

## Philipp Spener's *Pia Desideria*

by TIMOTHY MASCHKE

THE RELEVANCE AND lasting consequences of Lutheran Pietism for theology and practice cannot be ignored, despite the extremes to which it was carried. If Lutheranism is to continue as a reform movement within Christendom, then voices of the past need to be clearly heard in the present for the future. One such voice is that of Philipp Jakob Spener and his brief but significant work, *Pia Desideria*.<sup>1</sup>

Pietism has long been seen as a reaction to the Lutheran orthodoxy of the seventeenth century. In many contexts, the term is used only as a negative, disparaging label to indicate subjectivity and emotionalism or the reappearance of some aberrant heresy.<sup>2</sup> Yet, there is a persistency in the expression of Pietism in Lutheranism which goes beyond the mid-eighteenth century.

Curiously, the rationalistic nineteenth century saw the rise of neo-Pietism.<sup>3</sup> And, in this latter half of the scientific twentieth century, Lutheranism has experienced the emergence of the charismatic movement and the popularity of the church growth program which have significant pietist characteristics.<sup>4</sup>

Recent interest in Pietism shows the continuing spirit of the movement and its lasting influences.<sup>5</sup> In Pietism there is a reality which is called forth again and again in Lutheran circles. This reality can best be understood and exemplified in the tension of the church's own self-concept throughout church history. The church is "one, holy, catholic and apostolic." To be simultaneously one (*una*) and holy (*sancta*) is a most difficult challenge. The ecumenical spirit (*una*) and the desire for doctrinal purity (*sancta*) constantly strain in practical ministry. The sense of community (*una*) and exclusivity of Christianity (*sancta*) further that stress. The desire to communicate the gospel in clear terms understandable to the present world (*una*) is often at odds with the desire to contemplate the mysteries with one's soul (*sancta*). The innate human tension between the comfort of laws and the burden of legalism, on the one hand (*una*), and the consolation of the gospel and the fear of anti-

nomian license (*sancta*), similarly have paralyzed the church's practice at various times in history.

The concerns of Pietism stem from the tension between the poles of *una* and *sancta*, between unity and purity, between subjective and objective faith, with the desire to maintain a truly confessional balance. Dale Brown, for example, says that Spener and his successor, August Francke, "professed a mediating position between dogmatic rigidity and emotional warmth, faith and works, law and gospel, justification and sanctification, judgment and love of the world."<sup>6</sup> This article is written in the contention that Spener, at least, did not mediate through compromise but sought to maintain or restore the traditional Lutheran tension of these two poles.

While later Pietism did not always desire to maintain a balanced Lutheran perspective, it is the thesis of this article that Philipp Spener strove to do just that through his sensible proposals for reform of scholastic Lutheranism. His basic pietist platform in *Pia Desideria* also serves as a legitimate framework for evaluating contemporary Lutheran *practice*, especially in light of pietism's biblical and confessional foundation. The major portion of the article, after a historical review of the circumstances surrounding the work, summarizes Spener's concerns for a balanced Lutheranism as he expressed them in the *Pia Desideria*. The article concludes with reflections on Spener's six-fold proposal in light of Pietism's later history and especially contemporary American Lutheran church life.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Pietism did not grow in a vacuum. Following the intra-Lutheran controversies which resulted in the Formula of Concord and the Book of Concord in 1580, a period of confessional orthodoxy and scholastic Lutheranism flourished.<sup>7</sup> A singular emphasis on pure teaching and proper formulations replaced the fuller Lutheran emphasis on the gospel's power and purpose on the whole person as a justified sinner in this world.

It should be noted immediately that a thoroughly biblical and soundly confessional theology was never exclusive of a deep-felt personal spirituality. Martin Luther's own piety exhibited an interplay of objective doctrines with subjective application.<sup>8</sup> The most renowned forerunner of Pietism, Johann Arndt (1555-1621), held

to doctrinal purity with a high degree of spiritual sensitivity. Arndt's devotional work, *True Christianity*, emphasized the Christian's life which was not merely a product of orthodox doctrines, but involved an inner relationship based on the justified believer's union with God.<sup>9</sup> Johann Gerhard (1582–1637), the ablest systematician of orthodox Lutheranism, followed Arndt's example and wrote *Sacred Meditations*, an almost mystical expression of personal devotion.<sup>10</sup>

Lutheran scholasticism, as the Aristotelian and highly dogmatic approach has frequently been called, became more and more polemical and insensitive as it grew in influence and dominance in the seventeenth century. The aridity of such Orthodoxy in the latter half of the century, coupled with the despair produced by the Thirty Years' War a generation earlier, resulted in conditions which were ripe for Pietism. Dry dogmatic theology had suppressed the full expression of Lutheranism and Pietism arose as a corrective counter-measure.

Pietism, as used in this article, refers to the specific desires for a personal and practical faith as a balance to the "Orthodoxism"<sup>11</sup> which dominated late seventeenth-century Lutheranism. Although many scholars now use the term more generally, Pietism was originally identified as a uniquely Lutheran response to Orthodoxy.<sup>12</sup> It grew out of the Reformation via Johann Arndt through the writings of Philipp Spener<sup>13</sup> and was disseminated into the ecumenical world by the philanthropic and educational programs at Halle and Württemberg.

Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705), often called "the Father of Pietism,"<sup>14</sup> was nurtured in the piety of his baptismal sponsor, Countess Agatha von Rappoltstein, a mystical quietist, as well as his devout Lutheran parents. He studied Luther under the orthodox confessional Lutheran theologian, Johann Conrad Dannhauer (1603–1666) in Strassburg, but he was also influenced by the practical Christian life of other religious communities. He was ordained into the Lutheran ministry, married and received his doctorate in 1663. Within three years he became senior pastor of the Frankfurt ministerium, where he served successfully for twenty years and became the central figure of German Lutheran Pietism. His practical pastoral preaching, his prolific personal and devotional writing, and his strong leadership abilities brought him to the center of influence.<sup>15</sup>

## PIA DESIDERIA

Spener's *Pia Desideria* became the classic statement for Pietism, a platform as well as a foundation for future pietistic activities.<sup>16</sup> The work first prefaced a republication of Johann Arndt's sermons in March of 1675. By the fall of that year the demand for the work as an independent booklet resulted in its publication with two appended critiques. In 1678, Spener translated the work into Latin so that it could have a broader reception outside Germanic Lutheranism.<sup>17</sup> In his introduction, Spener suggests a collegial and mutual airing of concerns and discussion of issues.

This three-part work moves from the practical problems which Spener noted in his own Lutheran church, especially the moral laxity among both clergy and laity, to a hope-filled assertion of the possibilities for reforming the church, and, finally, to six proposals for achieving the desired piety. It is this six-fold restoration process to balance scholastic Lutheranism which became the focal point for subsequent Lutheran Pietism.

*Conditions Needing Reform*

In the first part of the work, Spener voices his criticism, even in the face of possible persecution, at the inferior condition of Lutheran churches.<sup>18</sup> Initially, he notes what can be called a caesaropapism, but what he is actually criticizing is the neglect of political leaders to use their God-given powers to aid the full expression of the gospel.<sup>19</sup>

The clergy are Spener's second objects of criticism. He says that "there are fewer than may at first appear who . . . really understand and practice true Christianity (which consists of more than avoiding manifest vices and living an outwardly moral life)."<sup>20</sup> The pursuit of success following worldly standards and a lack of fruit-producing faith was evident in too many pastors. Subtle philosophical controversy seemed to be the highest mark of orthodox theologians rather than a proper balance of theology with exemplary living based on biblical norms.

Because of oversight and insincerity among both the princes and clergy, Spener said, it was no wonder that the laity did not live Christian lives. Drunkenness of every kind is sin. The general prac-

tice of filing lawsuits, subtle and unscrupulous business procedures, lack of concern for the common good, and begging, also are sinful, according to Spener. Such activities come from a lack of love for one another as Christ exhorted his followers.

Aware that he might be understood as advocating a works-oriented Christianity, Spener quickly balanced his remarks:

We gladly acknowledge that we must be saved only and alone through faith and that our works or godly life contribute neither much nor little to our salvation, for as a fruit of our faith our works are connected with the gratitude which we owe to God, who has already given us who believe the gift of righteousness and salvation.<sup>21</sup>

He affirms the effectiveness of the proclaimed Word of God, baptism, and "the glorious power in the sacramental, oral, and not merely spiritual eating and drinking of the body and blood of the Lord in the Holy Supper."<sup>22</sup>

Quoting Luther's dynamic definition of faith in his preface to the Epistle to the Romans, Spener points out that many people think they have a true and living faith who in actuality do not.<sup>23</sup> A pernicious *opus operatum* (merely mechanistic) view of the sacraments had reentered the church, not through the orthodox teachers of the church but through an unbalanced misuse of their teachings.<sup>24</sup>

These conditions caused a four-fold offense, according to Spener. First, among the Jews living in German Lutheran territories, there is no reason to believe in a Christ whose followers lived such wayward lives. Secondly, Roman Catholic charges against Luther's reformation seem to be supported by the lives lived by those who followed him. Thirdly, godly people who read Scripture faithfully see many scandalous discrepancies between life and doctrine. Fourthly, potential converts to Lutheranism from other denominations do not do so because "they finally come to the conclusion that there no longer is any pure church on earth."<sup>25</sup> A proper balance needed to be restored.

He concludes this first section by underscoring his motivation of love for the truth and the gospel. It is not the doctrines of the Lutheran church which are at fault, Spener is careful to state, but the unbalanced external human defects which overemphasize one aspect of the church's nature. These defects must be exposed so that they can be corrected.

### *Examples Inspiring Reform*

Spener resumes with this confident statement: "If we consult the Holy Scriptures we can have no doubt that God promised his church here on earth a better state than this."<sup>26</sup> Although such a reform could be accomplished without human involvement, he viewed the prospect of being the instrument or occasion for the conversion of others in a most positive sense. His hope was not for a Platonic utopian dream of perfection on earth, an accusation some have incorrectly cast at him. Rather, he finds the biblical theme of striving for perfection as a goal for a balanced Christian life of sanctification following the basic foundational experience of justification.

Examples of godly living among the early Christians, including Ignatius, Eusebius, and Tertullian, are cited by Spener as evidence for the possibility of better conditions in the church. The difference between the early church and the contemporary situation of scholastic Lutheranism was the fact that the Holy Spirit's activity was not hindered in the ancient church. Spener concludes this section by exhorting pastors to make small improvements in their congregations, so that the church may be built up and a balance restored according to "pious reflection and the guidance of the Scriptures."<sup>27</sup>

### *Proposals Describing Reform*

The proposals made in this last section had the greatest impact on forming Pietism. Here, Spener presents six transforming propositions which he hoped would restore a balance for true Lutheran piety and practice. These must be read in the context of confessional orthodox Lutheranism, not later pietist praxis. In each proposal, Spener sought to restore the proper tension in Lutheranism between justification and sanctification, word and deed, law and gospel, objectivity and subjectivity.

In soundly confessional Lutheran fashion, Spener begins with the source and norm for Lutheran doctrine and practice—the Word of God: ". . . The Word of God is the powerful means, since faith must be enkindled through the gospel, and the law provides the rules for good works and many wonderful impulses to attain them."<sup>28</sup>

His first proposal had three parts. First, "every housefather

[should] keep a Bible, or at least a New Testament, handy and read from it every day." Secondly, "the books of the Bible [should] be read one after another, at specified times in the public service, without further comment." Finally, he introduces his *collegia pietatis* (pious gatherings) as "the ancient and apostolic kind of church meetings . . . in the manner in which Paul describes them in I Corinthians 14:26-40."<sup>29</sup>

Much attention has been given to the *collegia pietatis*. Six years earlier, Spener had introduced the idea in one of his sermons. Since that time, small groups had met in his home for devotional study, and, from 1675, exclusively for Bible study.<sup>30</sup> These small-groups became one of the most significant marks of the pietist movement. Conceived as a core for reform, their formation was intended to serve as an intermediary structure (between public preaching and private reading) for spiritual nurture. They could provide clearer lines of communication for better pastor-people relationships; and the lay participants would grow spiritually and so become better teachers in their homes.<sup>31</sup>

Tied closely with this re-emphasis on Bible study is the restoration *and practice* of Luther's priesthood of all believers. Spener labelled the spiritual monopoly of the clergy over the laity, "a special trick of the cursed devil" and "the principal means by which papal Rome established its power over poor Christians."<sup>32</sup> By distinguishing between the public and private exercise of spiritual functions, Spener elevated the pastoral office while encouraging greater spiritual activity among the laity.<sup>33</sup>

Beginning with Johannine enjoinders to Christian love, Spener proposed that the practice of love should be stressed incessantly. He suggested that those who truly wanted to practice love should find a spiritual director who would provide spiritual council and instruction along the way.

From the more general or universal propositions for the church-at-large, Spener moved to those directly affecting the *theological* circles of German Lutheranism. Controversy had become a major activity among the Lutheran scholastic theologians as they sought to clarify their orthodox doctrinal positions and distinguish themselves from other Christians, especially from other Protestants. Spener saw this process as necessary, but having drawbacks: "Disputing is not enough either to maintain the truth among ourselves or to impart it to the erring."<sup>34</sup>

He began with some suggestions for dealing with the erring and heretics. Besides praying for their coming to the truth, Lutheran Christians should be exemplary in their actions and conversations so that the erring may find no obstacles to their conversion. A clear, decisive articulation of error as it conflicts with Scripture should be given out of sincere love for the individual and the truth. When admonition is required, "a proper hatred of false religion should neither suspend nor weaken the love that is due the other person."<sup>35</sup> Although he acknowledged that defense of the truth and refutation of errors must always be practiced in the church, an emphasis upon true repentance and holy living served as an appropriate balance in churchly life.<sup>36</sup>

Disputation solely, he concluded, was not as useful as many theologians supposed, since after a dispute much remained unsolved. More significantly, winning a dispute did not result in winning a soul for Christ. Disputes should be balanced in such a way that Christian living and loving also is exhibited.

Because clergy have the greatest influence on church life, Spener saw the training of future pastors as a sphere ripe for reform. Beginning with a call for more exemplary living by the orthodox theological faculties, he designated several areas which needed immediate attention. An integration of piety into academic study was basic. "Study without piety is worthless," he said; "since theology is a practical discipline, everything must be directed to the practice of faith and life."<sup>37</sup> So important was this practice of piety that Spener boldly concluded:

It is certain that a young man who fervently loves God, although adorned with limited gifts, will be more useful to the church of God with his meager talent and academic achievement than a vain and worldly fool with double doctor's degrees who is very clever but has not been taught by God.<sup>38</sup>

Simply stated, piety preaches better sermons.

Not denying the importance of polemics, Spener suggested that there be specialists in that field and that, when studied, apologetics not be done in Latin, since most young pastors were unable to translate the concepts adequately for their parishioners. Besides the study of Scripture and dogmatics, he suggested that spiritual or devotional reading should be required for a complete and balanced theological education.<sup>39</sup>



Practical instruction and exercises should be provided through "how to" experiences. Professors should form *collegia pietatis* to guide the seminarians in practical piety. Students could then support and encourage each other in piety and pastoral ministry in such a biblical framework.

Continuing this practical emphasis, Spener focused upon preaching as the most effective instrument pastors possessed for spiritual nurture. The gist of his concern in this section is captured by the following sentence:

Many preachers are more concerned to have the introduction shape up well and the transitions be effective, to have an outline that is artful and yet sufficiently concealed, and to have all the parts handled precisely according to the rules of oratory and suitably embellished, than they are concerned that the materials be chosen and by God's grace be developed in such a way that the hearers may profit from the sermon in life and death.<sup>40</sup>

Practical personal application, not homiletic erudition, is demanded of true preachers of the Word. To that end, Spener proposed that the topics of Luther's *Small Catechism* become frequent subjects for sermons. Following the balanced example of Johann Arndt, Spener suggested that sermons should be directed to the "inner person," the "heart," the "soul."<sup>41</sup>

## RESULTING REFORMS

### *Initial Reception*

Approval of these proposals came from such unlikely sources as the Tübingen faculty and Abraham Calovius, a most conservative orthodox theologian. Two critiques of the work, included in the later publications, were provided by Spener's brothers-in-law. Both spoke approvingly, yet noted certain weaknesses in the proposals. John Henry Horb objected to Spener's advocacy of church discipline and was less optimistic of the possibility of reform. Joachim Stoll warned against using medieval mystics such as Tauler and à Kempis instead of a truly orthodox devotional writer of the like of John Gerhard.

Rather than being a radically innovative reform program, Martin

Schmidt has noted that the central feature of Spener's proposal was to reject the Aristotelian scholasticism which had re-entered theology, especially Lutheran dogmatics, and return to a more balanced spiritual dimension following Arndt and Luther.<sup>42</sup>

In almost all contexts, the work was perceived as being a legitimate proposal for reform. The conditions addressed by Spener gave voice to concerns felt by many others of his day. It was only the later developments in Pietism that distorted and diminished the power and purpose of this initial proposal.

### *Spener's Followers*

The followers of Spener, especially August Hermann Francke (1663–1727), sought to retain a Lutheran foundation and focus while moving out into the world. In Francke, however, there developed a greater emphasis upon an experience of conversion,<sup>43</sup> the relevance of doctrine only as it related to life,<sup>44</sup> an emphasis on education for practical piety, and Christian philanthropy.<sup>45</sup> Spener's careful balance began to wobble.

It was at Halle, that Francke's colleagues systematized Spener's ideas into what is most often identified as Pietism. In Francke, more than in Spener, there was a subtle but certain move away from Lutheranism, not just Orthodoxy.<sup>46</sup> Francke tried to maintain his Lutheran substance, although adopting a style akin to the more practical Calvinists and Puritans of his day.<sup>47</sup>

Other so-called Pietists were not concerned to retain their Lutheranism and diverted into other areas. When the Lutheran emphasis upon forensic justification (assumed by Spener) was exchanged for an over-emphasis upon sanctification, the original pietist balance was lost. When being "born again" was detached from the means of grace, errors earlier ascribed to Anabaptists and Schwenkfelders by the confessional Lutherans once again appeared. When the sovereignty of God was elevated and the means of grace denigrated, Calvinist influences were identified. This appeared most clearly in Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf.

### *The End of Pietism?*

With the rise of Enlightenment and Rationalism, both Orthodoxy and Pietism suffered frontal attacks. Pietism's eclipse after 1750

gives credence to some of the criticisms of Pietism's weak theology and over-emphasized praxis. What had begun with Spener's legitimate concerns for reform became institutionalized alongside that which it desired to reform. The *collegia pietatis* proved to undercut community rather than support the whole church and its reform. A subjective reading of Scripture with a commensurate weakening of objective doctrinal truth provided little foundation against the Enlightenment thinking of the later eighteenth century. The emphasis upon Christian love and religious toleration led to diversity not only in practices but also in substantive doctrines. Yet, Pietism's balanced legacy continued in at least one area of Lutheranism, through the hymnody of Paul Gerhardt and Nikolaus von Zinzendorf, and the music of Johann Sebastian Bach.

Although later Pietism replaced the centrality of justification with sanctification, objectivity with subjectivity, thereby losing its reform potential in maintaining the traditional Lutheran tensions, it still stood in the wings throughout the next centuries: in the neo-Pietism of Friedrich August G. Tholuck (1799–1877) in Germany and Samuel Schmucker (1799–1873) in America; in the theological school of Erlangen; in the writings of Johann Wilhelm Herrmann (1846–1922) who taught Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann; and (most recently) in the Charismatic and church growth movement among American Lutherans. At each of these times, there was a cultural and societal emphasis which sought an alternative to a rationalism (or scholasticism) of a previous age. The human spirit found a balance in the divine Spirit.

### *Relevance Today*

Pietism arose in a specific historical context of Lutheran confessionalism. It proposed necessary corrective measures against Orthodoxy, seeking to maintain a truly Lutheran balance. Because the necessary changes did not occur within the structure of Orthodox Lutheranism, new structures arose and Pietism developed as a step-child. But the cry for reform continues whenever rationalism empties the reality of faith.

In the six propositions for reform by Spener, we can still see their ongoing validity:

1. The cry for a return to Scripture remains frustratingly central in American Lutheranism. Bible studies are seldom experienced as the dominant program for spiritual nurture in Lutheran congregations. With the historical-critical hermeneutic, so popular among some Lutherans, the Bible has been literally taken away from the people and claimed only as a trained scholar's prerogative. Fortunately small group activities, an increasing emphasis among "church growth" advocates, although not new or innovative, exemplifies the on-going struggle and desire to return to the Word of God.
2. An emphasis upon the laity as "ministers" has received increased emphasis over the past generation in some Lutheran circles.<sup>48</sup> Much debate regarding the concept of "ministry" will continue in many areas of American Lutheranism. Neither the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America nor the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has been exempt from the debate.<sup>49</sup> Spener's concerns, therefore, cannot be disclaimed as illegitimate or inappropriate. The issues regarding the concept of lay-involved ministry has not been resolved nor have all the consequences even been considered. What will happen in the future will determine whether the cry is heard, answered, or ignored.
3. While love of neighbor is central for all Christians, the use of spiritual directors has never been followed to any great extent by Lutherans. Perhaps it is time to reconsider this idea. Training directors in conflict resolution and biblical, devotional counsel could have a significant impact upon American Lutheranism, especially if such training was in conjunction with our Lutheran colleges and seminaries. The true praxis of theology could be caught as well as taught.
4. Controversy seems to be a mark of Lutheran Christianity. The concern for purity of doctrine among many American Lutherans exemplifies this. The fact that controversies are often left unsettled supports Spener's contention that they are not always useful. Spener's concerns for spiritual dialogue may be more in line for future intra-Lutheran and ecumenical discussions, but it also raises a question about *the process* for maintaining purity of doctrine among Lutherans.
5. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has within the past several years introduced a synodical office for theological training, seeking to develop the practical and spiritual along with the

academic dimensions of pastoral preparations. Spener's concerns, not necessarily only devotional, certainly are representative of continuing Lutheran concerns about pastoral training. Has such training become solely academic or can a devotional praxis be restored with integrity?

6. Sermon content has remained an important consideration at Lutheran seminaries as well as Lutheran congregations. With the increased emphasis on *theological* training in exegesis and systematics, homiletics is often relegated to the level of another practical course. While rhetorical style is necessary, the theological content and practical application of texts needs to be continually stressed. Spener's voice can be heard in many pews today.<sup>50</sup>

## CONCLUSION

As we have seen, Philipp Spener's *Pia Desideria* was more than a pious desire. It was a foundational platform for later Pietism as it sought reform for the church. Through his six sensible proposals, Spener sought to reform scholastic Lutheranism and return Lutheran theology and practice to its biblical and confessional roots. Not as a compromise to Orthodoxy, but through concerted efforts aimed at restoring key Reformation themes, Spener articulately set forth his program which integrated Lutheran theology and practice into a grand, yet balanced scheme.

There will and must always be a tension in the church between the *una* and the *sancta*, between the missionary spirit and the dogmatic truth, between community and purity. Philipp Spener is one example in the history of the church in which this tension was manifested. Throughout his life he considered his beliefs to be Lutheran and Orthodox. Yet, the need to maintain the balance between faith and life resulted in the expression of his most "pious desires."

Spener's proposals must still be heard today, not in light of the later developments of Pietism, but in their original context of orthodox Lutheranism. The desire of the lay people to hear God's Word proclaimed and applied to daily concerns will always be present.

Pietism will always be attractive for those seeking a balanced Lutheranism. Balancing sanctification with justification, the re-

sponsible living of the faith with the assurance of the free gift of grace will always be necessary for maintaining the proper Lutheran tension. Pietism will be that ever present potential possibility kept before those who cry for purity of doctrine to the exclusion of a personal, living faith.

#### NOTES

1. Philipp Jakob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, ed. Kurt Aland, 3d ed., (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1964). Page numbers throughout this article are from the translation by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964).

2. Dale W. Brown, *Understanding Pietism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 10, notes: "In twentieth century theological parlance, Pietism has been identified negatively as emotionalism, mysticism, rationalism, subjectivism, asceticism, quietism, synergism, chiliasm, moralism, legalism, separatism, individualism and otherworldliness. Such characterizations in many ways echo the polemical utterances of the Pietists' early Orthodox opponents who called them, among other names: Donatists, Pelagians, Albigenses, Rosicrucians, Schwenkfeldians, Weigelians, Osiandrians, Syncretists, Majorists, Quakers, and Enthusiasts."

3. So consuming was this rise that Albrecht Ritschl spent his last ten productive years, 1876-1886, working on a critical three-volume *History of Pietism*. The "Prolegomena" is available in English translation by Philipp Hefner in *Three Essays by Albrecht Ritschl* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972).

4. Carter Lindberg has documented the similarities and ties between the charismatic movement, the church growth movement and Pietism (broadly defined) in two recent works: *The Third Reformation* and "Pietism and the Church Growth Movement in a Confessional Lutheran Perspective," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 52:2-3 (April-July 1988): 129-147.

5. Since the early 1960s there has been an increased interest in Pietism, both on the continent and in the United States. In 1964 the Historische Kommission zur Erforschung des Pietismus was founded by the recognized scholar of Pietism, Martin Schmidt. This commission supports the monograph series, *Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Pietismus*, and the yearbook, *Pietismus und Neuzeit*. Works by Dale Brown, Carter Lindberg, F. Ernest Stoeffler have provided some help for those limited to English.

6. Brown, 137. See Martin O. Westerhaus, "Literary Landmarks of Pietism," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 82:1 (Winter 1985): 13, for a comparable viewpoint.

7. See Robert D. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism: A Study of Theological Prolegomena* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1970), 27-252, for a very thorough discussion of this period of Lutheranism.

8. Martin Schmidt, "Spener und Luther," *Luther-Jahrbuch* XXIV (1957), 102-129.

9. Johann Arndt, *Sämtliche Geistreiche Bücher Von Wahren Christenthum* (Giessen: Verlegts Erberhard Henrich Lammers), 1749 edition. The first of the four books of *True Christianity* has been recently translated and introduced by Peter Erb in the series, *Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979).

10. John Gerhard was best known for his extensive systematic work, *Loci communes theologici* (1609-1622). His *Sacred Meditations* were translated from the Latin by C. W. Heisler (Philadelphia, 1896). Philipp Spener noted, *Pia Desideria*, 48, that even Gerhard was slandered as a pantheistic mystic (Weigelian) and a Rosicrucian. See also Jörg Baur, "Johann Gerhard," *Orthodoxie und Pietismus*, Martin Greschat, ed., Vol. 7 *Gestalten der Kirchengeschichte* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1982), 99-120.

11. The term is defined in the *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, 768, as "an extreme form of literal adherence to the system of Orthodox doctrine as accepted by the Church, with a pedantic insistence on absolute uniformity in the use of terms, while at the same time neglecting the true piety of the heart and corresponding behavior of the confessing Christian."

12. Spener, *Pia Desideria*, 57f, stated: "When one looks at the everyday life even of those among us who are called Lutherans (but who do not deserve this name, for they do not understand dear Luther's teaching about living faith) does one not find grave offense—indeed, such offenses as are everywhere prevalent?" Albrecht Ritschl, "Prologomena," 53, criticized Heinrich Schmid's *History of Pietism* (1863) because it restricted the concept only to Lutheranism, rather than embracing a broader expression in all of Christianity. Following Ritschl, F. Ernest Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, Studies in the History of Religion, ix (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), 6–7, uses the term in a more general sense; Lindberg, *Third Reformation*, 134–5, provides broad and narrow definitions, both of which define a Pietism which developed from Spener's work.

13. Paul Grünberg, *Philipp Jakob Spener* (3 vols., Göttingen, 1893–1906; reprinted, New York: George Olms, 1988). F. Ernest Stoeffler's, *German Pietism During the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973) provides a brief biography and bibliography on Spener for the English reader. See also Dietrich Blaufuß, ed., *Pietismus-Forschungen: Zu Philipp Jakob Spener und zum spiritualistisch-radikalpietistischen Umfeld* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1986).

14. Johannes Wallmann, "Philipp Jakob Spener," in *Orthodoxie und Pietismus*, 205, acknowledges that if Pietism is used more broadly, this is not the case, but if one is speaking specifically of Lutheran Pietism, Spener is "the Father."

15. Schmidt, "Spener und Luther," 103, says: "Er [Francke?] zeichnete ihm [Spener] nicht nur als einen vorbildlichen Christen im Glauben, in der Liebe, in der Demut, Sanftmut, Geduld und Aufrichtigkeit, in der Weisheit und Vorsicht, sondern hob auch einige seiner eigentümlichen Anliegen treffend hervor, das geistliche Priestertum, die Hoffnung auf bessere Zeiten für die Kirche, die Heiligung neben der Rechtfertigung des armen Sünders."

16. Wallmann, 208, cites from p. 52 of Spener's *Wahrhaftige Erzählung vom Pietismo* of 1697, Spener's own remark about the work that in it "wirklich bereits alles enthalten ist / was ich nachmal gelehrt oder getrieben [habe]." See also Friedrich Wilhelm Kantzenbach, *Orthodoxie und Pietismus* (Gütersloh: Gerhard Mohn, 1966), 138–140. For further background on the work in English, see Theodore G. Tappert's "Introduction," to *Pia Desideria* by Philipp Jakob Spener (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 1–28.

17. See [Peter] Wilhelm [Heinrich] Hossbach, *Philipp Jakob Spener* (Berlin: Dümmlers Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1861), 93.

18. *Pia Desideria*, 40: "... we limit ourselves to our Evangelical church, which according to its outward confession embraces the precious and pure gospel, brought clearly to light once again during the previous century through that blessed instrument of God, Dr. Luther, and in which alone we must therefore recognize that the true church is visible. . . ."

19. Stoeffler, *Rise*, 232–235, says that the term, *caesaropapism*, though seldom defined, "stood for all the evils and frustrations implicit in a system in which the secular power may control the life, the work, and frequently the message of a Church." Spener, however, was not opposed to the proper role of the secular powers. In fact, he utilized this political-religious clout through Elector Frederick III when the orthodox pastors of Brandenburg raised concerns over Francke's teachings in 1692. Stoeffler reports in his later work, *German Pietism*, 40: "All the differences of theological opinion had to be submitted to the consistory, which meant, in effect, that Frederick himself would make the final decision. Frederick, in turn, would rely heavily on the judgment of Spener, whom he had called to Berlin, thus giving Halle a direct line into the very citadel of political power."

20. *Pia Desideria*, 45. There is a translation error here. The ellipse included the words, "do not," which would be an affirmation of the clergy; an idea not intended by Spener here!

21. *Ibid.*, 63.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*, 64, citing WA, DB, 7: 9–10; *Luther's Works* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955) 35: 365–370; as well as Luther's *Kirchenpostille* in WA 22. Luther said, "Faith is a divine work in us which changes us and makes us to be born anew of God, John 1 (:12–13). It kills the old Adam and makes us altogether different men, in heart and spirit and mind and powers; and it brings with it the Holy Spirit. Oh, it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. It is impossible for it not to be doing good works incessantly."

24. Spener mentions baptism, the Word, confession and absolution, and the Lord's Supper, which can bring comfort, but falsely if inappropriately applied. [This echoes much of C. F. W. Walther's discussion on appropriately applying *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*.]

25. *Ibid.*, 68–71. Regarding the last point, Spener laments (71), that most do not even take the time to study the *purser* Lutheran doctrine. And, ". . . those who are acquainted with it regard doctrine which does not regulate life as mere pretense and expect to discern the kingdom of God not in words but in power," although that is no excuse.

26. *Ibid.*, 76. He anticipates a great conversion of Gentiles and Jews, based upon Romans 11:25–26, which he acknowledges was not so interpreted by Luther. Secondly, he expects the fall of papal Rome, based on Revelation 18 and 19. "If these two things happen," he says (77), "I do not see how anybody can doubt that the whole true church would be in a more glorious and blessed condition than it is now." See K. James Stein, "Philip Jakob Spener's Hope for Better Times for the Church—Contribution in Controversy," *The Covenant Quarterly* 37 (August 1979), where he shows Spener's continual concerns.

27. *Ibid.*, 86.

28. *Ibid.*, 87. Notice, however, that Luther's Pauline designation of the law as a pedagogue which leads to Christ is weak here and that the emphasis seems to be on the later confessional Lutheran emphasis on the *tertius usus legis*.

29. *Ibid.*, 88–89. Changes in the liturgical lectionary in the middle of this twentieth century would have been lauded by Spener, for he regretted that "all Scripture" was not preached.

30. Hossbach, 90.

31. *Pia Desideria*, 91. Spener was aware of the possible problems associated with this proposal. He suggested (*ibid.*, 89–90) that clergy and laity "meet under the leadership of a minister, take up the Holy Scriptures, read aloud from them, and fraternally discuss each verse in order to discover its simple meaning and whatever may be useful for the edification of all. . . . Then all that has been contributed, insofar as it accords with the sense of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, should be carefully considered by the rest, especially by the ordained ministers, and applied to the edification of the whole meeting. Everything should be arranged with an eye to the glory of God, to the spiritual growth of the participants, and therefore also to their limitations. Any threat of meddlesomeness, quarrelsomeness, self-seeking, or something else of this sort should be guarded against and tactfully cut off especially by the preachers who retain leadership in these meetings." These groups were called *ecclesiolae in ecclesia*, "little churches in the Church," and often exhibited a spiritual superiority which bordered on pride. In Frankfurt Spener discovered their divisive potentiality and he discontinued using them when he moved to Berlin.

Various explanations for the origin of Spener's idea have been given, but nothing has been conclusive. Tappert, "Introduction," 14, mentions attempts to connect these conventicles to the house meetings of Jean de Labadie in Geneva, whom Spener visited during his two-year study tour after graduation around 1660. Others have tried to tie them to the English Puritan "prophesying" or to similar assemblies in the Netherlands among Reformed. All such connections are weak and all that can be said is that such house-meetings were quite common at that time. Spener himself cites Luther's Preface to the Bible (WA 50:657–8; LW 34:283–5) and his *Tabletalks* (WA, *Tischreden*, 4: 87, 432–3; 5: 661–2), which emphasize the diligent study of Scripture by the laity.



32. *Ibid.*, 92–3. Spener encouraged his readers to look at Luther's treatise *De instituendis ministris Ecclesiae ad Clarissimum Senatum Pragensem Bohemiae* of 1523 (WA 12:169–196, LW 40:7–44). It is interesting to note that about a century later the German missionary to the American Midwest, J. K. Wilhelm Lohe, rejected this idea and introduced a very hierarchical view of the pastoral office into American Lutheranism. See the recent article by Todd Nichol, "Willhelm Lohe, the Iowa Synod and the Ordained Ministry," *Lutheran Quarterly* 4:1 (Spring 1990): 11–29.

33. *Ibid.*, 94–5. Spener says: "One man is incapable of doing all that is necessary for the edification of the many persons who are generally entrusted to his pastoral care. . . . However, if the priests do their duty, the minister, as director and oldest brother, has splendid assistance in the performance of his duties and his public and private acts, and thus his burden will not be too heavy."

34. *Ibid.*, 102.

35. *Ibid.*, 99.

36. Here Spener draws heavily upon Johannes Arndt's *True Christianity*, Book I, chapters 37–39.

37. *Ibid.*, 104–5. The latter quotation, "theologia habitus practicus est," was a common assertion among the theologians of seventeenth century Lutheran Orthodoxy. He also cites several respected theologians, Abraham Calovius, Johann Gerhardt, and Johann Schmidt, who shared similar concerns.

38. *Ibid.*, 108.

39. *Ibid.*, 110f. His examples from Martin Luther's life and writings suggest that the *Theologia Germanica*, Thomas a Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, as well as writings by Tauler and St. Augustine, be read diligently, albeit circumspectly, along with Johannes Arndt's *True Christianity*.

40. *Ibid.*, 115.

41. *Ibid.*, 118–122. Recall that this work was originally a preface to Arndt's Johannine sermons. Therefore, Spener moves into his introduction of the newly revised edition.

42. Schmidt, "Spener und Luther," 102–109.

43. He claimed, in his *Selbstzeugnisse*, a conversion experience in preparation for a sermon based upon John 20:31. See Stoeffler, *German Pietism*, 12, for a summary in English.

44. Francke taught a very pragmatic concept of doctrines, utilizing the term *das Nutzliche* for such relevant materials. See Stoeffler, *German Pietism*, 45–6.

45. Francke's philanthropic endeavors in Halle are exemplary for much of later Lutheranism. His four-level school system, interest in foreign missionary work, religious publishing, and social welfare programs have remained notable programs in the history of Lutheranism.

46. Valentin Ernst Loscher (1673–1749) clearly expressed several concerns of orthodox Lutheranism with the developing Pietist tendencies in his communications with Halle theologians. Especially clear to him was a Donatism which equated sacramental power with clergy spirituality, a legalism which denied the concept of *adiaphora* (matters of indifference) in church life, and a subjectivism which bordered on *Schwärmerei* (enthusiasm). See Martin Greschat, "Valentin Ernst Loscher," *Orthodoxie und Pietismus*, 287–300.

47. To delineate Calvinistic tendencies or influences in Pietism is beyond the scope of this article, although an important subject. It is only mentioned here because Pietism is generally categorized as exhibiting Calvinist leanings, without giving Spener's work an unbiased hearing. See Johannes Wallmann, *Philipp Jakob Spener und die Anfänge des Pietismus* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1986) and, in English, Carter Lindberg's studies, where the connection is made. Stoeffler, *Rise*, 203, notes that there is a difference between Spener's and Francke's Pietism; he connects Spener with earlier Lutheran devotional writers such as Arndt.

48. See Oscar E. Feucht, *Everyone a Minister* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1974), although criticized for its over emphases on "lay ministry," carries many concerns of Spener's *Pia Desideria*.

49. The issue of "lay ministry" was hotly debated in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's 1989 national convention. In the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the debate is less vocal, since the only valid ministry seems to be the pastoral office. See *Currents in Theology and Mission* 17:1 (February 1990), which carried several articles on "ministry," almost all emphasizing the hierarchical, pastoral, public ministry to the implicit deemphasis of the priesthood of all believers.

50. Milo L. Brekke, Merton P. Strommen, and Dorothy L. Williams, *Ten Faces of Ministry: Perspectives on Pastoral and Congregational Effectiveness Based on a Survey of 500 Lutherans* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1979), specifically uncovered this in chapter 6, "Community Through Word and Sacrament," and in Appendix C, pp. 205-256.



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