to him from God. Only by virtue of this union does he live spiritually. What this union meant to Paul he tells us when he says, "Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).[31]

According to Stump,

> the indwelling of God in the believer . . . is a close personal union in which the believer rests in Christ and draws strength from Him. . . . The personality of man . . . is united in a mystical and indescribable yet real and comforting way with Christ, or with God in Christ, so that Christ lives in him and he in Christ. The mystery of this union finds its explanation in the faith which grasps Christ and makes Him its very own, and in the love which flows from that faith and binds the soul and Christ together in the most intimate and loving fellowship.[32]

All of these insights are seen by Stump to be in keeping with the teaching of Luther, especially as that teaching is found in Luther's oft-quoted Lectures on Galatians. Stump writes:

> Luther has many mystical elements in his writings. He says in his commentary on Galatians, 2:20: "Christ therefore, joined and united unto me and abiding in me, liveth this life in me which I now live. Yes, Christ Himself is this life which now I live. Wherefore Christ and I in this behalf are both one. . . . So Christ, living and abiding in me, taketh away and swalloweth up all evils which vex and afflict me. . . . Because Christ liveth in me, therefore look what grace, righteousness, life, peace and salvation is in me; it is His, and yet notwithstanding the same is mine also by that inseparable union and conjunction which is through faith; by the which I and Christ are made as it were one spirit. . . . Thou art so entirely and nearly joined unto Christ, that He and thou are made as it were one person; so that thou mayest boldly say, I am now one with Christ, that is to say, Christ's righteousness, victory and life are mine. And again Christ may say, I am that sinner, that is, his sins and death are mine, because he is united and joined unto me and I unto him. For by faith we are so joined together that we are become one flesh and one bone [Ephesians 5:31], we are members of the body of Christ, flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone; so that this faith doth couple Christ and me more near together than the husband is coupled with the wife." —Engl. Transl. Publ. By S. S. Miles, 1840.[33]

Tuomo Mannermaa and his Finnish colleagues, in their European context, have rediscovered a highly significant aspect of Luther's theology, which had indeed been lost to the post-critical and post-Kantian mainstream theological tradition of their continent. Commendably, the Finns have attempted to reintroduce to the larger world of Christendom the important teaching of the great reformer on the believer's real and intimate union with the divine Savior himself. But we are not persuaded that the Finns have correctly grasped how this important truth meshes and coordinates with the other aspects of Luther's—*and Scripture's*—doctrine of salvation. In fact, we are persuaded that they have not yet properly grasped this.

In the American tradition of Lutheran theology, an awareness of this important component of Luther's theology was never really lost. American Lutherans in the first half of the twentieth century were spared the amnesiatic effects of neo-Kantian thinking, which then reigned in Europe, since they had not allowed themselves to be infected by that thinking. They preserved what the Europeans lost. They preserved what the Finns are now trying to reclaim.

But what the American church also preserved was an acute awareness of, and commitment to, the central focus of Luther's Pauline doctrine of justification by faith. They knew that before they could give thought to the Christian's union with Christ, they needed to give thought to what it is that makes a Christian to *be* a Christian, and what it is that soothes, with *divine forgiveness*, the conscience of a penitent sinner. LOGIA

31. Stump, *The Christian Faith*, 273–74.
32. Ibid., 274.
33. Ibid., 274–75.

Revisiting Pontoppidan

Mark DeGarmeaux

Much like "doubting Thomas" or even Benedict Arnold, the name Pontoppidan has a negative resonance in the minds of some Lutherans in America who recognize the name. To most others the name is an idle curiosity. Several congregations in the United States have chosen to be called Pontoppidan Lutheran Church. The name Pontoppidan is a Latinized version of the family name Broby, meaning "the city or town by the bridge." This name, sadly, is also connected to the election or predestination controversy of the late nineteenth century among Lutherans in America. This controversy raged particularly in the Norwegian Synod and the Missouri Synod, causing major divisions and splinter groups, some of them even forming new church bodies. Pontoppidan's famous catechism explanation allows the *intuitu fidei* (in view of faith) understanding of predestination, the idea that God chose some to be saved because he foresaw in them that they would accept his grace. "God predestined to eternal life all those who He saw from eternity would accept the offered grace, believe in Christ, and remain steadfast in this faith to the end" (Question 548).[1] Some interpret this to mean that there is "something in man" (*aliquid in homine*) that caused God to choose or elect them.

Pontoppidan certainly supported pietistic ideals, but his work should not be judged only by this one sad chapter of church history that occurred a century after his death. His pietism was not a radical rejection of all Lutheran understanding concerning the means of grace and the power of the word and sacraments. We should be careful to distinguish various forms of pietism and judge individuals by their own words and actions. Pontoppidan's influence continues to this day, particularly in Norway and America in the catechization of Lutheran young people. The structure and content of many questions from his catechism explanation are reflected in catechisms still in use among Lutheran churches of Danish and Norwegian heritage. Erik Pontoppidan deserves reexamination, or for most people a first true examination, of what he actually said and did.

PONTOPPIDAN'S LIFE

Erik Ludvigsen Pontoppidan (the Younger) was born in Aarhus, Denmark, in 1698. His father was a parish pastor. Orphaned at a young age, Pontoppidan lived and studied in many places, including Denmark, the Netherlands, and England. After taking the theology examination at the University in Copenhagen in 1718, he served as a private tutor in Norway, and later as parish priest and court chaplain in Denmark. With a wide range of interests, he wrote books throughout his life about Christian faith and doctrine, pastoral theology, religious and secular history, apologetics, pedagogy, and natural science.

By royal commission he prepared a new catechism explanation (1737) and a hymnbook (1740). According to the *Kirke-leksikon for Norden*, Pontoppidan's hymnbook, influenced by Pietism, was the first one arranged by topic or content and not according to the church year.[2] During this time he also served as occasional professor of theology, oversaw a revision of the Danish Bible translation, and was named a member of the Society of Science. In 1747 he was named Bishop of Bergen, Norway, where he instituted several educational reforms and wrote one of the first treatises on the Norwegian language. His time in Norway was not without controversy, and in 1754 he returned to Copenhagen to serve as vice-chancellor of the University. He was married three times and had ten children. Pontoppidan died in 1764 in Copenhagen.

HISTORY AND USAGE OF PONTOPPIDAN'S CATECHISM EXPLANATION

King Christian VI, a Pietist, was troubled by the chaotic situation with regard to catechism explanations and the instruction of catechumens. He established mandatory confirmation rather than occasional catechization, and he commissioned Erik Pontoppidan to provide a catechism explanation to be used throughout the two kingdoms of Denmark and Norway. The manuscript received approval, was printed in the Vaisenhuset (Orphanage) Printshop in 1737, and sent out by royal decree in 1738. The Royal Orphanage,[3] founded in 1727, enjoys special

Mark DeGarmeaux teaches at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota.

1. Citations of questions from Pontoppidan's catechism explanation are my translation from an anthology entitled *Christian Catechetical Texts*, compiled and edited by William P. McDonald and published by Edwin Mellen Press in 2011 in three volumes: *Medieval and Reformation, 1357–1579*; *Orthodoxy and Pietism, 1618–1778*; and *Modern and Missionary, 1790–1908*. The translation is believed to be the first complete English translation of the first edition of this classic work.
2. *Kirke-leksikon for Norden* (Aarhus, Denmark: Forlaget for Kirke-leksikon, 1900–1929), 3:581–82.
3. http://www.vajsenhuset.dk.

rights to this day for printing Bibles and hymnbooks in Denmark. Pontoppidan's most influential and long-lasting work is his catechism explanation. *Truth unto Godliness*, consisting of seven hundred fifty-nine questions and answers, was published in 1737, coinciding with the two-hundredth anniversary of the coming of the Lutheran Reformation to Denmark in 1536.

The goal of his book was an important tenet of Pietism: orthopraxis.

Mogens Brøndsted[4] suggests that the longer title, *Truth unto Godliness: In a Simple and, as Much as Possible, Short, Yet Sufficient Explanation of Sainted Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism*, is intended as a tribute and reference to both St. Paul and Jacob Spener. Part of the title is derived from Titus 1:1: "Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the *truth* which accords with *godliness*" [emphasis mine]. Pontoppidan picks up on the word "simple" from the title of Spener's book *A Simple Explanation of Christian Doctrine*. In an interleaved copy of his own book Pontoppidan noted additions and references to parallel sections in Spener's book and others.[5] The goal of his book was an important tenet of Pietism: orthopraxis, the idea that true doctrine should lead to godly behavior. For orthodox Lutherans, this must not lead to a perfectionistic understanding, but must live alongside the understanding that people are at the same time saint and sinner (*simul iustus et peccator*).

Pontoppidan's catechism explanation was widely used and respected in Denmark and Norway. When Rationalism began to take hold, Pontoppidan's explanation lost its strong influence in Denmark. But certain regions of Denmark held on to their original version of Pontoppidan (1737) and their Kingo hymnbook (1699) into at least the 1950s, even though at times they faced fines for refusing to send their children to school and to catechism instruction that used a newer catechism.[6]

Pontoppidan had greater influence in Norway, especially the southern and western parts of the country. He served as bishop of Bergen from 1747 to 1754. During that time he also did important work in linguistics, education, and geography. In Norway, Rationalism did not take root as deeply as in Denmark because there were very few of a true class of nobility, and the common people held more to traditional Lutheranism or to pietistic Lutheranism, especially under the influence of Hans Nielsen Hauge.

From 1814 to 2000 there were at least ninety editions or versions of Pontoppidan's catechism explanation in Norway and only seven in Denmark. At least fifteen versions, almost all abridged, were printed by Norwegians in America.[7] The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in Norway (now called *Det evangelisk-luthersk kirkesamfunn*), founded in 1872, still uses a basically complete edition of Pontoppidan. In the United States, the Church of the Lutheran Brethren, based in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, published a version of Pontoppidan as recently as 1988. Through the activity of the Norwegian Missionary Society, Pontoppidan's catechism was also translated into Malagasy for the people of Madagascar. In America, there are and were several congregations named Pontoppidan Lutheran Church in places like North Dakota, Minnesota, Illinois, and Iowa.

Pontoppidan's catechism explanation reached a status that is unimaginable today. It was a book so highly respected that it was carefully memorized—not an unusual teaching technique for the time. But for some people that memorization reached even to the extent of distinguishing between the word *Saint* and the abbreviation *St*. One person boasted of having recited the book one hundred eight times. Brøndsted relates these and other fascinating anecdotes, including one about the boy who would not shovel (*skuffe*) the path because the catechism said not to lie or deceive (*skuffe*).[8]

Despite certain overemphasis placed on Pontoppidan's work, his actual pedagogy was driven by a concern for the student. In the foreword to the very first edition he recognized the varying ability of students and marked certain questions as somewhat optional: not to be memorized, but only to be read and studied:

> The questions that are marked with a line in the margin, and thus obviously are separate, can simply be read and considered in the book, but not memorized, NB, by children who are slow learners and who have far too little time in school. But those who do not lack time or ability ought not pass over any part. When this is noted, then one cannot rightly complain that the book is too large or difficult to learn from memory, since a third or fourth of it is marked.

CONTENT OF PONTOPPIDAN'S CATECHISM EXPLANATION

Lutherans who have experienced a thorough instruction in Luther's *Small Catechism* will feel comfortable through much of Pontoppidan's explanation. Questions 26 and 33–38 offer an emphasis and explanation of law and gospel as a basic key to understanding the Bible. A good discussion of the three kinds of law given in the Old Testament is found in questions 34–54.

4. Mogens Brøndsted, "Historien om Pontoppidans 'Forklaring' i Danmark og Norge," *Fund og forskning i det Kongelige Biblioteks samlinger* 12 (1965): 47–65; accessed online at http://img.kb.dk/tidsskriftdk/pdf/ffo/ffo_1965_12-PDF/ffo_1965_12_100852.pdf (accessed 17 August 2011). Many points throughout this article are based on Brøndsted.
5. Ibid., 49.
6. Ibid., 53.
7. Ibid., 65.
8. Ibid., 52.

Pietistic concerns are most evident in regard to keeping the law. Pietism tends to have a more perfectionist view, while the more traditional Lutheran view quickly acknowledges that no one can keep the law perfectly and certainly not for any merit for salvation. Pontoppidan's answer to question 316 is probably quite startling to most Lutherans today. Later editions based on Pontoppidan often conflate questions 316–17, emphasizing the answer that it is not possible to keep the law perfectly.

Ulrik Vilhelm Koren, an important leader of the old Norwegian Synod, recognized Pontoppidan as "our dear old teacher."

316. Can one then keep God's law or commandments? Yes. If one truly loves God, then by the power of Christ he both has to and is able to keep God's commandments in the sincerity of an evangelical spirit, although not according to the utmost strictness of the law, and therefore not for any merit, but as a proof of his faith and love. Jn 14:23. 1 Jn 5:3.

317. Can we then merit salvation by keeping the law? No; because:

1) Our obedience is a debt or duty to which we are obligated.

Luke 17:10. When you have done all things that are commanded of you, then say: "We are unworthy servants, for we did what we were obliged to do."

2) The law is not kept by our own nature, but by the power of God's grace; and what God works in us is not our merit.

Phil. 2:13. God is the One who works in you both to will and to do according to His good pleasure.

3) Although the law is thus never kept perfectly, since the obedience of the willing spirit is mixed together with the weakness of the flesh, nevertheless God in grace regards and rewards our imperfect obedience for the sake of Christ.

Ps. 130:3. Lord, if You should mark iniquities; O Lord, who could stand?

Questions 82–86 discuss various aspects of fear or reverence for God in terms of the attitude of a slave or a son. Questions 161–91 offer a full understanding of the commandment to honor parents to include government and other superiors. These questions also note the three estates of government, school/church (tied together in Pontoppidan's society and understanding), and the home.

Concern for animals seems to be a modern ideal, but animals were important for transportation and work in the eighteenth century. Question 205 simply states that cruelty toward "creatures that cannot speak" is also a sin.

Discussion of the creation of angels and the meaning of the word *angel* provides brief but clear and helpful instruction about Christ's Old Testament appearances as the "Angel of the Lord," a concept that can be confusing and difficult to understand.

363. Which are the foremost invisible creatures? The angels, whose name means messenger, and therefore Christ is also considered the uncreated Angel who is sent by His Father, and in the Old Testament He is often revealed in this way. Gen. 22:11. Ex. 3:2.

Pontoppidan's pastoral heart and pedagogical skills are reflected very well in question 615, which distinguishes between giving offense and taking offense, as well as in question 420, where he applies the threefold office of Christ in a very practical and comforting way.

420. What should thinking about Christ's office encourage you to do? To love Him as my High Priest and Redeemer, to believe in Him as my Prophet, to honor and obey Him as my King, since I also can have the greatest comfort from His offices.

His definition and explanation of faith seems to recall Augustine's view of the threefold aspect of faith as knowledge, assent, and trust (Question 495).

PONTOPPIDAN, CITED BY ULRIK VILHELM KOREN

Ulrik Vilhelm Koren, an important leader of the old Norwegian Synod, recognized Pontoppidan as "our dear old teacher," and cited his works favorably several times in his writings. At the dedication of Albert Lea Lutheran High School in 1891, he recognizes the bishop as a longstanding authority and appreciates his perspective on the Christian's dual citizenship: "The old book by Pontoppidan that has been placed into the hands of our youth now for so many generations already in its first question refers to the fear of God as the source not only of salvation in heaven, but also of happiness on earth."[9]

In his essay "What Hinders the Merger of the Various Norwegian Lutheran Synods into One Church Body,"[10] Koren calls Pontoppidan "our dear old teacher," and cites questions about faith and good works, and whether non-Christians can do works that are good in the eyes of God. He calls him "our old father in Christ" and cites his book on pastoral theology (*Collegium pastorale*) in his essay "Trite Phrases, Sophistry, and

9. Ulrik Vilhelm Koren, *Samlede skrifter* (Decorah, Iowa: Lutheran Publishing House Bogtrykkeri, 1912), 2:396.
10. Ibid., 2:77–107; English translation in Ulrik Vilhelm Koren, *Truth Unchanged, Unchanging: Selected Sermons, Addresses and Doctrinal Articles*, trans. and ed. the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Translation Committee (Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic Publishing Company, 1978), 200–18.

Grandiloquent Platitudes: An Admonition." Here Pontoppidan urges the use of plain and simple words in proclaiming the gospel of Christ, which in itself is the power of God, just as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1 and 2.[11]

The most controversial question in Pontoppidan's Explanation is "What is election?"

The most controversial question in Pontoppidan's Explanation is number 548: "What is election? That God predestined to eternal life all those who He saw from eternity would accept the offered grace, believe in Christ, and remain steadfast in this faith to the end." Koren acknowledges that this "can be understood in various ways," but he concludes that the words should be understood in the simplest way possible, as a simple future tense: some will accept the offered grace; not that some sinners, in contrast to others, had a willingness or will and intent to accept God's grace. This sentence, he also notes, must be understood in agreement with Pontoppidan's statements about the corruption and powerlessness of natural man.[12] At one point he even uses the expression "we all confess with Pontoppidan" that "a new desire, power, and longing in the will . . . comes through regeneration."[13]

Koren clearly respected the teaching and writings of Bishop Pontoppidan, recognizing his place in Lutheran education and offering a proper interpretation of his words that were so often misused or even maligned.

11. Koren, *Samlede skrifter,* 3:104–5.
12. Ibid., 3:144–45, in an essay entitled "Prof. Schmidt's Peace Proposal Contains a Trap."
13. Ibid., 3:308.

CONCLUSION

It may be time to revisit — or actually read for the first time — the writings of this important Scandinavian author, educator, scientist, and bishop, and give him a fairer evaluation for the totality of his influence, and not just shun him because of the most controversial aspect of his legacy. Though his work shows the evidence of pietistic influence, it also bears the clear marks of Lutheranism. An evaluation of Pontoppidan, as with any person or topic, should be a two-sided exercise: distinguishing false doctrine from the truth of Scripture and putting the best construction on everything (Eighth Commandment), and understanding the person's place in history. Pontoppidan's writings and his larger influence deserve to be studied and evaluated to ascertain better their value to modern Lutheran catechesis and pastoral theology. LOGIA

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Kārlis Irbe, First Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia

Voldemārs Lauciņš

In 2011 the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (Latvijas evaņģēliski luteriskā baznīca) (ELCL) celebrated the one-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the birth of its first bishop, Kārlis Irbe (1861–1934). Kārlis Irbe was born and grew up in the territory of present-day Latvia, which was then part of the Russian Empire. In 1922 he was elected bishop of the Lutheran church in the newly established Republic of Latvia. Irbe is significant as a key person in a time of transition in Latvian history and in the renewal of the Lutheran church in the region.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Thus far no in-depth academic research has been dedicated to Irbe's life. In the two months (May and June, 1934) following his death, the ELCL's youth journal, *Jaunatnes ceļš* (*The Way of the Youth*), dedicated a series of articles to Irbe's life. All these articles were written by various authors and gave an overview of some important moments in his life. A general Irbe biography was written by former ELCL archbishop Ēriks Mesters (1926–2009) (Ēriks Mesters, *Latvijas evaņģēliski luteriskās baznīcas bīskaps Dr. theol. Kārlis Irbe* [Riga: Svētdienas rīts, 1994]) that presents an overview of Irbe's life, several of Irbe's articles, and memories of his contemporaries. Quite a few articles and smaller items have been dedicated to Kārlis Irbe and the crucial periods of his life. These writings are taken into consideration for the present article.

Kārlis Irbe[1] was born on 7 August 1861[2] in Gaiķi parish, a rural area in central South Kurzeme in the western part of present-day Latvia. At the time, Latvia was part of three territories of the Russian Empire. The Baltic region or Livonia — part of today's Latvia and Estonia — was distinguished from the majority of Russian-speaking administrative territories belonging to the Russian Orthodox Church by its cultural (German language) and confessional (Lutheran) characteristics.

Baltic-German (German *Deutsch-Balten*, *Baltendeutsche*, Latvian *vācbalti*, *baltvācieši*) presence in the territory of contemporary Latvia and Estonia started at the end of the twelfth century when the Germans came as merchants and missionaries. From the beginning of the thirteenth century they subjected the entire region with military force and established dominion over the local tribes that later formed Latvia and Estonia. Their dominance in the region continued until the twentieth century despite changes in the overall hegemony of the region between the Lithuanian-Polish, Swedes, and Russians. Baltic-German influence waned only after the establishment of the nation states of Estonia and Latvia and disappeared with the departure of the majority of Baltic Germans during World War II.

For centuries the Baltic-German governing class had been influential among the highest imperial powers. Their privileges in the region remained unchallenged until the closing decades of the nineteenth century when growing Russian nationalism — *Russification* — gained ground in the non-Russian areas of the empire with its push to unify the entire empire by means of a single language (Russian), under one ruler (the Russian tsar), and one church (Russian Orthodoxy). The rise of nationalism throughout Europe in the nineteenth century also found its way into Latvia, where the majority population were ethnic Latvians who belonged to neither the German nor Russian lingual tree. Tensions arising from these three ethnic strains — [Baltic-]German, ethnic Latvian, and Russian — were at the root of ethnic struggles that lasted for many years after the establishment of independent Latvia after World War I, with the latter two still playing a political, economic, and ethnic role in Latvia today.

Kārlis Irbe's father was a farmer, as were his three older siblings, two brothers and a sister. But Kārlis's parents wanted him to be educated. Therefore, he was sent to the parish primary school and *Gymnasium* (secondary school). However, home was the place where Kārlis received his initial Christian formation, which shaped his desire to study theology. His father, despite his blindness, taught his son hymns and Bible stories, and his mother had him read extensively from books of sermons. Since his parents' finances were not sufficient to allow him to study theology without further subsidy, Kārlis had to earn the necessary money working as a home teacher in Russia.

Voldemārs Lauciņš is a doctoral student at the University of Helsinki.

1. The first bishop of the ELCL (1861–1934), usually referred to as *bishop Kārlis Irbe* or *Kārlis Irbe, sen*, should not be confused with Kārlis Irbe (1885–1966), a nephew of the former. The latter was a dean for many years and was the executive head of the ELCL for a short time after World War II (1944–1946). The latter is sometimes referred to as *dean Kārlis Irbe* or *Kārlis Irbe jun*.
2. At that time, the Julian calendar or the Old Style dating was still used in Latvia as in the rest of the Russian Empire. According to it, Kārlis Irbe was born on 26 July 1861.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Lutheran theology could be studied in two universities in the Russian Empire: in Tartu (in present-day Estonia) and Helsinki (in present-day Finland). Latvians pursuing the study of theology preferred Tartu, as did Irbe in 1881. At the time, Tartu was still under the influence of orthodox Lutheranism, and the university was strongly connected to Erlangen University in Germany. At Tartu, Irbe was among the students involved in pro-Latvian activities and in opposing German preeminence. He is reported to have left the university's fraternity festival when nationalistic German students raised a song celebrating Teutonic superiority. As a counterpoint, fraternities for Latvians downplayed German traditions and were places that cultivated Latvian national and cultural life.

"Reconversion" from the Russian Orthodox Church back to Lutheranism was strictly forbidden.

Upon graduating in 1886, Irbe did not immediately receive a call to a congregation in Latvia, so he served a German Lutheran parish in Moscow. Many Latvian theologians with university degrees at the time faced serious difficulties in receiving calls to Latvian congregations, and some of them were not able to serve in their fatherland at all. This situation was caused by the policies of the Baltic-German church governors. Irbe was ordained in Moscow in 1887. That same year he received a call from congregations in Dzērbene and Drusti in the central part of Vidzeme, the north-central region of Latvia. He served there as pastor for the next eighteen years.

These years coincided with an intense Russification policy in the empire's Baltic governorates. Under this policy, for more than fifty years a hotly debated and highly political issue in Vidzeme's Lutheran church was the question of the "reconversion" of Latvians (and Estonians in the north part of the territory). A large Latvian population (up to 60,000 peasants) had converted to the Russian Orthodox Church under imperial pressure during the first part of the nineteenth century. Many of them were motivated by "wink-and-nod" promises of land/agricultural property; many others did so as a political expression protesting against a Lutheran church governed by the Baltic Germans. But the land promises were not kept, and the converts received only insignificant benefits from the switch. The majority of peasants were disappointed and wanted to revert, but "reconversion" from the Russian Orthodox Church back to Lutheranism was strictly forbidden, with both the "reconvert" and the pastor subject to punishment. Moreover, according to the Russification policy, interfaith marriages with the Orthodox were required to be performed in Russian Orthodox churches with the children of such unions required to be raised in Orthodoxy. Despite the risks involved, many Lutheran pastors accepted reconverts for either pastoral or political reasons. Many of them were punished and some even exiled. Kārlis Irbe himself was suspended for several months for performing a marriage in a Lutheran church for a couple in which one was Russian Orthodox. He spent this time travelling in Europe, particularly in Scandinavia.

Since Irbe's pastoral prudence, experience, and skills were highly valued by both the Latvian and German Lutheran clergy, and since the number of Latvian pastors in the deanery had significantly increased, Irbe was elected dean of the district of Cēsis in 1902. He was the first Latvian pastor to be elected to this high administrative position in the Lutheran church. But in 1905 Irbe left his pastorate in Dzērbene and Drusti as a result of a constellation of pressures[3] and accepted a teacher's position at a girls' school in Riga. Later he became the principal of the school, a position he retained until the school was evacuated due to the approach of German troops in 1917, when he also left Latvia.

The First World War wreaked havoc on the Latvians. Only Belgium faced more war destruction and only Serbia lost more of its population than did Latvia.[4] Many Latvians fled the war zone or had to follow evacuated schools and factories into the Russian interior as the German front advanced. Latvian theologians in Russia assumed spiritual responsibility for their refugee countrymen wherever it was possible. However, the war with Germany weakened the political influence of the Baltic Germans while the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II in March 1917 made Russia more open to ethnic minorities. An opportunity thus arose to establish a *Latvian* Lutheran church. Latvian theologians had already met for the first time in their own conference in March 1916. In 1917 they established the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Consistory, which was recognized by the Russian provisional government under Kerensky (February–November 1917). Kārlis Irbe was elected president of the consistory with the rights of superintendant/bishop. The solemn divine service in honor of his installation was held in St. Petersburg (then Petrograd) on 31 October 1917, a week before the Bolsheviks' putsch. Meanwhile, the entire territory of Latvia was

3. Various authors give different reasons for this action. Mesters cites (among other reasons) a miscommunication over a practical matter with the parish council (Mesters, *Bīskaps Kārlis Irbe*, 19). This is supported also by Roberts Feldmanis, *Kārlis Irbe, Latvijas evaņģēliski litueriskās baznīcas pirmais bīskaps, 1861–1934*, unpublished lecture). Kārlis Kundziņš mentions Irbe's disappointment with the Revolution (1905) as a cause (Kārlis Kundziņš, sen., "Bīskapa Dr. theol. K. Irbes 70 gadu piemiņai" ["For the memory of bishop Dr. Theol. K. Irbe's 70 years"], *Jaunatnes ceļš* 1931, nr. 8 [August]: 234). Irbe himself indirectly writes about his insufficient spiritual background from the university for the pastoral ministry as the motive for the transfer from the parish to the school (Kārlis Irbe, "Nākamā Sinode," *Svētdienas Rīts* 1925, nr. 2 [January]: 13). All of these factors probably played a certain role.
4. Daina Bleiere, et. al., *Latvijas vēsture 20. gadsimts* (*History of Latvia in the 20th Century*), 2nd ed. ([Riga]: Jumava, 2005), 45.

occupied by German troops. Tensions between Baltic Germans and Latvians rose again to new heights,[5] especially since neither shared the same view about the occupying German troops.[6]

The situation climaxed in the establishment of the Republic of Latvia on 18 November 1918, a development that was supported by the Allies and that strove to take into itself everything and everyone Latvian. At first, acceptance of the new republic by the general populace was hampered due to highly effective Bolshevik propaganda against it. But the new national government gained in popularity after the people experienced the "red terror," by which the Bolsheviks revealed their disregard for the interests of the majority in an attempt to assert their own aims. A significant part of Latvia was under the control of the republic by the second half of 1919, but it took an entire year to free the rest of Latvia from Russia's army and to sign a peace treaty with Russia (August 1920).

The new national government showed an interest in reshaping the Lutheran church as soon as it gained control over the majority portion of Latvian territory. Three key steps brought the reshaping about: the merger of the previous two consistories into one nationwide Lutheran church; the freeing of the church's governance from control by the Baltic Germans; and the freeing of the church from feudal subordination to its patrons. The church merger was prompted by both Latvian society (represented by theologians, pastors, and educated laity) and the state.

Kārlis Irbe returned from Russia in 1920 and immediately joined the church's constitutive efforts. The first ELCL synod of laity and pastors met on 21–24 February 1922.[7] The synod discussed the office of the church's leader and voted in favor of a pastor with the title of bishop.[8] Irbe was unanimously elected (with one abstention) as the first bishop of the ELCL.[9] For his own part, Irbe insisted on the election of an assistant bishop for the German minority of the church. In this way he made an effort to keep the Latvians and Germans together in one church of a single confession.

Upon taking office, Irbe inherited a situation that required different approaches to meet the challenges of the new realities of the time. The economic situation of the region was a shambles and many churches and parsonages had been destroyed. The church's traditional sources of revenue were no longer viable sources of support. The church experienced a serious shortage of clergy: many pastors (and a number of committed laypersons) had been killed,[10] some were still in Russia, and some Baltic Germans had fled to Germany. Compared to the prewar situation, the number of pastors was nearly halved. Moreover, the church had to make its way in a completely different ethnic and social environment. When Irbe left office in November 1931, the ELCL was in a much-improved situation due to his service.

Irbe insisted on the election of an assistant bishop for the German minority of the church.

Church-state relations and various theological controversies present two pivotal aspects of Irbe's episcopacy that merit special attention. But before turning to them, we should briefly point out several other important aspects of Irbe's tenure as bishop of the ELCL. Irbe considered youth work and the Christian education of children among the most critical of the church's fields of work. His personal concern was clearly demonstrated when he himself moved in next to the construction site of a new church *Gymnasium* to oversee the work and to be able to respond to any need as soon as possible. He promoted the publication of Christian literature and supported outreach to those disaffected from the church. During his episcopate the Latvian church ratified its *Satversme* (constitution), produced a new hymnal, and started publishing an annual church calendar. Irbe's daughter Anna became by far the best-known ELCL overseas missionary in India, a mission field operated in cooperation with the Church of Sweden. Irbe also developed the ELCL's international relations with churches around the Baltic Sea and beyond.

Irbe's episcopacy concluded at the seventh (special) synod on 10 November 1931 — a synod called for this single reason — when the synod accepted his retirement and expressed its gratitude to him. Kārlis Irbe spent the remaining two-and-a-half years of his life rather quietly. He participated in education and youth-

5. Leaders of the Baltic Germans proclaimed the *Duchy of Courland and Semgallia* in German-occupied Kurzeme in March 1918. This duchy was planned to exist in union with Germany, with the German Emperor as its duke. Similar movements were witnessed in the Vidzeme region. These political events proved to be unsuccessful and disappeared with the establishment of a Latvian government supported by the Allies.
6. The pastor of Riga's Dom Church, Oswald Erdmann, acknowledged his allegiance to the German Emperor in the Dom Church when German troops occupied Riga in 1917. The same was done by Vidzeme's German pastors' conference despite protests from the Latvian pastors (Edgars Ķiploks, "Latvijas ev.-lut. Baznīca 1918–1968" ["Ev.-Luth. Church of Latvia 1918–1968"], *Ceļa biedrs* nr. 9/129 [November, 1968]: 142).
7. This synod was numbered as the second because the Synod of Vidzeme's consistory in April 1921 was considered the first.
8. In the previous consistorial system, the presiding office was held by a layman.
9. *LELB draudžu mācītāju un priekšstāvju Sinodes sēžu protokoļi* (*Minutes of ELCL Synod*), *Rīgā, 1922. gadā no 21. līdz 24. februārim* (N.p., [1922]), 23.
10. The monograph dedicated to the pastors and laypersons murdered in the "red terror" of 1919 lists thirty-one Latvian and German martyrs: Kārlis Beldavs, ed., *Mācītāji, kas nāvē gāja* (*Pastors who Went into Death*), 2nd ed. (Riga: Luterisma mantojuma fonds, 2010).

related activities. He expressed his wish to join his daughter Anna in the mission field in south India and made all the necessary preparations, but passed away on 23 March 1934 before he could make the journey.

CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS

The Republic of Latvia inherited a rather complicated legacy of church-state relations from the Russian Empire. In the empire, the Russian Orthodox Church was the established (and privileged) state church. Despite its relatively small numbers in Latvia, as Latvia became incorporated gradually into the empire, the Russian Orthodox Church held the same status there as it did in Russia.[11] Non-Orthodox churches and religions were considered alien and subject to certain restrictions in Russia.[12]

Lutherans were both a state and an alien confession at the same time for several centuries.

However, the Lutheran church in the empire was somewhat of an exception to this situation due to important historical connections between Russia's rulers and the German Lutheran territories. In an effort to "catch up" with the West, for many years the tsars had invited German military and civilian advisors, merchants, and even farmers to Russia. These Germans enjoyed various privileges, such as the sanction to retain their own language and to worship with confessional autonomy. Therefore, besides historically Lutheran areas like Finland and Livonia, Lutherans also were found in the agriculturally fertile Russian interior and elsewhere in the empire.[13] As a result, the Lutheran church was officially "added" to the Russian Orthodox state church and jointly ruled through the General Consistory in St. Petersburg. In this way Lutherans were both a state and an alien confession at the same time for several centuries. However, outside these enclaves of German Lutheranism in Russia this autonomy was rarely respected and became even more constricted under the policy of Russification.

With the formation of the Republic of Latvia, in order to avoid a legal vacuum the government retained the former regime's structures until the adoption of new laws. For the Lutheran church this meant that it maintained the status of an "unofficial" state church, subject to the Ministry of Interior Affairs.[14] On the official level, however, the state understood itself to be secular.[15] However, in the 1930s church and state were bound more closely in the aftermath of the authoritarian *putsch* of 1934.

This legal construct created complex state and church relations between the two world wars despite Irbe's efforts for ecclesial independence. As a result, when the Lutheran church in its synod elected a church board (*Virsvalde*), this board was responsible not only to the synod but also to the Ministry of Interior Affairs' Department of Spiritual Affairs. Hence political decisions for the church could be made by secular or even atheistic politicians, as happened in the cases of the churches of St. James (*Jēkaba*) and the Dom in Riga.

Saint James Church

The case of St. James Church was almost a fait accompli politically speaking when Irbe was elected bishop. As the first major case of the state's violation of the rights of the Lutheran church, it involved the expropriation of a church building by the state, which then gave it to the Roman Catholics. The political reasoning behind the move was connected to the ongoing unofficial status of the Lutheran church, a situation that was itself rooted in the time of the post-Reformation and the confessional confrontations of that era.

Due to German influence, Reformation-era Livonia, a territory inhabited by ethnic Latvians roughly equivalent to contemporary Latvia, was the first territory outside Germany where Lutheran teachings were accepted by the majority of the towns and rulers. As early as January 1554, the parliament in Valmiera officially proclaimed religious freedom[16] and enacted the formula "cuius regio, eius religio" before the Peace of Augsburg (1555).

11. Arveds Švābe, *Latvijas vēsture 1800–1914* (*History of Latvia 1800–1914*), 3rd ed. (Riga: Avots, 1991), 19, 154; Ringolds Balodis, *Valsts un baznīca* (*State and Church*) (Riga: Nordik, 2000), 126.
12. Švābe, *Latvijas vēsture*, 189.
13. Olga Kurylo, *Lutherans in Russia* (N.p.: Lutheran Heritage Foundation, 2002), 35–60.
14. Balodis writes: "Latvian Lutheran congregations were directly subordinated to the Department of Spiritual Affairs of the Ministry of Interior Affairs. . . . That was a controversial mingling of government structure and the Lutheran Church. From the point of view of contemporary legal rights this could be regarded as a brutal breaking of the principle of separation of state and church, but at the time the circumstances were different" (Balodis, *Valsts un baznīca*, 539).
15. The Constitution (*Satversme*) of the Republic of Latvia was solemnly adopted in 1922. It, however, made no reference to any spiritual question since the second part dedicated to the human rights was not adopted. The second part contained references to conscience in articles 109 and 110, but these matters were not untangled legally until the postoccupation era of the 1990s. Article 109 declared freedom of conscience in spiritual matters (Balodis, *Valsts un baznīca*, 126, 127). Article 110 declared the separation of church and state, but was voted down in the preparatory stage (Ringolds Balodis, *Baznīcu tiesības:Tiesību zinātne* [*Rights of the Churches*] [Riga: Religijas Brīvības Asociācja, 2002], 198). As a result, the adoption of legal norms in the constitution concerning the separation of the state and the church took place only after reestablishing independence in 1998.
16. *Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls* (*Journal of History Institute of Latvia*) No 1/1993 (6): 174.

But religious reforms in the region coincided with regional instability created by three aggressors: Sweden, Lithuania-Poland, and Russia. The Livonians, unable to withstand Russian aggression in the Livonian War of 1558–1583, surrendered the already Lutheran area of north Estonia to Sweden, while the Roman Catholic King of Poland received south Estonia and all of Latvia. Poland divided Latvia into two duchies: Courland with Semigallia (Kurzeme and Zemgale) and Livonia (Latgale and Vidzeme, with south Estonia). The Duchy of Courland was given to the secularised grand-master of the former Livonian order, Gotthard Kettler, a Lutheran who supported the Lutheran church. Thus the Lutheran church remained the primary confession there. The Duchy of Livonia was subject to the Polish king through its governing duke. The entire duchy submitted to the Counter-Reformation until the Truce of Altmark, which ended the Swedish-Polish wars (1600–1629), in which Poland lost its northern territories in Livonia (south Estonia and Vidzeme) to Sweden. The Swedes ended the Counter-Reformation there, and the Lutheran church enjoyed legitmacy once again. After the Great Northern War of 1700–1721, Livonia capitulated to Russia, but the Lutheran church maintained its status. Courland and north Livonia were closely allied with similar political, cultural, and confessional interests and were sustained by Baltic-German leadership.

After the Truce of Altmark, Latgale, inhabited as it was by ethnic Latvians, remained a part of Poland and developed differently from Courland and north Livonia. In Latgale the Counter-Reformation continued until the duchy was joined to Russia in the First Partition of Poland (1772). Even many noble German families in Latgale changed their confessional affiliation and also assimilated during this time. After the incorporation of Latgale, Russia did not add the duchy to other territories inhabited by Latvians but changed its administrative structures several times in an effort to minimize Polish influence. The Roman Catholic Church, with its predominantly Polish-oriented clergy, remained the strongest instrument of Polish influence in the region, and was a significant influence even in the Republic of Latvia.[17] This influence was so significant that in a census done in the first years of the independent Republic of Latvia, a large portion of the respondents in Latgale found it difficult to associate themselves ethnically as Latvians on the basis of their common language, but were led to make ethnic associations on the basis of their Roman Catholic confession.[18] Latgale's incorporation into the Republic of Latvia was only accomplished by strong intervention on the part of nationalistically minded Latvians in the region (which included some of the Roman Catholic clergy!).

During the centuries of separation, the Latvian ethos in Latgale was affected by different influences. The Lutheran portions were influenced on the basis of the first full Bible translation into Latvian as early as 1689 and by many European stimuli via the Baltic-German governing circles. In contrast, the Roman Catholic area was influenced by the homelands of their confessional confreres, most notably the Poles. National awareness, so influential in Europe, was much more influential in Lutheran lands.

The Roman Catholic Church remained the strongest instrument of Polish influence in the region.

The Republic of Latvia considered Latgale's ethnic confusion a serious threat to Latvia's unity. To avoid the risk of factionalism, the government early on sought diplomatic recognition from the pope.[19] At the time, the pope, himself being the "prisoner of the Vatican" and not a subject to public international law in the full sense, warmly welcomed the efforts of the new state. But among the conditions levied from the papal side of the negotiations was that the head of the Roman Catholic Church in Latvia be supplied one of the historic church buildings in the capital city of Riga, namely, St. James Church.[20] The dialogue led to a 30 May 1922 concordat that initiated a political struggle lasting over a year. The concordat safeguarded a much more positive attitude on the part of the Roman Catholic population towards the new state.[21] Domestic policy, however, was not very successful because Polish influence, abetted by the Roman Catholics, persisted in Latgale throughout the entire period between the two World Wars.[22]

The Lutheran reaction over the expropriation of St. James Church (an important part of the Lutheran heritage in Latvia)

17. Ojārs Niedre and Viktors Daugmalis, *Slepenais karš pret Latviju: Komunistiskās partijas darbība 1920.–1940. gadā* (*Secret War against Latvia: Activities of the Communist Party 1920–1940*) (Riga: Totalitārisma seku dokumentēšanas centrs, 1999), 95. Fault is to be partly attributed to the ruling regime that classified its subjects, for example, by confessional criteria. Russia added Latgale to Belorussia due to the high percentage of Roman Catholics there, instead of adding it to the Latvian Lutheran territory (Švābe, *Latvijas vēsture* , 9, 165). Similarly, Latvians coming from several Roman Catholic parishes in Kurzeme were regarded as Poles (ibid., 99, 117).
18. *Latvijas izlūkdienesti, 1919–1940: 664 likteņi* (*Intelligence services of Latvia 1919–1940: 664 fates*) (Riga: LU žurn. "Latvijas Vēsture" fonds, 2001), 190.
19. Balodis, *Valsts un baznīca*, 538.
20. Jānis Cakuls, *Latvijas Romas katoļu baznīcas vēstures materiāli: xx gadsimts* (*Historical Materials of the Roman Catholic Church of Latvia: The Twentieth Century*) (Riga: Rigas Metropolijas Kūrija, 2001), 58.
21. Reinis Norkārkls, "Par dažiem motīviem evaņģēlisko luterāņu un Romas katoļu savstarpējos priekšstatos 20. gs. 20. gadu sākumā Latvijā" ("On some Motifs in Mutual Representations of Evangelical Lutherans and Roman Catholics in Latvia at the Beginning of the 1920s"), *Ceļš: Žurnāls teoloģijā, reliģijpētniecībā un kultūrvēsturē* nr. 60 (2010): 78.
22. *Latvijas izlūkdienesti, 1919–1940*, 204.

included official protests by the church, parliamentary struggles, and a referendum. The Lutherans entered into dialogue with the government, trying to convince it of their position even before the signing of the concordat. The entire board of the Consistory of Vidzeme resigned on 13 October 1921 in protest against the expropriation of the church. Since they were functionaries of the Ministry of Interior Affairs, their resignation had to be accepted by the Rev. Fricis Mīlanbahs, the head of the Department of Religious Affairs. Although he was himself a Lutheran theologian and pastor, Mīlanbahs interpreted the mass resignation as a "demonstration of a complete lack of understanding of subordination to state officials," and their action as a "flagrant violation of discipline."[23] Hence, he fired the entire board instead, and personally assumed administration of the Lutheran Church until the next synod. But the 1922 synod, in its turn, fully supported the members of the consistory.[24]

Kviesis ordered policemen dressed as civilians to confiscate the keys to St. James after the divine service.

Despite Lutheran protests, the Constitutional Assembly (1920–1922), the first legislative body of the new state, approved the concordat on 19 July 1922. Many representatives supported the concordat, fearing a scenario in Latgale similar to events in Vilnius,[25] should the concordat be rejected.[26] The Lutherans' legal appeal for their property failed, falling victim to political pressures too high to allow the politicians to respect the legal facts.

The 23 March 1923 session of the democratically elected *Saeima* (parliament) passed the so-called cathedral law on 20 April 1923. This law sought to compensate for the expropriation of St. James by the Roman Catholic bishop by giving the Dom Church (*Doma baznīca*) to the Lutheran bishop. The Lutherans replied that the Dom Church was *already* being used by the Lutheran Church and its bishop. Moreover, the state had not compensated the owners for the property taken without the approval of the parishioners of St. James.

The Lutherans made a final attempt to reverse the transfer of the property by initiating the first referendum in the history of the Republic of Latvia on the matter of church buildings. Although the majority of participants supported the church's claim on 1 and 2 September 1922, the result was rejected due to the lack of a quorum.[27]

These events attracted a level of international interest not previously experienced in Latvia. More than 200,000 Lutherans in Sweden expressed their disappointment concerning the decision about St. James Church. The (Lutheran) Archbishop of Uppsala, Nathan Söderblom, visited Riga for Bishop Irbe's episcopal induction and spoke of the matter with the president of the republic in July 1922. Ecclesial authorities in Germany and the United States, the Lutheran World Federation, and others followed developments and expressed their concern for the violation of the church's rights in Latvia. None of their concerns changed the situation.

Before the finalization of legal proceedings, the Minister of Interior Affairs, Alberts Kviesis (later President of Latvia) ordered policemen dressed as civilians to confiscate the keys to St. James after the divine service on 10 June 1923. Two congregations, one Baltic-German and one Latvian, were evicted so that the Roman Catholics could take possession of the church. The government promised to supply both Lutheran congregations with a church in Riga built for them, but this promise never was fulfilled. The expelled German congregation was received by German St. Peter (Pētera) parish. The Latvian *Miera* ("Peace") parish used some civil buildings until it was invited to join the German parish housed in the Dom Church. This invitation to the "churchless" Latvian parish by the Dom German parish was an act of true Christian charity.

Kārlis Irbe used every possible legal instrument to defend St. James during the entire struggle. He wrote protests and articles, argued with government officials, and initiated the referendum. His final word on the matter was his pastoral letter to the church after the expropriation was finalized. There he expressed his grief over the loss of the church, but noted that it was partly the fault of Lutherans who had not used lawful ways to prevail in the referendum. He fiercely rejected the call of voices suggesting resistance by force, and finished his letter with the words: "When we are deprived of churches and cathedrals built of stone and wood, we will build churches and cathedrals in our hearts with imperishable goods. Jesus Christ is resurrected! Likewise will we rise up from the tomb of lukewarmness and indifference." [28]

23. *Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs* (*State's Archive of History of Latvia*), fonds 1370, apraksts nr. 1, 61. lieta, 3. lpp. For this reference I am grateful to Rev. Uģis Brūklene.
24. *LELB draudžu mācītāju un priekšstāvju Sinodes sēžu protokoļi, Rīgā, 1922. gadā no 21. līdz 24. februārim*, 22.
25. Polish separatists occupied Vilnius (1920), ostensibly part of the territory of Lithuania, and achieved its union with Poland (1922).
26. Cakuls, *Latvijas Romas katoļu baznīcas*, 69–89.
27. More than 200,000 out of 206,000 supported the church (A. Mačulāns, ed., "*Svētdienas rīta*" *raksti Jēkaba baznīcas lietā: Cīņas laiku atmiņas* (*Articles in the "Morning Star" in the Case of Saint James Church: Memories of the Struggle*) (Riga: Baznīcas Virsvaldes izdevums, 1924), 4. Since half of the previous parliamentary elections would be 480,129 voters, participation was evaluated as insufficient. This was the first referendum in Latvia, and the decision that in order for the referendum to be legal, more than half of the voters in the last election would have had to participate in it, made it a legal precedent for all the other referendums.
28. Mačulāns, "*Svētdienas rīta*" *raksti*, 12.

The Dom Church

The expropriation of St. James initiated an ethnically fueled controversy in the Dom Church (Riga Cathedral) nearly a decade later. When Peace Latvian parish was established at St. James in 1919, its pastor, Edgars Bergs, served as a chaplain in the Latvian Army as well. Therefore, St. James Church was also used for military ceremonies by forces under the command of the Chief Commander of the Armed Forces. However, no military institution or parish was formed at St. James before its expropriation.

As noted above, following the loss of the use of St. James, Peace Latvian parish was invited by the German parish housed in the Dom Church in 1923 to use their church. The two congregations maintained a peaceful coexistence: the German congregation retained ownership, but the Latvian parish was given use of the sanctuary and several auxiliary rooms under an arrangement in which they paid their own expenses. Problems and misunderstandings that arose between the two congregations were solved and settled in Christian charity. For instance, initially, the German service began at 9:30 A.M. and the Latvian service followed at 11:00. When friction between the two arose due to the tight timing, the times were rearranged.

However, in 1926 a parish by the name of *Garnizona* ("Garrison") was established. Many members of this parish were officers and soldiers, but it was not directly related to any military institution, nor did the parish include all the Lutheran military companies of the parish's territory. And, like many new congregations, the *Garnizona* parish did not have its own church building. Therefore, it inquired about the possibility of also holding services in the Dom Church. The German parish allowed the request and permitted them to use their building during those times when the church was not being used by either the German or Latvian (Peace) congregations.

Now, the escalation of nationalism among the general Latvian population during the 1920s and especially the 1930s provided fruitful ground for ethnic conflict, also in the church. Garnizona parish used this climate of increased ethnic tensions in an attempt to obtain rights to the Dom Church. Their demand, while not entirely supported by Peace parish, was that the Germans should relinquish full ownership of the church and share it equally with the two Latvian parishes. *Garnizona* parish addressed these demands to the Dom Church's board, which suggested finding a solution in mutual Christian charity. However, *Garnizona* parish members actively courted the involvement of parties beyond the walls of the Dom Church to press the issue.

In April 1931, *Garnizona* parish submitted their case to the sixth synod, basing their demands on the so-called cathedral law. According to their interpretation of that law, even though the state had given the Dom Church to the Latvian bishop and the Lutheran church, the synod still had the final word in any dispute.[29] The synod passed a resolution that *Garnizona* parish should negotiate its demands with the Latvian Peace parish—not the German parish!—since Peace parish was at the Dom Church at the invitation of the German parish. *Garnizona* parish was invited to find a solution in "mutual agreement, in a manner very welcomed in the church between Latvians and Germans." The synod also encouraged construction of church buildings, where a new parish (especially *Garnizona*), could find a home.[30] But this proposal did not satisfy *Garnizona* parish: they continued to press the matter repeatedly during the synod, but without success.

Irbe and like-minded Lutherans also did not participate in the consecration of the ELCL's next archbishop.

Failing to have their way in the synod, *Garnizona* parish sought allies outside the church. The secular press and society were enlisted in a campaign to insist on the point of view that the question of the Dom Church was an ethnic issue involving civil rights. Political factions argued the issue in the parliament (*Saeima*), and after initial failure, brought the matter to a vote on 5 and 6 September 1931. This failed to win a majority, but the Cabinet of Ministers subsequently passed an amendment to the so-called cathedral law realigning the administration of the Dom Church so that German decision-making and ownership was reduced to three delegates on the board of eleven members, with Peace and *Garnizona* also having three delegates each. The other two members were representatives of the bishop and of the Minister of War. The German parish did not send representatives to the newly created board and left their church in protest against the violation of their rights.

Bishop Irbe considered these events to be a violation of the independence of the church and believed that the issue had fallen victim to unchristian manipulation. In protest he also did not send a representative to the board and called the seventh (emergency) synod for the purpose of tendering his resignation on 10 November 1931. In his declaration of resignation he denied any notion of "pro-German tendencies" on his part. His efforts in defense of the German Dom parish were based on his "legal and religious principles," rather than on nationalistic sensibilities. He resigned because "certain people in the church had used the walls of the Dom Church to ignite a national flame and with such actions caused intrusion of the political parties into the life

29. From the speech of the representative of *Garnizona* parish Colonel D. Blumentāls in the 6th Synod (*LELB VI. Sinodes protokoļi, Rīgā, 1931. gadā 7., 8., 9., un 10. aprīlī,* 11).

30. Ibid., 12.

31. *LELB Sinodes protokoļi, Rīgā, VII. (ārkārtājā), 1931. g. novembrī un VIII., 1932. g. 29., 30. un 31. martā*, 4.

of the church."[31] As a result, Irbe and like-minded Lutherans also did not participate in the consecration of the ELCL's next archbishop (which ironically took place in the Dom Church), due to the struggle over this church.

The "Suggestion" discusses the insufficient number of Latvian pastors compared to the church outside Latvia.

Even though the state did not directly intervene in the church's life after the cases of St. James and the Dom Church, state relations with the Lutheran church remained problematic. Several months after Kārlis Irbe's death on 23 March 1934, Prime Minister Kārlis Ulmanis overturned the parliamentary system in Latvia and established an authoritarian regime. Ulmanis maintained the state-church relationship with the Lutheran church, binding the church even more to the state. Occupation of Latvia by the Soviets early in the Second World War and again in 1944 dissolved the formal connection between the two, but the Russian occupation with its antireligious ideology in fact exercised an even closer scrutiny over every activity in the church. Only with the awakening movements in the last years of the occupation was the Lutheran church in Latvia able to establish its independence from the state.

IRBE'S THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

Kārlis Irbe faced two major theological challenges during his episcopate, both of which demonstrate his confessional and conservative theological stance. First, the church was affected by liberal theology via the historical-critical method, which made its way into Latvia from mainstream German Protestant universities. Second, society in general was affected by a growing secularism. Other challenges, like the national romantic movement that exhibited its most extreme expressions in neopagan practices[32]—themselves largely influenced by secularism—were more recent and less significant.

Irbe's first work, his three-volume *Ticības mācību ābece* (*ABC's of the Faith* [1898]) was published when he was still a pastor in the countryside.[33] Irbe's *ABC's* was an exposition of Luther's Small Catechism that used Bible stories and hymns and employed educational methods (which were modern at the time) with unmistakably confessional and clearly Luther-influenced theological content. In ABC's, Irbe spoke of the power of the word of God, of God's active role in human conversion, and many other "Luther themes." All three volumes were published at the same time, but the first volume was reprinted in 1899 and 1930.[34] Long before Irbe was elected bishop, this writing positioned him as a biblical and confessional theologian.

Irbe the theologian also could be observed in his attitude toward the theological faculty of the University of Latvia, the state university. Citing the "Evangelical Lutheran tradition," with its "legacy of academically trained theologians," several Lutheran theologians had proposed the establishment of a theological faculty as soon as the government of Latvia decided to found the University of Latvia in 1919.[35] But the necessity of such faculty was opposed by various influential social-democrat politicians of the newly founded Republic of Latvia. These opponents remarked that theology could be taught in the faculty of philosophy, which at the time also comprised the study of philology. However, the social-democrats insisted, should a theological faculty be created, it should be financed by the church. The promoters of a separate theological faculty believed, under the circumstances, that in order for the plan to succeed, the faculty would have to be entirely aconfessional.[36] The plan went forward and although the initial professors were all members of the Lutheran church, the faculty became strongly influenced by theological liberalism. This led the ELCL to establish its own theological institute to educate its ministers.[37]

In preparation for the fourth general synod (1925) Kārlis Irbe published a series of articles in the church's newspaper, *Svētdienas Rīts* (*Sunday Morning*) (*SR*)[38], under the title "Nākamā sinode: Bīskapa ierosinājums" ("The Coming Synod: Bishop's Suggestion"). In his "Suggestion" Irbe discussed the existing situation concerning pastors, and provided argumentation that revealed his own theological position. This article will pay close attention to the "Suggestion" here and also return to it in the concluding portion.

The "Suggestion" discusses at length the insufficient number of Latvian pastors compared to the church outside Latvia, such as the situation in the United States, and in comparison to German congregations within the ELCL.[39] The dearth of Latvian

32. In Latvia the neopagan movement was represented by *dievturi*, from *dieva turēšana, dievturība*—keeping/hold of god. Here god was not the Triune God of the Scriptures, but some folkloric figure from traditional songs (*dainas*). The movement today includes approximately 8000 Latvians worldwide.
33. Kārlis Irbe, *Ticības mācību ābece* (*ABCs of the Faith*), 3 vols. (N.p., 1898–1899).
34. Gustavs Šaurums, "Bīskapa Dr. Kārļa Irbes rakstu bibliogrāfija" ("Bibliography of Bishop Dr. Kārlis Irbe"), *Baznīcas ziņas* 1944, nr. 12 (19 March 1944).
35. Ludvigs Adamovičs, "Teoloģijas fakultāte," in *Latvijas Universitate divdesmit gados 1919–1939* (Riga: Latvijas Univeristāte, 1939), 1:811.
36. Ibid., 1:811, 812.
37. Jouko Talonen, *Church under the Pressure of Stalinism: The Development of the Status and Activities of the Soviet Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church during 1944-1950*, Studia Historica Septentrionalia 25 (Jyväskylä: Pohjois-Suomen historiallinen yhdistys, 1997), 7, 8.
38. *SR*, 1924, nr. 51, 52 (December) and 1925, nr. 1–7 (January and February); subsequent references will be to the number and page of the *SR*.

clergy had serious ramifications for the laity, and the bishop discussed ways to address the situation. Irbe questioned the long-standing tradition of the Lutheran church in the Baltic region that required pastors to complete a theological education at least at the university level for ordination. Irbe compared this expectation to that of other denominations, particularly the Roman Catholic and the Russian Orthodox churches.[40] The bishop's antipathy toward the theological faculty of the state university was the product of the faculty's claim of "unrestricted [academic] freedom." This claim was used to defend situations where "in the name of science a professor can teach that Christ is not the Son of God, has not risen from the dead, or even, that this Christ has not existed." Irbe retorted to this bluntly: "Who needs such a theology?"[41]

Later in the "Suggestion" the bishop mentioned the experience of "two Catholic churches"[42] that proved it is possible to have "two estates [or degrees] of the clergy." If the upcoming synod would accept the proposal relaxing the requirement of a university degree for pastors, Irbe argued, the most probable candidates for the "ordained assistant pastor's estate" would be Lutheran teachers of religion.[43] Another option he put forward was the development of a Theological Institute focused on educating assistant pastors and providing practical training for graduates of the faculty. When Irbe wrote the "Suggestion," the Theological Institute had not yet produced any graduates. Nonetheless, this did not preclude a pastors' conference in one of the deaneries from protesting the "training of nontheologian pastors."[44] Irbe defended his position against this objection later in the "Suggestion" with a theological argument. He differentiated between teachings in the church. The first are truths coming from God that "never become old, but are new for all times." The others are "created by humans." A believer must not deviate from the former "neither for the sake of our own will, nor for the sake of that of others." The latter, however, holds true only for a specific time and "has to change with the times."

According to Irbe, the requirement for university-educated pastors was a human ordinance that possessed certain advantages, perhaps, but that must not be insisted upon as indispensible.[45] Irbe's intent to introduce an alternative way to educate clergy, seemingly lowering the requirements for parish ministers, did not attribute less importance to the pastoral office. On the contrary, Irbe insisted that the pastoral office is in organic unity with the congregation and has the same "aims and interests."[46] Any deviation from the proper estimation of the pastoral office makes the congregation merely a human association like any other social gathering. Irbe said that such a notion and any similar notions were "alien to both the confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the word of God in the Scriptures, and hence have no place in ELCL."[47] In defense of the Theological Institute, Irbe noted the advantage it had in view of the fact that it would be supported by the church and serve her aims through its close connection to spirituality and discipline.[48]

The requirement for university-educated pastors was a human ordinance that must not be insisted upon as indispensible.

Irbe used two situations from his own experience to illustrate his point. The first came from his early years in the pastorate. As a newly graduated theologian from the university, Irbe had to learn a lot about spirituality from his parishioners.[49] The second illustration was more recent and came from a situation Irbe experienced in Soviet Russia when he opposed a similar practice of introducing pastors without theological education on the university level.[50] In both cases Irbe considered that he had been wrong in thinking that a university education was a crucial requirement for a candidate for the pastoral office. To these reflections he added short descriptions of similar problems and solutions taken from the churches of Scandinavia, Germany, and the United States.[51] This discussion initiated by the "Suggestion" evidences Irbe's pastoral concern and wish to address the dire need for the clergy by providing nonacademically trained, but nonetheless faithful, ordained associate pastors.

National romanticism affected the church via the wider society.[52] Partly rooted in the aforementioned liberal attitudes toward the Scriptures, it challenged the Lutheran church, but to a much lesser degree than did classical liberalism. These

39. *SR*, 1924, nr. 52: 4. Irbe does not specify the Lutheran body in America to which he is referring (*SR*, 1924, nr. 51: 4).
40. *SR*, 1924, nr. 52: 5; 1925, nr. 2: 13.
41. *SR*, 1925, nr. 2: 13. This reflects the faculty's pride in its "independence from any particular confessional authority" in "scientific endeavors" (Adamovičs, *Teoloģijas fakultāte*, 1:820) that was granted to it by the law in "the Constitution of the University of Latvia," 28 March 1923.
42. Irbe here and elsewhere cites the example of the Roman Catholics and the Russian Orthodox (*SR*, 1924, nr. 52: 5; 1925, nr. 2: 13; etc.).
43. *SR*, 1924, nr. 52: 5; 1925, nr. 1: 5.
44. *SR*, 1924, nr. 52: 5.
45. *SR*, 1925, nr. 1: 4.
46. *SR*, 1925, nr. 4: 27.
47. Ibid., 28.
48. *SR*, 1925, nr. 2: 13.
49. *SR*, 1925, nr. 1: 5.
50. *SR*, 1925, nr. 1: 4.
51. *SR*, 1925, nr. 2: 13.
52. Kristīne Ante, "Latviskošanās tendences Latvijas evaņģēliski luteriskajā baznīcā 20. gs. 30. gados" ("Tendencies of Latvianization in the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in the '30s of the Twentieth Century"), *Ceļš* nr. 60 (2010): 5–10.

issues played a minor role during Irbe's episcopacy but grew in influence with the advent of Kārlis Ulmanis's authoritarian regime in May 1934. In the 1920s pastors and theologians debated ways of making the Lutheran Church "more Latvian," predominantly through liturgical changes.[53] The most evident case of nationalism's influence was Rev. Jānis Sanders's doctoral dissertation, "Kristietība un kristīga dievticība" ("Christianity and Christian faith") to the theological faculty of the university (1926). In it Sanders questioned dogmas like the Trinity and the Person of Christ. Taking their cue from Sanders's words, others began questioning other central doctrines of the faith. Irbe and the church board (*Virsvalde*) ruled Sanders's dissertation to be contrary to the church's teaching. Although Sanders remained in the church as a professor of the theological faculty due to his long service in pastoral ministry, his continuance as a pastor and professor was hotly debated.[54] His later theological elaborations revealed other liberal tendencies, such as a denial of the role of the Old Testament in Christianity.[55]

A socialistic ideology with its anti-Christian orientation was still very popular in Latvia.

The doctrinal basis undergirding the ELCL's constitution (*LELB Satversme*) was another major issue faced by Irbe and his effort to guide the church in biblical and confessional ways. Irbe worked hard to formulate the first paragraph, which would express the teaching of the church. The strategy he followed was to take the core doctrines of the faith out of the internal paragraphs in which they were found and place this "cornerstone" as a preamble to the entire text. In this way the constitution clearly stated that "fundamentals of the faith are issues that stand above every discussion and are to be placed outside the paragraphs of the constitution."[56] Irbe had to defend this confessionally clear and conservative formula of the preamble against some vague formulation proposed by more liberal theologians. They, represented by church historian Ludvigs Adamovičs, wanted to formulate fundamentals of the church in Harnackian terms, namely, that the "ELCL bases its teaching on Jesus Christ and his gospel."[57] Irbe's preamble and doctrinal basis to the constitution remained unchanged throughout the next decades; it is this confessional emphasis that remains today.

Irbe faced the second principal challenge during his episcopacy — secularization — mainly via public media. He addressed the general population and the church in several books, articles, and sermons.

Many factors in the history of Latvia have influenced relations between the Lutheran church and the Latvian people. For many centuries the Lutheran church in Latvia was ruled by non-Latvians, and was used in the maintenance of the feudal system. The Lutheran church was part of the governmental structure and a stronghold of the German nobility. Hence, propaganda that was socially democratic and counterecclesial attracted the general population of ethnic Latvians. In part, this is why Bolshevik troops were first welcomed when they invaded Latvia in early January 1919. Latvians became disillusioned when the Bolsheviks' promises turned out to be empty and they had to endure the "red terror," collectivization, and famine. But this disillusionment became the foundation upon which the dream of a national state would be realized. And a socialistic ideology with its anti-Christian orientation was still very popular in Latvia. As a result, secularization and antireligious sentiments were an everyday reality for the church during Irbe's episcopacy.

Irbe himself was well aware of the complex heritage of the Lutheran church at the time. But he also thought that the Lutheran church, because it was a majority church, was obligated to assume responsibility for the entire nation.[58] Therefore, he continually addressed the wider Latvian populace with faith-related questions. His interest first and foremost was to strengthen church members and defend them from secularization. His second audience was those who considered themselves still to be Christians and Lutherans but who did not assume the responsibility of full membership in the church. He also spoke to those outside the church. In order to reach them, Irbe published several books in the early years of his episcopacy (1922–1925) and addressed them as well with pastoral letters and sermons throughout his time in office.

Irbe published two books in the first year of his episcopacy (1922): *Vaj kultūra bez reliģijas mūs izglābs?*[59] (*Will Culture Save Us without Religion?*) (*VKR?*) and *Tautas baznīca: Bīskapa*

53. Ibid., 7, 8.
54. Ibid., 10, where the author indicates that Sanders left the church. Jouko Talonen in his upcoming book argues the opposite. Sanders, despite the efforts of Irbe and his follower Grīnbergs, served as a Lutheran pastor for almost ten more years and then was forced to retire from both the church and the faculty.
55. Valdis Tēraudkalns, "Kārļa Kundziņa teoloģiskais liberālisms Eiropas kontekstā," *Ceļš* nr. 60 (2010): 212.
56. A. Kehse, "Latvijas ew.=lut. Baznīcas pamatu licēja un viņas weidotāja piemiņai" ("To the Memory of the Founder and Shaper of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Latvia"), *Jaunatnes Ceļš* 1934, nr. 6 (June, 1934): 168, 169.
57. Jouko Talonen, "Īss ievads Latvijas baznīcas vēstures pētījuma vēsturē," in Roberts Feldmanis, *Latvijas baznīcas vēsture* (Riga: Luterisma mantojuma fonds, 2010), xvii.
58. In the period between the wars Lutherans were reported to be approximately 55 percent of the population.
59. Kārlis Irbe, *Vaj kultura bez reliģijas muhs izglahbs* (Riga: Latvijas Iekšchejās Misijas Beedribas izdewums, 1922).

raksts Latvijas evaņģeliskajai tautai[60] (*Nation's/national*[61] *Church: Article of the Bishop to the Evangelical People of Latvia*) (*TB*). Both of these addressed the present situation and the role of the church in it. Moreover, they argued for the church's enduring place in the life of the nation.

VKR? is a longer essay subdivided into eight points. Irbe begins with an extended quotation by an unnamed Indian who criticizes the West for its emphasis on intellectual or rational progress, which does not exhibit the same spiritual foundations as in the East. Hence, the Indian quotation states, "We will have victory" because "every culture that is not first of all a spiritual culture destroys itself" (*VKR?*, 4). Irbe mentions the divinization of culture for which "wiseacres" (*prātnieki*) and writers are responsible. Irbe asks them about World War I, the revolution, and civil war. How can such tragedies happen if, as they say, progress makes nations more culturally mature, something that also makes people better? Why did the cultural metropolises of western Europe fight against one another (*VKR?*, 6)? Irbe states that this perception of culture has become so materialistic that it gives birth to the capitalist and the communist at the same time. Neither of them sees any need for religion. The capitalist tolerates it because of possible profit. The communist, it turns out, is more ethical since he turns out to the "smaller brother," whereas the capitalist cares only for himself (*VKR?*, 9). Irbe argues that materialistic culture is indeed responsible for the recent tragedies. The next segment Irbe dedicates to science and its limits. Science is incompetent in the spiritual (that is, religious or philosophical) realm but is most potent in the natural realm. "Should we ask whether we have reached the limit either in researching megathings or microthings, or should we ever reach such, the answer is: it is not possible" (*VKR?*, 17).

In his next section, Irbe tries to draw a distinction between culture and civilization. He defines culture as related to the heart, whereas civilization is related to the mind (*VKR?*, 21). Irbe claims that a lack of religion in the heart, that is, in culture, ruins civilization. He continues with a direct address to the Latvian reader that "we as people of Christ's parish" have a promise, and Christ's gospel "has carried, now carries, and always will carry life to every tribe and nation" (*VKR?*, 22). To Irbe, civilization conceived of as a mere development of the mind is insufficient to withstand the test of time. Irbe turns back to culture in the next section, where he assures the reader that culture also helps the development of religious strength. However, people seldom really care for this side of culture. Moreover, culture without religious content, merely acting as an aesthetic entity, is unable to sustain larger groups of people, that is, nations. It influences only small groups of intellectuals (*VKR?*, 28, 29). In his last section Irbe looks at religion and culture. Irbe remarks that sometimes people confuse mental skills and faith. The opponents of religion try to form public opinion so that it considers that faith belongs to the uneducated past, whereas unbelief belongs to the educated mind. Unbelief for Irbe, however, is a kind of invalidity that permeates the entire person (*VKR?*, 33). He also rejects the possibility of having a long-standing ethical basis without religion (*VKR?*, 33) and finishes the book with a reminder to the reader that a nation is subject to the same outcome as the individual who dies physically when he or she dies spiritually, that is, loses faith. His final words are a quotation from the German historian Sohm[62]: "We will not be saved by our education, but only by the gospel of Christ."

How can such tragedies happen if, as they say, progress makes nations more culturally mature, something that also makes people better?

While *VKR?* is a proposal for discussion in wider society, the *TB* is addressed to people affiliated with the church. This article is approximately three times shorter than the previous one, with no subdivisions. The article begins with an introductory paragraph that sets the basis for the whole article, the formulation of the church for Latvian Lutherans. The very first sentence is a reformulation of articles 7 and 8 of the Augsburg Confession: "Where God's words are clearly and rightly preached and the holy sacraments are distributed as Jesus Christ has instituted them, there is a Christian congregation or Church" (*TB*, 91). The church is a work of God, as confessed in the third article of the Creed, and has "external, visible cloth" (*TB*, 91). Irbe turns to history, where he admits that in previous times, before the establishment of Latvia, the church had been ruled by German nobility, that is, it was the *lords'* church. While in the previous century Latvian serfs in Vidzeme were allowed to make decisions along with the lords in some churches, this was not the case in Kurzeme right up to the last decades before World War I. This had to change with the new circumstances; now the church is "entirely given into the hands of the nation" (*TB*, 92). This having been said, Irbe appeals to the people now responsible for their church to take good care of it in order that the "nation's church would not have to blush, when compared to the previous lords' church" (*TB*, 93).

60. Kārlis Irbe, *Tautas baznīca: Bīskapa raksts Latvijas evaņģēliskajai tautai* (Riga: Latvijas Iekšējās misijas biedrība, 1922); see Mesters, *Bīskaps Kārlis Irbe*, 91–97.
61. This concept is difficult to translate into English, since it encompasses ethnic and also national understandings. It is comparable to some Scandinavian perceptions in which the church is understood to be for everyone in the state, it speaks a certain language, and it assumes also responsibility for the nation's spiritual welfare.
62. Probably Rudolph Sohm (1841–1917), German lawyer, historian, and committed Lutheran.

First, he dedicates space to merely financial matters. The Lutheran church had been deprived of its previous financial resources as a result of losses in the war but most noticeably as a result of agricultural reforms.[63] Irbe offers two possible solutions. First, church members could vote in the next *Saeima* (parliament) elections for those who promised to take good care of the church.[64] The second option was a voluntary church tax. Irbe immediately proceeds to the next point, where he takes up the moral damage to the nation. The church loses its reputation and "where churches remain empty, there prisons fill up" (*TB*, 94). The rest of the article addresses church offices, starting with pastors. They should "not only think well over their sermon, but pray God for it." Irbe emphasizes children and youth education. With a reminder that the church is "not the pastors' but the nation's church" (*TB*, 95), Irbe again tells parishes that everyone is responsible for the church. Irbe stresses Christian home education, work with youth, and cooperation with teachers. He emphasizes that there are questions where pastors "must not be cowardly and soft" (*TB*, 96), and he once more encourages parish boards to assist their pastor: "Everyone can contribute in some way." The *TB*, the bishop's short and cordial message to the church on crucially important things, ends with a pastoral greeting and blessing.

The lack of will to sustain the church with donations is a sure sign that such a person is in church merely "for the name's sake."

The bishop's next booklet was *Uzmosties! Latvijas bīskapa gana vārds draudzēm un viņu vadoņiem* (*Awake! Shepherd's Word of Latvia's Bishop to Parishes and Their Leaders*)[65] (*Uzmosties!*), published in 1924. *Uzmosties!* is almost twice as long as *TB* and in many regards serves as its answer and comparison. Their subjects and theological accents overlap and they share the same addressees: the parishes and Lutherans altogether. It seems *Uzmosties!* is even more focused on the active members of the parish. *Uzmosties!* is subdivided into four main parts. The introductory part begins with Ephesians 5:14 and praises God for the spiritual awakening taking place in the church (*Uzmosties!*, 3). It refers to problems raised in the *TB* (*TB*, 94), but now the church is experiencing improvement in every area: young people are joining the church, women's committees and inner missions are more active, as are soldiers and workers (*Uzmosties!*, 4, 14). The only class that seems to be an exception is the wealthy (*Uzmosties!*, 4). The awakening, however, is not merely cause for joy, but a sure sign of increased spiritual activities. Therefore, pastors and believing teachers are called to continue evangelization. Here Irbe reminds the reader that there is still a dire insufficiency of pastors. Only a small number will be educated in coming years. Parishes are obliged to help pastors who are already serving, for the believer "cannot be only a receiver, but also should be a giver." This understanding is based on the Redeemer, who gives life (*Uzmosties!*, 6).

Irbe repeats the idea of *giver* several times. The first part, following the introduction, is dedicated to the parish's spiritual leader. Irbe describes two staffs given into the pastor's hands: the word of God and the blessed sacraments. In addition, the Redeemer has added the power to forgive and retain sins in confession. With these, pastors are *true soldiers* who "should stand in the first lines of spiritual warfare"; no fraternization with the enemy can take place. "Black should be called black and sin should remain sin," and Jesus' name, "the Christian truth, should always clearly and unmistakably resound from the pastor's speeches and witnesses. Charity is greater than faith and hope, but only charity that has been born from divine truth" (*Uzmosties!*, 7). This part of the book ends with bold words, "the truth of the word of God must not be altered according to our human mind" (*Uzmosties!*, 8). The second part addresses the church board and its members, the pastor's closest associates. Irbe stresses their duty regarding youth and children, as well the "published word" (*Uzmosties!*, 9). Here he returns to the financial life of the church. Supporting the church with donations is an honorable duty and a way to insure that the church can live up to its responsibilities (*Uzmosties!*, 11).

Finally, Irbe speaks to the church member. In the new system everyone has become a co-voter, a codecision maker, and memorably, a coworker for and in the church. Irbe uses as the illustration the Old Testament practice of tithing and tells of brothers in faith from the United States (without naming specifics) who have achieved great things despite their small numbers.[66] The lack of will to sustain the church with donations is a sure sign that such a person is in church merely "for the name's sake" (*Uzmosties!*, 12). Next he tackles a popular reason not to go to church: the pastor's person. Participation in services,

63. The social and national situation required agricultural reforms in Latvia. For this reform the government made available the state's own land, the land of its enemies in the freedom war, mostly Baltic Germans, and large landlords' reduced land (the Lutheran Church was the biggest land owner of the time besides the state). With this agricultural reform the church lost 59,854 ha of its land (approx. 5/6) and retained 11,810 ha (approx. 1/6) (Daina Bleiere, *Latvijas vēsture*, 173–75).
64. This, however, seems to be a less desirable decision to Irbe. Despite the fact that there is no explicit comment, the context suggests that this option for whatever reason is used for the sake of argument.
65. Kārlis Irbe, *Uzmosties! Latvijas biskapa gana wahrds draudzem un viņu wadoneem* (Riga, 1924).
66. Irbe compares Latvia's average parish consisting of approximately nine to ten thousand members (*Uzmosties!,* 5, 6) and U.S. churches, consisting of approximately three hundred members. Statistics for the church of Latvia, however, can be misleading due to vague criteria of belonging to the church.

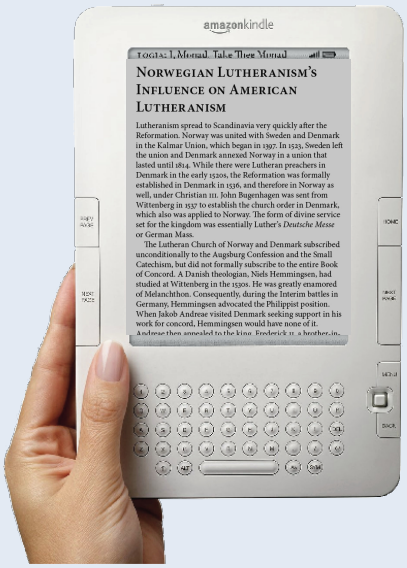
Irbe argues, is among the "highest duties of the member of the church." Therefore, pretexts to avoid it are without any validity. Increased participation at the Lord's table is a reason why Irbe expresses joy and reminds church members that "it is not good when we are rare guests at the Lord's table," where the worthy communicant is the forgiven sinner (*Uzmosties!*, 14). The decline in house services with prayers and Scripture readings saddens Irbe, for this is the appropriate place to fulfill baptismal duties. In his closing words Irbe again encourages every possible help to pastors and church boards with a good question for self-examination: "What am I doing in order that the kingdom of Christ may flourish and grow?" This booklet attempts to motivate and to mobilize Lutherans to become more responsible in the face of partial achievements, but many things still remain to be done. Irbe's remark in his "Suggestion" indicated that not many copies of *Uzmosties!* had been bought in 1924.[67]

As previously mentioned, Irbe's "Suggestion" is the longest piece he published as bishop. The "Suggestion" provides a fuller picture of Irbe's theological thinking. His description of the church's situation includes many disappointments rooted in Latvian society's deviation from Christian values. Nevertheless, some signs suggest a spiritual awakening.[68] Irbe stresses the responsibility of the Lutheran church and its members for the entire nation.[69] Among the church's different missions, Irbe sees a special place for women, "as is witnessed by the ladies' organizations in the church."[70] As an activity of Christians outside the church that would help the church, Irbe mentions "various societies" for promoting Christianity.[71] In the "Suggestion" Irbe provides his most extensive biblical argument for the financial support of pastors. This duty comes from God; therefore, the church should find ways to finance this office.[72] Further theological emphasis is placed on the church's fight with the Antichrist. Irbe refers to the word of God as the two-edged sword (Heb 4:12), the most important instrument (Luke 21:33; Isa 40:8, 55:10–11; and 2 Pet 1:19). After making his argument from Scripture, he poses questions to the reader: "Is the word of God richly abiding among us? Is it a lamp to our feet and a light for our path? Are we strengthening our weak faith; are we giving it to our children, to our youth?" Irbe concludes by encouraging the reader once again to use "our powerful, sure weapon: the word of God Almighty."[73] Irbe describes his idea of a "church tax" at length, a voluntary donation of each church member not arranged through the state's tax collecting systems.[74] Throughout the "Suggestion," Irbe returns to the experience of other denominations and practices in other countries, as he reproaches Latvian Lutherans for inertia in matters of church support.

All of the works we have examined serve to illustrate Irbe's theological approach: in connection with his episcopal duties, it was his to argue for, defend, and confess the Christian faith to both members of the church and wider society. The deepest core of his theological convictions is clear and simple: the biblical teachings presented in the Lutheran Confessions are the foundation of the church. He focused on Christ and his gospel in the context of the new nationwide Latvian church. This remains Irbe's most enduring contribution to his own and subsequent generations.

Soli Deo Gloria. LOGIA

67. *SR*, 1925, nr. 6: 45.
68. *SR*, 1924, nr. 51: 4.
69. *SR*, 1924, nr. 52: 4.
70. This has no connection with what already at that time was a perceivable movement towards the place of women in the pastoral office.
71. *SR*, 1925, nr. 1: 5.
72. *SR*, 1925, nr. 3: 19.
73. *SR*, 1925, nr. 5: 36.
74. See *SR*, 1925, nr. 4: 27; 1925, nr. 5: 36, 37; 1925, nr. 6: 44, 45; 1925, nr. 7: 57.



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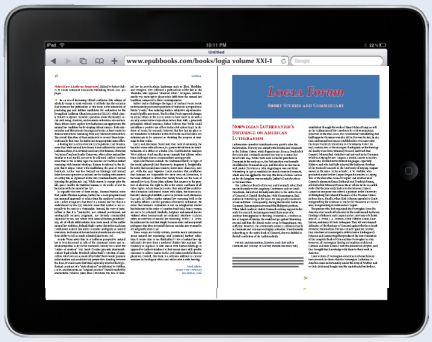

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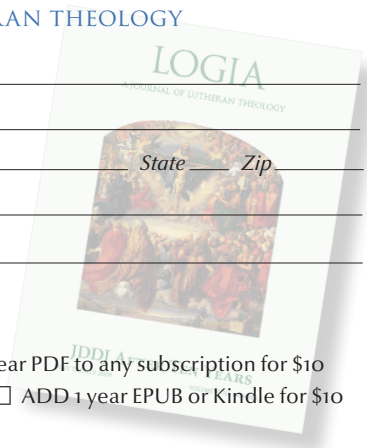

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"You Will See My Back"

A Lutheran Approach to History

Mark Braun

In the aftermath of the Golden Calf incident, Moses on Mt. Sinai pleaded with the Lord not to abandon his original plan to lead the Israelites through the wilderness to the Promised Land. The Lord allowed Moses the opportunity to act as intercessor for the sons of Jacob, and when at last he relented and said, "I will go with you," Moses, in a burst of unself-conscious exuberance, blurted out, "Now show me your glory." In other words, "Let me see what you are really like, with no veil, no vision to obscure your nature."

The Lord answered Moses, "There is a place where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back, but my face must not be seen" (Exod 33:12–23).

In the next chapter, the Lord placed Moses in the cleft and he proclaimed: "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation" (Exod 34:5–7). God reveals himself to us most clearly in his word, in the proclamation of law and gospel. But we can also see God's will and ways with us by observing his backside, how he has operated on the pages of history.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Professor August Pieper, in "The Glory of the Lord," wrote:

> There is a way of beholding God's glory, his way and counsel, his thoughts and plans. It consists in this, that one looks after God from behind when he has already passed by. This is the knowledge of God's ways and thoughts drawn from the past history of the great deeds of God in behalf of his people. . . .
>
> In a certain sense we speak quite properly of an evolution of things, except that with our tiny reason we are not able to foresee its extent and goal in advance. Even as the world has not called itself into being by itself, so it also does not evolve by itself. There is another who drives the wheel and does everything that transpires in, under, and above the heavens, both the great and the small. And even as the works of nature on the earth and in the heavens declare the glory of the great God, so also the footsteps of God are everywhere and at all times unmistakably imprinted as his and no one else's upon the history of mankind in things great and small, there for anyone who wants to recognize them and is able to read them aright.[1]

EIGHT POINTS FROM LUTHERAN HISTORIANS

In summer 2007, my colleagues in the History Department of Wisconsin Lutheran College—Drs. Glen Thompson and Paul Beck and Profs. Patrick Steele and Aaron Palmer—sought to define what constitutes a Lutheran perspective on history. In the course of their conversations they enlisted the help of my fellow members of the Religious Studies Department—Drs. Paul Lehninger and Joel Pless, Prof. Charles Cortright and me—for assistance. The result was an eight-point summation of a distinctively Lutheran viewpoint on history. With minor adjustments, I use their outline as the skeleton for this presentation.

(1) God is the creator and ruler of the universe. He is the Lord of history, always in control of the world's events.

"Don't know much about history," Sam Cooke wrote in 1958, in a song repopularized by Herman's Hermits in 1965. Many of our students—and maybe many teachers—share that view. History appears to be little more than a dreary recitation of kings and wars and dates and movements; Beaver Cleaver said history was "mostly killin' people."[2] History often reveals human beings at their worst, offering, as Edward Gibbon wrote, "little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind."[3] The winners write history, they say, so who knows whether what we so confidently repeat as "the facts" are in fact a correct recounting of what actually occurred? We like

Mark Braun teaches theology and church history at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

1. August Pieper, "The Glory of the Lord," in *The Wauwatosa Theology*, ed. Curtis A. Jahn (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997), 2:475–76.
2. *Leave It to Beaver*; quoted in Jack Mingo and John Javna, *Primetime Proverbs: The Book of TV Quotes* (New York: Harmony Books, 1989), 99.
3. Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (New York: Random House, n.d.), 69.

to cite Santayana's line that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it,"[4] but George Bernard Shaw countered, "We learn from history that we learn nothing from history."[5] If not best, Henry Ford at least said it in the fewest words: "History is more or less bunk!"[6]

How can we be so sure of God's hidden will in the bombing?

Yet St. Paul, referencing selected events in the history of the ancient Israelites, concluded, "These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come" (1 Cor 10:11). Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, Paul insisted, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope (Rom 15:4). Going farther back, we see that, before the LORD ever gave Israel his commands and decrees at Sinai, he reminded them of his gracious intervention on their behalf, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery" (Exod 20:2). Repeatedly thereafter, the LORD spokesmen reviewed in the covenant language of historical prologue God's past kindnesses to Israel (see, for example, Josh 23:2–5; Ps 105:5–45; Mic 6:4–6). Martin Franzmann has written that for Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, "history [was] the dress in which the Messiah of God is clothed in order that he may be revealed and may enter men's lives."[7]

"What is sacred history," Martin Luther asked, "but the visible word of faith or an act of faith?" If we fail to concern ourselves with faith in our treatment of sacred history, he continued, "the histories of the heathen will seem to be much greater and more celebrated. A mind void of faith and guided by natural reason will of necessity abhor and despise sacred history as consisting of trifling minutiae, in comparison with the great achievements of mighty kings."[8] August Pieper maintained that it "takes a Christian to apprehend the glory of God in history," who has "come to understand the gospel, God's revealed Word, as to law and gospel in its very essence," and "who has experienced it in his heart as the great truth and wisdom which is accessible to us carnal, puny little human beings, stone-blind in spiritual matters, only through the Holy Spirit."[9]

(2) Although God can and does intervene powerfully in human events, more typically he works in a hidden way. The Lutheran historian often cannot distinguish God's short-term role or plan.

An obvious advantage enjoyed by the authors of the Bible lay not only in their ability to observe God's "back side" as history unfolded, but also in God's revelation to them of his interpretation and understanding of that history. Old Testament prophets could announce with inspired certainty the plan and will of God because he had uniquely revealed his mind to them. Isaiah, for example, could call Cyrus the Persian, long before Cyrus appeared on the scene, the Lord's anointed and his shepherd who would make possible the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its temple when he brought Judah's Babylonian captivity to an end (Isa 44:28; 45:1).

Because we live at a different time in history, however, and because we do not possess an inspired revelation of God's actions and intentions today, we cannot clearly distinguish God's purposes behind human events.

Shortly after the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, I listened to a preacher—one I greatly admire—offer his explanation of God's purposes behind that evil event. Noting the many extraordinary expressions of trust in God and displays of generosity by Bible-belt Christians, the preacher concluded that God had allowed the bombing to happen there because this segment of the American population was providing an especially powerful witness of the Christian faith to America. Interesting as I thought his thesis to be, I also found myself silently debating him: How can we be so sure of God's hidden will in the bombing?

Six years later, after terrorists flew jet airliners into the World Trade Center, the sermon—not from that preacher but from others—presented a different interpretation. Only two days after 9/11, Jerry Falwell, appearing on Pat Robertson's "700 Club," infamously concluded that throwing God out of public schools and the public square had precipitated God's actions:

> The abortionists have got to bear some burden for this because God will not be mocked. And when we destroy 40 million little innocent babies, we make God mad. I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the A.C.L.U.,

4. George Santayana, *The Life of Reason, or The Phases of Human Progress,* rev. with Daniel Cory (New York: Charles Scribner, 1953), 82.
5. George Bernard Shaw, *The Revolutionist's Handbook*, in George Seldes, *The Great Thoughts* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1985), 381.
6. Henry Ford, interview in *The Chicago Tribune* (25 May 1916): 10; http://www.giga-usa.com/quotes/authors/henry_ford_a001.htm, accessed 22 December 2008.
7. Martin Franzmann, *Concordia Self-Study Commentary*, New Testament (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 8.
8. Introduction to Justus Menius, Exposition of 1 Samuel (1532); *St. Louis Edition*, 14:153–54, quoted in Ewald M. Plass, ed., *What Luther Says: An Anthology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 2:651.
9. Pieper, "The Glory of the Lord," 476.

> People For the American Way—all of them who have tried to secularize America—I point the finger in their face and say, "You helped this happen."[10]

Yet Jesus himself refrained from revealing God's hidden will behind the daily tragedies surrounding him, though others were only too eager to speak for God. There were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Luke records Jesus' response: "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or"—citing another example—"those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish" (Luke 13:1–5). On another occasion, when Jesus and the disciples encountered a man blind from birth, the disciples asked, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered that neither the man nor his parents were guilty of a particular sin that had brought down on him this punishment, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life" (John 9:1–3).

Seminary Professor J. P. Koehler warned, "Cocksureness which has everything all figured out and has thus settled all issues, is not the conviction of faith, neither in its method nor its reliability," but can be "selfish and loveless." This conviction of faith, while "grounded in a peculiar message of God's grace," will maintain "a humble knowledge of its own insufficiency both in perception and comprehension." Such uncertainty amid conviction, Koehler conceded, was "paradoxical, but then all of life is a paradox, our Christian life itself because of the duality of our total existence under sin and grace."[11]

(3) God uses all events and individuals, both good and evil, to bring about his ultimate plan. Usually, however, God's intervention comes through natural means. The Lutheran historian will investigate earthly cause and effect rather than blithely ascribing to God specific events and outcomes.

The Bible often provides both an "above" and a "below" explanation for events that took place in biblical history. The fall of the kingdom of Israel to Assyria in the eighth century B.C., and the fall of Judah to Babylon in the sixth, can be attributed to various "below" factors, readily explainable in political and historical realities: the superior economic resources Assyria and Babylon possessed, the advanced weaponry and more proficient military units of the two Mesopotamian empires, inept leadership in Israel and Judah, the disastrous decision of the kings of Israel and Judah to defy the power of their much larger suzerains, and others.

But the writer of 2 Kings also presents a "theological explanation" of the fall of Israel:

> All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the LORD their God. . . . They worshiped other gods and followed the practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before them, as well as the practices the kings of Israel had introduced. . . . The LORD warned Israel through all his prophets and seers . . . , but they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their fathers. . . . They bowed down to all their starry hosts, and they worshiped Baal. . . . So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence (2 Kgs 17:7–18).

The prophet Jeremiah sang in his lament over Jerusalem:

> The LORD has given full vent to his wrath;
> he has poured out his fierce anger.
> He kindled a fire in Zion
> that consumed her foundations.
> The kings of the earth did not believe,
> nor did any of the world's people,
> that enemies and foes could enter
> the gates of Jerusalem.
> But it happened because of the sin of her prophets
> and the iniquities of her priests,
> who shed within her
> the blood of the righteous. (Lam 4:11–13)

In a world in which one nation's victory over another was taken as the defeat of lesser gods by more powerful deities, who could have understood without divine revelation that the LORD intent was to employ the Babylonians as his instrument to bring about a painful yet necessary repentance and the preservation of a remnant in Judah? (See Jer 25:8-14; Ezek 11:6–21; Heb 1:5–11; 2:2–4.)

One might say as well that one of the most significant persons in the spread of the gospel in the first century after Christ was Alexander the Great—though he died more than three centuries earlier and never believed in the God of Israel. Alexander operated entirely from motives of conquest when he led his armies eastward from Macedonia to the Near East and beyond. More than military and political control, Alexander introduced that way of thinking and living that Edgar Allan Poe called "the glory that was Greece."[12] Hellenism was cool for new generations of these many conquered peoples, including Jews. Already by Alexander's time, many Jewish believers had moved out of Palestine but had sustained their faith in the God of Israel by gathering each Sabbath day in synagogues.

10. Partial transcript of comments by Rev. Jerry Falwell on the 13 September 2001 telecast of the "700 Club"; http://www.actupny.org/YELL/falwell.html; accessed 12 September 2008.
11. Joh. P. Koehler, *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschicte*, trans. Erwin Wagner, vi-vii, quoted in Leigh Jordahl, introduction to Koehler, *The History of the Wisconsin Synod* (St. Cloud, Minn.: Faith-Life, 1970), xx.
12. Norman F. Cantor, with Dee Ranieri, *Alexander the Great: Journey to the End of the Earth* (New York: Harper Perennial Books, 2005), 3.

Yet because even these Jewish believers had grown less familiar with Hebrew, the Scriptures were translated into the more accessible Greek of the *Septuagint*. These seemingly random events served to install a far-flung network of Jewish communities reading the Scriptures in Greek. By the first century A.D., these Jewish reading rooms had also begun to attract numerous interested Gentiles. The apostle Paul—himself a son of the synagogue—used these reading rooms as launching pads for communities of men and women won for the new faith in Jesus as the fulfillment of the promises of the Messiah.

God operates through evil men as well as good to accomplish his purposes.

The most powerful example of both "above" and "below" explanations of history can be found in the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus. The arrest, trials, and crucifixion of Jesus can be and have been ascribed to jealous religious leaders in Jerusalem, explained by the unwillingness of a Roman procurator to aggravate already tense relations with local power brokers, and provoked by the surprising popularity of a Galilean peasant preacher that threatened Roman control over its province of Palestine. But the prophet Isaiah, centuries before, had defined God's larger purposes in this seeming miscarriage of justice: the Servant of the LORD would be pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities (Isa 53:5).

The apostle Peter highlighted the "above" and the "below" explanations of Jesus' suffering and death in his sermon on Pentecost:

> Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. . . . God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear (Acts 2:22–25, 32–33).

God operates through evil men as well as good to accomplish his purposes. This does not excuse us from the responsibility of being informed citizens regarding candidates pursuing public office. Although granting that it was preferable to have a prince who was both "good and prudent," Luther advised—surprisingly, perhaps, to our Evangelicalized ears—that "if one cannot have both, it is better [that a ruler] be prudent and not good than good and not prudent." Luther reasoned that "the good man," that is, pious but incompetent, would be ruled too easily by others. But "even if the prudent man [competent but not godly] harms good people, yet at the same time he governs the evil ones, which is the most necessary and suitable thing for the world, since the world is nothing else than a crowd of evil people" (AE 9: 19). By such thinking, we would be less likely to cast our vote based on the public church-going habits of our candidates, or to decide thorny political issues based on a single-issue political litmus test.

"It's safe enough to recognize the finger of God in *any* event," Dorothy L. Sayers has a character say in her play *The Man Born to Be King*. "It's harder to be sure which way it's pointing."[13]

(4) God created Adam and Eve in his image, but they rebelled against him. The effects of their fall into sin have been passed on to all their descendants. Because of the pervasive nature of inherited and actual sin, Lutheran historians do not expect human history to reveal an upward evolution in goodness or morality.

A recurring theme in late-nineteenth-century America was progressive postmillennialism: the optimistic expectation of a world becoming better and better. In his second inaugural address in 1873, President Ulysses S. Grant predicted that our "Great Maker" was "preparing the world, in his own good time, to become one nation, speaking one language," a nation in which "armies and navies will no longer be required."[14] Said clergyman Newell Dwight Hills, "Laws are becoming more just, rulers humane; music is becoming sweeter and books wiser; homes are happier, and the individual heart becoming at once more just and more gentle."[15] Victor Hugo envisioned a twentieth century in which "war will be dead, the frontier will be dead, the scaffold will be dead, royalty will be dead, dogmas will be dead; and man will survive. There will be overhead of us all but one great country, the whole earth—and one great hope, the whole heaven."[16] Josiah Strong believed that the world was "making progress, we are leaving behind the barbarism of war; as civilization advances, it will learn less of war, and concern itself more with the arts of peace."[17] Strong considered the Anglo-Saxon race uniquely equipped to lead the world into this new era.

But then "came the deluge," as Reinhold Niebuhr put it. "Since 1914 one tragic experience has followed another, as if

13. Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Man Born to Be King* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 133.
14. Second Inaugural, 4 March 1873; http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres34.html; accessed 19 September 2008.
15. Quoted in Raymond H. Bailey, *Destiny and Disappointment* (Beloit, Kans.: McGrath Publishing Company, 1977), i.
16. James Cappon, *Victor Hugo: A Memoir and Study* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1885), 387.
17. Josiah Strong, "The Anglo-Saxon and the World's Future," in *Our Country*, ed. Jurgen Herbst (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1963), 200–218.

history has been designed to refute the main delusions of modern man."[18] The great World War—the war that was to end all wars—followed by the Great Depression, a second and still greater World War, revelations of the horrors of Nazi Germany, together with persistent racism and abuse closer to home, all confirmed the hollow and hypocritical nature of human morality. "Under a thin cultural veneer," observed August Pieper, "there lay hidden the brutal and satanic nature of the human heart, unbounded greed, unheard-of mendacity, and an insatiable lust to kill." Christians should be least surprised at this. We have learned that every inclination of the thoughts of [the human] heart is only evil all the time (Gen 6:5) and that the heart is deceitful about all things and beyond cure (Jer 17:9). "No article of Christian doctrine is more clearly attested by the history of human development than this doctrine of the moral depravity of the human heart," Pieper continued. In the fall "all human life and nature was corrupted and therefore lost. Unless this truth is preached in all its severity the Gospel cannot exert its regenerative and saving power."[19]

Lutheran historians may come off more pessimistic than their counterparts who continue to expect an upward evolution in human morality.

And so, Lutheran historians may come off more pessimistic than their counterparts who continue to expect an upward evolution in human morality. For this very reason, things may seem easier for the secular reformer than the Christian reformer, T. S. Eliot said, because the secular reformer mostly "conceives of the evils of the world as something external to himself." Either he sees them as an impersonal thing, or, if there really is evil *incarnate*, "it is always incarnate in *other people*—a class, a race, the politicians, the bankers, the armament makers, and so forth—never in oneself." Such "exhilarating" but unfounded optimism in human nature is something "the Christian must deny himself," Eliot wrote. "It causes pride, either individual or collective, and pride brings its own doom. For only in humility, charity, and purity—and most of all humility—can we be prepared to receive the grace of God without which human operations are vain."[20]

(5) God did not abandon his creation, but he has guided the events of history to bring his Son into the world to redeem the world. The incarnation of Christ stands as the turning point of all history. Before the coming of Christ, God brought people into his kingdom primarily through the nation of Israel; he now uses the church to expand his kingdom throughout the world.

Particularly in his later letters, St. Paul wrote that he had come to appreciate the great new age of gospel proclamation unfolding during his lifetime, and the role God had called him to play in that proclamation. He wrote to the Ephesians:

> Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. (3:2–5)

In referring to the mystery of this revelation, the mystery of Christ, Paul may have had in mind the various mystery religions of the first-century Mediterranean world, the secrets of which were not to be divulged to the masses but reserved only for those few "worthy" enough to be told them.[21] But God was turning the mystery of the gospel on its head, and he selected and commissioned Paul to "let the secret out of the bag": "This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus" (Eph 3:6).

For twenty centuries thereafter, the gospel has moved through the world in ebb and flow. Philip Yancey said he has observed "a pattern, a strange historical phenomenon of God 'moving' geographically from the Middle East, to Europe to North America to the developing world." God, Yancey said, "goes where he's wanted."[22] Some corners of the earth, once centers of Christian faith and activity, have been repaganized, and God has brought his happy message on to others.

Luther had his own insight into this mystery. "Beloved Germans," he urged with emotion,

> Buy while the market is close at hand! Gather while the sun is shining and while there is good weather! Make use of God's grace and word while it is here! For you should know this: God's word and grace is a passing downpour which does not return to where it has already been. It has been with the Jews; but what's lost is lost, and they now

18. Reinhold Niebuhr, *Faith and History: A Comparison of Christian and Modern Views of History* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1949), 6–7.
19. August Pieper, *Isaiah II*, trans. Erwin E. Kowalke (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1979), 96.
20. Quoted in Martin E. Marty, *Context* 23 (1 December 1991): 2.
21. For a popular discussion of the mystery religions and their purported influence on Christianity, see John Ankerberg and John Weldon, "Did Christianity Arise Out of the Mystery Religions?" http://www.ankerberg.com/Articles/historical-Jesus/DaVinci/PDF/Mystery-Religions.pdf; accessed 19 September 2008.
22. Philip Yancey, "God at Large," *Christianity Today* 45 (2001): 136.

> have nothing. Paul brought it to Greece; what's lost is lost, and they now have the Turks. Rome and Latin-speaking regions have also had it; what's lost is lost, and they now have the pope. And you Germans dare not think that you will have it forever, for the ingratitude and disdain will not let it remain. Therefore take hold and hang on tightly, while you are able to grab and to hold. (St. L. 10: 464; also in AE 45: 352–53)

What would Luther say if he could extend his analysis of how the Savior's gospel has fared in the world? "It has been with the Americans; but what's lost is lost, and they now have Oprah"?—vague, nontheological, low-demand, self-help spirituality; no sin, no judgment, no Christ, no cross, no forgiveness, no good news—but at least we all feel better about ourselves![23]

By 2050, only one Christian in five will be white or non-Latino.

This "passing downpour" of the gospel continues. It could still be said in the 1930s, as British writer Hillaire Belloc put it, that "Europe is the faith; the faith is Europe."[24] But we live today during "one of the transforming moments in the history of religion worldwide." While many maintain the stereotype of Christianity as the religion of the "West" or the "global North," during the twentieth century "the center of gravity in the Christian world has shifted inexorably south, to Africa, Asia, and Latin America."[25] Kenyan scholar John Mbiti has written, "The centers of the church's universality [are] no longer in Geneva, Rome, Athens, Paris, London, New York, but Kinshasa, Buenos Aires, Addis Adaba, and Manila."[26] Joel Carpenter, director of the Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity at Calvin College, concludes that the "average Christian" in the world today is a woman from Africa or Latin America, whose family is poor, whose children have no textbooks in their schools, and whose governments are fragile or corrupt. The Bible's "accounts of famine, plagues, and corruption—which seem distant to most of us in the global North and West—are immediately relevant to her. The Bible is her book."[27]

There are now six times as many Anglicans in Nigeria as in England, and as many Pentecostals in Africa as in all of Europe. By 2050, only one Christian in five will be white or non-Latino. "As Christianity moves from the privileged west to the less wealthy south, it becomes more conservative; more open to mysticism, exorcism and supernaturalism; and, more than at any time since the fourth century, the religion of the poor rather than the prosperous."[28]

(6) Through the gospel in word and sacrament, God calls men and women back into relationship with himself. While the working of the Holy Spirit is invisible, the fruits of his work can be observed in history. Still, the Christian church on earth remains tainted by sin and must be a continually reforming church.

In 1980, candidate Ronald Reagan reportedly said, "I would like to be President because I would like to see this country become once again a country where a little six-year-old girl can grow up knowing the same freedom that I knew when I was six years old, growing up in America." To which Peter Beinart, writing in *Time* magazine this past summer, remarked that "as a matter of historical fact" Reagan's statement was "downright bizarre." Reagan was six years old in 1917, a time when "women and most blacks couldn't vote, and America's entry into World War I was whipping up an anti-German frenzy that some of the towns in Reagan's native Midwest banned the playing of Beethoven and Brahms." But for Reagan and perhaps for other politicians and their supporters, movies can be confused with real life and "history usually meant myth."[29]

But how easily do we see things the same way in the church? As the old grammarians' joke says, we tend to consider the "present tense" but the "past perfect." We recall better times when the surrounding culture was, if not more Christian, then at least more moral. Lutherans were staying Lutheran and having lots of babies. Our parochial school classrooms were crowded, and being in the teaching or preaching ministry of the church was an admirable thing. The Wisconsin Synod was breaking out of its Midwestern stronghold; the back pages of *The Northwestern Lutheran* requested names for new mission church openings in places like Huntsville, Alabama; Anchorage, Alaska; Yucaipa, California; Hartford, Connecticut; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and East Brunswick, New Jersey.[30] From 1961 to 1968 alone, the number of states containing Wisconsin Synod churches more than doubled, from 16 to 33.[31] The goal was to make "Every State by '78," and we came close. "The Wisconsin Synod today supports missions in places in which it had no intention of going a few years ago," *Northwestern Lutheran* editorialist Immanuel Frey reported. This aggressive mission

23. See, for example, R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "The Church of Oprah Winfrey—An American Religion? http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/article_main_page/0,1703,A%253D161438%2526M%253D200373,00.html; accessed 22 September 22 2008.
24. Martin E. Marty, *A Short History of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 306.
25. Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 1–2.
26. Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa* (Edinburgh: University Press/ Orbis, 1995), 154.
27. *Response* (Autumn 2007); in Martin E. Marty, *Context* 40 (February 2008, Part A): 8.
28. Mark Braun, "Twentieth Century Christianity," article to be published in *The Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2011).
29. Peter Beinart, "Patriot Games," *Time* (7 July 2008): 29.
30. *The Northwestern Lutheran* 55 (1968): 339.
31. Norman W. Berg, "1961–1971: A Decade of Decision for Home Missions," *The Northwestern Lutheran* 55 (1968): 366.

expansion was "literally forced upon" the Wisconsin Synod, "in large part as a direct result of the liberal trends which have developed in once conservative churches."[32]

Today, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod seldom hears of new school openings; instead, the news is about declining enrollments and schools consolidating, barely surviving, or closing entirely. Our congregational numbers, likewise, continue to decline. Most disturbing is how we seem to be losing more and more of our own, who grew up in our churches and schools but who never embraced or no longer treasure distinctive elements in their Lutheran heritage. Still, a closer look at our history reveals the early struggles of horseback-riding preachers, feeble financial support for home missionaries,[33] and the disconcerting revelation that the official mission policy of the Wisconsin Synod for much of its history hinged on a judgment by one of its synodical teachers that not all church bodies were equally constrained by the Great Commission.[34] The Wisconsin Synod's school system typically got by on the most meager of budgets, and in the 1930s the synod barely avoided bankruptcy.[35] A deeper awareness of our past gives us clearer perspective, keeps us humble, and drives us back to greater trust in God's promises.

(7) Unrepentant human beings are still able to use reason and conscience to seek what appears to be morally good, but civic righteousness can never truly benefit humanity without the knowledge of God's will as revealed in the Bible.

Lutheran doctrinal statements extol the value of "civic righteousness." The Apology to the Augsburg Confession states that "God requires the righteousness of reason" and that "honorable works prescribed in the Decalogue are necessary." Such civil discipline is necessary because God wants particularly those who are not Christians "to be restrained by such civil discipline," and "to preserve it he has given laws, learning, teaching, governments, and penalties." Apology author Philipp Melanchthon added, "To a certain extent, reason can produce this righteousness by its own powers," and "we willingly give this righteousness of reason the praises it deserves" (Ap I , 22–24 [Kolb-Wengert, 124]). The Formula of Concord adds that these works are required of and performed by the unbelieving and unconverted (FC SD IV, 8 [Kolb-Wengert, 575]). "Honest and just government, law-abiding citizens, stable family units, and respect for human life and other people's property all make for a better society." Such a peaceful, protected society "enables Christians to preach the gospel unhindered by domestic violence," and so "Christians will encourage and promote civic righteousness for the good of the country in which they live."[36]

A deeper awareness of our past gives us clearer perspective, keeps us humble, and drives us back to greater trust in God's promises.

But Lutheran doctrinal statements are also quick to point up the inadequacy of civic righteousness. Though "God honors it with temporal rewards," this civic righteousness "ought not be praised at Christ's expense" (Ap IV, 24 [Kolb-Wengert, 124]). The good works of civic righteousness, "because they do not proceed from true faith," are "sin in God's sight." They are "tarnished with sins and are regarded by God as sin and impure because of the corrupted human nature and because the person who performs them is not reconciled with God." A person "must be acceptable to God beforehand (and that alone because of Christ), before that person's works are at all pleasing to him" (FC SD IV, 8 [Kolb-Wengert, 575]).

We find ourselves, then, in the occasional "Catch-22" of alternately praising civic righteousness and warning of its limitations. We also find ourselves voicing appreciation for the moral stands of other Christian bodies, occasionally even joining them in expression of those stands, while maintaining boundaries separating ourselves from them over doctrinal disagreements. Then-Missouri Synod President Ralph Bohlmann remarked in 1986, "We often find ourselves working side by side" with Roman Catholics "to correct such evils as abortion, pornography, and the corruption of family life," yet "traditional Catholic teaching in such areas as justification, papal primacy and infallibility, the role of Mary and apostolic succession remains unchanged."[37]

And the Apology concedes that even the best-intentioned efforts at civic righteousness are "often shackled by its natural weakness and by the devil, who drives it to shameful acts" (Ap IV, 22 [Kolb-Wengert, 124]). Tracy Kidder, in his account of the life and work of Dr. Paul Farmer, describes the Peligre Dam project on Haiti's Artibonite River. Conceived by the U.S.

32. Immanuel G. Frey, "Still Living," *The Northwestern Lutheran* 54 (1967): 183.
33. See, for example, Arnold Lehmann, "Wisconsin Synod *Reisepredigt* Program," *WELS Historical Institute Journal* 6, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 22–43; Martin O. Westerhaus, "Early WELS *Reiseprediger* On The Great Plains," *WELS Historical Institute Journal* 17, no. 1 (April 1999): 17–28.
34. Koehler wrote in *History of the Wisconsin Synod*, 196, that "there are organizations, like people, that remain small in number," meant to do "intensive rather than extensive" work. Establishing and maintaining a preparatory college for pastors was deemed "mission enough for awhile."
35. See the grim details in Edward C. Fredrich, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans: A History of the Single Synod, Federation, and Merger* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1992), 190–94.
36. Lyle W. Lange, *God So Loved the World: A Study of Christian Doctrine* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2005), 407–8.
37. Quoted in "News Around the World," *The Northwestern Lutheran* 73 (1986): 134.

Army Corps of Engineers, the project was designed to improve irrigation and to generate electrical power, though also intended to benefit mostly American-owned agribusinesses downstream and to supply electricity for the wealthy few in Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince. But as the Artibonite River flooded, peasants who had farmed the river's valley were forced off their land—some with little prior warning—and were forced to go looking for work in Port-au-Prince, where they found employment as cooks and domestics, stitching dolls and baseballs, but where more and more of them came back home to die of AIDS. Many of the valley's residents formerly owned creole pigs, which they kept like bank accounts and then sold at market to pay the school tuition for their children. But in the early 1980s, alarmed at the outbreak of swine flu in the neighboring Dominican Republic, and fearful that the outbreak could hurt the American pork market, the United States led an effort to destroy Haiti's pigs and replace them with pigs purchased from Iowa farmers—a true Congressional pork project! But the less hardy American-bred pigs were more expensive to house and feed and they did not thrive in Haiti, leaving the peasant farmers with no pigs at all. The net result of these humanitarian efforts—mitigated, of course, by much self-interest on the part of their benefactors—was increased poverty, a decline in educational opportunities, and greater dependence on inadequate relief aid.[38]

Conservative Christians awaiting an earthly millennium have more in common with secular views of personal and societal evolution upward.

(8) The Lutheran historian sees history not primarily as cyclical, evolutionary, or random, but as teleological and christological. God moves the universe toward the final goal of the return of Christ in power. The Lutheran historian does not expect an earthly millennium or an end to social evils before Judgment Day.

Biblical history and the course of God's actions in it "are like an arrow shot toward a target, not like a planet endlessly pursuing an unchanging, circular course." In such a "linear" system, "judgment is built in." The target "is where the arrow is going, and every action in the whole of the arrow's course—the drawing of it from the quiver, the setting of it on the bowstring, the releasing of the bow, and the flight of the arrow through the air—everything, quite literally, is governed by the history-fulfilling judgment of the bull's eye at the end." This linear view of history "has its origin in the Old Testament and is intrinsic to Christian thought. History has a beginning, it proceeds under God's providence and not without his intervention, and it will arrive at the goal which he has set for it." While the linear view "is realistic about history, it is optimistic about the consummation of history on the day of Christ's return."[39]

This view of history stands in marked contrast to the views of Hinduism, Buddhism, and other religions coming out of India and the Far East. Indian philosophy sees time as "moving endlessly through various cycles," progressing from an initial phase of peace and abundance to increasing famine, war, decay, and immorality. The world is finally destroyed by Shiva, "the world dissolves and all souls depart into suspended being. After a period of repose, the world begins again and the souls take up new bodies."[40] Likewise, the teleological Christian view differs from primal beliefs in many parts of the world, in which time is circular, "following the pattern of the celestial and natural world." The rhythm of sunrises and sunsets, the waxing and waning of the moon, the dependable change of the seasons are celebrated in primal myth and ritual. In primal religion, "people, like the land, the sea, and the forests, undergo an eternal process of birth, death, and rebirth."[41]

It can happen that Lutherans, searching for kindred spirits in their historical worldview and turned away by Eastern, secular, liberal, and postmodern views of history—both in academia and the church—feel themselves to be more in step with conservative, Evangelical historians. While there is much to admire about conservative and Evangelical historians, and things to learn from them, their historical viewpoint is often colored by a millennial view of history, with the expectation of a rapture and a literal thousand-year reign of Christ on the earth prior to Judgment Day.

Evangelicals typically find support for a millennial concept of history in the book of Revelation, yet Siegbert Becker has insisted that Revelation is "the most anti-millennial book in the whole Bible."[42] In many ways, conservative Christians awaiting an earthly millennium have more in common with secular views of personal and societal evolution upward and the old dreams of the perfectibility of the human race. "The whole concept of a millennial kingdom," Becker writes, "is the result of [a materialistic] concept of what it means to be a child of God in this sin-cursed world." Despite a conservative, even fundamen-

38. Tracy Kidder, *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, the Man Who Would Cure the World* (New York: Random House, 2003), 36–38.

39. Richard D. Balge, reviewing *Patterns in History: A Christian Perspective on Historical Thought*, by D. W. Bebbington (Baker, 1990), in *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 89 (1992): 232.

40. Lewis M. Hopfe and Mark R. Woodward, *Religions of the World*, 9th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004), 88.

41. John L. Esposito, Darrell J. Fasching, and Todd Lewis, *World Religions Today*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 36.

42. Siegbert W. Becker, *Revelation: The Distant Triumph Song* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1985), 3.

talist approach to Scripture, "millennialism is at heart closely related to the Social Gospel, which holds out the hope of a better world where there is no war, no sickness, no hunger, no inequity of any kind, without the renewal which will take place on the final day of judgment. Men have always yearned for a golden age where peace and harmony and justice prevail everywhere."[43]

Is it harder to do history now?

In a 1996 episode of *Seinfeld* entitled "Bizarro Jerry," Elaine meets three new friends who are kinder, less self-centered, and more sophisticated counterparts of her friends Jerry, George, and Kramer. Kevin is reliable and kind, in contrast to Jerry's forgetfulness and indifference; Gene is quiet and courteous, compared to the loud and obnoxious George. Feldman buys lunch for his friends and brings Kevin groceries, unlike Kramer who mooches Jerry's groceries and often bursts through his door without warning.

Remarking on the superior qualities of her new friends, Elaine tells Jerry: "They do good things. They read."

Jerry responds: "I read."

Elaine: "Books, Jerry."

Jerry: "Oh . . . Big deal."

Elaine: "Well! I can't spend the rest of my life coming to this stinking apartment every ten minutes to *pore* over the *excruciating minutia* of *every, single, daily event*."

Which Jerry can't seem to understand.[44]

Perhaps a charming feature of the Seinfeld gang was their shallowness and fixation on "the excruciating minutiae" of their daily lives. But numerous forces are conspiring to make all of us more like them. As newspapers grow smaller and news reporting becomes shorter, more sensationalized, and more devoid of analysis, people seek quick, simplistic answers to life's day-to-day minutiae. Thoughtful, in-depth reading and reflection suffer, which is bad news for historians. According to figures assembled by the Jenkins Group:

- on third of high school graduates never read another book for the rest of their lives.
- 42 percent of college graduates never read another book after college.
- 80 percent of U.S. families did not buy or read a book last year.
- 70 percent of U.S. adults have not been in a bookstore in the last five years.
- 57 percent of new books are not read to completion.[45]

Andrew Keen, in his book *The Cult of the Amateur: How Today's Internet is Killing Our Culture*, warns that the Internet revolution is delivering "superficial observations of the world around us rather than deep analysis, shrill opinion rather than considered judgment."[46] Nicholas Carr, asking, "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" cites Bruce Friedman, a regular blogger, on the use of computers in medicine, who admitted that he has "almost totally lost the ability to read and absorb a longish article on the web or in print." Friedman's thinking has taken on a "staccato" quality, reflecting his practice of rapidly scanning short passages of text from many online sources. "I can't read *War and Peace* anymore," he admitted. "I've lost the ability to do that. Even a blog post of more than three or four paragraphs is too much to absorb. I skim it."[47]

People seek quick, simplistic answers to life's day-to-day minutiae.

Maryanne Wolf, a developmental psychologist at Tufts University and author of *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain*, worries that the style of reading promoted by the Internet, which places "efficiency" and "immediacy" above all else, may be weakening our capacity for deep reading of long works of prose. Searching online, we tend to become "mere decoders of information," while our ability to interpret text and make mental connections remains disengaged. Wolf even fears that prolonged use of the Internet may cause our brains to develop different mental circuits from those woven by reading books and other printed works.[48]

Apparently, this is not a new thing. A half-century ago, Will and Ariel Durant lamented that "we Americans are the best informed people on earth as to the events of the last twenty-four hours; we are not the best informed as to the events of the last sixty centuries."[49] But it also must be a growing phenomenon. "Are kids more ignorant today?" asked a recent submission to the local editorial page. We can keep up with the breathlessly shifting dysfunctional details of the Spears family or the downward spiral of Anna Nicole Smith, but according to a survey done by professors at Columbia University, twenty-five percent of incoming freshmen could not identify Abraham Lincoln as the U.S. President during the Civil War. Among the accomplishments ascribed to Theodore Roosevelt,

43. Ibid., 103.
44. "The Bizarro Jerry," in *The Television Transcript Project*, www.geocities.com/transcripts/seinfeld/bizarro.htm; accessed 29 August 2008.
45. Jerold Jenkins, www.JenkinsGroupInc.com; accessed 24 September 2008.
46. Andrew Keen, *The Cult of the Amateur: How the Internet is Killing Our Culture* (New York: Doubleday/Currency, 2007), 16.
47. Nicholas Carr, "Is Google Making Us Stupid? What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains," TheAtlantic.com (July/August 2008); http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200807/google; accessed 12 September 2008.
48. Maryanne Wolf, *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2007), 3–8.
49. *Peter's Quotations*, 247.

students listed that he was a forest ranger, purchased Alaska, saved the country from the Depression, was a War of 1812 hero, headed a troop of Negroes who helped free Texas and "helped quiet the Indians."[50]

50. Thomas Zachek, "Are Kids More Ignorant Today?" *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (30 September 2008): 9A.

The loss of our national history and our ability to comprehend and analyze written texts does not bode well for our educational institutions. But to lose the record of God's saving acts on our behalf carries deeper consequences. God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the Lord of history, and because God the Son entered our human history, the study of history will always deserve our greatest attention and our best efforts. LOGIA

Inklings

Things were said . . . Mistakes were made.

Gerhard Forde

A Short Appreciation and Critique

Jack Kilcrease

The theology of Gerhard O. Forde (1927–2005) has grown in its influence in traditionalist North American Lutheran circles over the last few decades. Ironically, although Forde was a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for many years (and before that the American Lutheran Church), interest in his theology and institutional support for his ideas within that denomination have dwindled. The real growth of interest in Forde's theology has been within the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and other confessional Lutheran church bodies. Some have reacted with alarm to the growth of this influence, while others have welcomed it. What I would like to argue in the following short article is that Forde is neither the demon nor the demigod that many have made him out to be. He has made many theological contributions but also many mistakes. Below I will outline several positive contributions that I believe Forde has made to North American Lutheran theological discourse. Then I will also discuss several areas where he displays weakness or error.

Beginning with his positive theological contributions, one area of theological strength is Forde's application of Luther's doctrine of the hidden and revealed God. Forde's emphasis on this doctrine represents an extremely helpful break from modern theology's hunger for self-justifying theodicy.[1] In his writings on the subject Forde pulls no punches in describing the human situation under the hidden God.[2] Here he follows Luther in his basic recognition that God is by his very nature an electing God.[3] A God who in his abstract majesty is the supremely omnipotent arbiter of life and death cannot be trusted because he is too frightening to contemplate. For this reason, human beings in the delusional state of sin assert their free will against God's omnipotence.[4] This gives them a sense that they possess a modicum of control over the *mysterium tremendum* of God's reality. Nevertheless, free will cannot solve the problem of the hidden God. Free will starts by carving a hermeneutically sealed space out for itself over and against God's omnipotence. Ultimately it is never happy with this space. It grows and grows until it eventually does away with God entirely.[5]

Recognition of this problem brings us to Forde's second great contribution: his application of Luther's theology of the cross. The solution to the problem of the hidden God is not the puerile obfuscation of the theodicy of free will but rather the actuality of God's saving presence.[6] The theologian of the cross is honest about human bondage and God's terrible hiddenness and wrath.[7] Finding God in his majesty utterly unbearable, the theologian of the cross rejects the way of glory and proclaims God hidden *sub contrario* in the flesh of the man Jesus.[8] Whereas God apart from Christ is terrifying, abstract, and intangible, God in the man Jesus becomes for us the tangible and gracious God. Jesus is a God onto whom faith can hold, and therefore a God in whom one can trust.[9]

This leads to Forde's third major contribution: his insistence on the centrality of proclamation.[10] Because the intangible and hidden God can never be explained away or controlled, the true Christian must hold onto Christ as the tangible God present in word and sacrament. The preacher's job is to proclaim the actuality of Christ's saving presence in word and sacrament.[11] Many men who occupy the preaching office believe that their job is to give their congregations a better idea of God. Through this, they hope to make God more attractive and thereby move their parishioners' free will in a better direction.[12] The preach-

Jack Kilcrease is an adjunct professor of Theology and Humanities at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

1. See Gerhard Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross: Reflections on Luther's Heidelberg Disputation, 1518* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1997), 84–86. See one attempt to vindicate this path in Paul Hinlicky, *Paths Not Taken: Fates of Theology Luther Through Leibniz* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2009).
2. See Gerhard Forde, *The Captivation of the Will: Luther vs. Erasmus on Freedom and Bondage*, ed. Steven Paulson (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005), 31–46; Forde, *Theology is for Proclamation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 13–38; Forde, "The Work of Christ," in *Christian Dogmatics*, ed. Robert Jenson and Carl Braaten (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 2:66–76.
3. Forde, *Theology is for Proclamation*, 30–38; Forde, "Work of Christ," 67.
4. Forde, "Work of Christ," 66.
5. Ibid., 66–67.
6. Ibid., 67–69.
7. Forde, *Theologian of the Cross*, 72–81.
8. Ibid.
9. Forde, "Work of Christ," 67–69.
10. See the definitive summary in Gerhard Forde, "Radical Lutheranism," in *A More Radical Gospel: Essays in Eschatology, Authority, Atonement, and Ecumenism*, ed. Mark Mattes and Steven Paulson (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004), 3–16.
11. Forde, *Theology is for Proclamation*, 147–90.
12. Forde, "Work of Christ," 67.

er of the cross knows that explaining away God's terrible presence will never help sinners. Giving better theories about who God is simply cannot make God gracious in his concrete actuality.[13] Only the means of grace, within which God has willed to make himself gracious and tangible, can overcome the terror of God's intangibly hidden reality.

Forde's description of the work of Christ is problematic because it calls into question God's faithfulness to his word of law.

Along with these important theological contributions, Forde also displays some areas of weakness. The first area of concern is Forde's critique of the doctrine of *lex aeterna* or eternal law. Forde begins his doctoral dissertation *The Law-Gospel Debate* by attacking what he considers to be the inadequacies of the Lutheran scholastic doctrine of *lex aeterna*.[14] According to the older Lutheran theologians, because God is eternal and the law is the content of his will, then the law itself must be understood as something eternal.[15] Forde rejected this interpretation of the law in light of his rereading of Luther's *Antinominian Disputations*.[16] According to Forde (largely basing his interpretation on that of Lauri Haikola[17]), Luther rejected the idea of *lex aeterna* in favor of an understanding of the law as the experience of condemnation, accusation, and threat within creation.[18] In light of this, the law ultimately cannot be eternal because this experience of the law ceases or becomes an "empty law" (*lex vacua*) when the law is fulfilled within believers through faith.[19]

Though we do not have the space to critique Forde's position fully here, one main point should be made. If God does dynamically engage in accusing and threatening activity within creation, it is necessarily a reaction to human sin and its violation of God's eternal will. Therefore, saying that the law cannot be eternal because believers will eventually cease to experience its threat is something of a category confusion. One can agree with Forde on the existential dimensions of the law, while recognizing that God threatens sinners on the basis of their rejection of his eternal will.[20] Hence, when Forde rejects the idea of the eternal law he does not mean to suggest that the law at some point simply ceases to be God's will, but rather that God's will ceases to threaten sinners when the law is fulfilled in them. Though it is not theologically incorrect to say that the existential effect of the law will eventually cease for believers, Forde's formulation confuses the discussion by applying a term meant to express the ontic reality of the law to an existential description of the law's effects.

This brings us to a second area of concern: Forde's interpretation of the doctrine of atonement.[21] Forde starts with the recognition that sinful and unbelieving human beings exist under the law and the hidden God. In order to overcome this situation, God has sent Jesus into the world in order to forgive, thereby changing God's relation with the world to one of love and forgiveness. God, as he is actualized in Jesus, makes a unilateral decision to forgive without any fulfillment of the law. Humans prefer to be under the law because they believe that they can control God using their good works. Their response to being forgiven is to kill Jesus in order to maintain this sense of control. In doing this, they reveal their own sin of unbelief and they thereby die in their recognition of sin. Jesus' resurrection vindicates his practice of unilateral forgiveness. Since faith fulfills the law and sanctifies us, God now looks at the person of faith as righteous and is "satisfied."

Forde's description of the work of Christ is problematic because it calls into question God's faithfulness to his word of law. If grace is described as God's abandoning his word of law by refusing to punish sin, can we be certain that he will not ultimately reverse himself regarding his word of grace as well? Furthermore, although Forde criticizes the idea that the law must be satisfied before God can become gracious, he ultimately agrees that the law must be fulfilled. The only difference is that the law is fulfilled in believers through faith and not by Jesus. This calls into question the Lutheran confessional understandings of justification *propter Christum*.

Lastly, Forde has drawn criticism due to his understanding of the third use of the law. For Forde, faith fulfills the law and therefore talk of a "third use" is in a sense superfluous. The per-

13. Ibid.
14. Gerhard Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate: An Interpretation of Its Historical Development* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969), 3–11. Also see Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. Charles Hay and Henry Jacobs (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 508–9, 510–16.
15. Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate,* 3–11.
16. Ibid., 180–87.
17. Lauri Haikola, *Studien zu Luther und zum Luthertum* (Uppsala: A. B. Lundquistika Bokhandeln, 1958); and also Haikola, "A Comparison of Melanchthon's and Luther's Doctrine of Justification," *Dialog* 2 (1963): 32–39.
18. Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate*, 180–87.
19. Ibid., 182–84.
20. See Theodosius Harnack, *Luthers Theologie mit besonderer Beziehung auf seine Versöhnungs- und Erlösungslehre* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1969), 1:368–401. Harnack argues that there is a distinction between "office" and "essence" (*Amt und Wesen*) in Luther's understanding of the law. In its essence, the law is God's eternal will, whereas in its temporal office after the fall it is whatever threatens and accuses. In my opinion, this is a much better interpretation of Luther.
21. See the summary in Forde, "Caught in the Act: Reflections on the Work of Christ," in *A More Radical Gospel*, 85–97; Forde, *Theology is for Proclamation*, 87–134; Forde, "Work of Christ," 79–104.

son of faith has entered into the new age of righteousness and grace. Moreover, talk of a third use also presupposes that the *lex semper accusat* has in some strange sense been abrogated.[22] In other words, talking about a "third use" assumes that the law has lost its threat and has now become a harmless "pet" that merely instructs.[23]

Contrary to what many have charged, this does not mean that Forde holds that there is no place for law in the Christian's life. Of course, due to the *simul* of Christian existence, the old being persists and needs the law. For this reason, the law as instruction and rational commonsense continue to function for the Christian as they relate to the world.[24] This form of instruction Forde characterizes as falling within the first use of the law, rather than the third.[25] Hence Forde does not so much reject the third use as lump it in with the first use.[26]

There are several difficulties with this interpretation of the third use of the law. First, when Forde claims that the third use assumes that the law is harmless or has ceased to accuse, he is directly contradicting the descriptions of the third use made in the Formula of Concord. In fact, the Formula of Concord agrees with Forde that the law is a necessary restraint for Christians insofar as they remain under the power of sin (see discussion in FC SD VI). Secondly, although Forde is correct to emphasize the rationality of law, he fails to appreciate the need for the law to be clarified into cognitively understandable instructions by divine revelation. One point that is made in the Lutheran confessional documents is that Christians must perform divinely sanctioned works rather than self-chosen ones (See CA XX; FC SD VI). Of course, as long as the basic substance of the biblical teaching remains, one can parse the uses of the law any way one wishes. It is nevertheless helpful to describe the third use as something distinct from the first. This is important because it emphasizes the need for the visible church to give specific instructions regarding which works are divinely sanctioned and which are not.

In spite of these criticisms, Forde has made many valuable contributions to twentieth-century Lutheran thought. As with any theologian, Forde should, of course, be read with discernment. Nevertheless, his many positive contributions should not be ignored because of his mistakes. LOGIA

22. Gerhard Forde, "Luther's Ethics," in *A More Radical Gospel*, 152–53.
23. Ibid., 153.
24. Ibid., 152.
25. Ibid., 149, 152.
26. See Mark Mattes, "Beyond the Impasse: Re-Examining the Third Use of the Law," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 69 (2005): 279–80. Mattes writes: "Forde rejects a third use because he does not see this formulation as offering anything that is not already in the first use."

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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

Kirchenväterzitate in der Abendmahlskontroverse zwischen Oekolampad, Luther und Melanchthon: Legitimationsstrategien in der innerreformatorischen Auseinandersetzung um das Herrenmahl. By Gottfried Hoffmann. 2nd edition. Göttingen: Edition Ruprecht, 2011. 274 pages.

This book has an interesting prehistory. It originally was published as the typescript of Hoffman's Heidelberg dissertation under Peter Brunner in 1972. Almost forty years later, it is now republished as a "real book" by the faculty of the Lutherische Theologische Hochschule, Oberursel, Germany, the seminary of the Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche, the German sister church of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, to celebrate the eightieth birthday of its author, who taught many years at Oberursel. In the early 1980s, he also taught at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri.

The date of the original publication is historically significant, as in 1973 the controversial Leuenberg Agreement between Lutheran and Reformed and Union churches in Europe was signed, claiming to "resolve" the many centuries of theological disputes centered on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper and the person of Christ. This agreement has become the foundation for any number of fellowship agreements between Lutheran and Reformed churches throughout the world, and also in the United States.

In the years leading up to 1973, Hoffmann dedicated a significant amount of time and energy to study an aspect of the origin of those theological disputes: the way in which the leaders of the various Reformation groups used quotations from the early church fathers to bolster their own position on the Lord's Supper. He does not examine whether these uses are legitimate in the sense of being in keeping with the intended meaning of the church father in question, but he does suggest that this might be a possible next step that is perhaps all the more necessary, since this step is often deemed unnecessary or even impossible by the liberal historians of dogma such as F. Loofs. For going back to nineteenth-century Tübingen theologian D. F. Strauss, the "oriental" thought of the (Eastern) church fathers is said to have kept together what the West (including the Protestant Reformers) divided into the symbolism and realism of the Lord's Supper. Hoffmann counters correctly that the confession that has preserved the "realism" of the sacrament of the altar is certainly closer to the thinking of the early church than that confession that has focused merely on its "symbolism" (261).

As the title indicates, he examines Oecolampadius, Zwingli, Luther, and Melanchthon. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, Zwingli's and Luther's argumentations make the least use of texts by the early church fathers, while they play a quite larger role in Oecolampadius's and Melanchthon's writings on the issue of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper.

The Swiss theologians, Zwingli and Oecolampadius, found themselves confronted with the mammoth task of demonstrating that their symbolic understanding of the Lord's Supper was not a new idea, since in the sixteenth century, for all parties involved, a new idea was a wrong idea. Due to the "realism" that, in their minds, had wrongly come to dominate the church's teaching on the Lord's Supper in the Middle Ages, they reached back to the earlier church fathers to show that their symbolic understanding was in fact the consensus of the early church and thereby also the correct meaning of the New Testament. Augustine was their chief witness for a symbolic-psychologizing understanding of the Lord's Supper.

Hoffmann's study shows in detail how certain "hermeneutical keys" ensured that the consensus of the church fathers agreed with what Oecolampadius and Zwingli had already established as the true meaning of the Lord's Supper: the elements are the signs for what can only be an absent reality—Christ's human body once sacrificed on the cross but now locally enclosed in heaven at God's right hand—that is already known to the believers "from within" by a direct operation of Christ's divine nature or the Spirit. The words of institution, accordingly, have a figurative meaning that only a coarse, materialistic misunderstanding can overlook. In other words, when it comes to the sacrament of the altar, the miracle happens in the heart of the believer, not in bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. These elements merely become, for the believer, signs leading him from what is matter and visible to what is Spirit and invisible.

As far as Oecolampadius is concerned, researchers (for example, W. Köhler's book on Zwingli and Luther) have at times attempted to show that he and Luther actually agreed on the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Supper (115–17). The Basel reformer himself, in his discussions with Melanchthon, is perhaps partly to blame for this misunderstanding, as

he claimed that the controversy is not about the presence of Christ as such but only about the mode of this presence (66). Almost 450 years later, Leuenberg would build on this assertion and state: "To be concerned about the manner of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper in abstraction from [the act of eating and drinking] is to run the risk of obscuring the meaning of the Lord's Supper." Hoffmann shows, however, that Oecolampadius never went beyond asserting a "spiritual" presence of Christ in faith, which is a "relational" but not a substantial presence, outside of the believer, in the elements.

Luther's moderate use of pertinent quotations of the fathers, as Hoffmann shows, also has an important ecclesiological reason: the church, as an article of the creed and due to God's promise, is without end; the correct teaching on the Lord's Supper is one of the necessary conditions for the existence of the church; therefore, it is impossible to claim—as done by Oecolampadius and Zwingli—that over centuries this teaching was totally extinct from the church. As Hoffmann notes for the Wittenberg reformer, without encroaching upon the primacy of Scripture, "the *consensus ecclesiae* becomes an important theological argument" (155). The fathers are made not judges over Scripture but witnesses to its catholic truth across time and space, even though Luther admits that this truth was often hidden under much error. Accordingly, Luther reportedly enunciated this hermeneutical rule at Marburg in 1529 when it comes to the fathers: "When the fathers speak, they are to be accepted in accordance with the canon of Scripture. Whatever they appear to write contrary to Scripture must either be interpreted or be rejected" (AE 38: 33).

This notion of the fathers as witnesses to the truth of Scripture rightly understood reappears later also in the Catalogue of Testimonies appended to the Formula of Concord (1577) concerning the articles on the person of Christ and the Lord's Supper. Also the Apology of the Book of Concord (1583) is, for a good part, an argument with the Reformed over the correct meaning of the pertinent texts of the patristic period. Hoffmann's study shows that these two later documents simply continue the discussion that was begun in the 1520s by the first-generation reformers in an age of newly available Greek patristic texts due to two things: first, the renewed interest in Greek theology at the time of the council of Ferrara-Florence in 1438–1439, which resulted in a short-lived union between Rome and beleaguered Constantinople, and second, the efforts of Humanist scholars and printers.

Oecolampadius and Zwingli often took the meaning of terms like *sacramentum, mysterium, forma, signum, commemoratio, repraesentare*, which they encountered in the fathers, in their secular meaning without paying much attention to the actual context and usage in the respective fathers. However, Luther did not concede this argument, pointing back to the concrete ways in which the fathers use these terms. As already in his discussion of the words of institution and other passages in Scripture, the mere fact that something can be understood in a certain way does not show the necessity of such an understanding; until the possibility is proved as a necessity based on the text, the *sensus litterae* has to stand.

Melanchthon, finally, is perhaps the historically most interesting figure presented in the study. This is due to the well-known fact that of the four theologians discussed by Hoffmann, only he changed his position—both on what the Lord's Supper means and on what the fathers say about it—in the course of the controversy during the 1520s and 1530s (191–92). Consequently, the author explores the following question: why and when did he change his position? Some claim that this was due mainly to his being impressed by the patristic resources marshaled by Oecolampadius's 1530 *Dialogue* in favor of his symbolic understanding of the Lord's Supper. Hoffmann takes a different position. As the earliest possible date he takes a letter from 16 September 1534 in which Melanchthon still affirms the "true and substantial presence" of Christ but finds, based on his study of the fathers, that the "changing of the bread" and the "division of body and blood" (Luther's sacramental union resulting from the consecration of bread and wine by the words of institution) are not genuine thoughts of the true early church. The first two of the three witnesses adduced by him in the 1531 Apology—the Greek canon of the mass, Vulgarius, and Cyril of Alexandria—are no longer considered representative of the earliest views held by the church (227).

However, the "symbolic" view of the Lord's Supper as the consensus of the fathers cannot fully satisfy Melanchthon for long either, as he already in early 1535 marvels at the great dissimilarity in the views held by the leading theologians of the patristic period. In light of this, Hoffmann sees the 1535 edition of his *Loci* as Melanchthon's attempt to formulate the sum of his patristic studies (238): "He adopted the notion of sign from the patristic argumentation of the Swiss insofar as he disconnected the real presence from the bread of the Lord's Supper, and he clung to the clear texts of his own argument in that he assigned the presence of the body of Christ to the action of the Lord's Supper" (255). Interestingly, therefore, while Melanchthon could be critical of the fathers when it came to the doctrine of justification, he seeks the greatest possible accommodation to the fathers—whose perceived dissimilarity amazed him—in the matter of the Lord's Supper, possibly to facilitate doctrinal agreements with those disagreeing with Luther's position. Hoffmann, in conclusion, characterizes Melanchthon's understanding of the fathers in this question as that of a "boundary stone, beyond which no legitimate understanding of Scripture could be had" (244).

All in all, this book is a very welcome publication that gives important background information for the student of the Lutheran Confessions in that it explains why the patristic argument is encountered there not only when it comes to doctrines controversial among Lutherans and Catholics but also when it comes to those at issue between Wittenberg and the Reformed. The fact that many of today's heirs of the protagonists of the sixteenth-century controversies are historically illiterate should not mislead us to think the same about their spiritual ancestors.

The study also is stimulating in that it not only shows areas for further research today—that have still not been covered in the almost four decades since it was written—but also for further theological reflection concerning the doctrinal continuity

of the Lutheran church with the church of the postapostolic centuries that was firmly asserted by Luther (see AE 41: 205). Patristic studies by representatives of early Lutheranism were aimed at demonstrating this continuity (M. Flacius, M. Chemnitz, J. Gerhard, to name just the most prominent ones). Unfortunately today such studies are often done either along the lines of conventional, doctrinally undirected academic curiosity or with a strong Eastern bias (showing itself, for example, in a disparaging of Augustine who, in one way or another, was important to all Protestant reformers in the sixteenth century), neither of which lead to Scripture or to Wittenberg.

Holger Sonntag
Hiram, Ohio

Because of Christ: Memoirs of a Lutheran Theologian. By Carl E. Braaten. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmanns, 2010. 210 pages.

Autobiography is a tough genre to master, since most people get to do it only once. Most people do it poorly, since they are not writers or editors and only take up their pen because of the subject matter. When writers and editors do turn to this genre, they can succumb just as easily as others to self-pity, bombast, brag-audacity, and the temptation to settle scores. Carl Braaten succumbs to none of this in his own autobiography. It is a good read and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Braaten's autobiography is an important work as eyewitness testimony to what happened to American Lutheranism in the latter half of the twentieth century. Lutheran church historians need to get this book on their shelves and refer to it often as they do their work. All other Lutherans need to beg, borrow, or buy a copy and read it for their own benefit.

What happened to American Lutheranism at the end of the last century? With regard to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Braaten observes that "the theologians would not have much say in the formation of the new Lutheran church. The coalition of minorities and feminists would see to that. To them the issue of race and gender was far more important than dotting the i's and crossing the t's in matters theological and ecclesiological" (124). Braaten observes that the best theologians were ignored because they were perceived as "mostly a bunch of white males spouting their own elitist ideology in the name of theology" (125).

This prejudice against theologians and theology became hard-wired into the new church in the form of the quota system. Says Braaten, "The Commission for a New Lutheran Church (CNLC) . . . rammed through a quota system modeled on the principles of the left wing of the Democratic Party. Polls indicated that 80 percent of the membership of these Lutheran churches were not in favor of the quota system" (122; cf. 128, 130). James Nestingen, among others, also has pointed to the ELCA's quota system as a cause of its failures (see James Nestingen, "Failing Structures, Vibrant Hopes," *Logia* 15, no. 4 [Reformation 2006]: 17).

In my opinion, the quota system is not the underlying problem. Quotas are only a method of perpetuating the real power in the ELCA. The real power, as Braaten admits, is a "coalition of minorities and feminists." Braaten described it in his 2005 letter to ELCA Bishop Mark Hanson, with reference to the *Dialog* journal, as "the California ethos of religion and morality" (169; cf. 123–25). I was a resident doctoral student at Union Theological Seminary, New York, from 1986 to 1990. The "coalition of minorities and feminists" at Union included people of the following moral and religious persuasions: gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, cohabiting, heterosexual-bohemian, Unitarian, renegade Catholic, Wiccan, mystic, pantheist, experiential-syncretist, esotericist, New-Ager, neo-Marxist, liberation theologian, and community organizer. If Nestingen is correct that the political agenda of Union Theological Seminary has influenced the ELCA since Mark Hanson was elected bishop (Nestingen, "Failing Structures," 17), then that explains, more than anything else, the successful passage of the pro-homosexual policies at the ELCA national convention in the "Summer of 2009."

This is not what Braaten and other Protestant church leaders had in mind when they talked, years ago, about "ecumenism." This sort of radical religious-and-moral pluralism has come to typify the Ivy League Divinity Schools, that is, Harvard, Yale, Union, Princeton, and Chicago, as well as the seminaries, universities, and administrative offices of the Episcopalians, the United Church of Christ, ELCA, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Metropolitan Community Churches, and a few others.

What about the role of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC) in the formation of the ELCA? Braaten comments: "The AELC received a lot of credit—or the blame—for creating a new church that moved to the left on the spectrum of Christianity in the United States . . . The ex-Missourians pushed for greater democracy in the church and they got it. . . . During the deliberations of the CNLC, the AELC representatives together with representatives of minorities, blacks, Asians, and the representatives of women formed a coalition to emasculate the 'old boys'" (122–23). Braaten recounts from personal experience how the Seminex faculty upset the status quo at the Lutheran School of Chicago (LSTC) while he was there as professor (118–22). He observes, "The ideology of Crossings [an institution founded by Robert Bertram and Edward Schroeder] moved in a straight line from the rejection of the third use of the law to the support of the gay/lesbian agenda that has since taken the ELCA by the throat" (121).

I appreciate Braaten's description and analysis of the role played by the CNLC, the AELC, and Seminex in the formation of the ELCA. But as a historian, I believe that there were other factors equally as important in the leftward march of that sector of American Lutheranism into moral revisionism. First, as the Missouri Synod and its allies often said, the predecessor bodies of the ELCA were in the bad habit of uniting without careful discussions and full agreement in the major issues of theology, ecclesiology, polity, and ethics. Bad precedent thus led to premature consolidation.

Second, many American Lutheran Church and Lutheran Church in America theologians supported the radical political agenda of those who protested the Vietnam War. Braaten explains his own defense of the Chicago Seven and the Yippies (83–88). In the mind of the radicals, tactics used against the state could just as easily be used on the church. The foot soldiers for the radicals in the church were the draft dodgers who entered the seminary, instead of serving their country. During the war years, draft dodgers made up about half of the seminary students at LSTC (83), as they probably did in other seminaries.

Third, although there are a few conservatives among the women pastors in the ELCA, most appear committed to a left-wing agenda. No one, to my knowledge, has polled the ELCA women pastors to see to what degree they support the homosexual agenda. This does not imply that some or most are lesbians themselves, but rather asks to what extent they *tolerate* this moral behavior in others and teach that it is acceptable.

Fourth, Braaten's own Theology of Hope (104–8), derived from Wolfhart Pannenberg, cannot effectively resist moral revisionism. The Hegelian futurist mode of thinking—in philosophy, politics, and theology—asserts that whatever will be in history is right. German thinkers of the early twentieth century recognized the relativistic results of all types of Hegelianism, which relativism they called the "crisis of historicism." For Braaten, the norm of ethics is the love of God—*agape* as the absolute standard underlying all principles of justice, equality, freedom, and so forth. But without specific-and-fixed norms, as found in both Old and New Testaments, *agape* ends up letting people do whatever they want.

Finally, the doctrine of God and Christ that is found in Pannenberg eliminates the One who is always against moral revisionism. The God of the creeds includes real persons: Jahweh, Jesus, and the Spirit. In contrast, the God of Pannenberg is an energetic force without a personal mind, and Jesus is not the only son of his father (Wolfhart Pannenberg, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology* [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991], 35, 45, 46, 55, 60). The God of Pannenberg is not yet fully real (Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God* [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969], 56–58). Similar ideas are found in Braaten's dogmatics work (Braaten and Jenson, eds., *Christian Dogmatics* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984], 1:163–79; 511–43). The result of this for ethics is that if God is amorphous and still in the process of formation, then what he expects of his creatures must also be amorphous and subject to constant revision. The "Summer of 2009" is just one piece of all that.

In the end, although fully committed to the theology of his mentors Paul Tillich and Wolfhart Pannenberg, Carl Braaten rejected the results of Tillich's Theology of Correlation and Pannenberg's Theology of Hope when it came to moral revisionism in the ELCA. In his autobiography, we can see the theologically conservative influence of his Madagascar missionary parents (xii) and the influence of his years of teaching the Lutheran Confessions at seminary (xi–xii). That tells all of us that the hope for the Lutheran Church "in the future" lies in parents who faithfully witness to their children by word and deed and in the church's continued study and teaching of the Book of Concord. Thanks, Dr. Braaten, for a thought-provoking book!

Martin Noland
Evansville, Indiana

Lutheran Theology. By Steven D. Paulson. New York: T&T Clark, 2011.

From the very first words of the introduction, Steven Paulson is committed to the task of not only explaining Lutheran theology but of preaching it. As a volume in an interdenominational series one might expect it to be more "open" or "ecumenical," but as his first section, "The Assault," points out, Lutheranism is nothing like that. "Lutheran theology begins perversely by advocating the destruction of all that is good, right, and beautiful in human life. It attacks the lowest and the highest goals of life, especially morality, no matter how sincere are its practitioners" (1). Throughout the entire book Paulson is assaulting human reason and man-made religion of law, taking no prisoners and not apologizing for true Lutheran theology. In this way Paulson's presentation of Lutheran theology is at once both new and old. It is old in that he did not invent the content. Drawing predominantly from Luther himself, with Melanchthon, the Confessions, and other theologians providing complementary assistance, Paulson rehearses the truth of God's word given in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. No new doctrines—Christ alone. Yet at the same time this book is new in the way it presents the truth. It is fresh, exciting, and, as mentioned before, on the offensive. Any reader will probably be surprised at some point throughout the book, if not at every step of the way. And lest it seem that this shocking style is merely a trick of the author to gain readers, it is actually modeled after the apostle and Luther, for all three know that the gospel is indeed a shock to an old, dying world of sinners.

A great benefit of this book is its wholeness, completely tracking the apostle's argument in Romans and covering the entire message of salvation. In my experience it is a rare opportunity for a student of theology to get the whole story in one go. Rather than compiling, comparing, and contrasting various theologians (probably all using different vocabularies), it was refreshing to hear from one teacher with one vocabulary and to study one map or template of salvation. This made it much easier for me to check myself and others against a single backdrop. In fact it made it much easier for me to recognize where inconsistencies in my thinking have gone unchecked and unnoticed for some time. It is this insight into my own thought for which I am most indebted to the clarity of the author.

The point that I must focus on here was the most shocking precisely because it is at the very center of Lutheranism. To find that I possibly misunderstood this point, at least in part, was a real blow, but one that (I believe) finally knocked down

a wall to make more room for a greater understanding of Lutheran theology in general. This point is the righteousness of God (*iustitia dei*).

I am sure that I knew this before, but as Paulson sketched it out—Luther's problem and the God-given answer—I could not help but feel that I was hearing it for the first time. When the Psalms pray, "Deliver me in thy righteousness" (Ps 31:1), I, like Luther, assumed that the righteousness or justice of God was his fairness. God is ultimately governed by law and because he works according to that law he is fair and just. It is even possible to work Christ into this structure, which Paulson calls the "legal scheme." Christ satisfied the law's demands on my behalf and so it is now *fair* for God to deliver me. But what I didn't realize before is that this still keeps salvation confined to the strictures of the law. Salvation is still determined upon what one *deserves* (39). But the amazing thing about Romans 1:16–17 is that *iustitia dei* has nothing to do with the law but with grace and faith. The breakthrough comes when *iustitia dei* is put together with *deum justificare* (the justification of God) as in Psalm 51—and that God is justified by sinners (46)! But this can only happen when the righteousness of God is not seen as his judgment but as his gift! Luther explained, "I began to understand that in this verse the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous person lives by a gift of God, that is by faith" (51). Therefore, the righteousness *of* God is truly the righteousness *from* God that he gives to sinners—Christ himself, who died for sinners (52–53). With *that* kind of righteousness, the sinner is able actually to justify God, which means trusting his promise alone (56). Now when I pray the Psalms, "Deliver me in thy righteousness," I can actually pray, "Deliver me according to the righteousness of Christ given to me!"

I do not mean merely to rehearse Paulson's argument (and more correctly, Paul's), but the fundamental shift that takes place when these words are properly understood is of the utmost importance. Understanding the righteousness that God gives to the sinner on account of Christ (righteousness imputed) is vital to the vocation of the preacher. It must be the content of his preaching, as it was for Paul. Again and again, with each new piece of Paul's Roman argument, Paulson relates it back to the difference between God not preached and God preached. Faith trusts God's promise that is given in a spoken external word. Paulson constantly reminds the reader that "faith requires something to believe in" (57). Without God preached, the sinner is left with God hidden and silent—with nothing to trust in—and so he turns elsewhere. But when the righteousness from God is preached, a promise is delivered to the sinner: the forgiveness of sins.

All of this is really only the first topic tackled by Paul and Paulson. However, the rest of the book flows directly from this point and continues to explain Lutheran theology in such a helpful way, clearly and directly from the epistle. Without God preached, the sinner will turn elsewhere for another object of trust. Paulson, following Luther, points out that "sin wants God in the self in order to avoid the preacher" (151). This means that sin at its most basic is *enthusiasm*—God in me rather than God in his words. The sinner does not want to seek and trust God where he has revealed himself, in his words, but the sinner wants to be God himself. This means a hatred for the preached word of law and gospel.

Faith, on the other hand, trusts God's promise, which is delivered by the external preached word of the gospel. The term *promise* also took on a new meaning for me, a meaning that is not constrained by the limits of time. A promise is not merely a word awaiting some future fulfillment. A promise is a preached word and by it we receive the same promise that was given in the Old Testament: the forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness is a promise not because we do not actually have it and have to wait for it but because it is a word that we do not see and actually experience the opposite. It is nevertheless true, for it is a word given by God who is faithful.

A final point I wish to emphasize from Paulson's book is his description of freedom. Four chapters sketch out all that Christian freedom entails: freedom from wrath, sin, law, and death. It has been interesting to me to think about what this freedom means. Lutherans confess the bondage of the will to sin but that does not mean that apart from sin there is a free will. For the Christian, his will is bound now by the Spirit. So what does freedom mean? One simple definition of freedom with respect to sin is, "freedom is not being one's own God" (161). While the sinner who seeks to be his own God and be justified by his works must do a great deal of work to achieve his salvation, the Christian is free, for he has a God who does all things for him. In addition, the Christian is freed from the law because he is already dead to sin (174). The law's job is to accuse sinners, but if by baptism the old Adam has been put to death, what sinner remains to be accused? The law has no jurisdiction. But death does not have the final word. The Spirit does the work of killing the old man and raising the new, who now belongs "exclusively to Christ" and "with Christ, God is unthwartable in his regard for us" (199). This means that we are free to address God our Father and pray for exactly what he wants to give: the forgiveness of sins (204).

Again, the over-arching theme for Paulson's argument is the hidden and preached God. For this reason alone, this book needs to be read by pastors, those who hold the preaching office. I recommend it to be read and reread, preferably with a group of pastors to discuss the Lutheran breakthroughs laid out so clearly in it. As a recent seminary graduate I recommend it to our seminary faculties as they regularly look for material to assist in training preachers. This book beautifully demonstrates the unity of all the articles of faith. None of them are out of place or need be left out for the sake of convenience. All of these doctrines covered here are part of the whole—the sermon that Luther and Paul preached—the sermon that God himself preaches through men to men so that they might be saved.

Anthony Dodgers
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal. Ed. by Robert Baker. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 2011. 302 pages.

In an era of increasing ethical confusion this volume of scholarly essays is most welcome. It is likely that the occasion that warrants the publication of this book is the admission of practicing gay and lesbian candidates for ordination in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), which clearly violates Scripture. However, questions about the family's social well-being, abortion, and women's ordination also surface. These fifteen essays explore how Lutherans can appropriate the natural law tradition for developing ethical stances. Both existentialist and liberationist leanings in the ELCA have tended to disassociate ethical reasoning from any relation to natural law. The overall direction of these authors is to correct those trajectories and to find ways for Lutherans to appropriate natural law.

A leading ELCA critic of recent ELCA policies, Carl Braaten, notes that while natural law theory is not sufficient for a robust Lutheran ethics, it is certainly necessary. For Braaten, Christian "sectarians" such as Stanley Hauerwas, who eschew natural law (similar to Karl Barth), are not to be affirmed. Gifford Grobien notes that in the Middle Ages the natural law tradition linked reasoning with human teleology. Reason is rational to the degree that it aligns virtue with establishing the goal of eternal beatitude. Luther was less focused on teleology and instead linked reason operative in natural law for dealing with matters of earthly life, as expressed in the Ten Commandments, and as fostering the golden rule (32). While reason is corrupt after the fall, grace enables the justified human to do works of love in harmony with the natural law (37).

In arguably the best of these essays, Thomas Pearson notes that, unlike Thomas Aquinas, Luther has a more pragmatic and instrumental approach to ethics than his medieval predecessors. Luther recognizes that there is a natural law but that it is undermined by sin (58). Pearson notes that Luther is not especially to be seen as a Nominalist. Instead, his view of natural law is that it is "instinctive, not rational; provisional, not ontologically secured; pragmatic, not divinely commanded; chastened by sin, not robust with natural human possibility" (63), all of which differentiates him from much of the earlier natural law tradition. Roland Ziegler notes that in the Lutheran Confessions natural law meets a similar ambiguity as natural revelation. Both natural law and natural revelation are real, but their ability to tell us much is limited due to sin (76).

Armin Wenz notes that in a Lutheran perspective natural law is best discerned in talk of the creational orders and institutions—what early in the twentieth century was called the "orders of creation" (85). Jacob Corzine presents nineteenth-century legal scholar Friedrich Julius Stahl's rejection of natural law, which was on account of his belief that it would promote individualism and an ahistorical perspective. Reading between the lines, it would seem that Stahl especially rejected the hypothetical construct of a "state of nature" as defended by Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, an "original position" (Rawls) marked by unavoidable violence. John Pless articulates the fate of natural law in post-Barthian Lutherans such as Elert, Thielicke, and Wingren. Elert affirmed a political use of the law as did Thielicke, who opposed "situation ethics." Wingren, unfortunately, was more apt to disassociate faith from the natural law tradition, compared to these contemporaries.

Robert Baker challenges the legacy of Gerhard Forde. Forde unfortunately positioned questions of truth not in propositions but in "events," thus reducing truth to subjective experience instead of public assertions. The fact that Forde opposed changes in sexual ethics in the ELCA seems to have more to do with a socially conservative disposition rather than with a genuinely principled ethical response. Baker believes that Forde could not affirm a positive use of law in the civil sphere (145). In defense of Forde, he certainly believed that law had its place to set boundaries to behavior in the civil realm and that same-sex relations are to be opposed as violating the purpose of marriage in that realm.

Larry and Marianne Yoder note that radical autonomy, the basis for recent ethical license, is a greater threat than the totalitarianism of a Hitler or a Stalin (172). Carl Rockrohr analyzes West African ritual sacrifice as an example that affirms rather than challenges shared commonalities among people.

Ryan MacPherson defends the traditional family in light of the social upheavals that threaten to fragment it. Insightfully, he notes that social chaos tends to foster more chaos (213, note 30). With the 1992 Supreme Court decision that establishes that humans are responsible for their own self-definition, it becomes difficult to affirm that family bonds are the basis of natural law (215). Korey Maas affirms that counter to the practice of abortion, the right to life is the center and basis of all other rights. Adam Francisco notes that natural law could invite discussion and shared values with Islam, but Islam as inherently ideological inhibits and even prevents such discussion (245–46). Al Collver applies natural law reasoning both to the sexuality debates and the question of women's ordination. He notes that women's ordination is not an adiaphorous matter but inherent in the order of creation itself (261); hence women are not to be ordained. Similarly, Scripture and natural law are violated when homosexuals are ordained. Matthew Cochran offers an overview of natural law reasoning. With C. S. Lewis, he addresses the fact that simply because some cultures permit polygamy, that does not entail that one can take any woman for sexual gratification (274).

These essays are boldly written, provide much information about natural law reasoning, and commend further reflection. It seems clear to me that Luther's view of natural law significantly deviates from a medieval thinker like Aquinas. The tendency in Aquinas to link reason with human teleology as opposed to Luther's tendency to link reason more with specific outcomes to achieve justice in the civil realm needs further exploration. Overall, this book is a welcome addition to current ventures in theological ethics and will receive a wide hearing.

Mark Mattes
Grand View University
Des Moines, Iowa

Logia Forum

Short Studies and Commentary

Norwegian Lutheranism's Influence on American Lutheranism

Lutheranism spread to Scandinavia very quickly after the Reformation. Norway was united with Sweden and Denmark in the Kalmar Union, which began in 1397. In 1523, Sweden left the union and Denmark annexed Norway in a union that lasted until 1814. While there were Lutheran preachers in Denmark in the early 1520s, the Reformation was formally established in Denmark in 1536, and therefore in Norway as well, under Christian III. John Bugenhagen was sent from Wittenberg in 1537 to establish the church order in Denmark, which also was applied to Norway. The form of divine service set for the kingdom was essentially Luther's *Deutsche Messe* or German Mass.

The Lutheran Church of Norway and Denmark subscribed unconditionally to the Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism, but did not formally subscribe to the entire Book of Concord. A Danish theologian, Niels Hemmingsen, had studied at Wittenberg in the 1530s. He was greatly enamored of Melanchthon. Consequently, during the Interim battles in Germany, Hemmingsen advocated the Philippist position. When Jakob Andreae visited Denmark seeking support in his work for concord, Hemmingsen would have none of it. Andreae then appealed to the king, Frederick II, a brother-in-law of August of Saxony. He would not go against Hemmingsen and said that the church order set up by Bugenhagen was sufficient. However, the seventeenth-century Lutheran church in Denmark and Norway was highly orthodox. If not formally subscribing to the entire Book of Concord, she was faithful to the full confession of the Lutheran faith.

Pietism and Rationalism, however, took their toll in Denmark and Norway. In Norway Pietism was more fully established through the work of Hans Nielsen Hauge as well as the explanation of the Catechism by Erik Pontoppidan. However, in the mid-1800s, the confessional reawakening that had begun in Germany was also felt in Norway. In fact, in 1811 this confessional movement established its own university: the Royal Frederick University in Christianity (Oslo). By mid-century, two of the strongest theologians on the theological faculty were Gisle Johnson [*Yoneson*] and Carl Paul Caspari. Johnson had visited several universities in Germany. While in Leipzig he met Caspari, a Jewish convert to Lutheranism who excelled in the biblical languages, especially Hebrew, and who had fully adopted the Lutheran theology of the Book of Concord. At the University of Leipzig, Caspari moved in the same circles as had C. F. W. Walther, who graduated a year before Caspari began his studies at Leipzig. Two of the men who connect Caspari and Walther were Caspari's classmate Franz Delitzsch and Friedrich Brunn, a friend of the Missouri Synod. Many others in the so-called Holy Club became early leaders in the Missouri Synod. Caspari at one point was offered a position at the University of Königsberg but refused it because of the Prussian Union in force there. Finally, when Gisle Johnson appealed to Ernst Hengstenberg for someone to teach Old Testament at Christiania, Hengstenberg recommended Caspari.

The pastors who first organized the Norwegian Synod in America were nearly all schooled in the confessional Lutheran theology of Johnson and Caspari at the University of Christiania: H. A. Preus, J. A. Ottesen, Ulrik Vilhelm Koren, Laur. Larsen, and many of their colleagues. They all were staunch defenders of the theology of Concord against the three-headed enemy Rationalism-Pietism-Grundtvigianism (in that, they also later acknowledged a debt to Søren Kierkegaard). Johnson and Caspari together produced the first translation of the complete Book of Concord into Norwegian in 1868. However, all Norwegian theological students could read German and were familiar with the *Bekenntnisschriften*, and they brought that knowledge with them to their work in America.

Later writers of Norwegian-American Lutheran history have pressed the thesis that the Norwegian Lutherans in America came unfortunately under the sway of Walther and to their detriment bought into his repristinated orthodoxy.

That thesis, however, has been shown to be incorrect by several writers, such as Carl Meyer in *Pioneers Find Friends*. It seems clear that the Norwegians were right away attracted to Missouri because they recognized in the Missourians, both at Fort Wayne and St. Louis, the same theology they had learned in Norway. In fact, it is most likely that on coming to this country they already knew of Walther and *Der Lutheraner* through Caspari and his friendship with Franz Delitzsch and Friedrich Brunn. *Lehre und Wehre*, the theological publication of Concordia Seminary, was established in 1855 before the Norwegians first visited St. Louis, and they may already have known of it.

The Norwegian Synod, markedly different in spirit and confession from the Norwegian Lutherans who subscribed to the tenets of Pietism and Grundtvigianism, found themselves to be one in confession with the Missourians, not, as E. Clifford Nelson and others contend, because they came under Walther's spell, but because they had learned the confessional faith while they were still in Norway. Therefore, they recognized that same faith in the Missouri Synod. They were one in their absolute commitment to Scripture as it was understood by the Lutheran Reformation and their commitment to seventeenth-century orthodoxy.

That oneness was tested in several conflicts the Norwegians had with other Scandinavian Lutherans in their first decade. Some of these conflicts with the pietistic Lutherans included lay preaching, the gospel and absolution, and then the matter of slavery. An even more momentous test came later in the election controversy, when alongside of Missouri, they had to wrestle with the fact that their catechism explanation (Pontoppidan) and the seventeenth-century fathers had used the term *intuitu fidei* (that God elected to salvation those he foresaw would believe). This became a deeply divisive issue inside the Norwegian Synod as well as between Missouri and Ohio. The Norwegians, as they struggled with the matter, first carefully examined the Bible texts on the matter, and then the Formula of Concord. They were led to reject the *intuitu fidei* doctrine and terminology. Ironically, the conflict began when F. A. Schmidt, who had been a Missouri Synod pastor, attacked Walther's paper on the doctrine of election in 1877. Schmidt, on the recommendation of Walther, had been called in 1861 to Luther College and became a member of the Norwegian Synod. Later he was the Norwegian Synod representative at St. Louis from 1872 to 1876, and then was professor at the new Norwegian Synod seminary in Madison, Wisconsin. Schmidt also wrote the "Memorial" that laid out the reasons why the Missouri, Norwegian, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Minnesota synods could not join in the General Council and would therefore form the Synodical Conference. While Schmidt was not the first to attack Walther's paper on election presented to the 1877 meeting of Missouri's Western District, in the course of the controversy Schmidt became the center of the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood in the Norwegian Synod.

One can read further on this matter in the following: Erling Teigen, "The Book of Concord and Confessional Subscription among Norwegian Lutherans—Norway and America," in The American Book of Concord: A Sesquicentennial Celebration, *ed. John A. Maxfield, The Pieper Lectures, vol. 6 (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Historical Institute, 2003); Carl S. Meyer,* Pioneers Find Friends *(Decorah: Lutheran College Press, 1963); R. Tønder Nissen,* De nordiske kirkers historie *(Kristiania: T. Steen, 1884). For examples of the view of the Norwegian Synod's dependence on Walther, see E. Clifford Nelson and Eugene L. Fevold,* The Lutheran Church among Norwegian-Americans *(Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1960), volume 1, especially 1:151 ff.*

Erling T. Teigen

Lutheranism in Scandinavia

Beginnings

In order to understand Scandinavia, it is important to know that from the Middle Ages the kingdom of Denmark and the kingdom of Norway formed a union until 1814. Sweden and Finland made up the Kingdom of Sweden from the 1200s until 1809, a period in which the king usually resided in Stockholm, the Swedish capital, but many times he resided in Turku, the Finnish capital.

The Lutheran Reformation came very soon both to Denmark-Norway and Sweden-Finland through students who had studied under Luther in Wittenberg. The leading reformer in Denmark was Hans Tausen (1494–1561). He presented a statement of the Lutheran faith to the 1530 Diet of Copenhagen in the 43 articles of the *Confessio Hafnica* (Hafnia is the Latin name of Copenhagen). This happened a few weeks before the *Confessio Augustana* was presented in Augsburg. In 1537, Johann Bugenhagen, Luther's pastor, crowned (!) King Christian III in Copenhagen and ordained Lutheran superintendants (later called bishops) for all the dioceses, breaking the apostolic succession in Denmark and thereby formally introducing the Lutheran Reformation in Denmark.

The leading reformer in Norway was Geble Pederson (ca. 1490–1557). He was among those whom Bugenhagen in 1537 had ordained as a superintendant (bishop). He was assigned the Bergen diocese. In 1542 Torbjörn Olavson Bratt (d. 1548) became the first Lutheran bishop at the Norwegian shrine, the Cathedral in Trondheim. While a student in Wittenberg, he had lived in Luther's house for a time. In 1536 the Diet of Copenhagen took away all political powers from the church. It made the king the head of the church. Thereby the Reformation planted deep roots in both of Christian III's kingdoms.

The leading reformer in Sweden was Olavus Petri (ca. 1493–1552). When he returned from Wittenberg in 1518 he became the secretary of Bishop Mattias in Strängnäs and he was also consecrated as deacon. In his efforts to spread the teachings of Luther, Petri was supported by Laurentius Andreae (ca. 1470–1552), the dean of the cathedral. Both

moved to Stockholm. While there Andreae was King Gustav Vasa's chancellor and Petri was preacher at the City Church. Both used their influence to promote the Reformation. Petri was the leader in translating the New Testament into Swedish. He wrote a catechism, a postil, the Swedish Mass, an agenda for other services, and many hymns.

In 1531 his brother, Laurentius Petri (1499–1573), was consecrated as the first Lutheran archbishop in Sweden in the apostolic succession. Laurentius wrote the magnificent Church Order of 1571. It retained everything (for example, vestments and the sign of the cross) from the old church that did not contradict the beliefs of the Reformation. Even though the 1527 Diet of Västerås declared that "the Word of God should everywhere in the kingdom be preached purely," it was not until 1593 that the Council in Uppsala finally and officially decided that the Church of Sweden (including Finland) should adhere to the Augsburg Confession as well as the ecumenical creeds.

The leading reformer in Finland was Michael Agricola (ca. 1510–1557). He studied three years in Wittenberg because Martin Skytte, the bishop in Turku, favored the Reformation. As the bishop's secretary and principal of the *Gymnasium* in Turku, Agricola influenced a new generation of pastors in the teachings of Lutheranism. Like Olavus Petri in Sweden, Agricola was very productive. He wrote a catechism, a prayer book, the Finnish Mass, an agenda for other services, and the New Testament in Finnish (1548). In 1554 he became bishop of the Finnish shrine, the Cathedral in Turku, where a statue of him still stands.

Developments

The developments within Lutheranism in all the Scandinavian countries are basically the same after the Reformation. Very simply put: the 1600s is the era of orthodoxy, the 1700s of both Pietism and neology, the 1800s of revivalist movements, and the 1900s of secularization.

Adherents of Lutheran orthodoxy included Jesper Brochmand (1585–1652), the very influential bishop in Denmark, through his two-volume *Universæ theologiæ Systema*, in which he explained Lutheran orthodoxy especially as it was confessed in the Formula of Concord. Brochmand's *Systema* was very popular as well in Norway**.** Another orthodox Lutheran, the pastor-poet Petter Dass (1647–1707), endeared himself to Norwegians in his *Biblical Song Book* and *Catechesis Songs.* He also wrote popular works on folklore and nature. Another was Bishop Johannes Rudbeckius (1581–1646). He was the foremost church leader in Sweden, who strictly upheld Lutheran orthodoxy in his diocese. He promoted education (first *Gymnasium* in Sweden in 1628) as well as care for the sick and the poor. Rudbeckius succeeded in preventing the government from making the church an organization led by state officials. Adherence to the whole Book of Concord became part of the 1686 Church Law.

In Finland, the bishops of Turku, Isak Rothovius (1627–1652), Johannes Terserus (1658–1663), and Johan Gezelius the Elder (1664–1690), and their associates established and promoted the following in the spirit of Lutheran orthodoxy: the *Gymnasium* in Turku (1630), the university there (1640), a Finnish Bible (1642), the Augsburg Confession (1651), Small Catechism with explanation (1662), and the Bible with comments (1711; completed by Gezelius's son and grandson).

Pietism began in Germany with Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705), called the "Father of Pietism," and August Hermann Francke (1663–1727), professor at Halle. Pietism was a reaction against the collectivism, "dead" orthodoxy, and institutionalism of the church. Pietism promoted a living faith expressed in personal conversion (being born again), participation in conventicles, and renouncement of worldly entertainments. Pietism soon gained followers in Scandinavia as well. King Fredrik IV in Denmark started mission work in 1705 in the Indian Danish colony Tranquebar. This mission was guided by Halle Pietism. Erik Pontoppidan's (1698–1764) influence contributed greatly toward making Pietism in Denmark and Norway a major movement within the Lutheran church. Pontoppidan was the bishop in Bergen and finally the chancellor at the University in Copenhagen. His explanation of the Small Catechism, *Truth unto Piety*, was for generations the textbook for Lutherans in both countries.

Moravianism, which originated in Germany under the leadership of Duke Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700–1760), made inroads into Norway and Denmark but was very influential in Sweden. The so-called Conventicle Ordinance (1726) made meetings of Pietists in homes illegal. This law curtailed the Pietistic movements outside the church. However, some young Pietistic pastors, such as Peter Murbeck (1708–1766) and Anders Elfving (1745–1772) gathered large crowds from their own parishes and beyond. A confessional court preacher, Anders Nohrborg (1725–1767), also influenced by Pietism, has remained a mentor for Lutherans till this very day through his postilla *The Order of Salvation for Fallen Man.* In Finland, the orthodox-Pietistic parish pastor Abraham Achrenius (1706–1769) became a catalyzing figure in that he consecutively embraced competing spiritual persuasions. In 1740, he had a vision that the church was the Babel of John's Revelation. He resigned from the pastoral office and became the leader of the separatists. Soon enough he was estranged from them because of their disregard for the sacraments. Then he requested to be reinstated as a pastor in the church and the request was granted. As he integrated the best features of Pietism in his theology, Achrenius achieved a positive influence as a very prolific writer (including scores of hymns) both in Swedish and Finnish.

Neology began to infiltrate the theology of the Lutheran church in Scandinavia during the 1700s; it has remained a factor ever since. Neology is based on assumptions such as these: man is by nature good, Jesus is not the Son of God, miracles are against human understanding when based on reason and science and therefore cannot happen.

Powerful revivalism occurred in Scandinavia throughout the 1800s, but its movements were quite different in the four nations. Two fascinating movements became enormously influential in Denmark**:** Grundtvigianism and Inner Mission.

Their impact remains strong to this day. Grundtvigianism was inspired by the vision of Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783–1882). He held that the word heard in the church through the ages, especially the Apostles' Creed, rather than the written Scripture, was the "Living Word" given to the church by Christ himself. By this word and in the sacraments God meets the individual in the church. Grundtvig was pastor at Vartov Hospital Church in Copenhagen for 33 years, where a rich congregational life developed. He was even named honorary bishop. In 1844 he established the first Folk High School in order to promote knowledge among the population in general on a wide variety of disciplines, from history to agriculture. Over the years no less than 170 Folk High Schools were established in Denmark, and such schools became also very popular throughout Scandinavia.

When pious groups found that they could not fully cooperate with Grundtvigians because of their view of Scripture, a group of laymen organized Inner Mission. Pastor Johan Vilhelm Beck (1829–1901) became their leader in 1861. Great revivals swept the country as a result of his preaching. It advocated a lifestyle different from that of the world. However, engagement with the world was also on its agenda through such activities as spreading Christian literature and doing works of charity. Inner Mission is faithful to Lutheran doctrine. In its high esteem of the sacraments, it has been influenced by Grundtvig.

Hans Nielsen Hauge (1771–1824) is regarded by church historian Hjalmar Holmquist as "the foremost Christian leader in the history of Norway." In 1741 this young farmer began to lead edifying meetings in his father's house, although lay preaching was against the law. When Hauge extended his preaching to many other locations, he was persecuted both by government and church authorities. In 1813 the court sentenced him to two years of prison for illegal lay preaching. Hauge always remained loyal to the church and regarded himself an orthodox Lutheran, a claim that was not altogether accurate. He did urge church attendance and the use of the sacraments. A special royal resolution recalled the 1813 verdict and Hauge became a respected man.

Two widespread revival movements in the church of Sweden had long staying power. Henric Schartau (1757–1825), chaplain at the Lund Cathedral, influenced generations of university students preparing for the pastoral office. They promoted his genuine Lutheran teachings in southern Sweden. Carl Olof Rosenius (1816–1868), probably Sweden's most influential lay preacher, lifted up the legacy from Luther. Paul Peter Waldenström (1838–1917), originally a Lutheran pastor, left the church. He argued that there is no need for the atoning sacrifice of Christ since God is love. In 1878 his followers formed the largest free church in the country, the Swedish Mission Covenant. Several other free churches (Baptists, Methodists, and so forth) were formed, more so than elsewhere in Scandinavia.

Lay preacher Paavo Henrik Ruotsalainen (1777–1852) traveled through most of Finland. Although harassed by church and state authorities, he maintained a large following. He proclaimed that Christianity is not essentially a set of rules and formulations but experience of God's forgiving grace in Christ. Swedish pastor Lars Levi Læstadius (1800–1861) led a pietistic movement that gained many adherents in the northern parts of Sweden, Norway, and especially Finland. He described in drastic language the abominable sins of the people and the horrid pains that would be theirs in hell. He also explained, often with strong sensual images, how Christ atoned for sins. His preaching caused ecstatic emotions and strange bodily movements among his hearers. Through Læstadius a religious renewal took place. The wild drinking among the people was replaced by total abstinence. Although the Læstadians did not acknowledge the state church as truly Christian, they did not leave her but used the sacraments there.

Current Situation

The secularization that now overwhelms Scandinavia is a result of the Enlightenment, neology, and a misunderstanding of the meaning of science. This has caused people in general in Scandinavia not to embrace the beliefs of genuine Christianity, namely, that God is the Creator of all things; that he has revealed himself in his word, both in the Holy Scriptures and in the Incarnate Word, his Son Jesus Christ; and that he has founded his church among us to give us forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation.

The Lutheran state churches are to a great extent secularized. They follow the popular trends in society, such as contending that no religion has the whole truth but that every religion has a piece of the truth and that marriage cannot be limited only to a man and a woman.

This leads one to ask: is Evangelical Lutheranism surviving in the Nordic lands? Yes, in each of them the Lord God has left seven thousand who have not bowed to Baal and kissed him (1 Kgs 19:18). Many of them, both clergy and laity, are still members of the large national churches of their fathers and mothers. But many others have become members of *koinonias*, which make up *The Mission Province in Sweden and Finland*. There is also the *Luther Foundation Finland*. In Denmark we have *The Evangelical Lutheran Free Church* and *The Augustana Church*. In Norway there is *The Evangelical-Lutheran Church Association* and *The Lutheran Confessional Church*. The Lord will always have a church, just as he has promised (Matt 16).

Hans O. Andræ

Ecclesiastical Fascism

part 1

Hannibal Lecter: Everything you need to find him is there in those pages.
Clarice: Then tell me how.
Hannibal Lecter: First principles, Clarice. Simplicity. Read Marcus Aurelius. Of each particular thing, ask what is it in itself? What is its nature? What does he do, this man you seek?
Clarice: He kills women.
Hannibal Lecter: No! That is incidental. What is the first thing he does? What needs does he serve by killing?
Clarice: Anger . . . Social acceptance . . . Sexual frustrations
Hannibal Lecter: No! He covets. That is his nature.

Over the past few decades we've seen the meteoric rise of Seeker-Driven and Purpose-Driven (SD/PD) churches even within the ranks of Lutheranism. Men like Rick Warren, Bill Hybels, Bob Buford, and a small army of church transition consultants have been promising pastors and congregations "exponential growth" if they would only adopt and implement a new set of church methodologies and practices. Pastors and congregants are assured that these new methodologies are adiaphora and that they are compatible with historic orthodoxy and the Lutheran Confessions.

In each congregation that adopts these methodologies three obvious changes take place immediately:

1. The praise band appears and hymns disappear.
2. Felt-needs pep talks replace expository Bible teaching.
3. Small groups are created so that people can "do life together," while in-depth Bible teaching during Sunday School disappears.

These methodological changes are almost always met with sharp criticism by the old guard in these congregations. (The battle lines of the "worship wars" are drawn around these three methodologies, though it is my contention that these are the wrong battle lines). But the church consultants have an arsenal of "ready-made" answers for those few who are brave enough to challenge these changes, answers such as these: "The Bible doesn't restrict churches to only one style of music. Music style is adiaphora." Or, "The liturgy is a man-made tradition. The Bible doesn't dictate a particular style for doing church."

Like Clarice in *The Silence of the Lambs*, the people who are leveling their criticisms against these changes fail to see the true nature and essence of their subject and as a result, they are ineffective. In fact, the praise bands, the felt-needs pep talks, and the small groups are all incidental. The important questions people should be asking are "What is this thing's nature?" and "What needs does it serve through these methodologies?" It is only by answering these questions that we will be able to see this movement for what it is and understand the depth of the threat it poses to the body of Christ.

Ideas Have Parents and Grandparents

Ask the average layperson, "Who invented the Seeker-Driven/Purpose-Driven church movement?" and 99 times out of 100 the response would be either Rick Warren or Bill Hybels. But both of those answers are wrong. Neither of these men created these methodologies. Neither Warren nor Hybels chose these particular practices while rejecting other alternative practices. Neither one decided which outcomes were to be desired by these practices and which outcomes should be avoided. The Holy Spirit brooded over the waters of the deep prior to the creation's being spoken into existence (Gen 1:2), but neither Warren nor Hybels were present when the true creator of the SD/PD movement brooded over his invention. Warren and Hybels are the inheritors of these methodologies and practices, but Peter Drucker is their creator. One cannot understand the true nature of the SD/PD movement until one takes the time to understand who Peter Drucker was, who his philosophical influences were, and how his philosophical worldview lead him to invent the modern corporation and then later adapt it into the SD/PD ecclesiastical model.

What one finds when one takes the time to answer these questions is that Peter Drucker was first and foremost an early twentieth-century German Counter-Enlightenment philosopher. His worldview was profoundly shaped by the irrational existentialist philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, and the utopian socialist Martin Buber. Drucker, like the other German Counter-Enlightenment philosophers, rejected the rationalist philosophies of the Enlightenment as well as its views of the individual and his/her axiomatic rights, and instead touted the preeminence of community. Drucker, like the other German Counter-Enlightenment philosophers, focused on the immanent and downplayed the transcendent. Drucker, like the other German Counter-Enlightement philosophers, put more stock in experience than in reason. And there is a word that used to be used to define early twentieth-century German Counter-Enlightement philosophers who emphasized community over the individual, the immanent over the transcendent, and subjective experience over reason: fascist!

One of the problems we have today is that the historic definition of the word *fascist* has all but been forgotten and lost. The word *fascist* today is thrown about as a political epithet and a conversation stopper because the word itself has become synonymous with Nazism. As a result, we have lost a very important word that we must now regain in order to define it correctly and to understand history as well as our present reality. Therefore, it is critical that the reader understand that Nazism is not fascism per se. Instead the Nazi party was the political manifestation of a particular type of fascists.

The historian and eminent fascist scholar, Ernst Nolte, in his book *The Three Faces of Fascism*, clearly demonstrates that there were different "schools" of fascism that thrived in

Europe between World War I and World War II. Even though they shared an almost identical philosophical worldview, these different strains of fascism did not always agree on the particulars of their doctrine and practice. Of significant note is the fact that Jews held high-ranking positions in the fascist party under Mussolini prior to the Nazi occupation of Italy. In other words, all Nazis were fascists but not all fascists were Nazis. I need to make it perfectly clear that I am not saying that Peter Drucker was a Nazi. He was not a Nazi but was a sharp and outspoken critic of the Nazis. That being said, it is also important to note that Drucker shared far more philosophical common ground with the Nazis than he did with James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, and Alexander Hamilton (men whose rationalism and liberal humanism Drucker was philosophically and epistemologically antagonistic to).

In this beginning article, and the ones to follow, I am defining *fascism* as a coalescing of the main philosophical streams of the Counter-Enlightenment (Irrational Philosophy, Romanticism, and Darwinism) into a unified philosophical worldview that believes that the problems of the modern world (feelings of existential alienation and the exploitation of the working class under capitalism) are the direct consequences of the Judeo-Christian religions and the rationalism they gave birth to during the Enlightenment. (For a more comprehensive discussion of fascism, see Gene E. Veith's *Modern Fascism: Liquidating the Judeo-Christian Worldview* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1993].)

Fascism seeks the destruction of the philosophical foundations of Western civilization through the creation of a "new order" that fundamentally redefines our understanding of truth, what it means to be an individual, and how we relate to each other as well as to nature. In short, fascism seeks to replace the individual with the community, the transcendent with the immanent, and the objective with the subjective.

Drucker's 1949 essay, "The Unfashionable Kierkegaard" (*Sewanee Review* 57 [1949]: 587–602), reveals that during the time that he was most active in the creation of his corporate model he was still actively embracing the fascist views of the individual. In one passage, Drucker lays out his interpretation of Kierkegaard's beliefs regarding individual freedom. Said Drucker:

> Existence in time is existence as a citizen in this world. . . . In time we do not, therefore, exist as individuals. We are only members of a species, links in a chain of generations. The species has an autonomous life in time, specific characteristics, an autonomous goal; but the member has no life, no characteristics, no aim outside the species. . . . Because man must exist in society, there can be no freedom except in matters that do not matter. . . . In society, man can exist only as a social being—as husband, father, child, neighbor, fellow citizen.

The implications of this are clear. Drucker's corporate model was designed to be a community where persons could feel like they were part of something bigger and more significant than themselves because Drucker believed that in the physical realm individuals do not exist.

Drucker never repented of this philosophical worldview and still firmly held it in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the time during which he adapted his corporate model into the SD/PD church model. Below are a series of quotes taken from Drucker's 1989 interview in Christianity Today's *Leadership*, where he discusses why he changed his career focus from corporate management to church leadership ("Managing to Minister: An Interview with Peter Drucker," *Leadership* 10, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 14–22; online at http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/1989/spring/89l2014.html). In the answers that Drucker gives, all of the historic fascist themes are present in spades: community over the individual, immanent over the transcendent, and the subjective experience over the objective. Here is a sampling from that article:

> There are so many young, educated people who are struggling. . . . They come out of a blue-collar background or a farm background and find themselves working in the jungle of Los Angeles or Cincinnati. . . . They need something that they may not be conscious of, but something that restores balance and sanity. They need community. . . . More and more churches are what I call "pastoral churches." Their purpose is not to perpetuate a particular liturgy or maintain an existing institutional form. . . . They're more interested in the pastoral question ("What do these people need that we can supply?") than in the theological nuances ("How can we preserve our distinctive doctrines?"). These churches are growing partly because the younger people . . . are dreadfully bored with theology. . . . And I sympathize with them. I taught religion; I didn't teach theology. I've always felt that quite clearly the good Lord loves diversity. He created 2,500 species of flies. If he had been like some theologians I know, there would have been only one right specie of fly. But there are 2,500! The sermon is so important. . . . And today, you have twenty minutes to communicate the vision, to provide an existential dimension. (Forgive me if I sound like an old Kierkegaardian. I started out, when I was 19, to learn Danish so I could read Kierkegaard.) Part of the sermon's purpose is to make us conscious of the fact that we are creatures. . . . That there is a genuine experience that is not of this world.

So we now circle back and attempt to answer Marcus Aurelius's question. What is a Purpose-Driven church in itself, what is its essence? I contend the following: a Seeker-Driven/Purpose-Driven Church is an autonomous totalitarian spiritual community (community replaces individual) under a visionary/prophetic leader where transcendent theology and doctrines are replaced (immanent replaces transcendent) by the religious experience of "making a difference in the world" (subjective replaces objective). In short, a SD/PD church is, by design, a microfascist community.

To be continued.

Chris Rosebrough