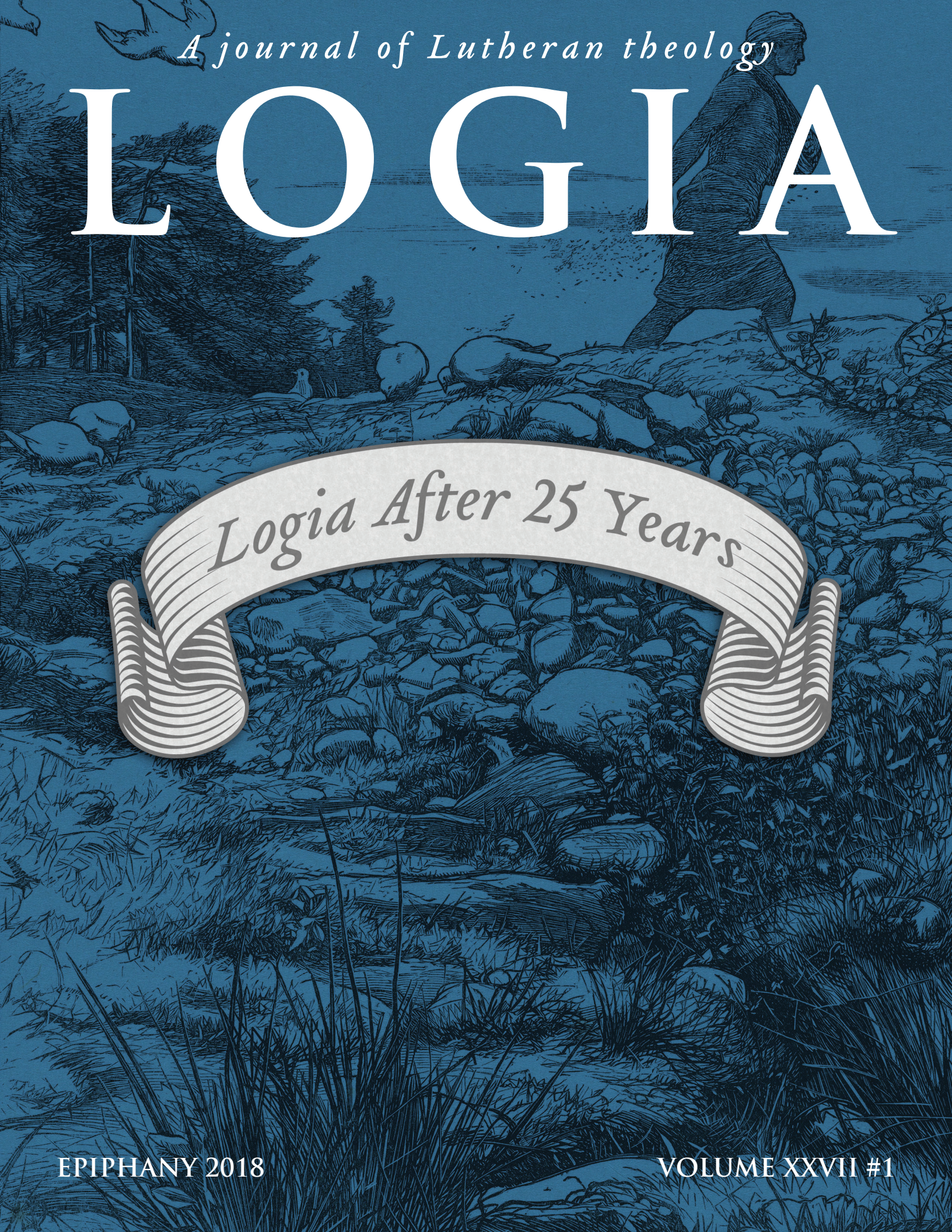
A journal of Lutheran theology
LOGIA
Logia After 25 Years
EPIPHANY 2018
VOLUME XXVII #1

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εἴ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λόγια θεοῦ

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

Editorial: Carl Roth & Aaron Moldenhauer. senioreditor@logia.org Unsolicited material is welcome. All submissions must be accompanied by a 300-word or less abstract of the article. See "A Call for Manuscripts" for further information. Letters selected for publication are subject to editorial modification, must be typed or computer printed, and must contain the writer's name and complete address.

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FREQUENTLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

AC [CA]	Augsburg Confession
ANF	Ante-Nicene Fathers
Ap	Apology of the Augsburg Confession
Ep	Epitome of the Formula of Concord
FC	Formula of Concord
LC	Large Catechism
LSB	*Lutheran Service Book*
LW	*Luther's Works,* American Edition
SA	Smalcald Articles
SC	Small Catechism
SD	Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord
SL	St. Louis Edition of Luther's Works
Tappert	*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).
NPNF[1]	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* Series 1
NPNF[2]	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* Series 2

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LOGIA

A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY

EPIPHANY 2018 VOLUME XXVII, NUMBER 1

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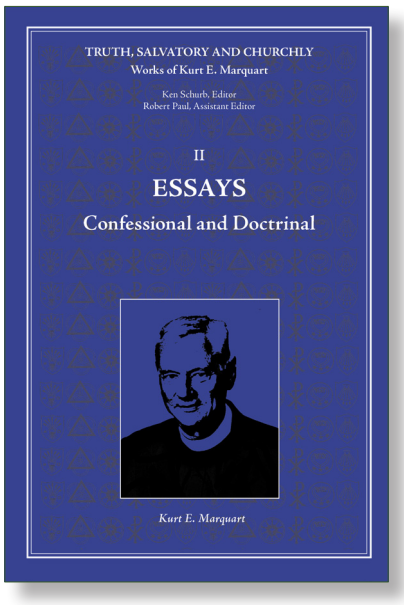
NEW from Luther Academy Books



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Confessional and Doctrinal

by

Kurt E. Marquart

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Facts, Faith, and Proof: Eleven Theses on Apologetics
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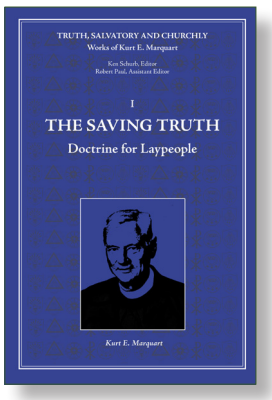
Truth, Salvatory and Churchly, Works of Kurt E. Marquart in three volumes. Kurt Marquart was a prolific Lutheran pastor and theologian who lived for fourteen years in Australia and taught for over thirty years at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. He writes in an energetic and winsome style typical of the professor who taught soberly yet with good humor, holding forth in such a way as to be understood by everyone, making incisive application to contemporary circumstances and events, and above all, constantly riveting on the incarnate Savior and the marks of the church.



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One Holy Church, on Earth and in Heaven
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Editor's Introduction

This issue of *Logia* marks a milestone for the journal. For twenty-five years this Lutheran "Free Conference in Print" has presented articles and essays that invite the reader to engage with others in the contemplation of the gospel and the Lutheran way of and toward life. Some of our readers have been faithful students for those two-and-a-half decades, and they have the groaning bookshelves in their offices or family rooms that attest to their interest in this Lutheran conversation. Some of you might be reading *Logia* for the first time, and we hope that your interest will be piqued to produce another generation of subscribers, contributors, and editors.

There are two brief anniversary essays. One presents the genesis of *Logia* and the other presents some of the significant theological writings that have given further shape to the Lutheran way of writing and thinking in the last twenty-five years. The time has been short, but the rivers of thought, at least in terms of the available *Lutheran* resources have blossomed in ways that were just at the edge of the imagined universe for Lutherans in the USA.

When the first issue of *Logia* hit the stands, the external associations of most Lutherans in the USA were defined by *The Lutheran Hymnal*, 1941; *Lutheran Book of Worship*, 1978; and *Lutheran Worship*, 1982. Red, green, and blue were the colors of confession and worship. Since those days the Lutheran churches in the USA have ventured into the world of vermilion, black, crimson, and burgundy. We still lack a common hymnal and service book, and this is probably as it should be given the breadth of the current Lutheran experience. Our churches are now more multifaceted in their confession than they have been since the mid-nineteenth century, and *Logia* tries to calm occasionally tempestuous waters with writings that call us all to think of our common ground.

But *Logia* has never attempted to be the champion of external unity among the Lutherans. It has tried to bring issues to the fore that interest many in the diverse community of North American Lutherans who are sympathetic to the notion of the confessional principle. The journal has been aware of the importance of related conversations among Lutherans around the world and has attempted to share that conversation with all who have a connection with or appreciation for a catholic Lutheranism that reflects the confessional process set forth in our "Concordia."

That spirit defines this silver-anniversary issue. We present the previously mentioned articles by Erling Teigen and John Pless, which put our work in the context of the time, and of the times. That is the extent of our understated celebration.

Two entries reflect themes drawn from the Old Testament. Brandon Koble presents his translation of Wilhelm Löhe's *Dinah: Against Youthful Lust*. We gain insight into young Löhe's sense of pastoral responsibility towards the junior members of his parish. He is sad, and frustrated, to see them use their blossoming sexuality as a social experiment that leaves God's intentions and purposes, so clearly set forth in the law and gospel, outside of the laboratory. In their pursuit of love, these literate German youth were rejecting the One who was "loving love" personified.

John Kleinig takes us to Leviticus. His discourse on the prohibitions and penalties set forth in chapters 18 and 20 is a springboard to an understanding of these chapters as a presentation of the reality that God is the source of life that flows through the land and through the families who inhabit the land. God is also the one who regenerates life. He blesses his people with new life, and because of that, he allows them to regenerate that which sustains them in the world.

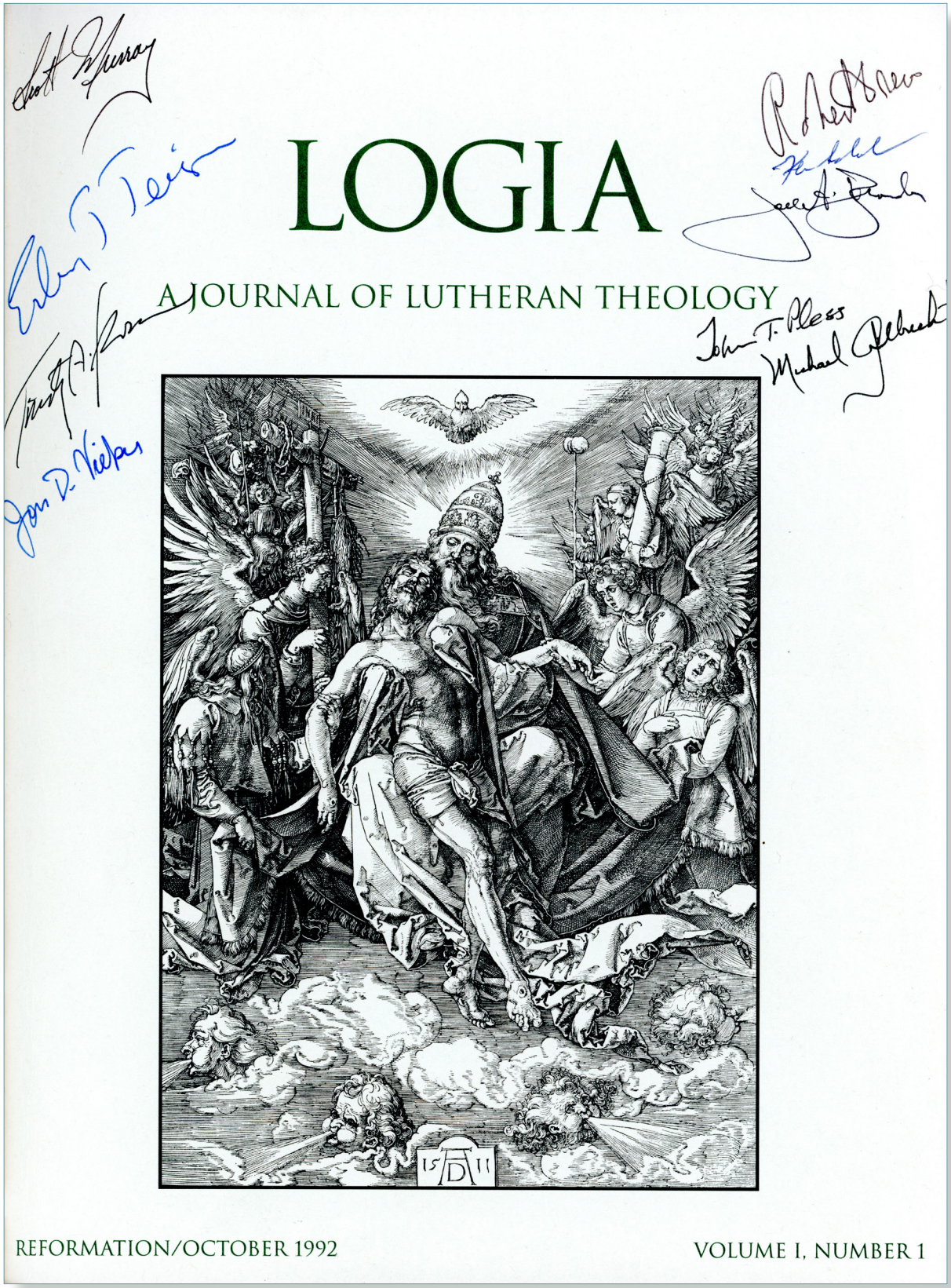
In "Martin Luther and Idolatry," John Maxfield highlights another thread in the ever-increasing tapestry of Luther's complex developments. He suggests that an understanding of Luther's war against idolatry is "a central theme, and a vital one" for students of Luther and Lutheran theology. Luther's "war" is obvious in his writings against relics, indulgences, and the mass, and their status in the program of devotional security devised by Rome. The war became more complicated when it was directed towards Karlstadt and the image-breakers. Maxfield maintains that Luther's war against idolatry grew ever deeper as his work progressed. It went beyond the statues, paintings, and windows to the very center of the human mind. It was a persistent impulse that led Luther to understand those forces and human emotions that brought about a self-enslaving worship of anything that debased or denied the "God for me" of the crucifix, pulpit, altar, and font.

Finally, using a letter penned by C. F. W. Walther as a catalyst for her discussion, Elisabeth Urtel invites us to consider again the role of our core hymnody, or *Kernlieder*, in worship and instruction. These paradigms of didactic doxology have provided Lutherans with a means to express the faith for many years, and while we see them as a common heritage, it is also prudent for us to see how they may fall by the wayside in a generation that might incline itself in favor of the poetry and melody of a prag-

matic Arminianism that waits patiently for any invitation at the doors of the Lutheran churches, schools, and homes.

Thank you for the support that you've given *Logia* in the past and that you give us today as you read this anniversary issue. Your readership is crucial to all of our support staff, contributing editors, editors, and to the generation that preceded them.

Dennis Marzolf



Logia after Twenty-Five Years

Erling T. Teigen

Twenty-five years ago, the age of the blog had barely dawned. Computers were coming into their own but weren't yet ubiquitous. If there was a subject at hand and a group of like-minded folks who would like to read about it, about the best one could do was to assemble a list of subscribers or to get some seed money, and publish, either by mimeograph or offset press, and affix a stamp.

And so it was that three like-minded newsletters came together. Joel Brondos published a newsletter winsomely entitled *LOGIA*. Robert Preus had a newsletter entitled *Confessional Lutheran Review*. I, since 1985, had a little newsletter, awkwardly entitled *Confessional Lutheran Research Society Newsletter*, a name not intended to roll off anyone's tongue.

At the time, all of us were trying to publish articles, excerpts, and reviews aimed specifically at promoting Confessional Lutheran theology. Preus's review, under the editorship of Paul McCain, was the most professionally produced. We were beginning to dabble in desktop publishing, and, at least for me, that consisted of producing copy with a dot-matrix printer and printing copies at Kinko's. At the end of the eighties, however, the printing and layout were more professionally produced with desktop publishing programs and laser printers. We were all aware of what the others were doing, and each had a little group of loyal readers. There was obvious overlap.

When the three newsletters decided to merge their efforts, they did not aim to be a purveyor of news—that function was being handled elsewhere. Nor were they interested in being a vehicle for the internal politics and various brouhahas of the Lutheran churches in America and Europe. In fact, one of the catalysts for the merging of the newsletter efforts was that Robert Preus wanted to publish an article I had written on the universal priesthood in the Lutheran Confessions that was too long for his newsletter, and I had an article by Martin Wittenberg on church fellowship that was too long for the *CLRS Newsletter*.

That in fact set the course of the new journal, for which the name of Joel Brondos's *LOGIA* was an almost automatic choice, adding to it the subtitle *A Journal of Lutheran Theology*.

A second issue grew out of the fact that the *Confessional Lutheran Research Society Newsletter*, begun in the early 1980s, had an editorial group consisting of members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and the Wisconsin Synod. With the addition of the *LOGIA* and *Confessional Lutheran Review*, it appeared that we had the makings of a free conference that followed the pattern of the old synodical conference days and the postsynodical conference era. In fact, I had delivered the article Robert Preus had wanted to publish at one of the free conferences being held in the early 1990s by the Concordia Academy.

The aim of the journal was to publish articles on some of the questions confronting those who defined themselves as "confessional Lutherans." That meant soliciting and publishing papers on those issues, avoiding an outwardly polemical tone, treating issues with scholarly objectivity, without ducking the thorny issues, but not falling off the edge into contentiousness.

The state of Lutheranism at the time presented plenty of grist. What was going on in the Lutheran churches at the beginning of the 1990s? On the one hand, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America had been formed in 1988 by the merger of the Lutheran Church in America, representing eastern Lutheranism; the American Lutheran Church, the Midwestern German and Scandinavian churches; and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC), the fallout over Seminex and the general struggle in Missouri. Even without the AELC/ELIM contingent, Missouri still struggled with its connection to the Synodical Conference outlook and the Lutheran Council in the USA outlook, and not a small part of that struggle had Robert Preus at the center of it. Of the other former Synodical Conference churches, the Slovak Synod had disappeared into Missouri, and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) and Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) had begun to join together with other small Lutheran groups in Europe, Africa, and the East to form the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference in 1993. Contemporaneously, the Missouri Synod formed the International Lutheran Conference (ILC) with sister churches as a global organization. Both of these groups were confessionally oriented, with the ILC being the larger of the two, and saw themselves as being alternatives to the Lutheran World Federaion, or at least as living in an entirely different world.

Not that the former Synodical Conference groups were on the verge of reunification—the deep divides of the 1950s and '60s remained. And they were not without internal struggles either. For one thing, ELS and WELS had a series of meetings

Erling T. Teigen is Professor emeritus at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota, and an editorial advisor for *Logia*.

with the Church of the Lutheran Confession, which had formed in 1960 by congregations that had left the ELS and WELS on the basis of disagreement concerning church fellowship. That attempt at agreement failed to achieve a reunion, although in 2015 a process began to renew those discussions.

Although some informal discussions on various issues between the former Synodical Conference churches have been held the last three years, none of those are seen as being on a definite course toward renewed fraternal relations.

What would seem to have been the common struggle of those who founded *Logia* was the desire to come to terms with what it meant to be confessional Lutherans. That tone was set firmly in the first issue with a translation by Matthew Harrison of Hermann Sasse's "The Church's Confession." Sasse concluded his essay by pointing out that confession "distinguishes . . . truth from error, pure doctrine from heresy, the church from sect. . . . This setting of the limit of truth and error belongs to the essence of confession" (*Logia* 1:1, 8).

In the same issue, *Logia* carried a translation by Jon Bruss of "Church Fellowship and Altar Fellowship" by Martin Wittenberg. Wittenberg's article brought the work of Werner Elert's *Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries*, translated by Norman Nagel (Concordia, 1966), into the twentieth-century context. Wittenberg reviewed the early church but concentrated his attention on the Reformation and the confessional reawakening of the nineteenth century, with this theme: "The principle stood fast that Altar Fellowship is Church Fellowship, and that Church Fellowship is fellowship in Faith in the sense of *fides quae creditur*" (*Logia* 1:1, 32). Along with articles by Ken Schurb, "The Church: Hospital or Gymnasium," and this writer, "The Universal Priesthood in the Lutheran Confessions," the direction of *Logia* was clearly signaled. It intended to be a journal dealing with confessional Lutheran theology. Confessional Lutheran was not to be a slogan (which it has in our circles often become) but a confession of the faith which necessarily aims at a unity of faith expressed at the altar, from the pulpit, and in all of the worship and proclamation that goes out from it.

How successful has *Logia* been in carrying out its mission? By one measurement, survival would indicate some sort of success, given that there was doubt in some circles that the journal would last for five years. In other ways, success, or the quality of success, would be subject to some debate. The numbers have never been immense, if anyone ever expected *Logia* to become a worldwide, highly subscribed, internationally acclaimed unifier of the mass of confessing Lutherans. But allowing for occasional flights into delusions of grandeur, it would seem that *Logia* has been able to stick to its original mission.

For one thing, it has been a journal of Lutheran theology. That means that it is theological, never, or hardly ever, detouring into sociological analyses of the church and faith. It has been Lutheran in that the Lutheran Confessions represent the faithful exposition of Scripture and that the guiding principle for the theology discussed here is the Book of Concord, normed by the infallible and inerrant word of God.

Logia's self-expressed mission has also been to be a free conference in print. While the members of the editorial staff have been largely from the former Synodical Conference churches, the list of contributing editors has included others who have in their public writings shown their commitment to Lutheran confessional theology. And yet, it has continued to be the case that no member of the editorial staff or contributing editors speaks for anyone except himself. While there could hardly fail to be references to activities or positions held by the various church bodies represented (or not), the pages of *Logia* have avoided direct involvement in intramural controversies.

This past year's commemoration of Martin Luther's posting of the Ninety-five Theses five hundred years ago is unavoidably accompanied by a certain amount of hoopla. One supposes that much of the celebration is not so interested in the content of the Reformation, or a commitment to the substance of Luther's theology, and to the Confessions set forth in the documents of the Book of Concord. But we trust that the voice of *Logia*, for another twenty-five years, will rise above the roar and will point to the substance of that confession of faith standing on the prophetic and apostolic Scripture. The substance of that confession is the Logos, the Word made flesh who dwelt among us, and who continues to do so through his word and sacraments. Only so long as *Logia* presents the Logos is it worth the effort. LOGIA

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We encourage our readers to respond to the material they find in Logia — whether it be in the articles, book reviews, or letters of other readers. While we cannot print everything that is sent, our Colloquium Fratrum section will allow for longer response and counter-response exchanges. Our Correspondence section is a place for shorter "Letters to the Editors."

If you wish to respond to something in Logia, please do so soon after you receive an issue. Since Logia is a quarterly periodical, we are often meeting deadlines for the next issue about the time you receive your current issue. Getting your responses in early will help keep them timely. Send Correspondence or Colloquium Fratrum contributions to

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Twenty-Five Titles in Twenty-Five Years

John T. Pless

Logia editor Aaron Moldenhauer asked me to identify and briefly to comment on twenty-five titles significant for confessional Lutheran theology that have appeared in the twenty-five years of *Logia's* existence. This is a daunting undertaking given the fact that Lutheran authors, translators, and publishers have not been slack these last two-and-a-half decades. With an abundance of fine Luther studies leading up to the celebration of the five-hundredth anniversary this year, the choices are even more complicated. Admittedly, there is an element of subjectivity that accompanies the question of why some and not others. I am going to exclude from this listing the highly significant translations of Luther, Chemnitz, Gerhard, Walther, Sasse, Giertz, and Bonhoeffer, as well as the phenomenal study of Luther's catechisms by Albrecht Peters, as these works predate 1992, the year of *Logia*'s founding. While several of the volumes in the Concordia Commentary series would surely qualify for consideration, I have opted not to include them in this survey. Neither will hymnals or translations of the Lutheran Confessions be considered. The titles I have selected are listed in no particular order of preference; this is not a countdown from the greatest to the least or vice versa.

We will start with books that cover Luther. Among the dozens of Luther biographies recently released, my top pick would be *Luther the Reformer: The Story of the Man and His Career* (second edition) by James Kittelson and Hans Wiersma (Fortress, 2016). This book strikes the right balance, giving attention to Luther's life and his theology in a concise yet comprehensive manner. For Luther's theology, three books stand out. Oswald Bayer's *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation* (Eerdmans, 2008) is undoubtedly the most significant study of Luther's theology since Paul Althaus's classic study (1963). No American Lutheran scholar has contributed more to Luther research than Concordia Seminary's Robert Kolb. Two of Kolb's books stand out: *Martin Luther: Confessor of the Faith* (Oxford, 2009) and *Martin Luther and the Enduring Word of God* (Baker Academic, 2016). Robert Kolb was also a coeditor with Irene Dingel and Ľubomír Batka of *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology* (Oxford, 2014), an indispensable tool for the serious study of the Reformer. A particular topical study in the area of Luther's theology worthy of note is Gerhard Forde's *Captivation of the Will: Luther vs. Erasmus on Freedom and Bondage* (Eerdmans, 2005), as this book remains the best reader's guide to Luther's work on the bound will. Also in this category of topical studies would be Gerhard Forde's now classic little study of the Heidelberg Theses, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross* (Eerdmans, 1997), *The Early Luther* by Berndt Hamm (Eerdmans, 2014), and *Martin Luther's Theology of Beauty* by Mark Mattes (Baker Academic, 2017).

For a historical-theological introduction to the Lutheran Confessions, *The Lutheran Confessions: History and Theology of the Book of Concord* by Charles P. Arand, Robert Kolb, and James A. Nestingen (Fortress, 2012) is a worthy successor to the older works by F. Bente and W. Allbeck.

In the area of Lutheran history there is the magisterial work of Mark Granquist, *Lutherans in America: A New History* (Fortress, 2015), as it now surpasses the earlier work by E. Clifford Nelson (1995). Granquist's work is marked by fairness and balance as he incorporates interesting excursuses throughout the narrative. Covering both historical and theological topics is the new *Dictionary of Luther and the Lutheran Traditions* edited by Timothy J. Wengert and others (Baker Academic, 2017). Matthew Harrison's *At Home in the House of My Fathers* (Lutheran Legacy, 2009) provides access to the pastoral hearts and theological minds of the early leaders of the Missouri Synod.

In Lutheran systematic theology, I would note the work of Oswald Bayer, particularly his *Theology the Lutheran Way* (Eerdmans, 2007), in which Bayer crafts an approach to theology based on Luther's "three rules" of *oratio*, *meditatio*, *tentatio.* Very significant for apologetics purposes is Bayer's *Living by Faith: Justification and Sanctification* (Eerdmans, 2003). Bayer demonstrates that the world is "forensically structured," demanding justification, countering current dismissals of justification by faith alone. Also on the doctrine of justification is *The Role of Justification in Contemporary Theology* by Mark Mattes (Eerdmans, 2004) and *Justification and Rome* by Robert Preus (Concordia, 1997).

A fine one-volume Lutheran dogmatics following the contours and content of Paul's Letter to the Romans is Steven Paulson's *Lutheran Theology* (T. & T. Clark, 2011). One volume in particular stands out in the Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics series: *The Holy Trinity* by Carl L. Beckwith (Luther Academy, 2016).

There have been significant Lutheran contributions to exegetical theology as well. The most substantial is the fine commentary by Mark Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*

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(Eerdmans, 2014), a masterful theological treatment of the text. An important exegetical work against the New Perspective is Stephen Westerholm's *Perspectives Old and New: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics* (Eerdmans, 2004).

Two important books come to mind in practical theology. English-speaking Lutherans have not contributed much to a confessional theology of missions. Filling this gap is *Mission from the Cross: The Lutheran Theology of Mission* by Klaus Detlev Schulz (Concordia, 2009). From Australia, the book by Stephen Pietsch, *Of Good Comfort: Martin Luther's Letters to the Depressed and Their Significance for Pastoral Care Today* (ATF Theology, 2016) is very significant.

On a popular level, four books had significant impact also on Lutheran laity: Harold Senkbeil's *Dying to Live: The Power of Forgiveness* (Concordia, 1994); Gene Edward Veith Jr., *The Spirituality of the Cross: The Way of the First Evangelicals* (Concordia, 1999); John Kleinig, *Grace Upon Grace: Spirituality for Today* (Concordia, 2008); and Klemet Preus, *The Fire and the Staff: Lutheran Theology in Practice* (Concordia, 2004).

Another dozen or so titles quickly come to mind, but the editor asked for twenty-five books, so this is where I stop. Only time will tell whether or not these books will have enduring influence for confessional Lutheranism and the wider church. In the meantime, good reading! LOGIA

A CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

The editors of *Logia* hereby request manuscripts, book reviews, and forum material for the following issues and themes:

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Reformation 2018	Lutheranism & Mysticism	March 1, 2018
Epiphany 2019	The Holy Cross as Mark of the Church	June 1, 2018
Eastertide 2019	Lutheran Hermeneutics	September 1, 2018
Holy Trinity 2019	Body & Soul	December 1, 2018

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The Flow of Life and Its Disruption

John W. Kleinig

Saint Paul speaks in 1 Timothy 6:6–19 about the danger of loving and pursuing wealth. In 6:13 he mentions "God who gives life to all things." But he does not actually say that God gives life. At least not in the original Greek! Instead, he uses a rare verb to say that he "generates" life. God alone is the generator of life. He is the living God.[1] We do not generate the life that we have. God generates it for us and for all living creatures. And he does that not once at the beginning of the world or at the moment of our conception, but continuously.[2] We human beings and all living creatures constantly receive life from him. Moment by moment, day by day, life flows from him to us, like an electric current to an electric light. The moment that flow ceases we die (Ps 104:29). Without him we have no life (Acts 17:28). He is the fountain of life (Ps 36:5). As our Creator he keeps giving us life so that we can remain alive.

Take a branch from a tree! It remains alive only as long as it is attached to the tree. It dies if it is cut off from the tree. Through the sap in the tree, life flows around the tree in a kind of circuit that links the rootstock and the leaves to the whole tree, which in turn provide food for the tree. But no tree exists by itself apart from other trees and its habitat. A tree receives its life from the seed of another tree. It is part of the whole web of life that interconnects all the species in the botanical realm. By becoming part of that tree, nonliving things, such as carbon dioxide, water, and minerals, also become part of something that lives. Each tree has its own niche among all the plants and its unique habitat in the whole order of nature. It, in turn, sustains other living things. Like every other plant, it is sustained by the flow of life through the ecological order in its environment.

We wrongly restrict the notion of ecology to the natural world, the realm of plants and animals. People in the ancient world quite rightly held that the natural world was part of a comprehensive ecological order, a system of five interlocking and interacting realms: the mineral realm, the vegetable realm, the animal realm, the human realm, and the spiritual realm. Thus in medieval times, and right up to Shakespeare, people spoke about the great chain of being that meshed the whole of the natural world with the supernatural world.[3] They envisaged the world as a hierarchically ordered pyramid, with the higher orders dependent on the lower orders, yet at the same time ruling over them. In this chain of being disorder spread from the top downward. Disorder, in turn, interrupted the flow of life from the physical realm upward through the biological realm to the human realm. We, however, tend to separate all these realms and keep them apart from each other. And so we hold that the working of society has little or nothing to do with the natural world or the spiritual world, and vice versa. We believe that we, in fact, can generate new forms of life at all levels from plants to human beings, without upsetting the whole order of our world and disrupting its delicate balances.

It is true that many people are most uneasy about this divorce of the human realm from the natural and the supernatural realms. They reject the mechanistic, atomistic worldview that it presupposes. Instead, they embrace various kinds of new age philosophies. They vary greatly from the scientific to the occult, but they all presuppose that we are part of a great cosmic order that creates and sustains us. If we disrupt that order, we damage ourselves. We may even destroy ourselves by upsetting our life support system. We must then live in harmony with our natural and cosmic environment, well adjusted to it and synchronized with its operation. It is all too easy to dismiss these ideas as light-headed and kooky. We should rather listen to them and learn what we can from them, for they can help us regain a cosmic understanding of Christianity, something that we have largely lost since the Enlightenment.

That view of the world is presupposed by Leviticus.[4] While much of that book, with its interest in sacrifice, ritual, and holiness is rather alien to modern readers, chapters 18 and 20, with

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1. See Matt 16:16; 26:63; Acts 14:15; Rom 9:26; 2 Cor 3:3; 6:16; 1 Thess 1:9; 1 Tim 3:15; 4:10; Heb 3:12; 9:14; 10:31; 12:22; Rev 7:2.
2. In Ap xxiii, 8 Melanchthon argues, "The Word of God did not just form the nature of men to be fruitful only at the beginning of creation, but still does as long as this physical nature of ours exists. Just so this Word makes the earth fruitful (Gen 1:11), 'Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed.' Because of this ordinance, the earth did not begin to bring forth plants only at the beginning, but yearly the fields are clothed as long as this universe exists."
3. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_chain_of_being.
4. For much of what follows see John W. Kleinig, *Leviticus*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia, 2003), 374–92, 423–42.

their laws about human sexuality, child sacrifice, and spiritism seem utterly alien to us. What a strange, barbaric combination! What is more, we are put off by the harsh penalties that are prescribed for the violation of these prohibitions: the death penalty, extirpation from kinsfolk and land, and the curse of childlessness. Yet the more I have studied the contents of these two chapters, the more I have become fascinated by them and their "primitive" ideas. They seem to presuppose and promote a kind of natural, social, spiritual ecology, an order that sustained the life of Israel with God in his land as well as every nation in its homeland. The paradox is that the same chapters that so vehemently threaten death also vigorously affirm life.

THE DISRUPTION OF LIFE

The book of Leviticus was addressed to people who held an animist worldview. They believed that the cosmic life force, with its supernatural life power, flowed through the whole of the world, energizing every creature and animating it from top to bottom. Everything had its spirit, its life force. That life power, they held, could be tapped at particular points, with the help of certain powerful substances, such as blood, semen, fire, and meat. These were powerful life-giving agents that acted like drugs. Anyone could most obviously draw on this power through sexual intercourse, sacrifice, and spiritism. Like impotent men who take Viagra, they held that they thereby increased their virility and fertility, their energy and longevity, their vitality and health. They received supernatural life power and were rejuvenated by it. Like some new age practitioners, they wanted to become part of the cosmic flow of life in and through the universe.

The Canaanites sought life from the dead rather than from the living God.

In stark contrast to this, God did not teach his people how to tap this life power, for if they tried to generate life for themselves, they would, eventually, diminish and perhaps even end their lives. He did not give them any instructions on how to increase their virility and vitality. He had no need to do so, because that life power was already openly and freely available to them in their station and vocation. The cosmic order was not the source of life; it did not generate life; he, the living God, was the one and only fountain of life. And he gave it freely to all people in and through their natural and social habitat. So, instead of giving them advice on how to gain vitality and health for themselves, like a new age guru, he gave them a series of prohibitions that protected the flow of life from him to them through their families and their land in Leviticus 18:2–23, and a list of penalties for their violation in 20:2–21, 27. These prohibitions forbade them, under any circumstances and often at the pain of death, to seize supernatural life power illegitimately apart from God and retain it for their own use apart from his provision for them. If they tried to gain life power for themselves in this way, they short-circuited the natural flow of energy and life. God warned them that such acts were suicidal, like playing around with high-voltage electricity or using radioactive substances. They did not enhance life; they cut people off from their life support system and so from life itself. The list of prohibitions and penalties therefore identify the kinds of behavior that damage the life-sustaining ecological order and so disrupt the natural flow of life from God to his people. They single out three classes of acts that disrupt the flow of life from God.

Child Sacrifice

As far as we know, the Canaanites did not practice birth control and abortion. They used to sacrifice unwanted children to Molech.[5] This terrible god was closely associated with the ancestral spirits of the dead who lived with him in the underworld. By sacrificing their children to him, the Israelites believed that they would gain good harvests and fertility for their flocks and herds.[6] If they gave him the life of a child as a sacrifice, they would prosper agriculturally and economically. They gave him some of their life to receive supernatural life power from him; and all for economic prosperity!

Many of our contemporaries avoid having children and abort their children for similar reasons. They sacrifice them because they diminish their prosperity and interfere with their personal fulfillment. Sterility is prized, while fertility is subject to our control. They thereby embrace and promote a culture of death.

Spiritism and Necromancy

The Canaanites believed that their dead ancestors were the source of life and blessing for them. The land belonged to them. They influenced its fertility and prosperity. They had the power to hurt or harm those who farmed their land. It was therefore wise to stay in touch with them, for they granted blessing to those whom they favored, or else they withheld it, if they were displeased with its inhabitants. And so the Canaanites conjured up the spirits of their ancestors. They sought life from the dead rather than from the living God. So too the Israelites conjured up the spirits of their ancestors, the living dead who had been buried in their land, the ghosts of the people who lived on their land before them.[7] They could foretell the future and so help people to plan accordingly. They could help those people prosper who respected them.

This does not differ all that much from the fashionable interest in spiritism. It is ironical that the same people who treat

5. For a discussion on the nature and identity of this deity see John Day, *Molech: God of Human Sacrifice* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1989); and Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 1551–65, 1772–85.
6. See Lev 18:21; 20:2–5; 1 Kings 11:7; 2 Kings 23:12; Jer 32:35.
7. See Lev 20:6, 27; Deut 18:11; 1 Sam 28:3, 9; 2 Kings 21:6; 23:24; 2 Chr 33:6; Isa 8:19; 19:3.

the triune God with contempt dabble in the occult and magic. They regard these things as energizing and life-empowering.

Illicit Sexual Intercourse

Sexual intercourse was the most obvious method of tapping into the life power of the cosmos, then and now. But many Israelites held that this was not just available in the normal sexual intercourse of husband and wife in marriage. It had to happen outside the order of marriage to be most effective and productive.

This happened in a number of different ways. By intercourse with a menstruating woman a man tried to gain the life power from her blood (Lev 18:19; 20:18). Menstrual blood was a powerful substance, used in spells and magic, healing and sorcery. Intercourse by a dominant male with other women in his own extended family besides his wife conserved the life power of the family and increased his own virility (Lev 18:6–18; 20:11–12, 14, 17, 19–21). Intercourse with a married woman from another family gained life power from it, weakening its vitality; the same was true of a woman engaged in adulterous intercourse with a virile man from another family in order to become pregnant by him (Lev 18:20; 20:10). Homosexual intercourse with another man was held to enhance male virility and energy (Lev 18:22; 20:13). It was believed that intercourse with an animal gained some of its virility and life power (Lev 18:21; 20:15–16). The irony was that instead of enhancing virility and fertility in a family, these sexual acts diminished and destroyed it. So all these prohibitions served to contain sexual intercourse and the flow of life through it within the marriage and the family. Outside of that environment, sex produced frustration and death rather than life and fulfillment.

This view of sex does not differ much from the modern view of sex as the source of health and happiness and wellbeing. In fact, many people only feel alive when they are engaged in exciting, abnormal sexual activity.

Cursing of Parents

We all receive life from our parents. They are agents of God in the act of procreation. They conceive us, give birth to us, nourish us, and provide for us in so many different ways. But we do not just receive life from God through them. Our lives can be damaged, warped, and diminished by them. We are bound to them for better or worse. All human beings, from the ancient world to modern times, have therefore had an ambiguous relationship with their parents. All too often they have held that they would only really gain a life for themselves if they got rid of their parents, and there was no better way of doing that than by cursing them (Lev 20:9). Yet no matter how restricting and damaging parents may be, you can't have life by damning your parents, for if you damn your parents you damn yourself; you commit social and emotional suicide. Those who damn their parents not only destroy their own family; they have difficulty in making their own marriage work properly, as well as difficulty in creating a new family that is not itself dysfunctional. The crime of cursing one's own parents is just as evil and destructive as the sacrifice of children to Molech. God therefore forbade it and attached the death penalty to its violation (Lev 20:9).

That might strike us as rather harsh, even if we realize that the penalty was seldom exacted. But it does indicate the importance of our relationship to our parents. The flow of life comes to us from God through them. That is just as true for us as it was for the Israelites. We need to remember that the Fourth Commandment is the only commandment that has two promises attached to it: the promise of wellbeing and the promise of longevity. No matter how unfashionable that may be, it is still true for us in our nuclear families. It is perhaps even more vital just because we no longer live in extended families and close communities.

THE CHANNELS OF LIFE

God made it quite clear that the prohibitions in Leviticus 18 and penalties in Leviticus 20 were not meant to diminish the enjoyment of life. On the contrary, they promoted and protected the flow of life from him. In Leviticus 18:5 he says, "You shall keep my statutes and my ordinances; the man who does them will have life by them."[8] That life came to God's people in three ways.

Life Came through the Land

God gave his land to them. It was a good land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Through the land he provided the necessities of life for them. They therefore were not to pollute the land by their behavior, as the Canaanites had once done. In Leviticus 18:24–30 God says:

> Do not pollute yourselves in any of these ways, for by all these practices the nations I am casting out before you have polluted themselves. Thus the land became unclean; and I visited its iniquity upon it so that the land spewed out its inhabitants. . . . So do not let the land spew you out as it spewed out the nation that was before you. For whoever commits any of these abominations shall be cut off from their kinsfolk. So keep my watch . . . and do not pollute yourselves by them.

Since the Canaanites had poisoned the land by their sexual immorality, their practice of child sacrifice, and their involvement in spiritism, the land turned against its inhabitants who had violated its ecology. The level of pollution was so high that the land vomited out the people who had polluted it. In sheer disgust the land got rid of its pollutants. This is, I think, also true for us. The promotion of deviant sexuality, abortion, and spiritism pollute our land and its inhabitants.

The Flow of Life Came to God's People through Their Families

This happened through sexual intercourse within the bounds of marriage. The life-giving seed passed from the fa-

8. The use of the term *'adam*, a human being, shows that this applies to everybody, not just the Israelites.

ther to the mother and through her to the sons in the family. That seed was to remain in the family; it was not to be passed on through the family except through marriage. The violation of this order resulted in death rather than life. Sexual disorder led to the loss of life in the family and the eventual destruction of family. Those who violated the sexual order of the family not only disturbed the life of the family but ended up cut off from the family as a living organism. Something like that is happening in our society. It may well be one of the reasons why so many people feel that they are missing out on life.

The Flow of Life Was not Generated by the Land or the Family, but by God Himself

God gave life to the Israelites through their land and their families. Since God lived with his people in the land, the Israelites could not have life apart from him. They could not gain supernatural life power and energy and vitality from other gods, let alone from the spirits of their ancestors. They committed suicide if they cut themselves off from him, like a branch cut from a tree. All life came from him. He gave it to them through the land and their life as families in the land that he had given them. He kept on generating life for them and every other living creature. So the worst sin of all was the worship of some other god than the Lord. These pagan gods promised life, but they delivered death to their devotees. That, too, is the story of our generation.

GUARDIANS OF LIFE

What does all this have to do with us in this new millennium of human history? We live in a world and a country that is hungry for life. Ordinary life does not really satisfy. The people around us know that there is more to life than merely existing. Some are bored and tired, unfulfilled, and depressed. Others have lost their zest for living and the capacity to enjoy what they have. They dabble in bizarre brands of spirituality because they feel that they are somehow less than fully alive. They fear that they are actually missing out on life, and rightly so. They tell each other, "Get a life!" And so they chase after those things that promise to give them a fuller, better life. But sadly, the more they pursue life, the more they seem to cut themselves off from the flow of life. They attempt to re-create their lives to fulfill their desires. But that kind of an artificial life does not last or satisfy in any real way.

At the same time, they treat the church and the word of God with contempt. They want to have life. Yet they avoid getting married and having children because they believe that children rob them of life, that they suck them dry and diminish their enjoyment of life. So sex is disconnected from the flow of life, and it loses its ever-surprising liveliness. Christians, they say, are killjoys who don't enjoy life; the Christian faith stifles and denies life. Yet little do they suspect that devotion to the living God brings with it vitality, a zest for living, and the capacity for simple, never-ending enjoyment. And so they miss out on life. They don't realize that human life, in all its amazing goodness, is readily available and accessible to all of them in their family, their marriage, and the land that sustains them.

The more they pursue life, the more they seem to cut themselves off from the flow of life.

All this is a most unfashionable teaching for our contemporaries, who seem to listen only to people who disdain God's created order and his life-giving ordinances. But their contempt for God's good creation, and empty rhetoric about self-fulfillment, must not silence us. Life is not to be found where these people say you can be in it and have it. You do not have to go somewhere else or do anything extraordinary to enjoy it. It flows through marriage and the family from generation to generation. If we disturb the family, we disrupt and corrupt its flow. We cannot destroy it, or manipulate it, without damaging ourselves.

Life cannot be had on our own terms; it always comes to us on God's terms. People cannot change this reality, even if they misapply and deny it. Our society may promise life apart from the order of conjugal marriage and the family based on it. But its rhetoric actually promotes the culture of death. God, however, still gives life each day, life that is new and fresh and wonderful, whether people acknowledge it or not. By his law he creates life and protects the culture of life on earth. He repairs the damage that we do to our life support systems. He alone generates life for us and regenerates it, for he is the living God. LOGIA

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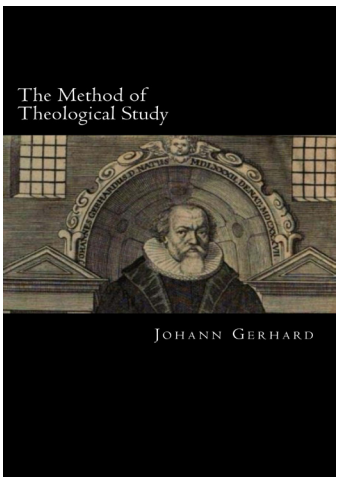

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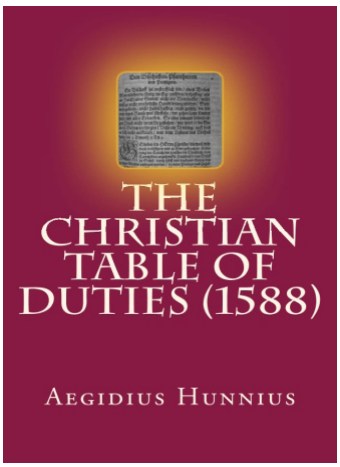

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Wilhelm Löhe's Dinah: Against Youthful Lusts

Brandon W. Koble

Especially in American circles, Wilhelm Löhe is remembered most often for his contribution to the beginnings of the Lutheran church in America.[1] Recent American scholarship is becoming increasingly focused on the pastoral nature of Löhe.[2] The resurgence in the focus of this aspect of Löhe will hopefully encourage a greater desire to translate many of Löhe's works into English, the majority of which have been thus far inaccessible to English speakers. The purpose of this paper is to expose the reader to one particular treatise of Löhe that shows his great love for his people and his genuine concern for their spiritual well-being. Before proceeding with the translation, it is necessary to set the historical stage, as it is imperative that one understand the situation that Löhe faced when writing this treatise.

In October 1831, the newly ordained Löhe left his position as vicar—serving under Pastor Ebert in Fürth—at the invitation of Reverend Sommer in Kirchenlamitz.[3] Löhe, who had been quite unhappy with his position in Fürth, gladly accepted Rev. Sommer's invitation. While in Kirchenlamitz, Löhe enjoyed a great deal of autonomy as vicar, as Rev. Sommers was quite ill. Arriving on 20 October, Löhe was immediately taken in by the beauty of the city.[4] Looks can be deceiving, however, and as he began to learn the town and the people, he realized the depth of the poverty and debauchery that was rampant in the small town.

Most concerning to Löhe was the unabashed, manifest sexual sin in the city, especially among the youth. Prostitution and adultery were common occurrences. The town even condoned sexual relations and living together before marriage. Löhe noted how men would live with young women for weeks at a time to essentially "try them out" before marriage. This led to an inordinate number of illegitimate births and the associated problems that face young, single mothers.[5] To fight against this societal norm of debauchery, Löhe instituted a "Bible Society" with the support of the town mayor. The purpose was to ensure God's word was available in each home. The youth were not immune to the sexual sins of the day. It was normal in the town for the young boys and girls to participate in public dances held on the Lord's Day. Löhe observed the unchecked degeneracy stemming from these dances in the market places in Kirchenlamitz. To reach the children, Löhe began vigorously to catechize and preach against this display of public, sexual sin.[6] In the midst of this catechesis, he anonymously wrote the following treatise.[7]

DINAH: AGAINST YOUTHFUL LUSTS (1833)

Dinah, Jacob's daughter, whom Leah had borne to him, had come with her father from beyond the Euphrates River into the land of Canaan and dwelled with him in huts before Salem (Gen 33:18). She was not satisfied for long in the lonely huts, for her mind was in the merry city of Salem. As a result she soon went into [Salem] "to see the daughters of the land." But the daughters of the land were an abomination in the eyes of the Lord, the God of Jacob. For they, with their fathers, were whoring after false gods, which are "vanity." They desired the young men of the land and the young men desired them, so that they could attend to their lust. The land was very corrupt and the wrath of the Lord was daily stored upon it for the day of wrath.

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1. See John Pless, "Wilhelm Löhe: His Voice Still Heard in Walther's Church," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 75 (2011): 311–28. See also James Schaaf, "Father from Afar: Wilhelm Loehe and Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 60 (1996): 47–74; and Klaus Detlef Schulz, "Wilhelm Loehe's Missiological Perspective," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 39 (2012): 28–37.
2. For example, see Martin Wittenberg, "Wilhelm Löhe and Confession: A Contribution to the History of *Seelsorge* and the Office of the Ministry within Modern Lutheranism," trans. Gerald S. Krispin, in *And Every Tongue Confess: Essays in Honor of Norman Nagel on the Occasion of His Sixty-fifth Birthday*, ed. Gerald S. Krispin and Jon D. Vieker (Dearborn, Michigan: Nagel Festschrift Committee, 1990), 113–50. See also Kenneth F. Korby, *Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Loehe with Special Attention to the Function of the Liturgy and the Laity* (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Printshop, n.d.).
3. The historical background in this section is entirely dependent upon Erika Geiger, *The Life, Work, and Influence of Wilhelm Loehe (1808–1872)*, trans. Wolf Dietrich Knappe (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010), 43–46.
4. A fire had destroyed most of the city. At the time of Löhe's arrival, it had been rebuilt through funds received by King Ludwig I and other members of the state. See ibid., 44.
5. Ibid., 46.
6. Ibid.
7. Wilhelm Löhe, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 3/1, *Die Kirche in Gemeinde/Schule und Haus* (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1954), 13–19.

Now since Dinah had become friends with the daughters of this land, she became like them. Shechem, the son of Hamor, the lord of the land, saw her, "took her and lay with her and defiled her." Dinah arose the next morning having become a "whore"[8] and a disgrace to her mother. It was done; it could not be undone. She must bear this evil name up to the present day. To see the harvest of bloodshed and curses that came from the consummation of that lust, reader, look up for yourself in Genesis 34 and 49:5–7.

According to Ephesians 5:6, "God's wrath comes upon the children of unbelief" on account of their lusts.

Listen, you young sons and daughters of *this* time! Are not the youth of our people the same as if they were Dinah's children? Do not the daughters of our land resemble the daughter of Jacob as children resemble their mother? For almost no girl is content to be at prayer and work in the house of a pious father. They are restless until they, like Dinah, go here and there to visit with the daughters of the land in order to woo their brothers. Look at the streets in the evening, at the fields and mountains and in the valleys: what swarms here and there and everywhere is surely none other than Dinah's seed, animated by Dinah's evil spirit: the many young girls, some indeed still very young—I mean young girls who are barely out of school—who come together when it grows dark. And what shouts and laughs so wildly and shamelessly in the dark night in free places—in cities and markets—is nothing other than Shechem who is waiting for Dinah. Others, the very image of Dinah, go together into sitting rooms to the spinning wheel so that they might be that much more diligent together, drawing sins out of the spinning wheel and spinning a curse. Or on Sunday evenings: who is turning, shrieking, or stomping along with the violin, if not Shechem and Dinah, who woo one another and find each other?[9] Dinah hastily dances God's word—which she had heard in the morning—out of her mind. And Shechem, with bawdy steps, pacifies his screaming conscience that wanted to resist the will of his flesh. And so that we may be disgusted by it, think of the exuberance that occurs in public markets, how they swarm with Dinah and Shechem. Here the eyes seek and find! And behind the stalls and in the inns, there they sit mixed together with one another, young boys and young girls—drinking, getting drunk with lustful glances, awaiting with restrained impatience the quiet evening in order to go home in the dark to mock the flaming eye of the living God with their grievous sins.[10] But in the sober mornings following such nights, the sun shines on a wailing conscience, seared with the brand of sin. It is as deserted and empty as the heart of Dinah, after she had "whored." This is Dinah's seed in the burgher class and peasantry. Woe and sorrow: the face of the Lord looks upon those who do evil![11]

But Shechem and Dinah are found not only among the poor—by no means only among those who work and sleep in narrow huts, in barns, on the ground, and behind fences. Shechem's father was the lord of the country. Dinah was the daughter of Jacob, a prince and a prophet of the most high God. Dinah's lust and Shechem's iniquity are found among the great and noble, among the glorious and rich, among the nobles and wise men, even among the children of the pious. The tall trees and treetops are in this regard no better than the grass at their roots. An evil heart can be found everywhere.[12] Among the nobles it is somewhat more hidden, subtler, and more secret; otherwise it is the same thing. The crescent necklaces, glittering things, festal robes, and coats and everything which Isaiah 3:16 ff names are merely fig leaves as a cover, under all of which are the graves of lust and death, which is alive in sensual pleasures.[13] If it is true that corruption has permeated all classes—if there really is no greater difference between the high and the low than that the former perhaps hypocritically conceal what the common people shamelessly say and do without concealment—what will become of it? From the seed of lust nothing other than a harvest of curse and suffering has ever grown. According to Ephesians 5:6, "God's wrath comes upon the children of unbelief" on account of their lusts. Because of lust this holy but terrible anger came upon the people of Canaan, against whom the Lord spoke (see Lev 18, especially verses 24–30).[14] "I desire to punish their iniquity, so that the land may vomit out its inhabitants." And as he had spoken, so also he did: he blotted out these heathen by his people Israel through a war of annihilation, just as one erases what is written with a damp sponge. But as the Lord had done to the heathen, so he did also to his people Israel as they followed the heathen and their customs. Read, for instance, Numbers 25, especially verse 9. For he himself is thrice holy and says to Israel, "You shall be holy for I am holy, the Lord your God" (Lev 19:2; 20:26; 1 Pet 1:15–16).

But if God did not spare the heathen who were *without* the law, and did not [spare] the Israelites who had *only* the law, how shall we escape his wrath? To us "has appeared the salutary *grace* of God and chastised us that we should deny the un-

8. A reference to Genesis 34:31.
9. Löhe is referring here to the scheduled public dances in Kirchenlamitz in which the young boys and girls participated weekly.
10. Alluding to Revelation 19:12.
11. Possibly an allusion to Psalm 34:16.
12. This is a possible allusion to Jeremiah 17:9.
13. *Lustgräber* ("graves of lust") is the name for the place where God kindled his wrath at the Israelites who, in their carnal hungers, had Moses beg God for meat in the desert. Those who ate of the quail were killed. Luther used the word *Lustgräber* as the translation of the Hebrew name קברת התאוה.
14. In a footnote, Löhe gives the complete text of Leviticus 18:24–30 from Luther's Bible.

godly nature and temporal lusts and live in this world chaste, righteous, and godly" (Titus 2:11–12).[15] When we sin, we not only despise the law, which Israel also had, but we also trample down grace and truth, which we have received in Christ Jesus (John 1:17). Dinah, Jacob's daughter, had not yet heard the preaching of Jesus, who had to atone for the contemptuous lust of men with bitter misery and suffering. But he is preached to *us*; we know him well! Even our children know that for the atonement of our sins he endured the cross. Nevertheless, the one among us who sins does again what cost the Lord his holy blood and life, crucifies him again, and makes mockery of his atonement. His crucifix is portrayed before *our* souls. When we are tempted by lust, it is as if the sorrowful eye of our Savior looks with a painful glance into our hearts, and on his lips seems to die the words: "This I did for you—what—what are you doing for me?" Listen, young men and young women! Whoever trespassed against the law was *cursed* (Deut 27:26). How shall we escape the curse if by continual frivolity we constantly neglect this redeeming love, this Jesus Christ, who became a curse for us (Gal 3:13–14)? The curse of the law can be escaped in the new covenant, but there is also a curse in the New Testament. Would that you escape *that* one! The apostle speaks in 1 Corinthians 16:22, "If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema" (that is, cursed). No male or female prostitute was permitted in Israel (Deut 23:17). And here—where the law no longer threatens, where grace dwells, in the kingdom of Jesus, under the covenant of grace, where the Holy Spirit gladly distributes strength to live and to prevail to everyone who desires to prevail—should they [prostitutes] be allowed to find refuge and shelter? "Do not be deceived! Neither the prostitutes nor the adulterers nor the homosexuals nor the pedophiles will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9–10)."[16] "No prostitute or impure person has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God (Eph 5:5)!"[17] The Lamb of God on the cross is also God's Lion: the Jesus who died shamefully will come again in glory to judge the world according to righteousness, and reward everyone according to his works![18] What then will the seed of Dinah have to expect (Rev 21:8)? Indeed, when the last day is mentioned, some say: "Who knows if that old fairy tale will come true? Who knows if a judgment day is coming? Who knows if God is as strict as you describe him? Indeed, who knows if there is a God who pays attention to men? Who knows if there is a God at all?" But let us answer: Although you only brush [this] aside as far as you can, your "who knows" is a poor shield against the assault of God's prophesied wrath! What if there were a God—one who pays attention to you, a holy, righteous one, who (according to the Scriptures) would come on the day of judgment with devouring fire before him to consume those who are detestable? What then? Could you definitely deny that it is so and will be so? That it will be as when the flood came, when no one would think about it, when the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven opened, and all unbelievers and doubters had to experience the worst? Prophecy appears to be slow in fulfillment: but when it is here, it always arrives too soon for the godless. Your lack of haste is a hasting [to destruction]![19]

15. Löhe incorrectly gives the reference as 2 Timothy 2.
16. Löhe gives the citation as 1 Corinthians 6:10.
17. Löhe (in a footnote): "Read Hebrews 12:18–29!"
18. See Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:2; Revelation 22:12.

Think of the night of his arrival! It will be a night like any other night.

O, the Day of the Lord can come soon! Before the Lord a thousand years are like a day; but one day is sufficient for his omnipotence to bring to fulfilment the signs that are to precede his arrival.[20] Think of the night of his arrival! It will be a night like any other night. The drinking buddies will booze, the players will play, the dancers will dance, the daydreamers will dream, the whores and adulterers will work the corners as always—and the sleepers will sleep as every night.[21] Then the Lord will come unexpectedly, like a thief at midnight![22] If you then serve sin, O man; if the Lord would meet you upon the evil ways of your heart! Your heart, full of terror, would have no more opportunity and no more time to grasp onto saving faith. Your mind would churn out the disconsolate memory of long-forgotten sins before the holy One of God. In front of him, you would have to recognize yourself for what you are, in the shame of your nudity, in the filth of your uncleanness! What a sight the Lord would be! How would you endure the flame of his eye? Simeon and Levi's sword would be a comfort to you, but it will not come.[23] Indeed, mountains and hills will falter before the Judge of the world, give way, and fall, but none will cover you.[24] They will turn away from you, spare you, leave you standing openly and honestly before his face! No wing of dawn would be able to carry you away from him because he arrives everywhere.[25]

Perhaps one person or another will say: "This is nothing other than your fantasy; it is a complete fabrication to portray it in this way; it will not be so." Well then, although I know that the one who comes will be terrifying beyond all imagination, I will say nothing about his coming. But let me say two other things to you who are so minded:

19. [*Ihr Verweilen ist ein Eilen!* Literally, "Your tarrying is a hasting!" The translation offered attempts to reflect the play on words that Löhe uses—ed.]
20. For references to "a thousand years are like a day," see Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8.
21. See Revelation 22:11.
22. See Matthew 25:6 and 1 Thessalonians 5:2–4.
23. Genesis 34:25–26.
24. See Luke 23:30 and Revelation 6:15–16.
25. Psalm 139:9–10.

(1) Have you not been in a madhouse? How many have been driven insane by fleshly lusts? How many have wretchedly lost all thoughts, to ruminate forever on the one thought that lust is good? How miserable are those who can no longer hold on to any other thought, who must think constantly of lewdness!

The peace of God is more precious than all the glory of the world, and it does not lack true joy.

Have you not been in a hospital, or in the homes of common people?[26] — to say nothing of the palaces, where you have the least access in such cases. How many sick beds could be found there that could serve as a warning to you! Often worms are the bed of the sick and moths are their blanket: their bodies are workshops of decay as death works in them, while the soul has not yet escaped! Or infirmities and injuries are the libertine's reward, which bring early death or make old age less bearable than death. The sufferings that come from fleshly lust are kept very secret; otherwise you would see how God's hand finds the sins of men. Yet pay attention to your *own* life: it may be only after long years, but God will surely punish your lusts in your body in a way that you can feel and know. You will not escape eternal punishment; even temporal punishment will find you!

(2) But if by chance you ignore this in the intoxication of lust and the recklessness of youth, at least listen to this much:

Do you have peace in your life? Inwardly are you well while your body wallows in the mud of sin? Is your soul pleased when you sow to the flesh all the days of your life?[27]

Does not a worm of dissatisfaction, of aversion, and of discontent gnaw at your heart, which stirs all the more as the power of the body is further consumed in sins? Is not lust a food that excites disgust already during the enjoyment and especially afterwards? Can you say that all those lusts are comparable to the joy which you knew when as children you prayed with your mothers, or when as confirmands you were allowed to approach the Lord's table? Where is the quiet peace of your more faithful youth? O, the peace of God is more precious than all the glory of the world, and it does not lack true joy. On the other hand, when one hurls himself into all the sins and joys of the world, his soul will not forget its suffering; its hunger, thirst, and whimpering will only increase. The cry of inner pain sounds forth out of the whoop of the libertine; all his laughter is, in the ear of the wise, a horrible weeping. Worldly lust separates man from the source of his happiness, from God. And what has been written is true: "The ungodly have no peace" (Isa 48:22).

Thus the libertine is always unhappy in body and soul, here and there. And as he himself is unhappy, he makes others unhappy. Indeed what a sorrow Dinah's fall was for her elderly father, Jacob! How many hot tears have been shed in the world by mothers over sons and daughters who would no longer be governed by God's Spirit because they were flesh! Many grey heads have gone down to the grave mourning over children, concerned that they might be separated from their pious parents eternally. Many painful tears of seduced boys and girls have also cried out to God about seducers and seductresses. For nothing is capable of pressing out more painful tears than, upon awakening from the intoxication of passion and youth, to be forced to realize that one has been robbed of the innocence of the body and life, never to return. Moreover, it is not merely individual men whose peace is disturbed by sins of fleshly lust. Not only Shechem, but the whole city of Salem had to pay for his guilt. Not only does Dinah sin, but with her sin she also pushes her brothers into the sorrow of sin, and her whole house into fear and terror before the inhabitants of the land. See Genesis 34. So the lust of *one* son or *one* daughter often poisons the quiet, peaceful life of many people. Much, much guilt the libertine lays upon his soul, and when God someday enters into judgment with him, how will he account for himself?[28]

O, you boys and girls who read this: If you are not yet like Shechem and Dinah, do not be proud. Pride comes before the fall.[29] There was also a time when Shechem and Dinah were pure; when they became secure, they fell. No man can protect himself from the fall. Only the guardian of Israel, who does not slumber or sleep, guards us.[30] Only Jesus, the Good Shepherd of his sheep, who bought them with his blood for his own possession, and acquired the Spirit for them, who renews and sanctifies their hearts. Gather yourselves to Jesus: conduct yourselves under his gentle guidance, like pious sheep. Then he will lead you on the paths of life, on which no evil will touch you (John 10)! Surely you will lack nothing. Goodness and mercy will follow you all your life, until he has brought you safely to the eternal city of Jerusalem and to her unutterable joy, where no unclean person is given a portion (Ps 23; Rev 21:22; 22:15).

But you, you who have already become like Shechem and Dinah; you who are lustful, but certainly without peace or joy; you who with the lost son have considered the dregs[31] of worldly lust to be satisfying food: May God open your eyes to your guilt, which you have laid upon yourself, and to the way in which you walk, namely, the straight path to damnation. May

26. In this section, Löhe is discussing in a very graphic manner the sexually transmitted diseases that were the result of the rampant sexual promiscuity in a day and age before condoms and drugs were used to prevent and treat these types of disease.
27. Possible reference to Galatians 6:8.
28. This is the end of Löhe's second point; he marks the transition back to the text with a visual line.
29. Taken from Proverbs 16:18.
30. See Psalm 121:4.
31. *Treber*, which is the same word Luther used in Luke 15:16 to describe the pigs' meal that the lost son longed to be fed with.

the Spirit of grace bless this pamphlet for you, that you repent! You still live, you are not yet cut off from the redemption of Jesus. Moreover, he also invites you to experience the power of his redeeming blood, the comfort and salvation of his death. In fact, you can do nothing to make good what has been done; but with his suffering obedience, he has obtained forgiveness and peace for all sinners, even for you. Indeed, you cannot improve yourselves: human resolutions and human strength are futile, but the most futile and weakest of all are the resolutions of those who are sold to lusts. On the other hand, there is great power for sanctification in faith in the cross of Christ. Whoever considers his suffering and dying with pleasure will feel more and more such a love for the Crucified in himself in which he will be strong enough to fight all vices victoriously and to deny all lusts.

Therefore you sinners, come to him! If you have not yet accepted his invitation, repent and follow now! (Luke 21:28–29).[32] If you have been until now like Shechem and Dinah, now with the great sinner return all your love to Christ who forgives you all your sins (Luke 7:36–50). Do not doubt that when you too come with a penitent, crushed spirit, you shall be acceptable to him! He wants to see *all* the weary and heavy laden come to him and be refreshed. Why not you (Matt 11:28)? If he is the propitiation for the sin of the *whole world* (1 John 2:2), should *you* not also be able to receive propitiation for yourself, since you also belong to the "whole world"? Did he not always accept the sinners kindly (Luke 15:1–10)? Has he not promised: "Whoever comes to me, I will not cast out" (John 6:37)? He is a doctor for the sick (Matt 9:12), and you are so sick and in need of the Doctor! Come to him in faith: Whoever believes in the Son of love shall not perish (John 3:16). Why should you not accept the offered grace? That is, should you not be permitted to believe, since so many others like you have accepted it and have experienced God's peace in such acceptance and faith?

O Jesus, have mercy! Good Shepherd, seek your lost sheep! Give to lost souls both repentance and forgiveness of sins! Do not allow them uselessly to ignore law and gospel with a hardened mind or in heedless security! Amen.

CONCLUSION

Löhe seems to begin his treatise with an overly harsh view of Dinah. This is especially true when compared to Luther's treatment of Dinah in his *Genesis Lectures.* Luther focuses on the sin of Shechem and the fact that he forcibly took Dinah. In this, Luther connects the resultant bloodshed as a necessary consequence of Shechem's sexual sin.[33] In this view, however, Luther is the exception. Both patristic writers and the medieval church used this pericope in the same way as Löhe: to warn against the temporal and eternal consequences of a woman's pride, foolishness, and in Dinah's particular case, curiosity.[34]

When considering the social circumstances that Löhe found himself in during his time in Kirchenlamitz, it is not surprising that he followed the church fathers and medieval theologians in using this example to warn against gross sexual sin. Löhe was first and foremost concerned with the spiritual life of the citizens. Due not only to the willful sinful attitudes of the citizens, but also to the humble state that the young girls especially found themselves in, Löhe chose to use the law and to do so in the sharpest manner possible. His treatise, while strict, is absolutely pastoral in its purpose. His call for repentance, and his assurance that Christ desires to forgive even the worst of sinners, is done to provide the comfort of the gospel to this depraved city.

If you have been until now like Shechem and Dinah, now with the great sinner return all your love to Christ who forgives you all your sins.

Throughout the treatise, Löhe is driven time and again to God's word with which to admonish, rebuke, restore, and strengthen the readers. He uses Luther's translation almost exclusively, with little paraphrasing. This method of pastoral theology should not be overlooked. Although most modern exegetes would not agree with the liberties that Löhe takes with the narrative of Dinah, one cannot deny that his subsequent usage of Scripture is faithful and true. Contained in this one small treatise is Löhe's theology of the Lord's Supper; his view of the blessedness of confirmation; his anthropology in expounding the sinful, depraved state of man; and his soteriology. This is all beautifully unpacked in an almost poetic tone as Löhe weaves together his arguments. Löhe is eminently valuable in regards to his application of Scripture to the real needs of his people. LOGIA

32. [Löhe's reference is not correct; what he intended is not certain—ed.]
33. *LW* 6:193: "Rape and defilement of virgins have never passed by without bloody slaughter, and this deed is an example."
34. For a fuller treatment of Luther's position as juxtaposed to these patristic and medieval writers, see Joy Schroeder, "The Rape of Dinah: Luther's Interpretation of a Biblical Narrative," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 28 (1997): 775–91.

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Martin Luther and Idolatry

John A. Maxfield

One of the most compelling features of Scott Hendrix's interpretation of Martin Luther's agenda to Christianize Christendom is his fresh analysis of the German reformer's concern to root out what he perceived as a widespread infestation of idolatry in the vineyard of the Lord. Building his argument from Luther's writings and then citing Carlos Eire's important book *War against the Idols*, Hendrix holds that "for Luther, as for the Reformed tradition, the Reformation was a war against idols."[1] But while in Eire's treatment Luther functions as a foil, a dam resisting the quickening stream running from Erasmus to Calvin that came to define the Reformed and not the Lutheran tradition, in Hendrix's view, Luther, too, was radical in his critique of idolatry in the church of his day. Luther sought not merely some conservative brand of "church reform" or reform of doctrine, but a radical reform of the life and piety of Christians and corporate Christianity, replacing "idolatrous ritual with evangelical forms of worship and piety: going to church, using the catechisms, praying regularly through Christ instead of invoking saints, devoting assets and time to assisting others in place of fasting, pilgrimages, and the like."[2]

In this essay I would like to explore further Luther's war against idolatry by delving into it as a central theme in Luther's thought and work, and a vital one for understanding his theology, describing the reformer's repudiation of both papal and Protestant forms of idolatry and the means by which he sought to remove idolatry from the hearts and lives of his parishioners, students, and readers of his various writings. Luther sought to replace idolatry with forms and practices of Christian faith and life that conformed to the commands and promises of God. In fact it was this same concern to oppose every form of idolatry—as Luther understood it—that led the German reformer to dissociate himself and his movement so sharply from those he came to dismiss as fanatics and despisers of the sacraments: what has come to be known as the Reformed tradition, aptly characterized by Eire for its rejection of any conveying of spiritual blessing through material means. I agree with Hendrix's analysis of the Reformation as cohering in the goal shared by most reformers—Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, and various radicals—to "make Christendom more Christian." But I will also argue that contradictory understandings of that goal and of the forms of idolatry that stood in its path were the fundamental reason for disunity among Evangelical reformers in a way that is not fully explored in Hendrix's treatment.

Rather surprising is that in the literature on the Reformation, the portrayal of Luther as waging a "war against idolatry" is so rare. An admittedly unscientific investigation through the search engine in the digitized version of the Weimar edition of Luther's works churned up nearly 1500 hits just for variants on the words *Abgott* and *Abgötterei* (*idol* and *idolatry*), so the concept in Luther's writings appears to come up fairly often. Yet in various studies on Luther's theology the concept of idolatry does not play a very significant role. And as I have noted briefly, in Carlos Eire's study on the "theology of idolatry" in the Reformation, the treatment of Luther focuses on his dissonance from the Protestant tune:

> While some Protestants cast down the "idols" of Rome, Luther cast out the image breakers from Wittenberg. . . . By the time Calvin came to Geneva in 1536, to run his own crusade against "false religion," the streams of piety were flowing, inalterably, along three different courses. The Catholic stream continued to flow as it had for centuries, suffused with the immanence of the divine. The Lutheran stream, for all its protests, meandered close to these waters. Though they opposed much in medieval piety, Lutherans, for the most part, were not too interested in separating the material from the spiritual, or in promoting a radical change in worship. Stressing instead an opposition to "works-righteousness," they steered a middle course between transcendence and immanence, and remained open to the use of material objects in worship as long as they were regarded with indifference. The Reformed stream flowed hard and fast in a different direction, surging with

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1. Scott H. Hendrix, *Recultivating the Vineyard: The Reformation Agendas of Christianization* (Louisville; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 51.
2. Ibid., 64.

> transcendence. The central focus of Reformed Protestantism was its interpretation of worship—more specifically, of the relationship between the spiritual and the material.[3]

Eire in this introductory statement is staying true to his central thesis, namely, the tracing of a tradition coming to its fullest expression in John Calvin who, "in defending the heritage of the Reformed attitude toward idolatry, forged a new, scripturally based, theological metaphysics in which the boundaries between the spiritual and the material were more clearly drawn than ever."[4] The line of descent runs from the humanist-reformer Erasmus (who was conservative only in that he declined to break with the papal church) through Luther's erstwhile colleague Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt (who was radical in that he was willing to promote or at least not deny the right of the people, and not just the authorities, to remove images), to the Reformed tradition as developed by Ulrich Zwingli and later John Calvin. Expanding the ditty that "Erasmus laid the egg that Luther hatched" Eire notes of these reformers that their theology "resembled their parent more closely in some respects than Luther's ever did."[5]

Eire is quite correct in excluding Luther from this family tree of sixteenth-century reformers nourished by Neoplatonic streams and committed to a concept of divine transcendence shaped more by this theological metaphysics than by Holy Scripture, which they interpreted through "metaphysical assumptions" comprehended in the principle that "the finite cannot contain the infinite."[6] But by focusing his exploration of the theology of idolatry in the Reformation on reformers' opposition to material images and other externals of the medieval Catholic cult, he overlooks the significant ways that Luther continued to expose and teach against idolatry in Christendom even after he had rejected Karlstadt's iconoclasm and, more importantly, the spiritualism of his reinterpretation of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. For Eire, "the Protestant attack on Roman Catholic 'idolatry' begins with Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt. . . . It was he, not Luther, who first criticized medieval piety as misdirected and evil."[7] Luther is portrayed as inconsistent in his objections to the misuse of images while opposing Karlstadt and others in their removal. Thus while Eire correctly demonstrates the chasm that developed between Luther, Karlstadt, and the Reformed tradition regarding the nature and threat of idolatry, he does not explore fully the concept of idolatry operative in Luther's thought and work.

In a similar way, Luther's concept of idolatry and its centrality in his theology and reform agenda is ignored or sidelined through the literature focused more specifically on religious images and iconoclasm in the sixteenth century. Here too there is a clear rationale for the lacuna—Luther did not believe that images are inherently idolatrous, as he noted with increasing fervency in response to Karlstadt and others, beginning in 1522 upon his return from the Wartburg and definitively by 1525. Also, Luther disdained the violence of iconoclastic riots and the legalism he interpreted in Karlstadt's and others' demands to remove all images, believing that they betrayed and were destructive to the gospel he was fighting so hard to bring to the center of Christian piety. In the final analysis Luther viewed images as indifferent matters. So images would remain—or rather, *some* of them—in churches loyal to the Lutheran version of evangelical reform, and thus Luther's war against idolatry does not play a significant role in the literature on iconoclasm.

Nevertheless, Luther did criticize the abuse of images in the Christian piety of his day and—as I will detail below—he responded to Karlstadt that his own efforts were removing the idols in human hearts (where idolatry truly exists, as a distortion and corruption of Christian worship and piety) much more effectively than Karlstadt's removal of images from churches ever could. More importantly, Luther's horror over iconoclastic violence did not deter him from persisting in his protest against the other forms of idolatry that he believed were much more a threat to Christian faith and life. In short, Luther's own war against idolatry has been ignored not because it was insignificant or undeveloped but because a *different* approach has tended to catch the interest of theologians and historians.

THE CENTRAL THEME IN LUTHER'S WAR AGAINST IDOLATRY

Luther's understanding of idolatry was emerging already in his early lectures, particularly in his lectures of 1515–1516 on Romans. At its core idolatry is, in Luther's understanding, a matter of the heart's imagination. The young professor bemoans that many worship God not as he is but as they imagine him to be, refusing their duty (that is, obedience to God's will as revealed in his word) while choosing works for themselves that purport to honor God. Thus they create for themselves an "imagined God [who] is the kind who has regard for you and your ways." He calls this "spiritual idolatry of a more refined type," widespread and built on the "pious intentions" of those who are blinded by their own self-righteousness, "unable to believe anything but that they are doing extremely well and that they are pleasing to God."[8] Later in the lectures Luther conveys a definition of such idolatry that roots it in the very nature of the human condition apart from God's grace:

> Just as grace has placed God in the place of all things it sees, even its own interest, and prefers Him to itself and seeks only those things which belong to God and not its own things, so nature, on the other hand, sets itself in the place of all other things, even in the place of God, and seeks only those things which are its own and not the things of God. Therefore it is its own first and greatest idol. Second,

3. Carlos Eire, *War against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 2.
4. Ibid., 3.
5. Ibid., 28.
6. Ibid., 3.
7. Ibid., 55.
8. *LW* 25:158–60; WA 56:178.4–179.25.

> it makes God into an idol and the truth of God into a lie, and finally it makes idols of all created things and of all gifts of God. . . . This is spiritual fornication, iniquity, and a terrible curving in on itself.[9]

Thus human nature leads the creature of God to seek its own, and this idolatry of the self acts *prudently*, choosing what is good for the self. It is "a prudence which directs the flesh,"

> that is, our concupiscence and self-will, which enjoys itself and uses everyone else, including God Himself. . . . This prudence makes man feel that he himself is the final and ultimate object in life, an idol, on whose account he does, suffers, attempts, plans, and says all things.[10]

So in these lectures prepared prior to the indulgence controversy and his theological dispute with the papal magisterium, the concept of idolatry was already functioning in a polemical way: Luther addresses a self-righteous piety, embedded in human nature, that he believes is all too widespread in the Christianity of his day, criticizing it publicly before his students in the lecture hall at Wittenberg and seeking to form in them a piety that recognizes idolatry as an inherent temptation in the human experience. This idolatry emerges from within the human heart and not, at least not primarily, from anything external. Idolatry is a problem of the heart and its core is the "prudent" putting of self and its interests above God and his word.

By early 1522, when the reform movement at Wittenberg was well under way and Luther's break with the papal church was complete if not yet permanent, this polemic against idolatry had expanded significantly to include every manner of false teaching and churchly abuse exposed in the well-known flood of pamphlets that poured forth from the reformer's pen. Yet at its core Luther's protest against idolatry in Christendom remained a sharp critique of human willfulness in the face of God and his word. Thus in a treatise published in early July 1522, *Against the Spiritual Estate of the Pope and the Bishops Falsely So Called,* a successor pamphlet to an aborted and no longer extant treatise with the illuminating title *Against the Idol at Halle*,[11] Luther attacks a form of external idolatry, namely that of the Roman papacy and its false bishops' tyranny over Christians and Christendom, but his polemic turns once again on a problem of the heart—human willfulness that sets itself in the place of God and his word.

In the opening of the treatise Luther addresses the mass- and indulgence-offering bishops (the "bishops falsely so called" of the title) who have condemned him as a heretic. As the excommunicated reformer addresses this papal hierarchy, he calls himself "an ecclesiastic by the grace of God in defiance of you and the devil," noting that he has been deprived of his churchly titles by "papal and imperial disfavor," but this is of no concern—these titles were merely indications that he had been a "papal creature."[12] Now he renounces all such titles: "For these masks were my greatest shame before God. I too was once in error . . . a liar, a cheater, a seducer, and a blasphemer against God's pure teaching, as you are now." Luther exclaims that he will no longer allow the bishops—"or even an angel from heaven"—to judge his teaching, "for it is God's and not mine."[13] Rather, he will fulfill the divine command to reprove the bishops on the basis of God's word. God does not know them or their office, for they "neither teach nor perform any episcopal duties." Their tyranny is worse than that of worldly tyrants, for "spiritual dominion, when it is unholy and does not support God's word, is like a wolf and murderer of the soul, and it is just as though the devil himself were ruling there."[14]

Luther will fulfill the divine command to reprove the bishops on the basis of God's word.

Interpreting 2 Peter 2:11–19 as a severe, prophetic judgment on the papal bishops, Luther writes, "St. Peter calls them 'blots and blemishes.' They revile and condemn the truth they do not know. As a result they are drowned in their nature, truly animal-like and sensual men who have never tasted the Spirit."[15] With a form of verbal iconoclasm Luther links the papal bishops with the Moabite prophet Balaam's seduction of Israel into idolatrous fornication with Baal-Peor (Num 25:1–9, 31:16), drawing on an interpretive tradition stemming from Augustine that this idol was identical to that known in the early Roman tradition as Priapus, a statue of a naked young man with a wreath placed on his uncovered genitals, and "all brides had to place themselves upon this shameful unchastity." Such blasphemous perversities Luther judges to be "the result of God's wrath and of human blindness—there is nothing that can be thought up which is so shameful that people cannot be persuaded to do it, if only the most blessed name of God is attached to it."[16] But as Moses taught the people neither to add to nor to detract from God's teaching, threatening them with the judgment that God had displayed upon the people at Baal-Peor (Deut 4:3), so Luther concludes,

9. *LW* 25:346; WA 56:356.30–357.12.
10. *LW* 25:350; WA 56:361.11–17.
11. See the introduction to the treatise (*LW* 39:241–45) and its basis in the arguments of Gottfried Krodel (against the editors of the Weimar edition), summarized in *LW* 48:344–50 and fully articulated in *Lutherjahrbuch* 33 (1966): 9–81.
12. *LW* 39:247–48; WA 10, II:105.17–19; 106.10–14.
13. *LW* 39:248–49; WA 10, II:106.14–17; 107.3–14.
14. *LW* 39:252; WA 10, II:110.29–111.5.
15. *LW* 39:258–59; WA 10, II:116.3–36, quotation at lines 33–36.
16. *LW* 39:260–61; WA 10, II:118.11–119.14, quotations at 119.6–10.

> Why should Moses make such an example of Baal-Peor—that they should neither add [to] nor take anything from God's commandments—if he did not want to show that this idol is human teaching? Human teaching always takes away from God's commandments and adds its own commandments—just as the pope has now taken away all of God's commandments and substituted his own.[17]

Throughout this treatise the reformer applies his core conception of idolatry as self-will over against God and his word to the Roman papacy and its bishops, who neither teach nor know God's word. "Holy canon law" is thus "a shameless portrait of spiritual unchastity. . . . They think that with this spiritual unchastity they now serve God even better than before, just as though God had become a Priapus—whereas true service to him is offered only by faith and by God's work brought about by his grace, and spiritual chastity is only maintained by his divine word."[18] Luther sarcastically labels as the "virtues of bishops" the proclamation of papal bulls and indulgences instead of God's word, the princely wealth of papal bishops, the financial profiteering of the indulgence peddling and the false promise of God's forgiveness attached to indulgences, the papal pretense "to change vows for the sake of money."[19] The response of "all devout Christians" that Luther calls for can only be described as iconoclastic—though its focus is not on physical images but on destroying the mental image of the papal magisterium. For in Luther's view it has become an idol:

> Just as you would deal with a physical Priapus or idol, so you should also deal with the bulls of Balaam and the soul-murderers in Rome. Just think what a great service you render to God when you destroy the idols and sanctify his divine name by cleansing it of idolatry. Therefore, anyone who has the desire and the opportunity may tear up and destroy such bulls, if he is able to do so with a good conscience and understanding. To destroy idols, as Moses commands so often in Deuteronomy, is the best service one can render to God. Gideon smashed Baal, Judges 8 [6:27], and King Asa smashed Priapus, I Kings 5 [15:13]. They were highly praised and honored for it by God. But in these days the sheep have to beware of the shepherd more than of the wolves.[20]

In a section added to the treatise in two editions of 1523,[21] subtitled "Doctor Luther's Bull and Reformation," Luther goes on to label as "God's dear children and true Christians" all who work to bring an end to this tyranny of an idolatrous episcopal government, while those who obey this tyranny "are the devil's own servants and fight against God's order and law." Yet Luther in this section issues a qualification, namely that "such destruction and extinction" of the false episcopal government in Germany should happen not by violence ("using the fist and the sword") but rather by teaching. Citing Daniel 8 ("'by no human hand' shall the Antichrist be destroyed"), Luther admonishes, "Everyone should speak, teach, and stand against him with God's word until he is put to shame and collapses, completely alone and even despising himself. This is a true Christian destruction and every effort should be made to this end."[22] The admonition is just one paragraph and its rhetorical force hardly counters or even succeeds in qualifying the heady iconoclastic rhetoric of what precedes and also follows. Yet its presence in this added text provides a subtle indication that Luther in 1522 and 1523 was dealing no longer solely with the task of countering the papacy and its bishops. He was also dealing with the challenge of a reform movement in Wittenberg and its environs that had taken the war against idolatry in directions Luther found misguided and destructive to his own agenda of a Christendom centered in God's word and most importantly in the gospel.

LUTHER'S WAR AGAINST IDOLATRY AND THE REPUDIATION OF KARLSTADT AND THE SACRAMENTARIANS

The earliest division of the Reformation bears the marks of a squabble among colleagues turned bitter. It happened within the German evangelical movement centered at the University of Wittenberg when Luther returned from protective exile in the Wartburg to take up personal leadership of the movement in March 1522. Scholars have reconstructed a fairly coherent narrative of events and apparent motivations that led to this division: Karlstadt and the Augustinian friar Gabriel Zwilling were advocating specific reforms from the pulpit of St. Mary's Church, including the removal of images from the churches, and seeking support from the city council. By early December 1521 a few riots had broken out that involved destruction of images and altars and verbal abuse of clerics. On Christmas Day Karlstadt celebrated the first evangelical mass, not only distributing the elements in both kinds as Luther had forcefully advocated, but also laying aside clerical vestments and dressed as a layman, thus confusing Luther's understanding of the universal priesthood of believers with an undermining of a distinct pastoral office, which Luther did not advocate. In January the city council passed a reform ordinance that instituted various changes in worship. But the Elector of Saxony, citing the disturbances and lack of agreement even among those advocating reforms, called for a halt to reforms and a return to the *status quo ante*. Luther returned to Wittenberg against the elector's wishes but apparently in response to the call of the congregation to intervene. He mounted the pulpit of St. Mary's Church to preach his famous Invocavit sermons on eight successive days beginning on 9 March, effectively taking up leadership of the evangelical movement. In the aftermath Zwilling submitted but Karlstadt did not. Karlstadt eventually was repudi-

17. *LW* 39:262; WA 10, II:119.34–120.5.
18. *LW* 39:264; WA 10, II:122.19–24; 123.7–15.
19. *LW* 39:270–78, 285–86; WA 10, II:133.13–139.36; 145.26–146.28.
20. *LW* 39:271; WA 10, II:134.2–13.
21. See *LW* 39:278n26.
22. *LW* 39:278–79; WA 10, II:140.1–29.

ated by his colleagues and left Wittenberg in 1523 to practice his own version of evangelical reform in Orlamünde, where his theology and practice continued to develop in ways contrary to Luther's confession and the reform movement in Wittenberg. As Hendrix notes, disagreement among scholars regarding the character of Luther's renewed leadership in Wittenberg and on the division itself is grounded not so much in varying interpretations of the events but in their own ideological preferences: "Historians who have rehabilitated the integrity and good intentions of Karlstadt have sometimes criticized Luther, while some theologians have celebrated Luther's conservatism and his opposition to 'radicals' everywhere."[23]

Hendrix argues that the goal of Luther's actions is missed by this labeling and that Luther's Invocavit sermons and subsequent leadership demonstrate that his concern was not simply to slow down the pace of reform but was motivated "by his conviction that reform was not exclusively an external matter."[24] This judgment corresponds precisely to Luther's understanding of idolatry. Events subsequent to March 1522 clearly demonstrate that Luther acted on this understanding both by continuing his own work of removing idols from the hearts of Christians by means of pastoral teaching, and by repudiating Karlstadt's insistence that all images be removed from the churches, which Luther viewed as misguided and even legalistic—that is, a return to the idolatrous piety of works-righteousness. As Luther and Karlstadt's personal relationship deteriorated in the next several months, leading to their final embittered break in 1525, their writings demonstrate that not differing tactics for successful reform but rather a different and even contradictory understanding of idolatry was at the heart of their division.

Luther's preaching to combat idolatry in the hearts of Christians and celebrated through false forms of Christian piety is exemplified in a sermon he preached on 14 September 1522 for the Festival of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, which also appeared in seven pamphlets printed in Wittenberg from 1522 to 1524 and later was incorporated (in two separate sermons) into Luther's Church Postil.[25] Yet despite this significant printing history and the original delivery of the sermon during the time that Karlstadt was being repudiated in Wittenberg, the sermon does not appear to have been treated in the literature on the developments of the early evangelical movement.[26]

In its pamphlet form the sermon appears with the title *A Sermon on Relics, decorated with excess/ On the Holy Cross in the Churches*. Over a simple woodcut image of the crucifixion appears an epigraph: "Don't adorn the picture, only remember the poor."[27] In the body of the sermon the reformer announces his topic by highlighting in its first sentence that there is a great abuse that has sprung up from the holy cross. He recounts the historical circumstances of its origin in the (Byzantine) Roman emperor Heraclius's order to portray the cross on his banner in commemoration of his victory over Persia, and then launches into his warning against the idolatrous piety of his day:

Luther and Karlstadt's writings demonstrate a different and even contradictory understanding of idolatry.

> Now as you know, in every matter that God addresses, always the evil spirit has wanted to mimic God and do it as well, so that there is nothing so great that the devil does not want to do it and to pull the people from the right way to misuse and foolishness. We see this with his holy cross, also with his dear saints, yes, even with his holy name. As you know that God has commanded us to honor the saints, here the devil has led us to make a commotion [*ain geplerr gemacht*] and had us lift up our eyes so that we have fallen before the dead and have left the living forgotten.[28]

From this introduction Luther proceeds to display the abuses associated with the holy cross and then to speak on its proper use. First, Christ has not commanded that his physical, wooden cross be taken up by Christians, but rather they are commanded to deny themselves, take up their (own) cross, and follow Christ (Matt 16:24). Instead of this, wooden crosses are endowed in churches and externally shown reverence through decorations of gold, silver, and precious stones, "even unto superabundance, as here at Wittenberg the spike on the crown of thorns is endowed and many fees and revenue [*vil zynss unnd rendt*] directed toward it."[29] Now it would not be good, Luther goes on to say, to step on the holy cross; one should honor it. "But to fall before it, to endow churches with it, to place in it the blessedness of souls, and meanwhile the real and more necessary cross to leave ignored, that is not right."[30] Such a conception is rather the source of all sorts of abuses: the poor are left to sit there while the indulgence idols—for Luther, the bishops—grant indulgences. Other abuses include pilgrimages, a view that God's grace is given so that the holy cross might be prayed for, and that there are so many pieces of the holy cross in the world that one could build a house from them (just as one could reckon that St. Barbara had seven heads from all the relics thereof), etc. . . . [31]

23. Hendrix, *Recultivating the Vineyard*, 38.
24. Ibid.
25. Introduction and text in WA 10, III:CLVII–CLX, 332–41.
26. I have found the sermon treated only in Lennart Pinomaa, *Die Heiligen bei Luther,* Schriften der Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft A16 (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft, 1977), 81–82.
27. "Ain Sermon von den hayltumben unnd gezierd mit uberfluss/ Vom hailigen Creutz in den kirchen. Geprediget von Doctor Martini Lutter. Im Jar. M.D. XXii. Nit zyer die bildtnus Gedenck nun der armen. [Holzschnitt] Vuittemberg." WA 10, III:CLVIII.
28. WA 10, III:332.8–16.
29. WA 10, III:332.19–333.1.
30. WA 10, III:333.1–4.
31. WA 10, III:333.4–15.

"God has blinded us so," Luther proclaimed, "for as we seek him, so he finds us again. We want to be fools, so he lets us remain fools."[32] This fulfills the saying of the apostle Paul (2 Thess 2:1–12) that God sends a crafty error so that they believe the lies. "For if one preaches that we should help the poor, . . . that goes in one ear and out the other. Therefore, when they urge God's commands, seek God's eyes and further his works—that we let lie and on this account God plagues us, that we must accept lies, serve idols, pray to stone and wood . . . "[33] All this is the first abuse of the cross, that people think they do more by decorating the cross than by giving money to the poor. Such words are emphasized as a central theme in the sermon through the admonition appearing above the woodcut image of the crucified Christ on the title page of the published sermon pamphlet. In the sermon itself Luther goes on to suggest that God places no power in the external decoration but rather seeks the cross "carried only in the heart." "Therefore I would prefer," he concludes, "that no crown of thorns, yes, no holy cross were here. For there the people fall down [in worship] and decorate it with gold and silver, and let the poor people sit there."[34]

The problem is the use of the cross as an object of veneration and costly decoration while the vocation of Christian discipleship is ignored.

Through skillful weaving of memorable phrases the reformer impresses upon his parishioners and readers the problem of idolatry in relation to the physical cross in churches on the very day it was to be exalted. For Luther the problem is not the image of the cross—indeed, the title page of the printed sermon displays a woodcut of precisely this image—but rather use of the cross as an object of veneration and costly decoration while the vocation of Christian discipleship is ignored. Luther's analysis of the cross in Christian piety does not draw upon the traditional distinction between proper veneration of the thing and the worship that is to be directed beyond the thing to God alone, lest there be idolatry. Rather, for Luther the idolatry of such misuse of the cross is the replacing of God's command for Christians to deny themselves and to take up their cross and follow Jesus—a command subsumed in the repeated refrain to give to the poor—with various means of endowing and adorning physical crosses and even collecting the pieces of what was said to be the wooden cross that Jesus bore. The reformer makes clear that it is not the physical object or even the festival of the holy cross that is the problem—rather it is the misuse of both cross and festival that derives from a problem of the heart. It is a form of idolatry that occurs as God's commands are displaced by human attempts to honor God by means of pious veneration of a physical object reminiscent of (or that is regarded as a piece of) the cross that Jesus bore and on which he died for the atonement of human sin. This idolatry associated with the image is the result of God's judgment against hearts hardened against his commands, which Luther in his Romans lectures years before had described as putting self-will and prudence at the center of human activity.

As Luther continues in this sermon he specifically applies these principles regarding the holy cross to all relics. For, he says, "a relic is nothing other than a seduction of believers."[35] In support of his argument he appeals to one of the church's earliest iconoclasts, Vigilantius, against whose work St. Jerome wrote "so sharply that I wish he [Jerome] had rather yielded." Luther opines, "If Vigilantius's book were extant, as is that of Jerome, I hold that he would have written much more christianly [about relics] than Jerome."[36] Luther calls it stupidity and blasphemy and an "unchristian trade" that holy bones are venerated while the neighbor right there is despised; he would prefer that the bones stay in the ground so that the misuse of them remains buried while works of love emerge.[37] For relics replace in the minds and hearts of Christians the true "holy thing" that God has placed before every Christian as a means of exercising veneration and love for God:

> Indeed, one cannot take the blindness out of our eyes, so that we cannot make the distinction between which would be better: The poor man is there, there lives God's Word within, body and soul together—*this is the living relic*. But we forsake him, and run out and gild a dead bone. Oh, how blind we are, and senseless, that we so despise the relic of the gospel! For what more can Saint Peter possess than you and me? He may indeed possess more gifts and have done more powerful works, but the faith that he has is directed to Christ precisely as is ours. He has the same Christ, the same Spirit, that we have, so we believe. Why then do I want to give honor to another? Therefore note well how people have esteemed as precious all the bellowing and honor (given) to the dead saints—and the honor that one does for the neighbor, you treasure that instead, as gold and a precious gem, and the poorer he is the more you should help him. Now you can indeed keep in mind what you should believe about cloisters, which come here and make a commotion and leave the people's eyes gaping. In them the Franciscans, the Augustinians, the Benedictines pose high (and holy), but of this nothing has been commanded us.[38]

32. WA 10, III:333.15–17.
33. WA 10, III:333:21–26.
34. WA 10, III:333.29–334.7.
35. WA 10, III:334.12–14.
36. WA 10, III:334.14–18.
37. WA 10, III:334.18–21.
38. WA 10, III:334.21–335.8.

With such words Luther completely rejects the ancient concept of relics as bearers of holiness, as means of access to divine power. He rejects as well the monastic movement and its spiritual elites who strive for and are credited in Luther's day with a higher form of divine holiness by virtue of their religious vocation, accessible to more mundane Christian piety by means of veneration and honor. Luther retorts that none of this is commanded by God; it is rather a replacing of God's command with human inventions and empty promises, a distracting from the essential command to love the neighbor and despising of the true "living relic" that God has placed in this world as a physical means of receiving the love he has commanded. By siding with Vigilantius over Jerome, Luther wholeheartedly rejects what Patricia Cox Miller calls the "material turn" that became a central part of the Catholic tradition in the fourth through seventh centuries, that investing of physical "things" with spiritual significance and power that is accessible through various practices of piety.[39]

In so doing Luther and the communities following him were hardly "meandering close" to the stream of Catholic piety[40] that made material objects the means of spiritual access to the divine. Luther, like other Evangelical reformers of his generation and beyond, protested this piety as a charade of human invention, distracting from the word of God and the needs of one's neighbor—that is, the spiritual and physical means God has instituted for the increase of faith and the exercise of love. In particular, Luther would have all relics that the common man associates with miracles and pilgrimage removed: "Therefore one ought to send all these nuisances on their way and teach only the unglossed faith; that's why I would have it that all crosses be overthrown that have sweat or bled, and with them the pilgrimages and the bellowing that has arisen, which has made for such great error and misuse."[41]

In the sermon Luther turns next to describe "the correct discovery and lifting up of the holy cross," which he interprets from the command of Christ that every Christian discover and lift up his own cross—this cross is the one "that you should make holy, as [Christ] has sanctified his [own cross] with flesh and blood." The Christian's cross is not grasped with the hand or found through a pilgrimage to Jerusalem; it is grasped through experience.[42] Luther's "theology of the cross" comes to the fore in this sermon as he identifies the experience of suffering in varying forms sent by God as the cross properly taken up and borne by Christians:

> To find is to recognize—when you know that God has sent this to you, then you have found it with the heart. . . . Now the cross is that which first of all would be suffering and pain, then with the disgrace and dishonor before us, as Christ suffers. . . . When I stand there and suffer and all the people sing, jump and say, "it has happened justly to him, yes, he has deserved even more," as happened to the apostles . . . that is the right cross.[43]

Thus Luther identifies as the true cross of discipleship not just any suffering but suffering that includes disgrace and insult, grasped alone with the heart and recognized as imposed by God, even as it is experienced through the hatred and persecution of human beings. He gives as an example of such suffering those true Christians who are damned and burned by the pope as if they were the devil's own—and all the while "the whole world falls upon them and says: 'To them it has happened justly.'" But Christ himself is the perfect example of this kind of cross-bearing, and the surprising turn of events in his life stands as a promise for Christians: "For while he lived, there stood all the world against him, but as soon as he was dead, then everything turned around and sun and moon and all creatures testified to his guiltlessness, as the centurion said, 'He was truly God's Son.'"[44]

As Luther continues to explain in the rest of this part of the sermon, this kind of finding and taking up the cross is quite different from the experience of the emperor Heraclius, who exalted the cross in victory, or of the *Stationirer*—that is, mendicant friars who travelled with relics.[45] This kind of cross-bearing is not external at all but internal:

> The external produces money (as with the *Stationirer*); the internal praises God and adorns heaven. Therefore the true holy cross is discovered and lifted up when you recognize it and are in the faith, and thank God that he has laid it upon you; thus you sanctify it with the heart, as Christ has sanctified his. Christ's blood and suffering have sanctified you; so you approach, and sanctify your cross with your heart, when you willingly and kindly accept what God inflicts upon you.[46]

So Luther's inversion of the idolatrous misuse of the holy cross turns not on the removal or destruction of the thing but the transformation of the experience it represents. Indeed, the image of the cross and even of the crucifix with Christ portrayed in his suffering—as in the woodcut print adorning the title page of this printed sermon—can be a means of inspiring this Christian experience of bearing the cross. But Luther's war against the idolatrous piety of his day is manifest as he exposes and labels as foolishness, deception, and the judgment of God the abuses associated with physical crosses adorning the churches, and the pieces of the True Cross and relics, whose veneration was sought in pilgrimages and through which divine power was promised.

39. Patricia Cox Miller, *The Corporeal Imagination: Signifying the Holy in Late Ancient Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), passim.
40. Eire, *War against the Idols*, 2.
41. WA 10, III:335.17–20.
42. WA 10, III:335.21–27.
43. WA 10, III:335.28–336.12.
44. WA 10, III:336.26–337.1.
45. Alfred Götze, *Frühneuhochdeutsches Glossar*, 7th ed., Kleine Texte für Vorlesungen und Übungen 101 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1967), 207.
46. WA 10, III:337.11–18.

On account of such abuses Luther says at one point in the sermon that he would prefer that no crown of thorns or cross remain in the church. But the reformer by September 1522 has not advocated the removal of all such objects from the physical space of the Wittenberg church (or elsewhere); instead, he has repudiated both violent iconoclastic acts and legally imposed removal of images, as advocated by Karlstadt and others in the Wittenberg movement. This difference of opinion and eventual division within the evangelical movement often has been attributed to Luther's harsh personal leadership and even arrogance. Such a view is endorsed by Hendrix in *Recultivating the Vineyard*, even as he seeks to explain it through Luther's perception of himself as an apostle called by God, which led to "an exaggerated sense of personal entitlement to leadership of the movement."[47] Whether it was Luther or Karlstadt who more arrogantly exaggerated his own role is debatable, but in any case this kind of judgment fails to consider fully how deeply Luther's understanding of the problem of idolatry differed from that of Karlstadt and others. This difference became more evident after Karlstadt's departure from Wittenberg to pursue his own agenda for reform in Orlamünde, and it was exacerbated by iconoclastic violence in the early 1520s and by calls for a violent overturning of the social and economic order by Thomas Müntzer and the growing revolutionary movement that came to its climax in 1525—forms of popular unrest that Luther did not distinguish carefully. More importantly, however, is that Luther's understanding of Christian theology and practice—and therefore his agenda of Christianization—was contradicted by the spiritualized interpretation of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper that began in the German evangelical movement with Karlstadt and turned into a major division of the Reformation through the Swiss reform movement led by Ulrich Zwingli and others.

Karlstadt acknowledges that his writings on the sacrament are now the issue of contention between him and Luther.

Our focus is on Luther's understanding of idolatry, but at this point it is essential to grasp the position he found himself opposing. By August 1524 Thomas Müntzer's activities in Thuringia, Saxony, were notorious for their calls for violence—and Luther responded with a preaching tour wherein he preached "against the spirits." A report recounting his sermon in Jena on 22 August and his subsequent meeting with Karlstadt, who was there clandestinely in the audience, notes that Luther had in the sermon "said it would be equally the work and fruit of this spirit to tear down churches, images, wood and stone, and in short to take away, to root out and completely bring to naught baptism and the sacrament of the altar . . . "[48] Karlstadt perceived that he was being lumped together with Müntzer's call for violent rebellion, and in a letter to Luther sent by a messenger he asked for a meeting at the Black Bear Inn in Jena that same day.[49]

The anonymous report of the meeting was later published, sympathetic to Karlstadt but apparently accurately conveying the tenor and conduct of the meeting, which shows the deep personal resentment that had developed by this time between the two former colleagues. Most significant is that while Karlstadt conveys in this interview his resentment at being characterized as a violent spirit, he acknowledges that his writings on the sacrament are now the issue of contention between him and Luther.[50] Luther denies that he had ever named Karlstadt in the sermon but replies that Karlstadt's inference that he was meant amounts to self-accusation. The issue of idolatry in relation to the sacrament of the altar comes to the fore as Karlstadt attacks Luther's teaching: "Yes, I will prove with [your doctrine of] the sacrament how you preached Christ—that is, whether you have preached the crucified Christ or rather a self-invented Christ. You have preached against yourself as it can be read from your books."[51] The end of this tense meeting found Luther issuing a challenge to Karlstadt to attack his doctrine publicly, giving him a gulden as a token of the challenge.[52]

Karlstadt responded to this challenge by issuing eight tracts, one of which, entitled *Whether One Should Proceed Slowly . . .*, was his response to Luther's early criticism in the Invocavit sermons of the Wittenberg reforms Karlstadt had championed. The tract is throughout a justification for an immediate and uncompromising obedience to God's law, which Karlstadt understands to require the removal of images. Addressed to a city clerk in the town of Joachimstal by the name of Bartel Bach, Karlstadt urges Bach not to go with the majority view—testimony to the apparent success by this time of Luther's call for ordered and gradual reform throughout Saxony—or to bow to the opinions of the "princes among the learned" but rather to

47. Hendrix, *Recultivating the Vineyard,* 54–55. See also the judgments of Luther's personality and actions in Mark U. Edwards, *Luther and the False Brethren* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975).

48. The *Acta Jenensia*, or "What Dr. Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt Talked Over with Dr. Martin Luther at Jena, and How They Have Decided to Write against Each Other" (1524), in *Karlstadt's Battle with Luther: Documents in a Liberal-Radical Debate*, ed. Ronald J. Sider (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 38. The subtitle and introduction to this collection illustrate the anachronistic manner with which several scholars have sought to characterize the divisions of the early Reformation. The German text of this report is in WA 15:334–40.
49. Sider, *Karlstadt's Battle with Luther*, 37.
50. Ibid., 40.
51. Ibid., 42.
52. Karlstadt's writings previously had been censored in Saxony.

consider only the commands of God. "Each community, that is, every community in its city, is responsible to restrain the error," Karlstadt writes, and he and the community under his leadership in Orlamünde "were not obliged to refrain either in teaching or activity from carrying out God's commands until our neighbors and the guzzlers at Wittenberg followed."[53] In another tract on *The Anti-Christian Misuse of the Lord's Bread and Cup*, Karlstadt repudiated his own previous views, as well as Luther's, that the Lord's Supper is a sacramental meal conveying the promise of forgiveness of sins, calling it "a common and dreadful injury that our Christians seek forgiveness of sins in the sacrament" and articulating a theology that has been described as spiritualist in one form or another.

Luther's response, his 1525 treatise *Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and Sacraments*, reflects the chasm that by then had emerged between the two former colleagues, and its title shows the close relationship between images and sacraments that is operative in the thought of both of them.[54] At the center of his argument is the different understanding of idolatry that is operative in the two theologians and their goals for reform. Luther views Karlstadt's interpretation of the sacrament as mere bread and wine as simply in accord with reason, but the word of God and reason, Luther insists, are two teachings that must be separated, the one "to govern the conscience in the spirit before God; the other, [reason,] which teaches of things external or works." In Luther's understanding, Karlstadt and others are "honor-seeking prophets who do nothing but break images, destroy churches, manhandle the sacrament, and seek a new kind of mortification, that is, a self-chosen putting to death of the flesh."[55]

In this way Luther announces his main criticism of the iconoclasts of the early Reformation: that they misconstrue the true source and danger of idolatry, and as a result fight against those physical means (the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, with their physical elements of water and bread and wine connected with the word of God) that God has instituted as instruments of salvation. Luther charges that they replace his evangelical doctrine of the promises of God received by faith with a doctrine of obedience to the law and works, including self-chosen forms of spiritual mortification. In a section "On the Destruction of Images," Luther writes of his different understanding and goals:

> I approached the task of destroying images by first tearing them out of the heart through God's Word and making them worthless and destroyed. This indeed took place before Dr. Karlstadt ever dreamed of destroying images. For when they are no longer in the heart, they can do no harm when seen with the eyes. But Dr. Karlstadt, who pays no attention to matters of the heart, has reversed the order by removing them from sight and leaving them in the heart. *For he does not preach faith, nor can he preach it; unfortunately, only now do I see that.* Which of these two forms of destroying images is best, I will let each man judge for himself.[56]

Karlstadt repudiated his own previous views.

The problem, in Luther's understanding, is that Karlstadt interprets both the law of Moses and the gospel ineptly. Against Karlstadt's interpretation that God's law commands the destruction of all images as idols, Luther retorts that only images that are worshiped are forbidden by God's law; "a crucifix, on the other hand, or any other holy image is not forbidden. Heigh now! you breakers of images, I defy you to prove the opposite!"[57] He cites as an example the bronze serpent made by Moses, and destroyed by Hezekiah only centuries later "solely because it had been worshiped."[58] "The meaning," Luther later explains, "is not that I wish to defend images, as has been sufficiently indicated. Rather, murderous spirits are not to be permitted to create sins and problems of conscience where none exist, and murder souls without necessity." While Karlstadt is focusing on obedience to laws (and that not even correctly, with the result that he is "not even a Mosaic teacher"), Luther is concerned with the Christian message of grace and freedom:

> . . . to speak evangelically of images, I say and declare that no one is obligated to break violently images even of God, but everything is free, and one does not sin if he does not break them with violence. One is obligated, however, to destroy them with the Word of God, that is, not with the law in a Karlstadtian manner, but with the gospel. This means to instruct and enlighten the conscience that it is idolatry to worship them, or to trust in them, since one is to trust alone in Christ. Beyond this let the external matters take their course.[59]

In this way Luther combats Karlstadt's error as a confusion of law and gospel that results in the destruction of the gospel and Christian freedom. While the pope destroyed Christian freedom by inventing commandments through the requirement of human traditions, Karlstadt does so by prohibitions

53. Ibid., 62, 56. Original text in *Karlstadts Schriften aus den Jahren 1523–25*, ed. Erich Hertzsch (Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1956), 1:73–97.
54. The first lines (after the salutation) of the treatise read: "Doctor Andreas Karlstadt has deserted us, and on top of that has become our worst enemy." *LW* 40:79; WA 18:62.6–7.
55. *LW* 40:81; WA 18:63.31–33.
56. *LW* 40:84, emphasis added; WA 18:67.8–17.
57. *LW* 40:85–86; WA 18:68.29–31.
58. *LW* 40:87; WA 18:70.1–3.
59. *LW* 40:90–91; WA 18:73.11–14, 24–30; 74.3–10.

of images and also of elevating the sacrament, which Luther understands as matters of freedom. Luther states that he is advocating a "middle course. . . . We are neither papist nor Karlstadtian, but free and Christian . . ."[60] In Luther's view Karlstadt is not merely mistaken but "has fallen from the kingdom of Christ and suffered shipwreck with respect to faith."[61] Luther's characterization of Karlstadt in this way reflects his core convictions about Christianity and therefore his agenda for the Reformation, and these convictions are minimized by analyses that attribute his motivations and actions either to characteristics of personality (and even personality disorder) or to his self-image as an apostle called by God to personal leadership of the evangelical movement.[62]

Luther charges that Karlstadt's spiritualist understanding of the sacraments replaces Christ's word of promise.

In the second part of the treatise where Luther more specifically answers Karlstadt's writings on the sacraments,[63] he charges that Karlstadt's spiritualist understanding of the sacraments replaces Christ's word of promise, which brings the benefits of the cross to those receiving the sacraments in faith, with human works of meditation and remembrance.[64] Luther makes clear that his teaching is not that the physical elements of the sacrament effect forgiveness but rather the word of God connected to those elements:

> Our teaching is that bread and wine do not avail. I will go still farther. Christ on the cross and all his suffering and his death do not avail, even if, as you teach, they are "acknowledged and meditated upon" with the utmost "passion, ardor, heartfeltness." Something else must always be there. What is it? The Word, the Word, the Word. Listen, lying spirit, the Word avails. Even if Christ were given for us and crucified a thousand times, it would all be in vain if the Word of God were absent and were not distributed and given to me with the bidding, this is for you, take what is yours.[65]

In Luther's understanding, made clear throughout this treatise, both Karlstadt's conception that all images are idolatrous and his spiritualist interpretation of the sacraments are grounded not in a right interpretation of Scripture, of the law of Moses or the gospel of Christ, but rather in human reason and therefore in a salvation achieved through human efforts, which for Luther is the real idolatry. Reading Karlstadt's writings in this period, it is difficult to imagine that Luther could have managed any other reaction than that his former colleague's conception of reform was a turn back to a religion of law and works, precisely that conception of the church and salvation from which Luther had been freed through his own evangelical breakthrough and his excommunication by the papal magisterium. Though the charge that Karlstadt is an idolater does not come forth overtly in *Against the Heavenly Prophets*, it is implied through Luther's exposition of idolatry as self-will over against the commands and promises of God as revealed in the law and the gospel. For this is precisely how Luther understands the convictions that Karlstadt was expressing at this time. Though it was Karlstadt and not Luther who was labeling his former colleague's movement a "new papism," Luther's response to Karlstadt's writings shows that he viewed the latter's movement as a turning back to works-righteousness, whether that be in the form of requiring Christians to remove images or be damned as spiritual adulterers; or in the form of inventing a prohibition against elevating the consecrated bread and wine of the sacrament; or in the form of participating in the atoning work of the cross of Christ, and thereby receiving forgiveness, through the mental act of remembrance and arduous, passionate meditation rather than receiving the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper with faith in God's promises given there through the word.

THE PERSISTENCE OF LUTHER'S TEACHING AGAINST IDOLATRY

Luther grew so deeply troubled by and wrote so vigorously against the "violence of the spirits" in the mid-1520s that in many ways scholars have characterized him as a reactionary and have even endorsed the taunts of Karlstadt and Müntzer that the Wittenberg reformer betrayed the communal and populist impulses of the early evangelical movement to become a "lackey to princes." But although Luther could have blunted his public criticism of the widespread idolatry of his day in favor of "going slowly" and letting the authorities quietly carry out reforms more in keeping with his own convic-

60. *LW* 40:127–130, quote at 130; WA 18:112.34–35.
61. *LW* 40:139; WA 18:121.15–16.
62. For the former analysis, see Edwards, *Luther and the False Brethren*, 1–59 and 210n6; for the latter, see n. 47 above.
63. The editor of the treatise in *LW* notes that "almost without exception" Luther is referring to only one of the four treatises Karlstadt wrote on the sacraments in 1524, his *Dialogus oder ein Gesprächbüchlein von dem greulichen und abgöttischen Missbrauch des hochwürdigen Sakraments Jesu Christi*." *LW* 40:145n99.
64. "With all this mouthing of the words, 'Spirit, Spirit, Spirit,' he tears down the bridge, the path, the way, the ladder, and all the means by which the Spirit might come to you. *Instead of the outward order of God in the material sign of baptism and the oral proclamation of the Word of God he wants to teach you, not how the Spirit comes to you but how you come to the Spirit*." *LW* 40:147, emphasis added; WA 18:137.12–16.
65. *LW* 40:212–13; WA 18:202.32–203.2.

tions, the reformer continued frequently to teach and write publicly against idolatry while sharply distinguishing his understanding of it from the iconoclastic movements that focused their attack on images. Characteristic of his attitude is the *Personal Prayer Book* Luther published in 1523, in which he included (in some editions) an illustrated *Passional* depicting with images the sufferings of the Savior, and prefaced it with the comment,

> I don't care if the iconoclasts condemn and reject this. They do not need our advice and we don't want theirs, so it is easy for us to part company. I have always condemned and criticized the misuse of [religious] pictures and the false confidence placed in them and all the rest. But whatever is no misuse of pictures I have always permitted and urged the use of for beneficial and edifying results. This is the way we teach our common people; those clever fellows shall be neither our pupils nor our masters.[66]

Also in the Large Catechism, published in 1529, Luther explored richly the problem of idolatry in his exposition of the First Commandment, defining the command to have no other gods not in relation to physical objects—images and physical idols or statues are completely bypassed in Luther's exposition—but in terms of what is in the heart: "It is the trust and faith of the heart alone that make both God and an idol. . . . Anything on which your heart relies and depends, I say, that is really your God."[67] The most common idol in the world is mammon, "money and property . . . on which they set their whole heart," while under the papacy there are countless "abominations" where the trust of the heart is placed "elsewhere than in the true God, from whom they neither expect nor seek any good thing."[68] Pagans placed their trust "in power and dominion" and their various gods, fashioning idols in their imagination about God. For "idolatry does not consist merely of erecting an image and praying to it, but it is primarily a matter of the heart . . ."[69] In Luther's understanding, the greatest false worship and idolatry is a "conscience that seeks help, comfort, and salvation in its own works and presumes to wrest heaven from God." Upon this idolatry the religious orders are established and the piety of Christians is focused on keeping track of endowments, fasts, celebrations of the mass as a sacrifice, and meritorious works rather than receiving gifts from God.[70]

In the sacramentarian controversy and Luther's meeting with Ulrich Zwingli, John Oecolampadius, and Martin Bucer at the Marburg Colloquy in 1529, contrasting understandings of idolatry played a central role, with Luther clearly on the defensive as his persistence in confessing the presence of Christ's true body and blood in the bread and wine of the sacrament was attacked as a return to papist idolatry. The chasm that existed between Luther's conception and that of his opponents is exhibited most clearly not in a debate about the "mode" of Christ's presence but in whether the Supper is to be interpreted on the basis of the words of institution, which Luther chalked on the table in Marburg, or an interpretation of spirit and flesh in John 6, from which Zwingli and Oecolampadius never budged. This difference finally came to dramatic confrontation in Zwingli's outburst, "That passage will break your neck!" (for which he later apologized) and, more importantly, Oecolampadius's exhortation to Luther, "You should not cling to the humanity and the flesh of Christ, but rather lift up your mind to his divinity"—to which Luther replied, "I do not know of any God except him who was made flesh, nor do I want to have another."[71] Luther's later response to Bucer that he had a different spirit was not mere name-calling, nor the assertion that only he (Luther) could lead the evangelical movement, but was his recognition of the divergent paths of the Wittenberg Reformation and those who insisted on a purely symbolic and spiritual interpretation of the sacraments. Asked by Bucer to confirm the orthodoxy of other topics of his theology as he had confessed them at the Colloquy, Luther replied,

At the Marburg Colloquy in 1529, contrasting understandings of idolatry played a central role.

> I am neither your Lord, nor your judge, nor your teacher. Your spirit and our spirit cannot go together. Indeed, it is quite obvious that we do not have the same spirit. For there cannot be one and the same spirit where, on the one side, the words of Christ are accepted in sincere faith, and, on the other side, this faith is criticized, attacked, denied, and spoken of with frivolous blasphemies.[72]

Luther could not make common cause (which was the political goal of the Marburg Colloquy) with an agenda for reform that defined the sacraments in terms that separated Christ's divinity from his humanity and treated as idolatrous Luther's confession of the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Supper instituted by the Lord on the night he was betrayed.

As Hermann Sasse concluded, "Luther's attitude at Marburg was not determined by obstinacy and stubbornness, but by

66. *LW* 43:43; WA 10, II:459.3–10.
67. LC v, 2. All quotations of the Large Catechism are from Kolb-Wengert.
68. LC v, 6, 11–12.
69. LC v, 18–21.
70. LC v, 22–23.
71. Quoted in Hermann Sasse, *This Is My Body: Luther's Contention for the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969), 196–97, 202.
72. Quoted in Sasse, *This Is My Body*, 213.

respect for the words of Christ," and he has been followed in this conviction by the Lutheran church and its Confessions.[73] But this separation from what has become known as the Reformed tradition in no way tempered Luther's own persistent war against idolatry, nor that expressed in the Lutheran Confessions. Rather, in his later works Luther continued to expose "idolatry among Christians," as he entitled a section of his Preface to the Prophets, included in the editions of his German Bible. Here both papal and Protestant forms of idolatry are identified, for "among us Christians all those people are idolatrous . . . who have invented or are following new ways of worshiping God, without his commission or command, simply out of their own pious inclination and, as they say, good intentions."[74] Such characterizations focus on papal "human traditions" but extend also to iconoclastic zealotry and lawmaking, as well as interpretations of worship and sacraments that Luther was convinced were not established by God and interpreted in accordance with his institution.

For Luther idolatry is the self-enslaving false worship of a heart turned in on itself.

In his vituperative treatise *Against Hanswurst* (1541), Luther chants as it were the oft-repeated refrain, "Who has commanded you to do this? Or where is it written? Where do you find it in the ancient church, or instituted by the apostles? Who then is here the new apostate church?"[75] Luther's polemic against the papal church's claim to be the holy church of God turns on his definition of idolatry: "You are no longer of the church, or members of the church, for in this holy church of God you are building your own new apostate church, the devil's brothel with limitless whoredom, idolatry, innovation . . ." For "whatever is not with certainty God's word, cannot be the doctrine of the church, but must be the doctrine, falsehood, and idolatry of the devil."[76] And so when also in 1541 Luther appealed for prayer against the Turks, he rejoiced that God was calling Germany "from the abominable darkness and idolatry of the papacy into the light of his holy kingdom." Yet he also laments that the word of God is received so ungratefully, that such idolatry is oft defended "with violence and executions." And so "we"—in this call to repentance Luther uses the pronoun of the first person—invite God's judgment upon Germany through "not only the Turks but also the devils themselves," and the reformer expresses wonder that his land was not long ago "swept away with a deluge."[77] So central for Luther was the reality of papal idolatries and so real the threat—also for German Evangelicals—of God's judgment against an ungrateful and therefore idolatrous community even in a time of Reformation.

"'Idolatry' is a fighting word," writes Carlos Eire, and he notes that "in the sixteenth century, one man's devotion was another man's idolatry."[78] Despite his different understanding and the sharp division of evangelical movements that resulted from it, a war against idolatry was for Martin Luther, as for the developing Reformed tradition, the central concern of the evangelical movement, and indeed it came to define for Protestant reformers the perennial late-medieval quest for the true church.[79] But in Luther's understanding idolatry is not bound together with external images, nor with those material means that have been instituted by God for conveying divine grace and the promise of forgiveness. For Luther idolatry is the self-enslaving false worship of a heart turned in on itself, of religious piety shaped by self-will and thus works-righteousness in any number of ways, of substituting human reason for the revelation of God in the divine word. The very same understanding of the gospel that led Luther to protest papal idolatries and abuses of images led the reformer to regard Karlstadt, Zwingli, and other "despisers of the sacraments" as false brethren, substituting their own laws, meditations, and reasonable ordinances for the liberating gospel and sacraments instituted by Christ to convey his promise of "forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation" to sinners bound by a fallen human nature in sin and death. Thus Luther's goal of Christianizing Christendom by combating its idolatries and shaping its teaching and piety through the gospel required his opposition to and freedom from the opinions of other Protestants just as it required his lifelong battle against and freedom from the tyranny of the papal magisterium. LOGIA

73. Sasse, *This Is My Body*, 296.
74. *LW* 35:270; WA DB 11, I:11.9–13.
75. WA 51:489.4–6 and 22–24; this refrain is repeated in substance twelve times, WA 51:487–497; *LW* 41:199–205.
76. *LW* 41:209–10, 217; WA 51:505.30–34; 518.34–519.1.
77. *LW* 43:219; WA 51:585.14–17; 585.23–586.4.
78. Eire, *War against the Idols*, 5.
79. Remarkable for its breadth of investigation and insight into the late medieval context of the reformers is Scott Hendrix's article of over forty years ago, "In Quest of the *Vera Ecclesia*: The Crises of Late Medieval Ecclesiology," *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 7 (1976): 347–78.

With United Heart and Voice

The Confessional Inheritance of the Lutheran Chorale in America

Elisabeth Urtel

The most unsung symbol of Lutheran identity is that which is most frequently sung: the hymnal. Martin Luther and his colleagues understood its strength as an instrument of unity as they penned the first congregational songs, the *chorales*, nearly 500 years ago. Descendants of the Reformation tradition enriched it with their own offshoots of the same creed, accumulating a valuable trove of hymnody that grew to be known as the *Kernlieder* (the core songs of the church). Insofar as these texts center worship upon salvation won by Christ, the means of grace which distribute it, and its finale in eternal bliss, the chorales engrave the sign of confessionalism on the visible church.

Nevertheless, the hymnal's strength as a teaching and confessing tool may be turned against itself. It may be compromised intentionally, as in the case of Rationalism, Pietism, and Modernism replacing and rearranging the chorale to serve an agenda.

However, Lutherans may unintentionally compromise it when they overlook the centrality of the *Kernlieder*, viewing all Christian song as equally edifying.

Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther addressed the latter in 1883, when he responded to one pastor's predicament regarding the introduction of "Methodist Hymns in a Lutheran Sunday School." The original source or occasion for the letter is unknown, but his reply is unequivocal: "No, this is not advisable, rather very incorrect and pernicious."[1]

The six reasons he cites may be summarized as follows:

1. There is no need for them, just like "carrying coals to Newcastle."
2. They are not "pure food."
3. It demonstrates a unionistic spirit on the part of the pastor.
4. It imparts a unionistic spirit to the congregation.
5. It strengthens Methodists in their heresy.
6. It weakens Lutherans in their confession.

Considering the presence of Protestant hymnody in Lutheran churches today, Walther's response may appear quaint and archaic. Yet, the reasons he delivers bear utmost pertinence to confessionalism in the twenty-first century. Without realizing it, Lutherans owe their identity to his defense of the *Kernlieder*, and a fresh consideration of their uniquely confessional role will reveal the relevance of his letter today.

SAYING WHILE SINGING

Martin Luther was cognizant of congregational songs' potential to assemble, establish, and encourage the growing church as they returned to "restore the temple" of Christianity after the captivity of Rome. He understood that in accordance with the priesthood of all believers, each Christian possessed the mandate to "say and sing" these "glad tidings of great joy" (*ELH* 123:1, *CW* 38:1, *LSB* 358:1).[2]

Blending artful melody with the words of Scripture not only embellished it, but also formed a new element. Its chief objective was to teach and confess the church's beliefs, which in turn also glorified the Creator.

Confessions such as these impel a response and maturation in the faith. In the case of creedal hymnody, words penned by others come through the heart and into the mouths of other believers, teaching them while they proclaim God's word. After the young Christian learns through didactic hymnody ("Christ died for the sins of the whole world"), he or she internalizes the transformative truths ("Christ is also the substitute for *my* sin. This truth includes me—it exists to comfort me"). Applying the doctrine introduced in Reformation hymnody necessarily leads to the secondary stage, "Jesus hymns," which developed in harmony with the growth of devotional literature. "Jesus, Priceless Treasure" (*ELH* 263, *CW* 349, *LSB* 743), "Jesus I Will Never Leave" (*ELH* 362), and "Jesus, Jesus, Only Jesus" (*ELH* 379, CW *348*) represent this motif.

The natural ripening process of the Reformation's song included the exegetical application of its truths to the believer, which takes place *while he or she sings*. Philipp Nicolai, source of "Wake, Awake, For Night Is Flying" (*ELH* 544, *CW* 206, *LSB* 516) and "How Lovely Shines The Morning Star" (*ELH* 167, *CW* 79, *LSB* 395), is considered to be the pivotal poet of this movement based on his addition of the *unio mystica* theme.

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1. Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, "Methodist Hymns in a Lutheran Sunday School," trans. Matthew C. Harrison, in *At Home in The House of My Fathers* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2012): 331.
2. All hymn quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* (St. Louis: MorningStar Music Publishers, 1996). Equivalent verses in *Christian Worship* and *Lutheran Service Book* are designated when appropriate.

The shift is evident in the changing tone of hymnody from comprehensive, conspicuous language to immanent and metaphorical topics. Paul Gerhardt brought these themes of Christian life from the university halls of Early Orthodoxy to the ruins of the Thirty Years' War. From the time of Martin Luther to Paul Gerhardt, a corpus of texts and tunes called *Kernlieder* took form, which served a specific function within the church year.

The "Enlightenment" ironically stripped hymnody of its vivid color.

Plans to supplant the *Kernlieder* have characteristically not ended victoriously for the Lutheran faith, due to their "universal acceptance" as confessions. Grounded in the liturgical seasons, they refocus the eyes of the church on Christ through the lens of his word. In understanding the great value of their subject, poets and composers have sought to encase these truths in the most majestic of settings, both text and melody. These elements, as Carl Schalk confirms, blend to form a powerful third element: the chorale.[3] Embracing this dynamic pairing strengthens the hymnal as a marker of theological value.

SINGING, PROCLAIM THE WONDERS

Lutheranism is the confessing church, but it is also the singing church. Throughout history it has deserted its identity when these two qualities seem to be at odds. Lutherans settling the East Coast contended between noble confession in German or Scandinavian languages and noble hymnody in English. Precedence on congregational song disrupted the delicate balance. English-language hymnal production for the sake of more enjoyable singing led to the desertion of the orthodox faith as manifested in the *Kernlieder*.

John Christopher Kunze, president of the New York Ministerium, advocated the Anglicization of the chorale with his *Hymn and Prayer-Book* (1795). Though the German tradition held prominence, its English renderings were less graceful. Further efforts, such as those of his New York colleagues George Strebeck (1797) and Ralph Williston (1806), sought to correct this problem, not by improving translation, but by strengthening the presence of original English (and non-Lutheran) hymns.

Frederick Henry Quitman edited the infamous 1814 collection of the Ministerium of which he was president. The Lutheran chorale was nearly abandoned in favor of English hymnody, which in turn was further adapted to comply with Rationalism. The Trinity, Christ's Godhood, sin, and the means of grace were diluted into an arrangement of poems affirming the nature of man.[4]

By 1838, when the Saxon Lutherans departed for America, Pietistic themes of sanctification and morality accelerated into Rationalism. The "Enlightenment" ironically stripped hymnody of its vivid color and the voice of the confessing church. Schalk writes:

> Pietism produced hymns which tended to stress the subjective facets of human religious experience and urged a moralism apart from the means of grace. The Reformation accent on objective justification, so strong an emphasis in Lutheran hymns of the sixteenth century, was slowly replaced by a subjective emphasis on moral perfection. Rationalism, prepared in large measure by the excesses of Pietism itself and by a newly-emerging worldview, resulted in a hymnody which . . . sought to eradicate those doctrinal stresses no longer thought consonant.[5]

Those of a similar confession now reaped the fruits of their homeland's compromise, and the results were chaotic. The German immigrants sought fellowship as new American Lutherans, but the regional variances in hymnals impeded them. The chorale's strength as a confessional symbol is apparent here.

The production of a hymnal is crucial in that its contents answer the question "Who is the church?" in the way the Lutheran Confessions do. "The church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught [NB: this includes hymnody] and the Sacraments are rightly administered" (AC VII).[6] These limits to the definition of the church serve not as a restriction but a protection. Where the doctrine of hymnody deviates from the gospel, it also disrupts the sacraments. As C. F. W. Walther says,

> The true Lutheran spirit is found in none of them; second, our hymns are more powerful, more substantive, and more prosaic; third, those hymns which deal with the Holy Sacraments are completely in error; fourth, when these little sectarian hymnbooks come into the hands of our children, they openly read and sing false hymns.[7]

As the fledgling Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) sought to restore confessionalism, its leaders laid down strict boundaries for the use of "doctrinally pure" materials, with an intention to replace the weak and heterodox.[8] The introduction

3. Carl F. Schalk, "Luther on Music After 500 Years: Paradigms of Praise Revisited," Lecture at Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota, 3 December 2016.
4. Carl F. Schalk, "Sketches of Lutheran Worship," in *A Handbook of Church Music* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), 85.
5. Carl F. Schalk, *The Roots of Hymnody in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 10.
6. Robin A. Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical Music* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 281.
7. Walther, "Methodist Hymns," 332.
8. Schalk, *Roots of Hymnody*, 19.

of the *Kirchengesangbuch für Evangelisch-Lutherische Gemeinden ungeänderter Augsburgischer Confession* (hereafter *KELG*) reset the stage around the *Kernlieder*, and thus returned the crucifix, font, and chalice to hymnody.

A review of *KELG*, likely by Walther, echoes many of the sentiments expressed in "Methodist Hymns":

> In the selection of the adopted hymns the chief consideration was that they be pure in doctrine; that they have found almost universal acceptance within the orthodox German Lutheran Church and have thus received the almost unanimous testimony that they had come forth from the true spirit (of Lutheranism); that they express not so much the changing circumstances of individual persons but rather contain the language of the whole church, because the book is to be used primarily in public worship; and finally that they, though bearing the imprint of Christian simplicity, be not merely rhymed prose but the creations of a truly Christian poetry.[9]
>
> [The editors] can give the assurance that they approached the task with fear and trembling and from the Christian church's voluminous treasury of German hymnody, according to the grace which God has given them, selected only those hymns which they recognized as particularly worthy of transmission from children to children's children and of preservation as a treasure, as an inalienable possession of the German-speaking church. May our Lord Jesus Christ, who ascended on high and gave gifts to men, grant a superabundant blessing also on this little hymnal.
>
> With this hymnal for the church the needs of the home were indeed not overlooked, even though, as said, the primary purpose was to serve the church. So we have thought that we might in time also follow this up with a special hymnal for the home, as part two, if the demand for it becomes clear in the congregations.[10]

A TRUE LUTHERAN SPIRIT

One likely catalyst for the pastor's letter would have been the American Methodists' *Sunday School Songs: A Treasury of Devotional Hymns and Tunes for the Sunday School* (1880). Several selections give away a "contrary spirit" even from their titles: "I'm Told That Jesus Loves Me—Is It True?" "If We Had Our Dear Lord Here," "I Long To See This Blessed Earth," "Is There Refuge, Lord, In Thee?" among others. The enveloping theme of these compilations resounds of law motivation. If the young child imitates Jesus' example, then he or she will *become* a true Christian.

In lieu of hymns to instruct children in their baptismal identity as saints and priests, there is an irresolute approach to the means of grace. Through them, the youngest members of the kingdom cannot confidently seize the word's promises and they are left to reach with moral character and behavior—eclipsing the reality of original sin.

Simultaneously, during the 1880s, English translations from the pen of August Crull and others had appeared in supplementary collections, prompting Walther to add, "Our Church itself has everything it needs."[11]

Confession and song were now reunited in the American church, and anything less "would make the rich Lutheran Church into a beggar."[12] At this point, Walther released an ultimatum announcing the church's reliance on the chorale tradition, taking preventative measures against the unionism from which his own reformation had emerged.

As attractive as Reformed hymnody might be to Lutherans, it cannot be relied upon to satisfy all instructional needs. It may offer stylized psalmody and eloquent Latin paraphrases, enriching the Lutheran chorale tradition without implying that it is incomplete. However, emphasizing Protestant and Anglican hymnody in American-Lutheran collections opens the possibility for the service to exist without the chorale. This invites dangerous doctrinal deficiencies to surface, namely Christ's omnipresence only according to his divine nature

- Absence of sacramental hymnody, or sacraments as symbols only
- Denial of the efficacy of the word
- Direct operation of the Holy Spirit
- Prayer as a sacrificial means of grace
- No distinction between venial and mortal sins
- Sin as the sensation of social injustice
- The Christian cross as demonstrative of God's wrath, not his love
- *Causa finalis* of salvation as renovation

In contradistinction, we shall review specific instances of how the Lutheran chorale

- Accurately portrays the *genus maiestaticum*
- Honors and rightly frames the sacraments
- Recognizes the efficacy of the word, spoken and sung
- Affirms the operation of the Holy Spirit through the means of grace
- Views prayer as an exercise of faith
- Distinguishes between venial and mortal sins
- Considers the cross an expression of God's love
- Plants its feet on the ground while looking above toward heaven

CHRISTOLOGY

Lutheran theology alone presents the *genus maiestaticum* in full accuracy. Chorales highlight the words of Christ, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt 28:20). The

9. Carl F. Schalk, *Source Documents in American Lutheran Hymnody* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1996), 71.
10. Ibid., 72.
11. Ibid., 331.
12. Ibid.

festival of Ascension is a joyous celebration for Lutherans, for it reminds them of the Lord's exaltation to full use of his divine attributes on their behalf. As he has promised, he remains with them in word and sacrament, the *unio mystica,* and his communicated omnipresence.

Christ will be with me all the way,
Today, tomorrow, every day,
Till trav'ling days be ended. (*ELH* 167:6, *CW* 79:5, *LSB* 395:5)

Protestant denominations affirm that while Christ is omnipresent according to his divine nature, he did not communicate that attribute to his human nature. This leaves a place in the world over which Jesus' atoning, merciful nature does not extend, subject to the ruthless divinity of a Judge.

Reformed Christians view Jesus' visible removal as a melancholy parting; it signifies his complete absence until the parousia, when he reclaims his majesty and governs the earth as King. One can merely hope to experience the glory of heaven transcendentally through fervent prayer and devotion. A Charles Wesley original text begins:

Hail, the Day that sees Him rise,
Ravish'd from our wishful Eyes
Christ, a while to Mortals giv'n,
Re-ascends His native Heav'n.
(*A Choice Collection of Spiritual Songs* [1774], 65:1)

Its third stanza, omitted in the *ELH* alteration, reads:

Master (may we ever say)
Taken from our Head to Day;
See thy faithful Servants see
Ever gazing up to thee!
Grant, tho' parted from our Sight:
High above yon azure Height,
Grant our Hearts may thither rise,
Following thee beyond the Skies.
(*A Choice Collection of Spiritual Songs* [1774], 65:3)

The chorale carefully portrays the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, deflecting any hint of kenoticism. The Lord retains his divinity from the Bethlehem birth to the Calvary crucifixion, and the poetic narratives of these events render it clearly.

Brightly doth Thy manger shine,
Glorious is its light divine. (*ELH* 90:6, *LSB* 332:7)

The only Son from heaven
Foretold by ancient seers,
By God, the Father given,
In human shape appears;
No sphere His light confining,
No star so brightly shining
As He, our Morning Star. (*ELH* 224:1, *CW* 86:1, *LSB* 402:1)

Wesley's "Lo, He Comes With Clouds Descending" (*ELH* 98, *CW* 29, *LSB* 336) in its original form may be misread to contain several christological errors, and the Lutheran layperson may be unaware of the necessary adjustments required: "Once for favored sinners slain" (limited atonement); "Christ appears on earth to reign" (millennialism); "Thou shalt reign and Thou alone" (modalism); and "Savior, take the power and glory" (kenoticism).

The root of the issues with Protestant hymnody is the doctrine of *finitum non capax infiniti.* It is simply beyond reason that Jesus' exalted human nature commands divine honor, omniscience, omnipotence, and especially omnipresence. Therefore, rational or sensational motifs arise in the clothing of subjectivity, contending against the "correct Lutheran spirit" of *sola Scriptura*.

MEANS OF GRACE

In relation to Lutheran doctrine concerning Christ's modes of presence, the real presence of Holy Communion only manifests itself in Lutheran hymnody. Reformed theology believes in a spiritual eating of the Lord's body, which is physically located only in heaven. On the other hand, the great Eucharistic hymn says,

Human reason, though it ponder,
Cannot fathom this great wonder
That Christ's body e'er remaineth
Though it countless souls sustaineth.
(*ELH* 328:6, *CW* 311:5, *LSB* 636:4)

Yet, within the same text, his communicated local presence is acknowledged:

Lord, by love and mercy driven
Thou hast left Thy throne in heaven.
(*ELH* 328:8, *CW* 311:6, *LSB* 636:7)

"Lord Jesus Christ, You Have Bestowed" assertively confesses the facets of his omnipresence, particularly the sacramental mode.

Still You are here, as says Your Word,
With us, Your congregation,
With now Your flesh and bones, O Lord,
Not bound to one location.
(*ELH* 320:3, *CW* 312:3, *LSB* 622:3)

And though my mind here does not see
How in so many places
Your body at one time can be,
Yet faith Your Word embraces.
I leave to You how this can be,
Your Word, O Lord, suffices me;
Faith stands upon it solely.
(*ELH* 320:5, *CW* 312:5, *LSB* 622:5)

Poetry speaking of baptism as a "washing of regeneration" may only be found in Lutheran hymnody.

Not doubting this, I trust in Thee,
Thy Word cannot be broken,
Thou all dost call, "Come unto Me!"
No falsehood hast Thou spoken.
"He who believes and is baptized,
He shall be saved," say'st Thou, O Christ,
And he shall never perish.
(*ELH* 227:7, *LSB* 555:7)

In addition to sacramental power, the Lutheran tradition affirms the potency of *sola Scriptura* to enlighten, correct, exhort, comfort, and instruct unto salvation.

Jesus, Thy Spirit and Thy Word,
Thy body and Thy blood, afford
My soul its dearest treasure.
(*ELH* 167:4, *LSB* 395:3)

Divine revelation itself imparts salvation and the blessings therein.

Thy Word doth deeply move the heart
Thy Word doth perfect health impart
Thy Word my soul with joy doth bless,
Thy Word brings peace and happiness.
(*ELH* 24:2, *CW* 282:2, *LSB* 908:2)

The chorale does not request an emotive warmth or new revelation, but prays in accordance with God's will for trust in his word.

Thou art my Lord;
Thy precious Word
Shall be my guide
Whate'er betide.
O teach me, Lord, to trust Thee!
(*ELH* 207:4, *CW* 395:4, *LSB* 557:4)

The perfection and perspicuity of Scripture to reveal truth—both to defend and fortify—is not only mentioned, but demonstrated.

Since Thy Word cannot deceive me,
My salvation is to me
Well assured eternally.
(*ELH* 460:4, *LSB* 559:4)

Additionally, the very existence of confession and absolution hymnody recognizes that the penitent sinner and singer abides in God's grace. The sinful nature does not eliminate the Christian spirit; rather, they coexist.

Though alive, I'm dead in sin,
Lost to all good things by nature.
Holy Ghost, change me within,
Make of me a newborn creature.
For the flesh works condemnation
And can never gain salvation. (*ELH* 220:2, *CW* 461:2)

Only the genuine believer firmly clinging to Christ for his or her forgiveness of sins can implore:

Lord, I believe; dear Lord, I trust;
Help for faith's weakness give me!
(*ELH* 320:6, *CW* 312:6, *LSB* 622:6)

Despite awareness of the sinful nature each Christian can confess:

By grace! On this I'll rest when dying;
In Jesus' promise I rejoice;
For though I know my heart's condition,
I also know my Savior's voice.
(*ELH* 226:9, *CW* 384:5, *LSB* 566:6)

The undercurrent of Walther's letter is the effect of sacramental hymns on faith formation: "Those (Methodist) hymns which deal with the Holy Sacraments are completely in error."[13] Children begin learning about their past baptism and future Lord's Supper from an early age, even before they (supposedly) understand. Chorales for all occasions direct attention to the means of grace as sources of cleansing and nourishment.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Chorales concerning the work of the Holy Spirit never predicate his operation apart from the abovementioned means of grace. The Spirit's presence coincides with a Lutheran mindset of teaching and proclaiming the efficacious word, through which the divine Comforter regenerates, enlightens, and preserves.

Shine in our hearts, O most precious Light,
That we Jesus Christ may know aright,
Clinging to our Savior, whose blood hath bought us,
Who again to our homeland hath brought us.
Lord, have mercy! (*ELH* 33:2, *CW* 190:2, *LSB* 768:4)

He properly illuminates the heart by the beacon of the gospel for the singular aim of increased faith and knowledge of the triune God.

Thou holy Light, Guide Divine,
Oh, cause the Word of Life to shine.
Teach us to know our God aright
And call Him Father with delight.
(*ELH* 2:2, *CW* 176:2, *LSB* 497:2)

13. Walther, "Methodist Hymns," 332.

Give to Thy Word impressive pow'r
That in our hearts from this good hour
As fire it may be glowing,
That we confess the Father, Son
And Thee the Spirit, Three in One
Thy glory ever showing.
(*ELH* 27:2, *CW* 184:2, *LSB* 913:2)

And for this our soul's salvation,
Voucheth Thy good Spirit, Lord,
In Thy Sacraments and Word.
He imparteth consolation,
Granteth us the gift of faith
That we fear nor hell nor death.
(*ELH* 460:3, *LSB* 559:3)

In contrast, songs outside the Lutheran tradition are designed to incite and sustain the Holy Spirit's presence by a degree of emotional intensity. They invoke the Spirit to come down aside from his chosen means, to perform that which is not his office.

THEOLOGIA CRUCIS

Chorales, especially those encircling the church year, bear the undertone of the *theologia crucis*. In all seasons of life, they uphold the hidden and humble objects as glorious instruments of grace, beginning with Christ's humiliation.

A Helper just He comes to thee,
His chariot is humility,
His kingly crown is holiness,
His scepter, pity in distress.
(*ELH* 91:2, *CW* 3:2, *LSB* 340:2).

His advent is motivated by
A love that could embrace
A world where sorrow dwelleth,
Which sin and suffering fill,
More than the tongue e'er telleth;
Yet Thou couldst love it still!
(*ELH* 94:5, *CW* 19:2, *LSB* 334:4)

The Lord bids the Christian to "take up the cross," and they are also exhorted, "As you partake in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice, in order that when his glory is revealed you also may rejoice with exceeding joy" (1 Pet 4:13).

Lutheran hymnody is not confined to an illusion or utopia. It refuses to paint over the trials within or without with an idealistic scene of prosperity. Instead, the chorale portrays the raw and realistic consequences of sin—fear, doubt, distress, loneliness, illness, death—to assure the believer of his or her personal faith and citizenship in heaven. Chorales deliver comfort under the cross in light of Christ's vicarious work in which he suffered all things for the sins of the world. They additionally remind the individual of the *unio mystica* brought about by the Spirit through regeneration.

Thou Christian heart, Whoe'er thou art,
Be of good cheer, and let no sorrow move thee.
For God's own Child, In mercy mild
Joins thee to Him—how greatly God must love thee!
(*ELH* 161:4, *CW* 40:3, *LSB* 372:4)

When the cross manifests the presence of faith rather than the absence of prosperity, all troubles may be seen as correction and guidance on the path to heavenly glory.

Cross and comfort in Reformed hymnody is a nonexistent genre, save for the instances they depart from a theology of glory and resemble Lutheran chorales. Those outside Lutheranism uphold eternal election to grace, evidenced by the Holy Spirit's internal illumination. Temporal trial and temptation contradict God's benevolence, as well as preservation in sanctified life.

However, Reformed Christians do not practice this. They seek consolation in God's word, which they affirm is inefficacious to provide peace, and side with Lutheranism. Their theology of glory operates in theory, but not in practice. Denominations of a charismatic flavor may also locate the cheering quality of hymnody not in text, but in music. The emotional experience generated by singing and listening to hymns, even those of a law-oriented tone (for example, "I Surrender All") comforts by removing the cross, or at least desensitizing one to it.

ESCHATOLOGY

A defining trait of the Lutheran chorale is the glimpse of heaven furnished in each one. It predominantly appears in the last stanza, and the examples of this are endless. All chorales fundamentally preach salvation, and the *causa finalis*—eternal life—is manifest.

The *sanctorum communio* on earth unites with those in heaven in singing the church's song, from different sides of its *causa finalis*. This is declared plainly in the progression from the Proper Preface and Sanctus.

To thee the palm triumphal
By God's own hand is giv'n,
Thine, to His name who saved thee,
To sing the songs of heav'n.
(*ELH* 208:11)

And endless praise to Thee be giv'n
By all Thy Church in earth and heav'n.
(*ELH* 198:6, *CW* 569:5, *LSB* 839:5)

And then at my departure
Take Thou me home to Thee,
And let me there inherit
All Thou hast promised me.
(*ELH* 494:3, *CW* 403:3, *LSB* 587:3)

The third stanza of "Wake, Awake, For Night Is Flying" is the paradigmatic example.

All the Church in Christ rejoices
With human and angelic voices,
With harp and cymbal's merry tone.
(*ELH* 544:3, *CW* 206:3, *LSB* 516:3)

These references are often concise but compelling, which reveals the backdrop of the authors' two-kingdom mindset.

Father, hymns to Thee we raise
Here and once in heaven. (*ELH* 454:5, *CW* 423:4)

To have Him always near me
Is heav'n itself begun. (*ELH* 517:15, *CW* 419:7, *LSB* 724:10)

In whose rich grace
We'll run our race
Till we depart victorious. (*ELH* 524:7, *CW* 448:5, *LSB* 734:5)

To increase the Christian's anticipation for heaven, chorales often encapsulate a scenic description of its glory. "The Bridegroom Soon Will Call Us" (*ELH* 100, *CW* 10, *LSB* 514) directly applies the parable of Matthew 25 to the church militant. The closing stanzas of "All Men Living Are But Mortal" (*ELH* 472) illustrate the splendor of eternal bliss from the words of Revelation.

ALL THE CHURCH IN CHRIST REJOICES

The chorale's status as a hallmark of Lutheran identity is not only apparent from its doctrine but also its praxis within the divine service and, on a grander scale, the church. The proclamation not only held but also embodied by the chorale entails the calling of the priesthood of all believers. It does not guess or speculate upon this office, but rather asserts it.

Leaver notes that though the chorale has retained its cultural significance as an identification mark, it operates in a postmodern, subjective sense.

> We sing them as shibboleths, identifiers—usually enshrined in a specific musical style—that marks out what kind of contemporary Christians we are. We sing them because we have always sung them, and we like the emotions they evoke, though we do not necessarily understand what it is we are singing. Or we sing them because they are new and up-to-date, and we would not want to be heard singing stuffy hymns, especially those old German ones. But such modern criteria for the singing of hymns appear very superficial when compared with how hymn-singing-as-we-know-it began in the sixteenth century.[14]

People can sing the chorale if it pleases their cultural criterion, but not because they are obligated to on a wider scale. The point of reference for its necessity has been narrowed to the whims of the individual.

Yet, the Lutheran church should not simply revere the chorale as a relic of nostalgia or nationalism. Schalk writes, "To use church music or hymnody simply as a trip down some nostalgic trail is demeaning not only to music and the liturgy but also to the congregation and its role as royal priests singing the church's song."[15]

Likewise it must use discretion not to avoid the chorale tradition for the sake of diversity and the *vox populi*. Variety rather than Lutheran dogma has become the norm in worship life. The congregation that integrates the most colorful assortment of musical styles from a plethora of ethnicities, welcoming every age level, gender, and race, will win. Additionally, the majority opinion determines value, despite level of qualification. From its inception, the chorale tradition has embraced all vocations according to their inheritance of the gospel. Its heritage of proclamation desires to nest in every corner of the true church on earth.

AS LUTHER TAUGHT THE WORD OF TRUTH

In place of repolishing and admiring the chorale, Lutheran musicians trained and untrained alike best commemorate it by simply using it. Singing these *Kernlieder* shows a unique approach to the church service that is sacramental and proclamatory; service music that sacrifices and glorifies shifts the basis for gathering to worship. Additionally, the tradition not only illuminates the inside, but provides confessional identification to those outside.

Schalk contends,

> If music is indeed God's good creation and gift to people, then to proclaim the Gospel in music that reflects cheapness, superficiality, banality, shoddiness, and—perhaps worst of all—pretentiousness is to contradict in our art the truth, honesty, and integrity of the Gospel itself.
>
> Much of the music heard in churches today can be characterized by the banal melody, the trite rhythm, the treacly harmony, and a striving for the easy effect. Such basic dishonesty, lack of integrity, and contempt for craftsmanship in dealing with the materials of music, often overlaid with a patina of superficial attractiveness, does a disservice to the Gospel in which service such music pretends to be.[16]

Leaver says,

> It is because the classic Lutheran hymns were Scripture-based that they functioned not only as worship songs, expressing the response of faith to be sung within a liturgical context, but also as theological songs, declaring the substance of the faith to be sung with catechetical intentions. In this early part of the twenty-first century, we hear much about hymns of "Christian experience," but almost

14. Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical Music*, 168.

15. Carl F. Schalk, *Luther on Music: Paradigms of Praise* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1988), 54.

16. Ibid., 52.

> nothing about the essential catechesis of hymnody. Yet the catechetical function of hymns has been fundamental to Lutheran theology and practice.[17]

Trivializing the importance of the chorale, along with its singular function as a teaching tool, reverts the congregation to spectatorship. When members accustomed to this spirit plead for relaxed participation in the divine service, deficiency of effort is not the culprit. Rather, attention has been redirected to another distraction. Simply stated, they are rendering higher honor to creation, not the Creator. Schalk adds, "For the church to be concerned about the craftsmanship of the music it uses in its praise and prayer is a direct reflection of its care in the use of this great and good gift of God."[18]

IN GOD'S HIGH PRAISES BLENDED

The chorale also inspires musical craftsmanship. If congregational music does not proclaim, less care is required in its execution. Congregants are not exercising their active, priestly call but a passive, attendant role, being the object of the message rather than the messenger. Pastors understand the preparation required for a weekly sermon: exegetical study, practical application, rhetorical skill, and—above all—a spirit of sacerdotal service. Releasing Christians from this exhortation located in the text of the hymn redirects the command to "rightly divide the Word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15).

Carl Schalk writes,

> [The doctrine of the royal priesthood of believers] lent dignity to the office of each Christian, especially to one's participation in worship. But this democratic spirit did not induce Luther to adopt lower standards of music or liturgical order to abandon either beauty or order. For Luther, the people's *priesthood,* not their educational, spiritual, or cultural poverty, was the determining factor.[19]

The chorale is for all Lutherans, regardless of musical aptitude. Yet its instructional nature should inspire its heirs to grow in musical art, as a steward of God's good creation.

CONCLUSION

How might Walther respond to the questions of Lutheran pastors today, as they assemble similar puzzle pieces of heritage and innovation? How might he critique *Lutheran Service Book*, the culmination of 150 years of *KELG*'s influence upon the LCMS, or any of the recent hymnals produced by the *heirs* of the fractured Synodical Conference? Would he grimace at the inclusion of many Methodist texts by the Wesley brothers and colleagues, as well as their tunes? Would the pastor possess the humility to ask for advice? Would he have the discernment to recognize the peril in the first place? Is the distinction between Lutheran chorales "to teach the people" and Methodist hymns a conditioned illusion?

In the face of a practice that reinterprets it, Walther's admonition was in earnest for the confessional revivals' descendants. He experienced the moralistic drift in both Europe and America and strove to anchor the LCMS and its future companions in the Synodical Conference in their heritage by way of *KELG* and its *Kernlieder.* Few Lutherans today might be aware that they have retained their identity due to this collection of hymns. Defending the Lutheran chorale tradition, especially in the nurturing of the church's lambs, safeguards this precious faith.

Above all, the aspiration of Walther's advice is not to avoid innovation (though all "new" musical elements are reexplored and reinvented from the past). The Lutheran chorale is inventive and welcomes in new ideas that enhance its growth without redirecting it. Its organic nature does not restrict it to one chronological or cultural point. In the case of *adiaphora*, they may be permissible and even helpful outside of another ideology. For example, hymnic traditions outside of Lutheranism nurture varying poetic and musical styles that may supplement parish singing. Insightful Psalm paraphrases and resplendent tunes may be drawn on for variety, as long as they are complementary to the archetype of the *Kernlied*.

Thus, in Christian freedom, the Lutheran poet and composer is master of all things in service to the chorale tradition. With their discretion, all elements must be undividedly won over to its confessional camp. Prospective consorts of the chorale must be willing to bear its sign, and not cast it off in favor of another. It is the responsibility of the modern Lutheran hymnist to keep watch over its treasured musical symbols of faith, as well as reaffirm it with vibrant texts and tunes of its own—showing the enduring declaration of the gospel message.

With this in mind, the confessing *and* singing church of 2018 may pray, along with Friedrich Layriz:

> May the Lord again grant us true familiarity with the hymns and the songs of the holy church and grant us always to acknowledge what a great treasure the heritage of our fathers' hymns and melodies has been for us. May those who speak German, even in our new homeland, now let that boast be taken from us, especially that they understand: "God is in heaven to be sung hymns." But may someone else now, who better understands this matter, express this in better words and more basically than has been done here. For truly, the way that our fathers sang hymns is worth researching, and telling and commending today.[20] LOGIA

17. Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical Music*, 108.
18. Schalk, *Luther on Music,* 51.
19. Ibid., 44.
20. F[riedrich] L[ayriz], "A Word On Music," trans. Joel R. Baseley, *Der Lutheraner* 3: 140.

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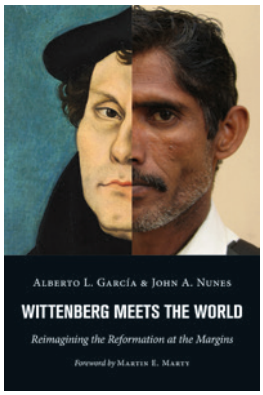

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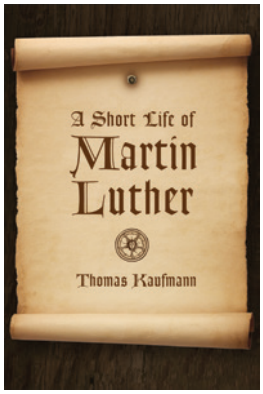

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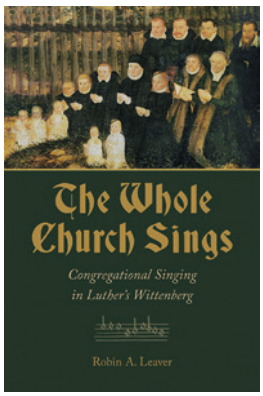

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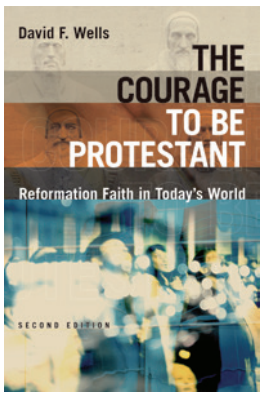

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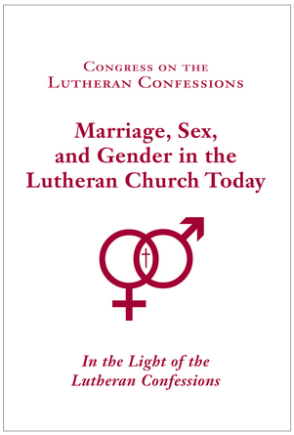

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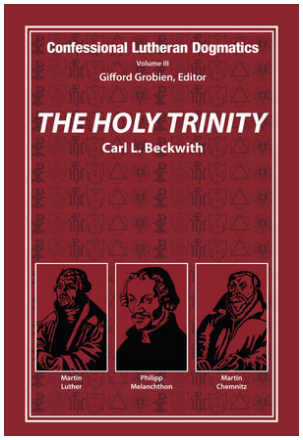

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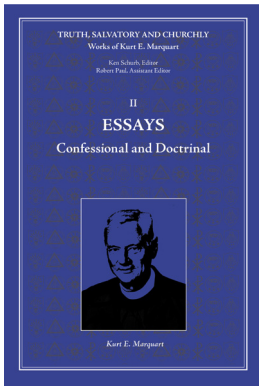

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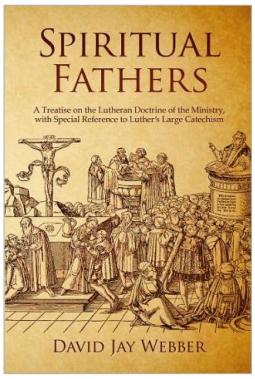
"It is not many books that make men learned . . . but it is a good book frequently read."
Martin Luther



Spiritual Fathers: A Treatise on the Lutheran Doctrine of the Ministry, with Special Reference to Luther's Large Catechism. By David Jay Webber. Phoenix, AZ: Klotsche-Little Publishing, 2015.

David Webber has issued a second edition of his work concerning the Lutheran doctrine of the ministry. I have not read the first edition, so this review will not be a comparison of the two editions, but an analysis of his overall work on this topic. It is almost with the skill of a surgeon the author takes out his theological scalpel and separates the sinews while maintaining the marrow between church and ministry. He takes great pains with this attempt to clarify a most precious and important doctrine. His work is well-balanced between theologians from the Reformation Fathers, the Golden Age of Lutheranism, the mid-nineteenth-century Saxon emigrants, and a few more modern-era writers and teachers of the Lutheran Confessions.

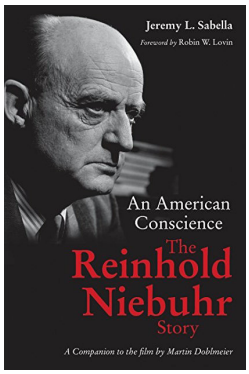
The body of work is not founded on the theological perspective of the writer so much as it is a compilation of the quotations of respected voices throughout the ages on church and ministry. From time to time there are glimpses of the writer's position, and in a few places they actually seem to contradict based on the quotations he uses to define the particular point. His best chapter comes at the end when he writes an excurses on "The keys are given to the church." There he shows his pastoral skill when laying out the called and ordained responsibility of the pastor of the flock. He does this with great clarity when it comes to confession and absolution. I very much appreciated his use of resources pertaining to the "public ministry" and why the pastor is given to the church. While holding the office in high esteem, he never replaces the word with the office but shows that the office has its authority only from and through the word. Webber also is quite accurate when he defines the role of the laity and how it is that they exercise the keys of the church in their given vocations. There can be no question as to the power of that which closes and opens the gates of heaven, the word alone.

Without trying to speak favorably to the view of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, or Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Webber quotes theologians from each church body. He is willing to point out the accuracies and inaccuracies of each. He does this by comparison to the Lutheran Confessions, which all the clergy have taken a vow to uphold.

His chapter on male clergy only is helpful but far from comprehensive. The same can be said as he addresses the doctrine of ordination. What cannot be denied is that he spends a great deal of time with the Augsburg Confession and the Tractate. Articles from AC IV, V, VII, and XIV are exhaustively researched and explained. Portions of the Tractate are discussed but only as support for the Augsburg. Luther's Large Catechism is also a frequent resource in his book.

I would recommend this book for the library of any pastor who wishes to study this very important doctrine. While the opinions expressed are minimal, the research and resources listed in the footnotes are invaluable for further study and discussion. It is a work that is sequential in its theological progression as well as detailed in ministerial application. I enjoyed the read and commend it to any Lutheran pastor as well as well-informed Lutheran laity.

Brian S. Saunders
Cedar Rapids, Iowa



An American Conscience: The Reinhold Niebuhr Story. By Jeremy L. Sabella. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017.

Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971) was the theologian of the golden age of American liberal Protestantism. This book is a remembrance of his life and work offered as a companion piece to the film by Martin Doblmeier, "An American Conscience."

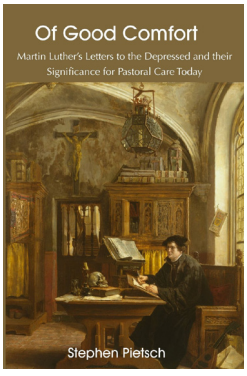
The son of a German-American pastor and brother to the theologian H. Richard Niebuhr, Reinhold Niebuhr was a product of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, growing up in Missouri and Illinois. After graduation from Eden Seminary in St. Louis, he went on to serve a congregation of that denomination in Detroit. It was in the context of parish ministry set in the heart of a thriving yet dehumanizing growth of indus-

try that characterized Detroit in the 1920s that Niebuhr found his theological voice. Indebted to the so-called Social Gospel Movement and yet profoundly critical of its foundations, Niebuhr came to champion a "Christian realism" that sought to go beyond what he saw as the naïveté of the movement. From his Detroit pulpit he spoke out against racism and the Klan as well as Henry Ford's labor practices.

Like his European colleague Karl Barth, Niebuhr's theology was formed in the crucible of parish ministry, where he served for nearly thirteen years. Like Barth, Niebuhr never earned a doctorate but was called to the faculty at Union Theological Seminary in 1928, where the seminary president expressed the confidence that Niebuhr could bridge the gap between academic study and real-world concerns. A year after his arrival at Union, Niebuhr was offered an endowed chair in ethics, and would quickly emerge as the leading light of the institution. His literary corpus would ultimately include 24 books and over 2500 articles in both scholarly journals and popular magazines. His first major work, published in 1932, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, represents his own constructive proposal of an alternative to the Social Gospel Movement. This book would inform the tenets of civil disobedience in the era of civil rights. But Niebuhr's best known work remains the so-called Serenity Prayer made popular through Alcoholics Anonymous and greeting cards. With his 1943 work *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Niebuhr was established as America's premier theologian. In 1948 he was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine. His reputation was iconic, as he was acclaimed only second to Jonathan Edwards in the ranking of American theologians.

Sabella documents Niebuhr's influence on such notables as former president Jimmy Carter, South African novelist Alan Paton, social activist Saul Alinsky, Martin Luther King Jr., Andrew Young, and others, giving readers a glimpse into Niebuhr's place in American church history and public life. Niebuhr and the institutions that surrounded him would thrive in the postwar years of the 1950s. The mainline liberal Protestant world would go into decline only to become, in the words of Richard John Neuhaus, the sideline denominations. Whatever influence he had, Niebuhr was unable to rescue them from this fate.

John T. Pless
Fort Wayne, Indiana



Of Good Comfort: Luther's Letters to the Depressed and Their Significance for Pastoral Care Today. By Stephen Pietsch. Adelaide: ATF Press, 2016.

In Luther's explanation of the Sixth Petition of the Lord's Prayer he says that "we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice." Here Luther links despair to temptation and calls it great sin. It is the sin of not being able to enjoy the gift of God that is life itself. It was a sin Luther knew all too well. Luther himself had suffered many bouts of *Anfechtung* (despair and temptation) as he contemplated the ramifications of a false belief, namely an Augustinian form of predestination that could not allow for any certainty of salvation. As Stephen Pietsch shows in his wonderful book *Of Good Comfort*, this understanding of God and the nature of salvation permeated all of society and created a sort of monastic culture so that even those who had not taken monastic vows were still in effect monastics. This meant that large swaths of society suffered from melancholy and its accompanying *Anfechtung*. For these reasons Luther had many opportunities to offer pastoral counseling for those suffering from melancholy, and on a few occasions he recorded his pastoral counsel in letters that have been preserved for posterity. On a few other occasions his counsel was also recorded in Table Talks, as well as explicitly consolatory works and sermons such as *Fourteen Consolations*, *A Sermon on Preparing for Death*, *The Consolation of a Person in Great Affliction,* and *Four Psalms of Comfort*.

Pietsch makes use of these works wherein Luther counsels those who suffer from melancholy to see what benefit it might have in helping those who today suffer from depression. With this in mind he begins with a thorough analysis of the culture in which Luther lived, while also looking at popular resources that were available and influenced Luther's own counsel. The two most influential for Luther were Augustine and Jean Gerson. Augustine was most influential for Luther for the concept of the mutual consolation of the saints, which finds somewhat enigmatic and often misunderstood reference in the Smalcald Articles. Jean Gerson was a fascinating French mystic, who stressed the importance of embracing life's external gifts of joy, such as food, laughter, wine, and music, as well as cognitive and diversional strategies to counter depressive moods. Pietsch moves on to provide an analysis of the twelve letters that Luther wrote at various periods in his own life to those suffering from melancholy and despair. Though these letters can be found elsewhere, such as in Tappert's classic *Luther's Letters of Spiritual Counsel*, Pietsch makes use of his own translations, which are included as an appendix to the book. Following an analysis of these letters, Pietsch provides a historical study and comparison concerning the phenomena of melancholy and its similarities with modern clinical depression.

The meat of the book follows as Pietsch considers modern strategies for dealing with depression, and in what ways these overlap with Luther's practice. Additionally, he considers what ways Luther's practices are challenged by, or perhaps challenge, modern methods. Pietsch shows himself adept at this sort of investigation, and seems to be loathe to give anything a pass simply because it is labeled "Christian." He is especially antagonistic towards bad theological assumptions. Perhaps this is because he sees a proper theological perspective that allows the carer to be flexible as to the best way of handling the source of depression suffered by many Christians—"false belief that

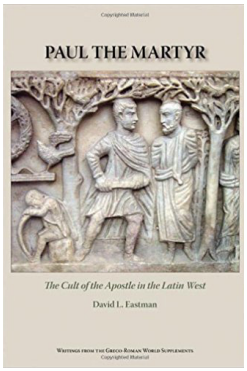
leads to despair and other great shame and vice." As Pietsch notes concerning Luther's own view of pastoral care:

> He understood that pastoral practice, especially with those who are *in extremis*, requires the carer to respond flexibly and sometimes daringly in order to meet an extreme situation. Pastoral care is about doing theology in a *particular space*, with a *particular person*, not producing a correct balanced theological response that will stand up under all theological scrutiny. (252)

But Luther's theological nimbleness and pastoral risk-taking was only "possible because he had a highly stable biblical centre of gravity." Pietsch recommends that pastors develop the same biblical center of gravity through regular prayer and devotional reading of Scripture so they too can deal with those who suffer depression as Luther did.

Pietsch's book fills a void that has been long wanting in the library of pastoral resources. All too often parishioners suffering from depression (or those having family members and friends so suffering) ask their pastors for counsel, and the pastors soon realize they are out of their comfort zone. The advice to find a good Christian counselor or psychologist seems equally empty when pastors have minimal training in psychology. Pietsch has done yeoman's work in this area. He also writes in an engaging manner that makes his book hard to put down.

Bror Erickson
Farmington, New Mexico



Paul the Martyr: The Cult of the Apostle in the Latin West. By David L. Eastman. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011.

The New Testament includes hints about the death of Paul but nothing definite. For example, Paul supposed his death to be imminent (Phil 1:20–23) and that he was "already being poured out as a drink offering" (2 Tim 4:6). In Acts, Luke states that after his arrest in Jerusalem Paul appealed his case to Caesar and was sent to Rome to stand trial before the imperial authorities (Acts 25:12; 26:32). The final two years there were spent under house arrest (Acts 28:16, 30) though he remained relatively free to evangelize (Acts 28:23–28). Acts does not tell us how the incarceration ends, and scholars have wondered whether Paul died there or not. However, ancient iconography of the apostle is dominated by one image: Paul as martyr. Whether in proximity to a sword—the traditional instrument used in his execution—or receiving a martyr's crown from Christ, Paul was honored for his faithfulness to the point of death. As a result, there was in very early times a cult of Paul centered around holy sites and characterized by such stories as celebrated his demise, pilgrimages, privileged burials in shrines associated with the apostle, and the veneration of relics. David Eastman's book integrates literary, archaeological, artistic, and liturgical evidence to describe the development of the Pauline cult in the West.

Aside from an introduction, conclusion, bibliography, scriptural citations, primary source citations, and subject index, the book is comprised of two parts: Part 1: The Cult of Paul in Rome; and Part 2: The Expansion of the Cult Outside Rome. Both parts contain two chapters, thus four in all: (1) The Cult of Paul on the Ostian Road; (2) The Cult of Paul on the Appian Road; (3) The Spread of the Pauline Cult in Latin Europe; and (4) the Pauline Cult in North Africa. Thus, the cult of Paul was centered upon the city of Rome—especially the shrine, the church—on the Ostian Road where Paul may well have met his end, according to early sources (15–24). The Appian Road site—south of the city—continued the curious tradition of celebrating a martyr's "birthday" (that is, the day the martyr met his end, so was translated into the presence of the Lord) and frequent meals eaten there in memory of Sts. Paul and Peter on 29 June (77, 84). Most of the sites in Latin Europe (Gaul and Spain) and North Africa received their sanctity from associations made with Rome itself, either in the form of secondary relics imported from the city or bishops attempting to curry favor with Roman counterparts.

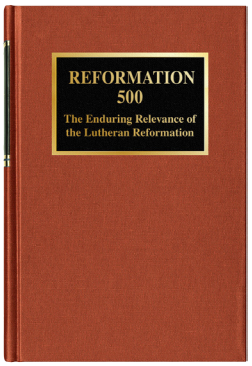
These details present problems for Lutherans, yet even determined Protestants will have to recognize that the cult of the martyrs was one of the focal points of Christian piety in the early years. The basis of the cult was the belief that the martyrs—those who faced death rather than recanting their Christian faith—occupied an elevated position in the spiritual hierarchy. Having voluntarily followed Christ to the point of death, they reside in the presence of God and enjoy God's special favor. Though physically dead, they remain alive and accessible to Christians who even now seek their intercession and assistance (see "transfer of sanctity," 50). If nothing else, this book points out how deeply embedded in early Christianity these problematic practices were—coming about more than 1000 years before the reforms of Luther. For one example of this zeal, take the curious practice of pouring libations over Paul's bones at the "sarcophagus of Paul" in the Abbazia di San Paolo fuori le Mura on the Ostian Way in Rome:

> A libation consisted of pouring a liquid at a sacred place, often the tomb of a god or an esteemed ancestor. Some believed that wine libations provided nourishment for the dead (Lucian of Samosata, *Luct*. 9), while others honored the dead by pouring perfumes or other precious liquids. . . . The archaeological evidence suggests that such libations also took place at the tomb of Paul. A funnel-shaped hole in the sarcophagus lid led to its interior. . . . In some cases, the pouring of balsams or oil at Christian tombs was believed to alter the liquids into holy objects that had come into contact with the relics and were taken away in flasks placed beneath a hole in the bottom of the tomb. (40–41)

Such practices demonstrate that works-righteousness remained a problem for Christianity not long after Paul and the

apostles taught the gospel faithfully in their respective ministries, and that pagan intrusions would all but necessitate Luther's reforms later. Nevertheless, Eastman's book suggests that faithfulness to Christ often exacts a frightful toll on Christianity's practitioners, and that perpetuating a martyr's memory remains essential to the faith itself.

John G. Nordling
Fort Wayne, Indiana



Reformation 500: The Enduring Relevance of the Lutheran Reformation. Edited by Curtis A. Jahn. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 2017.

The observance of the Reformation's quincentennial this year is proving that you cannot separate that event from the reformer Martin Luther. The year 2017 is as much about the reformer as it is about his hammer blows.

Reformation 500 is the contribution to the party by theologians of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) that seeks to show ways in which the Reformation is relevant today. Along with a preface from WELS president Mark G. Schroeder, ten essays explore topics such as "Luther and the Biblical Canon," "Luther on Infant Baptism," and "The Lutheran Influence on Education."

There are also essays that address topics and concerns of WELS pastors, teachers, and congregations. Mark Zarling answers the question, "With What Attitude Should We Celebrate the Reformation?" by offering commentary to seven stanzas of the hymn "In Trembling Hands" (*CW* 199). His contribution is that of a college president to his supporting church body (Zarling serves as president of Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota).

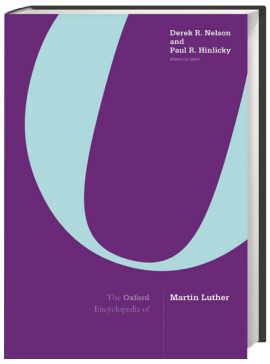
Regarding fellowship, John F. Brug writes "Luther and Fellowship: The Courage to Break and the Courage to Be Patient," in which he traces the challenges and difficulties of maintaining and breaking fellowship from the time of Luther to the breakup of the Synodical Conference.

There is also plenty that will interest those outside the WELS. Paul O. Wendland discusses the New Perspective on Paul and how theologians like N. T. Wright make Luther's reformation and theology, and especially the doctrine of justification, out to be a terrible misread and mistake. Where does that leave us Lutherans? Party poopers! The church cannot continue without the *articulus stantis*.

Daniel M. Deutschlander in "The Enduring Uniqueness of the Lutheran Reformation" seeks to answer the question why Luther was successful when so many others failed. As a Missourian I answer, "Because Luther got law and gospel right when all the others did not." Deutschlander says it is because Luther took God seriously. He also recognizes the Lutheran teaching on law and gospel as important. We agree.

It was good to read how our fellow Lutherans and friends in the WELS are celebrating and talking about the Reformation. It shows me there is much agreement in doctrine that is traceable back to our common theological and confessional heritage in the Reformation and Luther.

Mark A. Loest
Saginaw, Michigan



The Oxford Encyclopedia of Martin Luther. Edited by Derek R. Nelson and Paul R. Hinlicky. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. (Three Volumes)

This impressive work is one of three major reference tools published in the year of the five-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation. The other two are *A Dictionary of Luther and the Lutheran Traditions* edited by Timothy J. Wengert et al. (Baker Academic) and the two-volume *Encyclopedia of Martin Luther and the Reformation* edited by Mark A. Lamport (Rowman & Littlefield). The scope of *The Oxford Encyclopedia* is not as expansive as the other works. It covers a more limited number of topics (120) but the topics are treated with full and in-depth essays that include extensive footnotes. The essays more often than not include a survey of the literature related to the topic as well as suggestions for further reading. The editors, Derek R. Nelson (Wabash College) and Paul R. Hinlicky (Roanoke College), have assembled a diverse team of writers, mostly from North American and European backgrounds, reflecting a variety of disciplines with vested interest in Luther studies.

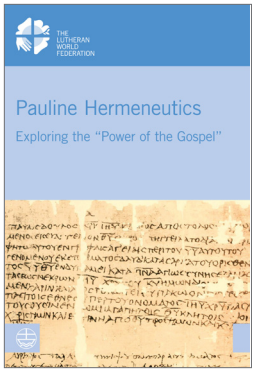
The articles in this encyclopedia fall into one of four categories: contexts, genre, theology and ethics, and reception and transformation. For example, under "context" there are essays on the "Christological Sources in the Church Fathers" (Carl Beckwith), "Islam and the Ottoman Turks" (Adam Francisco), "Magic and the Occult" (Kathyrn A. Edwards), "Erasmus and Luther" (Robert Kolb), and "Monasticism" (Eric Leland Saak). Under the category of "genre" we find entries on Luther's "Pastoral Writings" (Ronald Rittgers), the "Catechisms" (Ninna Jørgensen), "Disputations" (David Luy), "Sermons and Postils" (John Frymire), and "Music, Poetry and Hymns" (Johannes Schilling). Under "theology and ethics," articles treat such topics as Luther's "Doctrine of Creation" (Johannes Schwanke), "Baptism" (Kirsi Stjerna), "Freedom and the Trinity" (Piotr J. Malysz), "Prayer" (Mary Jane Haemig), and "Law and Gospel" (Charles Arand). How was Luther and his legacy appropriated? This question is taken up by essays in the fourth category, "reception and transformation." Here there are entries on how Luther's teaching was utilized in particular countries or regions such as "Luther in Denmark" (Niels Henrik Gregersen) or "Luther in North America" (Mark Grandquist), although there is nothing unfortunately on "Luther in Asia" or "Luther in Af-

rica." There are essays on Luther's influence on particular individuals such as the entry on "Luther in Marx" (Paul Hinlicky) and "Bonhoeffer, Luther, and Political Theologies" (Michael P. DeJonge). There are contributions on the "Luther Renaissance" (Heinrich Assel), "Lutheran Orthodoxy" (Andreas Stegmann), and Luther's use in "Modern New Testament Scholarship" (David Lincicum).

It is risky business to try to identify the most outstanding articles in such a collection, but a few of my picks are "Preaching" (Steven Paulson and Chris Croghan), "Vocation" (Robert Benne), "Theological Aesthetics" (Mark Mattes), "Pietism" (Carter Lindberg), "Penance, Confession, Forgiveness and Reconciliation" (Ronald Rittgers), "Martin Luther, Jews and Judaism" (Dorothea Wendebourg), "Martin Luther's Practice of Old Testament Commentary" (John Maxfield), and "Promise in Martin Luther's Theology and Thought" (Gregory Walter).

The Oxford Encyclopedia of Martin Luther will prove to be an indispensable work for Luther scholars, church historians, and systematic theologians. Overall, it is an intellectual feast! No doubt that a sticker price of $595 will mean that this encyclopedia will be largely limited to libraries. For the time being at least one may access and download individual articles (http://religion.oxfordre.com/page/martin-luther).

John T. Pless
Fort Wayne, Indiana



Pauline Hermeneutics: Exploring the "Power of the Gospel." Edited by Kenneth Mtata and Eve-Marie Becker. Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 2016.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has for some time been publishing series of collections of exegetical essays discussing various parts of the Bible and their contemporary significance. The current volume on St. Paul and his theology is simply its latest example.

The authors of the essays are from a diverse number of racial and ethnic backgrounds, in accordance with the composition of the present LWF. For example, there are a number of significant essays by African scholars. Also in keeping with the theological culture of the present LWF, the essays emphasize the manner in which themes in Lutheran theology can be appropriated to promote a far-left social justice agenda. Although they do occasionally contain a theological insight here or there, the authors have very little respect for the divine inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, or, for that matter, the central article of the Christian faith, justification. This is especially manifest when the essayists are implicitly, or openly, critical of the apostle. In all this, the authors by and large see their goal as making Paul relevant to our contemporary situation. The difficulty with this is that in attempting to update the apostle the authors largely cover up the theological worldview of the Bible in their own largely secular worldviews.

One example of this ill-conceived attempt at relevancy is Kenneth Mtata's essay on the gospel as an "emancipatory hermeneutic." Mtata begins the essay by contrasting the hermeneutics of suspicion with those of trust. The former encompasses the attitude of modern Western scholars as formed by Nietzsche, Freud, and Marx. The latter represents the traditional interpretation of Scripture, or any interpretation that presupposes the author is writing for the good of the audience rather than as a covert power play. Mtata sees the gospel as a hermeneutical principal that reconciles these attitudes towards the text. Since the gospel means freedom, it can accept the hermeneutics of suspicion's critique of heteronomous power plays, while at the same time being the positive content of the Bible. According to Mtata, the gospel's freedom means two things. First, Paul's gospel promotes emancipation from shame imposed by heteronomous authorities. The interesting thing to note here is that Mtata primarily construes the condemnation of the law as something subjective (shame after all is a subjective emotion). In our contemporary world, the gospel may free people from the shame of having less wealth than others, or perhaps enjoying less the advantages of technology (that is, people feel bad that they cannot afford iPhones). Secondly, the gospel emancipates people from enmity due to different identities (ethnic, or otherwise). This helps people cope with their role in a new globalized community.

The major problem with all of this is that it has little to do with Paul's (or Luther's) understanding of justification and its role in overcoming the curse of the law. In this scenario, the gospel is useful because it solves a series of secular problems. In other words, secularity largely sets the agenda for the church. Unlike Paul, the question is not how one will be saved from the present evil age and stand as righteous before a holy God. Rather, for Mtata the issue primarily seems to be how we make people feel good about themselves and get along with others in a cosmopolitan setting of the new globalized world.

Another essay in the collection by Magnus Zetterholm addresses Paul's use of the metaphors of mastery and slavery. Zetterholm first discusses the reality of human trafficking in our own context and slavery in some areas of the developing world. He then launches into a fairly standard discussion of Paul's use of slavery metaphors. Prior to Christ, humanity stood under the power of sin and the law as slaves, now under the gospel they are set free so that they can be willing slaves of righteousness. Paul seems not to question the institution of slavery at all, with the possible exceptions of some hints in 1 Corinthians 7:21 and Philemon. Zetterholm strongly implies that he finds this problematic, but nevertheless feels that Paul's doctrine of evangelical freedom can be appropriated within our context to free people from oppression in the form of various involuntary servitude. Of course, it is difficult not to agree with Zetterholm that slavery is contrary to God's will and that Christians should oppose slavery in its various forms. Nevertheless, Paul's language of freedom (much like Luther's)

pertains to the divine-human relationship as constituted by the relationship of the gospel. As Luther observed in regard to claims made by the peasants during the Peasants' War (1525), evangelical freedom does not translate into political freedom. Political freedom is good, but it is nevertheless part of the kingdom of the world and its legal (rather than evangelical) relationships.

The final example comes from Marianne Bjelland Zartnow's essay on Paul's use of Sarah and Hagar in Galatians. Zartnow is a champion of feminist and "intersectional" hermeneutics. By "intersectional" interpretation she means figures in a given text not simply interpreted from the perspective of one identity (for example, that they are female), but from the standpoint of several identities (female, person of color, slave, etc.). Zartnow then launches into a discussion of the figure of Hagar. Hagar is not only female, but also a slave and an Egyptian. She is marginalized in the text of Genesis, insofar as she ceases to be a character after she is expelled by Abraham a second time. According to Zartnow, Paul can be faulted for reducing her to a female and a slave in his allegory of the two covenants in Galatians. Zartnow also finds Paul somewhat contradictory in his insistence of not overturning social hierarchies of the present age, while insisting "all are one in Christ Jesus." It apparently never occurs to Zartnow that the former passages in Paul discuss life *coram mundo* where the stability of the present world demands hierarchies, whereas the latter refers to the equality of believers *coram Deo*. In spite of these problems, Zartnow nevertheless implies that Paul has some potential for being appropriated for liberationist project in the contemporary world.

Overall, this volume of essays is at odds with confessional Lutheran commitments to the reliability and truthfulness of the Bible. Justification is mentioned, but it is frequently seen as implying the modern democratic concept of personal autonomy, rather than Christian freedom in the Lutheran sense. Moreover, the authors in the collection almost consistently take the attitude that Paul and his theology are something of an opening bid for modern projection of human authenticity and liberation.

Jack Kilcrease
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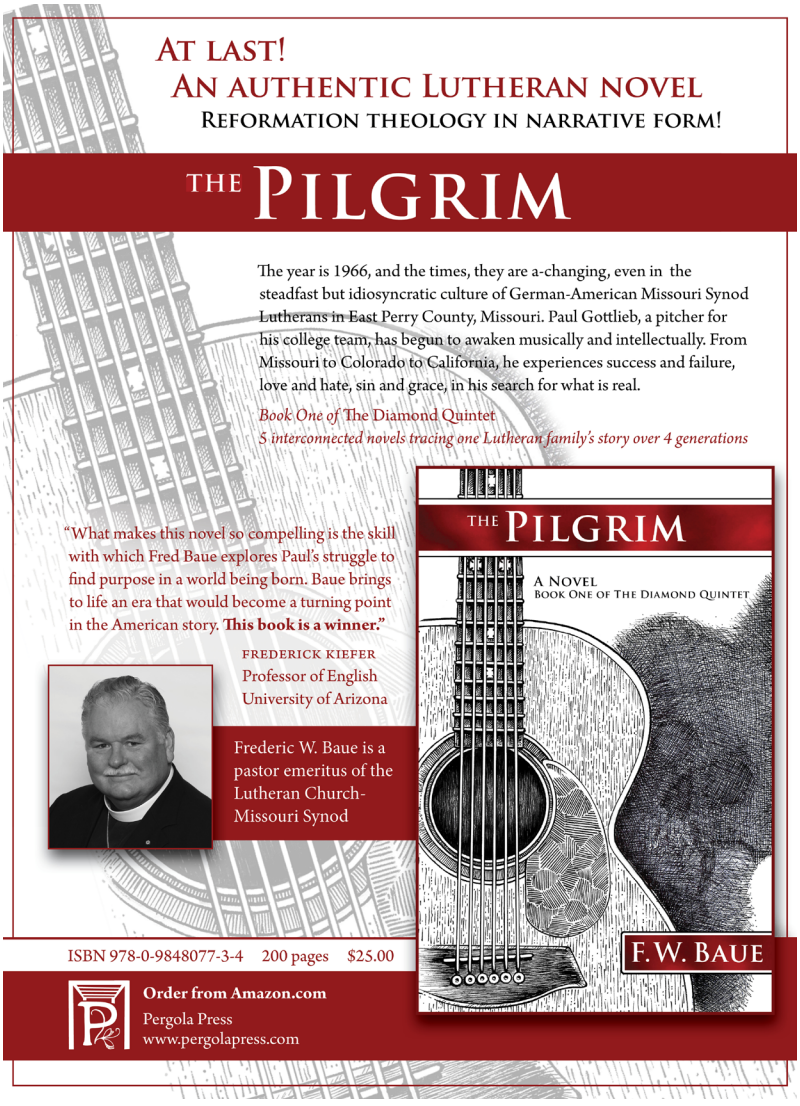

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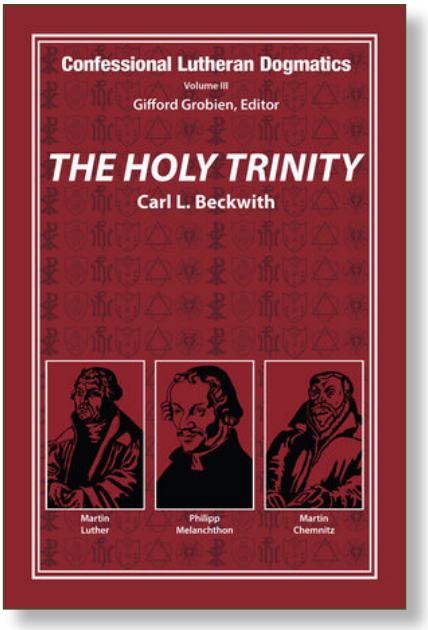

CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN DOGMATICS

THE HOLY TRINITY

by

Carl L. Beckwith

THE HOLY TRINITY, VOLUME 3 OF THE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN DOGMATICS SERIES, explains the difficulties we face in confessing the Trinity in our world today and how we overcome these challenges by placing Christ and the Gospel at the center of our preaching and teaching. *The Holy Trinity* returns us to Scripture and shows how the Old and New Testaments carefully and decisively present the indivisible oneness and irreducible threeness of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Finally, *The Holy Trinity* introduces readers to the sound pattern of words used by the Fathers and Lutheran reformers to clarify and defend the trinitarian witness of Scripture. We confess, worship, and glorify the Holy Trinity rightly when we boldly proclaim the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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Logia Forum

Short Studies and Commentary

Nostra res agitur

For going on thirty years I have gotten strange looks from my classes by regularly predicting a split in the Roman Catholic Church. "There he goes again," they groan. Yet for at least two of those decades I thought the rift would occur through liberal-progressive dissatisfaction with Karol Wojtyła or Joseph Ratzinger, neither of whom was actually all that "conservative." Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that the schism I envisaged would be precipitated by a pope who would go off the rails into the wildest recesses of liberal Protestantism.

Life being stranger than fiction, the scenario I had barely reckoned on is coming to fruition before our eyes. From the moment Jorge Mario Bergoglio stepped onto the balcony overlooking St. Peter's Square back in March 2013, he has struck me as nothing but a fake and a fraud. We Lutheran pastors, surely the lowliest bunch of clerics on the face of the earth, nevertheless tend to know that, in the discharge of our office, we are to behave, speak, and act *vice et loco Christi*, representing him whose ambassadors we are. Not so with Bergoglio, who doesn't bother to bless crowds or to address them on behalf of the one whose privileged vicar he claims to be. Instead we encounter a spokesman for international leftism and liberation theology, an ally of the Clintons and Obamas of this world, a blabbermouth who harps on about so-called climate change while turning strangely silent about the concrete implications of the Fifth and Sixth Commandments. Worst of all, he is utterly unable to proclaim Jesus Christ as God incarnate and sole Savior of the world, and he would never commit the faux pas before the world of suggesting that faith in Christ and his atoning work might be a good idea.

Bergoglio—I refuse to call him Francis since this would be a terrible insult to the little poor man of Assisi who did not consider Jesus one option among many, and who risked his life to proclaim him to the sultan of Egypt—has by now succeeded in plunging the worldwide Roman Catholic Church into uproar as he has moved to dismantle the legacy of his two immediate predecessors. Renouncing Karol Wojtyła's syncretism would, of course, be a great idea, but Bergoglio has chosen to accentuate that part of the Wojtyłian program and to take aim at the major aspect of John Paul II's pontificate that could legitimately be deemed "conservative," namely the classical moral theology of the Roman Church.

For many Roman Catholics the straw that broke the camel's back was Bergoglio's green light for divorced and remarried Roman Catholics to be restored to the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist. Of course, with their practice of *oikonomia* the Orthodox have long lived with second and even third marriages while the first spouse is still living, and have considered this no barrier to the reception of Holy Communion. As for ourselves, the Treatise's allowance of the remarriage of innocently divorced spouses tends to be interpreted very broadly. A brother in the ministerium told some of us recently that all of the twenty-some divorcees whom he has remarried in church insisted that they were the innocent parties in their marital breakdown! And we separated brethren would point out to Roman rigorists that so-called annulments are often no more than an allowance of divorce by a different name.

But don't think for a moment that the issue of the pastoral treatment of the divorced and remarried is the chief issue thrown up by the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* ("The Joy of Love"), which might be appropriately renamed *Concupiscentiae Tristitia* ("The Sadness of Uncontrolled Desire"). The four cardinals (one of whom is now deceased) who posed the famous five *dubia* (doubts) to Bergoglio are chiefly concerned with the status of the classic notion of the *intrinsice malum*, that is, whether certain deeds, irrespective of circumstances and motives, are intrinsically evil, wrong in themselves and without qualification. Am I wrong in thinking that 1 Corinthians 6:9–11 commits all Bible-believing Christians to the notion of the *intrinsice malum*, apart from which there is no point in preaching the law?

An Australian woman theologian has pointed out that *Concupiscentiae Tristitia* makes no mention of the fear of God or the divine commandments, and that the figure of our Lord Jesus Christ is simply absent from the document. What creeps

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me out above all in this whole business is that Bergoglio and his cronies remind me so much of the gospel-reductionist liberal Missouri Synod pastors in whose midst I moved at the time of my first call. Genuflection took place all right and on a regular basis, but before the world, not Christ.

Having sacked the distinguished canon lawyer Cardinal Raymond Burke at an early stage of his pontificate, Bergoglio upped the ante in early July 2017 by consigning to the outer darkness Benedict XVI's chosen prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Gerhard Mueller, formerly archbishop of Regensburg in Germany. Mueller is only most modestly "conservative," but has proved a thorn in Bergoglio's side by refusing to make a root-and-branch disavowal of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* of 1992.

For the moment Bergoglio reigns supreme, delighting the world and its prince, dialoguing to his heart's delight with everyone except devout Roman Catholics, for whom he displays only bitter contempt.

Developments since Bergoglio's accession to the papacy are not good news for the International Lutheran Council, which began formal talks with the Vatican in the closing days of the Ratzinger pontificate. Someone with close ties to the *Ratzinger-erschülerkreis* (the circle of Ratzinger's former doctoral students, itself no youth organization these days!) told me that one of Benedict XVI's regrets as he left office was that he had failed to develop much friendly interaction with those Lutherans who revolve, so to say, in the Missouri orbit. With Cardinal Mueller's departure, few senior figures are left in the Curia who would give the likes of us the time of day. While this might be a minor blip in the chart of church history, the fact that the largest church body in Christendom is being ravaged by a militant secularist is surely cause for concern, to say the least. As dear Bishop Pittelko once remarked, "When the Pope sneezes, the Lutherans catch cold." The notion of a trickle-down effect applies beyond the realm of economics.

John Stephenson

Three Circles

The cities that were the seats of governments in late medieval societies often had three rings of fortifications. Three concentric circles of walls guarded them from their enemies. They were designed in such a way that even if the two outer walls were breached, the city could still survive by preserving its main assets and providing an inner bastion to hold out against the enemy. This was so because the inner circle protected the heart of the city with its royal palace, its military garrison, its administrative center, and its stock of supplies.

This arrangement of a fortified city provides Luther with an apt illustration of the correlation of three foundational orders for human society: civil government, the family, and the church (*LW* 41:176–77). Sadly, Luther's teaching on these three divine orders is unlikely to receive much attention even by Lutheran scholars and commentators as we celebrate the anniversary of the Reformation this year. Yet Luther regarded it as a vital part of his teaching, as is shown by his inclusion of the Table of Duties at the end of the Small Catechism. It was, in fact, so important for him that he summarized it in the Trinitarian appendix to his *Confession Concerning the Lord's Supper* from 1528 in connection with his profession of faith in Christ as God and man (*LW* 37:364–66) and in his conclusion to the carefully crafted treatise *On the Councils and the Church* from 1539 (*LW* 42:176–78).

These three sets of walls all rest on the invisible foundation of God's word, the divine ordinances that institute and sustain them. Without his word they would not exist, nor could they survive. These walls protect the city of God against the devil and his hostile forces. They do not just protect the city from being attacked and defeated by the devil; they prevent the devil from infiltrating the city and subverting the harmonious cooperation of its citizens in their respective callings. He is, as Luther says, "the enemy of God's order" (*LW* 40:147). While his main target is the church, he also undermines it by attacking the order of the family and the order of society. And that best from within these orders!

The inner bastion protects the church, the holy heart of the city, God's own stronghold in the city. By its preaching of God's word as law and gospel, the church drives the devil from the conscience of its members and establishes a sanctuary for them where Christ rules with his Holy Spirit. It is the ultimate bulwark against Satan, a heavenly fortress that provides the base for Christ's defeat of all the powers of darkness. By its prayers for the family and good government the church protects them from sure destruction. While the devil can damage the church badly, he cannot destroy it, because it rests on Christ himself as its sure foundation.

The middle, intermediate set of walls protects the family with marriage as its productive heart. It nurtures the life of the city by producing children and caring for them. By its teaching of God's law, every family trains them for their calling as responsible, productive citizens; by its teaching of the gospel, the Christian family also equips them to serve God in the respective callings. From a human point of view, the prosperity of the city depends on its health. God's word establishes and maintains the family as the foundation for moral order in society, an order that promotes what builds up the city and opposes the evildoing that undermines it.

The outer set of walls is government with all its agencies. It provides a legal protective shield against social disorder and injustice; it maintains the legal regulative framework that is necessary for the family and the church to flourish. By its enactment of God's law, as set out in the second part of the Decalogue, good government maintains social harmony and justice; it punishes evildoing and rewards good behavior. God's law establishes it as a just order that promotes the well-being of the whole society and protects the family and

the church from subversion. It is the outer bulwark against the devil and his wicked cronies.

Even though these orders are currently under severe attack on every front in the Western world, Luther's teaching on them is largely ignored by the church. That is rather odd because it speaks so well into our current context. Just a week ago, Paul Kelly, the editor at large of *The Australian*, our national newspaper, penned a rather perceptive article entitled "Blessed be the egoistic individuals." In it he argued that the drastic decline of the Christian faith in the USA and Australia has had direct consequences for our political system and public trust in it. He concludes: "The final logic is that everything depends upon politics. As the society of family and marriage becomes mired in confusion, as the society of church and religion is the target of assault, so the society of politics is being asked to assume a role and burden utterly beyond its capacity and guaranteed to leave community-wide unhappiness. The tripartite design that made the West such a workable and successful proposition is being torn apart. Once dismantled it cannot be put back together" (19, [8–9 July 2017]).

Kelly is right about the tripartite design of our social order and its Christian origins. Yet he is wrong in his pessimistic judgment that it cannot survive. That may be so for the ideology for our intellectual, cultural elite. But it is not really so morally and spiritually. These three orders do not rest on human teaching and legislation; they rest on the divine foundation of God's eternal word. Since they have been established by God's word, he will sustain them with it, no matter what happens. His word stands in judgment over those who try to subvert and destroy them. His word and its practice by the church ensure their survival.

John Kleinig

Using Two Kinds of Righteousness Properly

Among some American Lutheran theologians, it has increasingly become fashionable to table the talk of "law and gospel" in favor of "two kinds of righteousness." As all orthodox Lutherans are aware, law refers to the manner in which the word of God governs human life in the temporal world, reveals sin, and encourages Christians in holy living. The gospel refers to God's unilateral promise of forgiveness and eternal life for the sake of Christ.

By contrast, two kinds of righteousness describe how the law and the gospel are subjectively appropriated by humans. Righteousness is a relational concept and therefore is actualized in different manners within different spheres of reality. From the late 1510s onward, Luther recognized that human beings are relational beings and therefore are defined by their existence within two different horizons. *Coram Deo* ("in the eyes of God") refers to the status that the sinner possesses before God. *Coram mundo* ("in the eyes of the world") refers to the moral status that sinners possess in relationship to other humans.

Coram Deo, righteousness is always something passive, since one's moral status before God is passively received. That is to say, we either stand before the bar of God's justice on the basis of the sinful heart passively received from Adam at our birth, or on the basis of the righteousness of Christ received by the passive receptivity of faith. Although our works certainly do count as righteous or unrighteous in themselves, they are ultimately colored in God's eyes by the orientation of the heart towards faith or unbelief. For example, the unbeliever's *coram Deo* act of charity or honesty does not count as righteousness because it is not done in faith (Rom 14:23). In an ultimate sense, only acts performed out of a pure heart of faith are genuinely good before God (and even then they are tainted! [Isa 64:6]), because only "a good tree bears good fruit" (Matt 7:17).

By contrast, our status as righteous or unrighteous *coram mundo* is "active" rather than "passive." That is to say, our status derives from a right performance of righteous deeds, irrespective of the orientation of heart. For example, a good father does a series of things which make him a good father: he guides his children into the knowledge of right and wrong, plays with them, provides for them financially, etc. One could make a similar observation with any number of worldly endeavors and vocations. In the eyes of the world it is the actions in themselves that count as righteous irrespective of the intention behind them.

It is interesting to note that humans in their fallen state typically try to reverse these two distinct ways of being righteous. On the one hand, Luther observes that humans are habitual self-justifiers and wish to be righteous on the basis of their action before God. Conversely, in civil society, humans have historically sought to create all sorts of artificial and unjust means of judging people on the basis of who they are, rather than what they do. Racism and sexism are only a few examples of this tendency.

In contemporary Lutheran theology, there are a number of positive things that can be gleaned from the retrieval of the paradigm of two kinds of righteousness. First, two kinds of righteousness is a theme in a number of Luther's writings that have often been ignored in the history of Lutheranism and in contemporary Luther studies. Highlighting this theme in Luther's thought that has often been pushed into the background adds color to our interpretation of the Reformer's thought. Secondly, the paradigm of two kinds of righteousness helps clear up a series of misunderstandings of the third use of the law that have occurred in twentieth-century Lutheran thought. It has frequently been asked by critics of the third use: "How can there be a third use of the law, when the gospel is the end of the law?" Two kinds of righteousness exposes such a critique as something of a categorical confusion. According to passive righteousness *coram Deo*, the

gospel certainly is the end of the law. The law nevertheless continues to be an important guide to the person of faith for their active righteousness *coram mundo*.

In spite of these valuable aspects of retrieving the paradigm of two kinds of righteousness, there are significant difficulties with it. Specifically, problems arise when two kinds of righteousness ceases to be another helpful angle from which one may view the multidimensional reality of law and gospel and instead becomes a means of replacing them. This move ultimately reverses the proper relationship between the objective and subjective in the divine-human relationship.

Put succinctly, law and gospel are God's two objective words that he has placed before humanity. Indeed, as Melanchthon states in the Apology, all the content of Scripture can be summed up as law and gospel. By contrast, two kinds of righteousness represents the subjective human appropriation of law and gospel. Therefore, to make two kinds of righteousness the paradigmatic structure of the divine-human relationship within which law and gospel are a mere subsidiary, is to prioritize the subjective over the objective. Such a move is necessarily disastrous, since Lutheran theology has always emphasized that humans under the thrall of sin are curved in upon their own subjectivity and must be drawn out of their subjectivity to the objectivity of God's word. Therefore, by prioritizing two kinds of righteousness over law and gospel, humans and their use of God's word take center stages, whereas the word's objective content falls into the background.

Jack Kilcrease

Botox in a Tree: The First Worship Service

The following is a little snippet from Steven Paulson's new publication on Luther and the Hidden God. Dr. Paulson joyfully provided this preview for the readers of Logia Forum. Happy reading!

Into the Garden of Eden God planted two trees to establish the rhythm of worship/life: the tree of life, and tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2). The tree of life was the location where God gave himself to Adam and Eve and Luther liked to imagine that whenever Adam felt old he could go to that tree and remove "age lines on his forehead." Botox in a tree! The tree was the fountain of life by whose means Adam and Eve could have entered heaven without dying—if that worship had continued endlessly.

But another tree was given for a different, contrary worship that Luther thought was "so that Adam might have a definite way to express his worship and reverence toward God." That second tree's means of worship was opposite the first—but just as necessary. Adam was to worship this tree by liturgically processing from it as the way to exit from God not preached. Escaping that God is not merely theoretical or psychological, but physical and geographical. Even with our dim understanding of what love really means after the fall, we can understand that lovers make themselves available to their beloved by first removing themselves from all other loves. In Eden, this was the way of reverence, worship, or giving God his due that is being obedient to God himself (and not some external law). So Adam and Eve had God in a specific tree—where he specifically refused to speak to them (a wise silence) *except for a threat*: "If you eat of this tree you shall die."

It seems strange to us, but these two trees and worships were not in the least "legal" requirements or fulfillments. Adam and Eve were not given a law for their justification in these trees, nor was a neutral free will inside them being asked to choose between opposites of good or evil. To the contrary, God was making love to them there. Adam and Eve were created intoxicated with love for God and God provided a way to express that love lest the liquor of their hearts ruined their livers. Inward worship was thus naturally expressed outwardly and so the Creator was not hidden above or beyond these trees but giving himself in them. Such contrasting worships were not given as tests, but were ways for Adam and Eve to listen to their Creator, and so receive his love verbally and certainly when and where God wants to speak. After all, even sinners know that love seeks both external expression and exclusivity so that God wanted to be heard and known as favoring them in the place appointed, and did not want to be their God where he did not express this love. God is not love everywhere.

So, God gave Adam and Eve the tree of life much in the way he currently gives his chosen the pulpit, baptismal fountain, and altar. He provided a place—and other creatures—through which his favor is declared and in which he can give himself fully in such a way that they can recognize, yield to, express, and hold on to a divine word. Luther calls this means of worship "solemnity," where the first people went to receive and investigate every precious word God uttered and in which way today we can enjoy every precious one of absolution's endless details.

In this way, the two trees were not different from others in the garden, except that each had a word of God applied to it that made them places of worship. In the tree of life, he was the preached God who seeks to be heard, grasped, and worshiped by running to it: "I favor you!" But to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil God applied a different word. "Do not eat!" Even with this negative word however, a regular old tree becomes momentous, worship-worthy, and adorned. This way of God working with his creatures is not beyond our grasp even now. Marriage is not different than two people having sex as a lark one night—except that it has been adorned with God's word and so made awesome. Once marriage received such a word from God, it became divine, and not just one more one-night stand. Just so, water is only water, until the word adorns it—and so gives it as a promise of eternal life. Then it becomes divine and gives us the awesome worship as baptism.

In this way, the key to God's strange love is the *withdrawal of freedom of will* in God's possessive jealousy. Worship is the withdrawal of the free will by the God who establishes sole lordship and exclusivity over his chosen. The corresponding aspect in humans of the relation to the Creator adorning things with his word is *faith*. Trust gets its name from God's word and so is possessed by God and actually belongs to him. Faith is never to be placed in myself, but in relation to God, and is never lonely but rather brings Adam and Eve together with other creatures of the garden to hear their divine word of election. Worship is just such an assembly around the tree in which God's word has been put where two or three are gathered in my name.

So the first liturgy in Eden went like this: Adam and Eve would first wander over to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and begin adoring God—by not eating from it! That is, they fled liturgically (processed—in a hurry) from it to the *arbor vitae*. They used its branches to get rid of age lines and Luther figured they would naturally want to sing something like this: "Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights! Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all hosts! Praise him sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars . . . " (Ps 148). Religion would thus have no book, no worship hymnal, it was all premised on one sentence of divine love (along with its terrible threat): "From all the trees you may eat, but not of the tree of knowledge . . . " Adam would then have been able to preach to his progeny this way: "Tend the garden, eat whatever you like, but not from this one tree—for here we worship"—meaning that "here we are possessed by old Jealous himself." True worship is the withdrawal of free will and the giving of faith by God who puts his words in things that his chosen can reverence by grasping the word-in-the-thing.

Christ's Authority on Earth to Forgive Sins

When the minister speaks Christ's absolution to us we believe that Christ himself is forgiving us. Jesus spoke to his disciples on Easter Sunday evening. Ten of the eleven apostles were huddled together in fear. Jesus appeared to them. He showed them the wounds of his crucifixion. The Jesus who was crucified was the Jesus who stood before them. There can be no doubt concerning his identity. The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world displayed then and there to his fearful disciples his victory over their sin. He spoke peace to them. As the Father sent him, so he was sending them. Thus the Lord Jesus established the public ministry of the word and sacraments.

He sent them out to forgive the sins of the penitent and to retain the sins of the impenitent. Jesus had already proven his authority on earth to forgive sins when he healed the paralytic of his paralysis (Matt 9, Mark 2). He claimed that it was here on this earth where sinners sin that he had the authority to forgive sins. In passing on this authority to his apostles, he made it clear that his authority to forgive sins was to remain here on earth until the end of time. The keys he promised to Peter (Matt 16:19) he gave to all of the apostles. He said to Peter, "I will give you the keys." He gave this authority not only to Peter, but to all of the apostles and to all of their successors. When the pastor absolves you it is Christ who is absolving you.

John was a witness to what he reported (John 21:24). The authority to forgive sins is grounded in historical facts. Jesus died. Water and blood flowed out of the side of his dead body. John saw this (John 19:35). The Jesus who died is the Jesus who rose. The historical Jesus and the Christ of faith are one and the same. The account of Thomas demanding and receiving tangible proof of Christ's resurrection confirms the crucifixion and the resurrection as historical events that happened in space and time. As surely as Jesus died and rose again, he gives us peace and he forgives us our sins. The authority of the apostolic ministry to forgive sins is grounded in what Jesus did on the cross. The wounds Jesus displayed are the evidence that the forgiveness he authorized them to bestow is authentic.

John the Baptist identified Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. If he had stayed dead that would have meant that he did not take away sin. His resurrection is God's absolution of the world. "Who was delivered up because of our offences, and was raised because of our justification" (Rom 4:25). Were this not so, the ministers of Christ could not forgive sins. There would be no forgiveness of sins without the death and resurrection of Jesus.

How do you know that the pastor's word of absolution comes from Christ? You know this because Jesus, who purchased forgiveness at the price of his holy, innocent suffering and death, said so. Christ gave to his church the authority to forgive sins. He gives this churchly authority to his church's pastors. Indeed, we appeal to John chapter 20 as biblical evidence that the pastoral office is divinely instituted. In Matthew 18 Jesus says that the keys belong to his church. Clearly, the church has the right to choose ministers who will exercise this power for her benefit.

But that's not all. Since Jesus gave the authority to forgive sins to the church, he gave it to all of his Christians. Jesus breathed on his disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" before he gave them the authority of the keys. Luther points out in sermons he preached on Quasimodogeniti (the Sunday after Easter that features John 20 as the Gospel reading), that whoever has the Holy Spirit has the authority to forgive. Every individual Christian can absolve the penitent by speaking Christ's absolution to him and this is as valid in heaven also as if Christ our dear Lord dealt with us himself.

We do not protect the preaching office by denying to the laity the authority to absolve the penitent. Nor is it proper to distinguish between the absolution the pastor speaks and the absolution the layman speaks as if the former is done in

the stead of Christ whereas the latter is but the assurance that God forgives . . . somewhere, sometime, but not through the speaking of the layman's words. No! The preaching office is not the catalyst that makes the absolution efficacious. It is the other way around. Christ's inherently efficacious absolution is the foundation for the pastor's authority to forgive. This authority belongs to all the faithful. It belongs as their birthright to everyone born from above by the Holy Spirit. Augustine's famous story about the newly baptized catechumen absolving the one who baptized him illustrates that any Christian can be a pastor when the faithful need a pastor.

We need the gospel. We need to be forgiven of all our sins by the speaking of another. Christ purchased and proved his authority on earth to forgive sins and he established in and for his church an office whose incumbents are duty bound to forgive and retain sins according to God's word. The church needs this office because she needs forgiveness. That's why Christ established it. Where there is no minister at hand, the Christian still needs the forgiveness the minister is called to proclaim. It is the death and resurrection of Jesus and his bestowal of the Holy Spirit upon all his Christians that provide us with the confidence that absolutions spoken by the laity provide nothing less than the absolution spoken by the called and ordained servant of the word.

Rolf Preus

The Notion of "Church Family"

One part in particular of Glenn Obenberger's "Until I Finally Please Everyone . . . " (*Logia* 26, no. 2: 21–22), brings to mind the subject notion that has been troubling me of late. I refer to the part where Pastor Obenberger exposes the "ineffective nature of busy innovative programs," of "extracurricular activities at church," as an effort to "establish a family atmosphere at church."

This observation recalls Dietrich Bonhoeffer's warning of "the danger of confusing Christian brotherhood with some wishful idea of religious fellowship, of confounding the natural desire of the devout heart for community with the spiritual reality of Christian brotherhood," which he insists is a "*spiritual and not a psychic reality*" (Bonhoeffer's italics). He elaborates: "The Scriptures call 'pneumatic', 'spiritual' that which is created only by the Holy Spirit, who puts Jesus Christ into our hearts as Lord and Savior. The Scriptures term 'psychic', 'human' that which comes from the natural urges, powers, and capacities of the human spirit." And he argues: "The existence of any Christian life together depends on whether it succeeds . . . in bringing out the ability to distinguish between a human ideal and God's reality, between spiritual and human community"(*Life Together*, 26, 31, 37).

Part of the theological confusion that breeds "wishful idea(s) of religious fellowship" like establishing a "family atmosphere at church" involves the virtual mistranslation of the New Testament term *koinonia*, *communio* as "fellowship" instead of "communion." The latter word keeps the focus on the spiritual unity of the Body of Christ (he in us and we in him), while the former lends itself too readily to cover various "extracurricular activities" arising from "natural urges, powers, and capacities" rather than to the "spiritual reality" of the *koinonia*/*communio* in Christ. Thus the congregation that regards itself as a "church family" is subsisting in what the early Luther called *esse naturae* (natural being), rather than in the *esse gratiae*, the being in grace by act of the Holy Spirit which is the reality of the church (Sammeli Juntunen in *Union with Christ*, edited by Braaten and Jenson, 136–41; Larry Rinehart, *A Metaphysical Luther*, 90f, 105ff).

Given that our (fallen) natural being continues to subsist in tandem with our spiritual being in the church, there is inevitably an admixture of human-psychic sociality with the spiritual *communio* in the concrete life of the congregation, as Bonhoeffer acknowledges. The problem arises when *psyche* begins to dominate over *pneuma*, and the congregation comes to see itself as an earthly extended family rather than as the Body of Christ subsisting entirely in *communio* with him. Our Lord himself calls attention to the disjunction between family and *communio* in Matthew 10:34–37, where he says he will divide fathers and sons against one another, and also mothers, daughters, and daughters-in-law; and where he declares that whoever loves father or mother or son or daughter more than him is unworthy of his *communio*. In Matthew 12:48–50 he rebuffs his earthly mother and brothers in favor of his disciples, whom he calls "my mother and my brethren" (RSV).

Finally our Lord's retort to the Sadducees in Matthew 22:30, that "in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage" (RSV), also weighs against the "family" metaphor as applicable to the *communio sanctorum*, given that the marriage of man and woman is the axis of the natural family. If there is no "family" at the marriage feast of the Lamb, should an earthly assembly, defined by its foretaste of that feast, be encouraged to think of itself as a "church family"?

Larry Rinehart

The Leadership of a Shepherd or The Imitation by the Sheep

In the Small Catechism under the Table of Duties Luther references Hebrews 13:17 in the section entitled "Duties Christians Owe Their Teachers and Pastors." Luther points out the relationship the sheep are to have with the shepherd the Lord places in their midst. The temptation with verse

seventeen is to understand it as a license to dominate the congregation. It is also tempting to declare to oneself an authority that is not one's solely by one's personhood leading to a demand for submission. While the NIV speaks of the "leader's authority," in fact the original Greek does not have the word *authority* nor the word *submit* in it. In order to understand what verse seventeen is saying it is very helpful to read it in conjunction with verse seven.

In verse seven the leaders (pastors) are to be remembered for the sake of the word of God. The leaders are men of the word since the word is given to the office of the pastor so that Christ can be heard. The word of God creates faith in the hearer just as it does in the one who speaks it. The pastor speaks it in its truth and purity. The word governs his life, conduct, and disposition as a shepherd. It is that way of life that the congregation is to review and imitate. What the congregation hears and reviews does not change, for it is founded in "Jesus Christ who is the same yesterday and today and forever."

In reference to verse seven we can avoid the temptations against verse seventeen. A proper translation of seventeen would read like this: "Be persuaded by your leaders and defer to them. They keep watch over your soul as men who must give an account, so that their work will be a joy and not a sigh of oppression, for that is not worth the price." Right away we can see that it is not a directive to dominate the congregation. To be persuaded by (the middle voice) implies that the members of the congregation have been taught well and by that teaching they heed the word rather than are made to obey. The membership defers to the pastor because the pastor has taught them the word of God. So to defer to the pastor is to defer to the word. Should the pastor go beyond the word or fall short of it, the congregation is not to defer to him. It is not the pastor's authority to which the congregation defers but the authority of the word (verse seven).

The pastor has the immense responsibility of keeping watch over the souls of his flock. He has to give an account for how he cared for them using the word. To "keep watch over" is another way of saying "to awaken, care for," and in some cases "to raise the dead." In fact, that is the joy of a pastor's ministry, raising the dead. Each proclamation of the second use of the law kills; each proclamation of the holy gospel rescues the dead and makes alive. The word of the gospel proclaimed and bestowed in the sacraments raises the dead into the glorious light of life in Christ Jesus.

The congregation has a duty to listen to the word from the pastor's mouth. They have a duty to eat from his hand. They have this duty because it is their duty to the word of God, and the word is the core and substance of the pastoral ministry. They are to live the life of faith that they see in the life of their pastor. They are to speak the language he speaks, sing the songs of the faith he sings. They are to shine forth the face of Christ that shines from his face. They are to pray for him that the Holy Spirit continue to strengthen him in his trials and comfort him in his sorrows. It is a deep sorrow to a pastor when the congregation ignores the word he preaches and teaches.

The ministry is not to be expressed by the pastor under a sigh of oppression. When his heart is heavy, when his efforts to care for the congregation's soul are rejected and condemned, he sighs under heavy sorrow. It is well for him to pray also then for the congregation as much as he desires for them to pray for him. After all, when the shepherd suffers so does the flock. When he is depressed and sullen it is evident to those who review him. It is also not a time for the pastor to get angry and demand the congregation obey. It is time to teach, teach, and teach some more. In and through that teaching some will learn. In and through the disposition and behavior of the pastor some will imitate. But what does not change is the fact that Christ Jesus, the core and substance of the ministry, has given his word to the office that it may be preached and taught. Therein is the advantage to the congregation.

Brian Saunders

The Locatedness of God

"The gospel is not Christ," Dr. Luther said. The gospel proclaims Christ. And when we say "proclaim" we are saying, "Look, here, at the cross, your Savior stricken, smitten, and afflicted for you." The for-you-ness of the gospel is the delivery of the cross, of all Jesus did for us on that day so long ago, in the present tense. The "good news" of the gospel is the pronouncement that since we cannot go back to Calvary, and there is no need for us to try, our Lord delivers its benefits to us now.

Likewise, then, Savior Jesus is not fixed back there at Good Friday. He is present where his words are spoken. His words deliver him to sinners that "everyone who believes may not perish but have eternal life." Therefore, Dr. Luther said, if we want our sins forgiven we don't go to Calvary. There forgiveness was won for us but it was not given out. Forgiveness is delivered in the present tense at the Lord's Supper. At the wedding feast of the Lamb forgiveness is not won for us, but there it is given out. This is the there-ness of the gospel, the locatedness of our Lord and his Calvary gifts that are for us, for our salvation.

This is the way our Lord has decided it must be. Otherwise how can we hope to find him? The locatedness of our Lord, at font, altar, and pulpit, at a specific time, is for the delivery of his gifts, the means of his Spirit that are given to us through simple earthly words, water, bread, and wine.

In baptism, for example, Good Friday is done to us. The Lord puts his name on us, and where his name is, there our Savior locates himself for us. He is there for us and we are thereby there for him. Nothing of time and space to keep us from him anymore. No more worries about life, death, and new life where the Lord of Life is present for us. Only "the hour that has come that the Son of Man should be glorified." But he is not there only for the one who is baptized. He is

there for all of us. There is nothing of "me and my Jesus" in baptism. Word, water, and Spirit are "there for everyone, and also for you," as Dr. Norman Nagel likes to say.

The Lord likes to gather us around his words because where his words are spoken by a preacher that is where Christ Jesus announces his specific locatedness for us, how and where he promises to be Savior for us. In this way, in the present tenseness of the gospel proclamation, the cross is the center and focus of the church. Likewise, as a consequence, all our living is done under the sign of the cross.

No matter what the churches may appear to be on the outside—whether they are full to bursting or struggling to pay the bills, a hot mess or a peaceful oasis from the world's strife, apathetic or stirred up toward the gospel—when the Lord is there with his gifts, every local congregation is the church catholic, the body of Christ specifically located in that place and at that time. Our feelings about him may wax and wane, but Savior Jesus is never indifferent to our sinful plight. Even when the churches look like they are done for, when politics and power games dominate our time and attention, so long as the gospel and his gifts are delivered he is there for us.

There is no hope for us apart from Christ located presently for us. But, where Christ is there for us, his gifts communicate and bestow upon us sinners forgiveness, life, and eternal salvation. That is, his words deliver the cross to us where and when he announces himself in the for-you-ness of the gospel. In this is every gift and blessing of God that translates us into our Savior's death and resurrection.

Where our Lord's words are spoken he delivers himself to us. Where he delivers himself for us the cross is proclaimed and delivered to us. Where the cross is delivered and proclaimed to us we are located with God at a particular time and place, which means we are with our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus. Then, we may confidently confess with the apostle that "I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal 2:20).

Donovan Riley

Luther's Understanding of Freedom in Brief

The following, with Dr. Oswald Bayer's permission, is an edited portion of his insightful paper "Necessary Transformation? The Reformation and Modernity in Controversy Over Freedom" (Pro Ecclesia *22, no. 3: 293–97).*

Luther's interest in human freedom, to be sure, has a *universally* anthropological character because it concerns what pertains to *every* human being. However, it is, as such, a thoroughgoingly soteriological interest: it is oriented toward salvation or perdition, toward life or death. The human being is regarded as a *sinner*—as a creature that, in misusing his original freedom, has always contradicted this freedom and has of his own accord forfeited and lost it together with his image of God (Rom 3:23). The human faculty of the will is in this radical sense unfree, a *servum arbitrium.* The human being regains the forfeited freedom only through Jesus Christ, who again grants and imparts freedom to the person; it is a new, definitive freedom that "Christ has gained for him and given to him" (*Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen* [*The Freedom of a Christian*] (1520); *WA* 7:20, 26f; cf. 29.13–18). It is Christ-freedom. For this reason *human* freedom is concretely the freedom of a *Christian.* Where the faculty of the will at the root of one's existence is concerned, one who is not a Christian is unfree; such a person remains suspended, and entangles himself further in contradicting his destiny.

What reveals this contradiction to the person is God's demanding will: God's *law.* It uncovers this contradiction; it uncovers sin. The law convicts me of sin as a misuse of my original freedom and judges and condemns me.

Without reference to the accusing and judging law, it is impossible to understand the freedom that Christ has newly brought, which has newly come through, with, and in him. Without such reference, this freedom is meaningless and pointless. In the law, you hear

> God speak to you, how all your life and your works are nothing before God, but you would have to perish eternally with all that is in you. If you believe this rightly, how you are guilty, then you must despair of yourself and confess the truth of Hosea's words: "I will destroy you, O Israel; who can help you?" [13:9]. In order that you may come out of and from yourself, God places you before his beloved Son Jesus Christ and through his living and comforting word has this said to you: You ought to surrender yourself to him with a steadfast faith and trust in him anew. On account of this very faith, all of your sins shall be forgiven you and all your perishing vanquished, and you shall be justified, truthful, freed, godly, and all the commandments shall be fulfilled, and you shall be free from all things, as St. Paul says (Rom 1[:17]): "A righteous Christian lives only by his faith' and (Rom 10[:4]), "Christ is the end and the fullness of all the commandments for those who believe in him. (WA 7:22.26–23.6; cf. 23.29–24.21 and 34.11–22)

The freedom of a Christian, the newly created freedom of a human being, the restitution of his corrupted and forfeited original freedom is, as Christ-freedom, *freedom from the law.* This is its first characteristic. Christ has ended and abolished the Decalogue, including the Sermon on the Mount, which radicalizes it: "Christ is the end of the law" (Rom 10:4). However, this *abrogatio legis*, this radical abrogation of the law, does not in any way imply that God's law is no longer in force, for it is and remains "holy, just and good" (Rom 7:12). One ought to continue to do the works of the law; for the law no longer condemns me if I do not fulfill it. The abrogation of the law (*abrogatio legis*) indicates precisely that only the law's

condemnation, which I have earned, no longer applies to me: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1). Freedom from the law is as such *freedom in Christ*. This is the second characteristic of the freedom of a Christian.

The condemnation of the law thus no longer applies to me, because God himself took it upon himself in his Son, dealt with it in himself, removed us from it and into himself, into his holy fellowship. Consequently, the most important affirmation of Luther's doctrine of freedom centers on 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Galatians 3:13. "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21). And Galatians 3:13, "the key to the Pauline understanding of Jesus' death" (Christian Dietzfelbinger, *Der Sohn: Skizzen zur Christologie und Anthropologie des Paulus* [Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 2011], vi): "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed be every one who hangs on a tree' [Deut 21:22f]" (Gal 3:13).

God himself has in his Son taken upon himself our unfreedom, or to put it better, our ruinous and lethally willful misuse of our original freedom, so that we might be ransomed, saved, and free. This ransom, this acquittal, is something completely different, for example, from an idea of reason in Kant's sense. Freedom in a theological sense has nothing to do with an intelligible determination of the person but is rather constitutively tied up with that concrete historical event in which Jesus Christ on the cross "purchased" for us freedom. At the same time freedom is constitutively tied up with that concrete historical event in which Jesus Christ as the living Lord "distributes" (for Luther's differentiation between, and correlation of, purchase [*erwerben*] and distribution [*austeilen*], see 1525 *Against the Heavenly Prophets* [*LW* 40:213–16; WA 18:203.27–205.28]; 1528 *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* [*LW* 37:192; WA 26:294.25–27]; and the section on the Sacrament of the Altar in Luther's Large Catechism) it to us as the "external Word" (AC v) of the sacramental sermon: he promises, administers, and gives his very self in, with, and under the "external word"; he takes us up into himself, into the space of his being; and gives us a share in his priestly and royal freedom. In short, we have our freedom from the law *in* Jesus Christ.

In this Christ-space of freedom that is created and sustained through the "external word" (*das leibliche Wort, verbum externum*), there takes place the "happy exchange and struggle" (WA 7:25.34). This space is a concrete, physical space of history, bound up with the water of baptism and the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper—the substitutionary space where Jesus Christ, "true God, begotten of the Father in eternity, and also a true human being, born of the Virgin Mary," takes away from me the law's condemnation, pulls me out of this condemnation, and takes my sin upon himself, so that in its place he might give me his own righteousness, his life, his brightness, and the fullness of his grace.

Liberation from condemnation through the law is—we are now focusing on the third characteristic—as new freedom at the same time *freedom for the fulfillment of the law*, because Christ is not only the end of the law but also its "fullness" (WA 7:23.5). The new freedom is freedom for the law's fulfillment "in free love" (WA 7:30.22): freedom not only *from* but also *for*. It is a freedom marked by a new perception of the self, the world, and God. In this perception the fulfillment of the law is no longer a soteriological burden; it is no longer a question of salvation or self-constitution. And I—no longer locked up in myself under the tyranny and compulsion of the law, insofar as sin turns to the law and makes use of it—am again brought into the unconstrained and the open. With heart, mouth, and hands, I am brought to an astonishing and active awareness of God. This awareness takes place in the return of the received gift to God through thanksgiving and praise, as well as in passing it on, in that in love, I "give myself as a Christ to my neighbor" (*LW* 31:367; WA 7:66.3–4). I let Christ first become a "*sacramentum*" or rather "*donum*" to me, but then, on account of the freedom guaranteed to me through the "*sacramentum*" I take him as *exemplum* (see *LW* 35:119–20).

This new—threefold—freedom to which we are liberated through Christ is characterized by a self-forgetfulness, understood as a thoroughly relational and excentric constitution of the self. Luther gives a classic expression to this in the concluding thesis of his freedom tractate: "A Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbor: in Christ through faith, in the neighbor through love" (WA 7:38.6–8).

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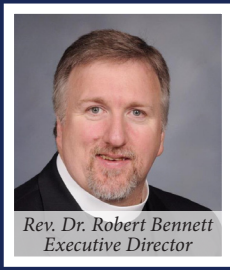

Rev. Dr. Robert Bennett
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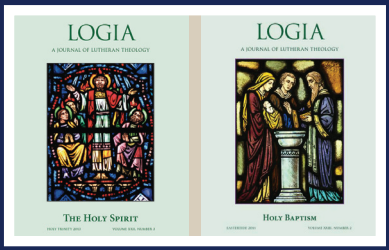
Luther Academy promotes genuine, confessional Lutheran theology and research through conferences, scholarly exchanges, and publications that assist the church both to preserve and to proclaim to the world the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the only saving faith.



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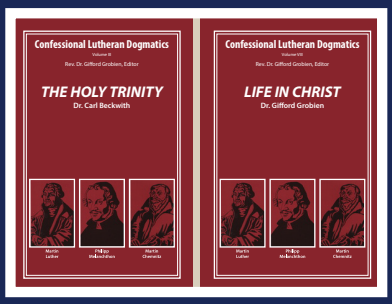

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