LOGIA

A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY

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EPIPHANY 1999 VOLUME VIII, NUMBER 1

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ὡς λόγια Θεοῦ

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

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THE COVER ART is "The Adoration of the Magi," a woodcut by Albrecht Durer, depicting the account in Matthew 2. This is the second and last woodcut Durer produced on this theme. The first one (1503) clearly takes place at the manger, whereas in this one (1511) Joseph and Mary seem to be living in a house, as the text says. Nevertheless, we see here a few non-textual elements supplied by church tradition: The magi are depicted as kings, there are three magi (following the fact that three gifts are offered), one of the magi is from Africa, and Joseph is obviously much older than Mary.

This woodcut by Albrecht Durer is taken from the Complete Woodcuts of Albrecht Durer, edited by Dr. Willi Kurth, Arden Book Company: 1936. The cover art is provided by the Concordia Seminary Library, Saint Louis, by the Rev. Ernest Bernet.

FREQUENTLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

AC [CA]	Augsburg Confession
AE	*Luther's Works,* American Edition
Ap	Apology of the Augsburg Confession
BAGD	Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*
BSLK	*Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*
Ep	Epitome of the Formula of Concord
FC	Formula of Concord
LC	Large Catechism
LW	*Lutheran Worship*
SA	Smalcald Articles
SBH	*Service Book and Hymnal*
SC	Small Catechism
SD	Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord
SL	St. Louis Edition of Luther's Works
Tappert	*The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.* Trans. and ed. Theodore G. Tappert
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TLH	*The Lutheran Hymnal*
Tr	Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope
Triglotta	*Concordia Triglotta*
WA	*Luthers Werke,* Weimarer Ausgabe [Weimar Edition]

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Correspondence

On Church and Ministry

Several authors writing for *Logia* seem to identify the pastoral office, and even the person of the pastor, with the means of grace—for example, "To confess the means of grace is to confess the office of the holy ministry and its instrumentality in the confession of the gospel itself." Also, "The pastor then is the means and instrument through which Christ himself personally does his work in his church." Again, "Only *in, with, and under* [emphasis added] the human element of the pastor can Christ offer the Communion and actually commune." Or, "Just as the sacramental union is similar to the personal union, so also is the ministerial union similar to the sacramental union."

This opinion makes the pastor a means of grace and in a way can also be understood as identifying the minister as a *sacramental* means to actualize the presence of Christ in the congregation. Whether the writers recognize it or not, this is the doctrine of the Orthodox Church. "Bishops and priests in the Church are sacramentally ordained to actualize the presence and power of Jesus himself in the church, Christ's own personal and individual presence and actuality as the good pastor, the great high priest." On the basis of this doctrine, the Orthodox Church refuses to recognize a baptism done by anyone other than an orthodox priest.

Reference is frequently made to Luther as supporting this point of view. Allow the blessed Doctor to speak for himself. The following quotations are from *Sermons of Martin Luther,* ed. John Nicholas Lenker. vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983).

Sermon on the First Sunday after Easter (John 20:19–31): "The first and highest work of love a Christian ought to do when he has become a believer, is to bring others also to believe in the way he himself came to believe. And here you notice Christ begins and institutes the office of the ministry of the external Word in every Christian" (359).

"He [Christ] gives spiritual power and rule . . . when ye shall speak a word concerning a sinner, it shall be spoken in heaven; for He is in your mouth. . . . This same power belongs to every Christian, since Christ made us all partakers of his power and dominion" (360).

Second sermon for the First Sunday after Easter, 1522 (John 20:19–31): "'Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins you forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.' This power is here given to all Christians, although some have appropriated it to themselves alone, like pope, bishops, priests and monks have done: they declare publicly and arrogantly that this power was given to them alone and *not to the laity*" (375; emphasis added).

And, lest someone should say that this is only the young Luther, from a sermon on the same Gospel for the First Sunday after Easter, 1540: "This [whosoever sins ye forgive etc.] is not said alone to ministers or the servants of the church, but also *to every Christian* [emphasis added]. Here each may serve another in the hour of death, or wherever there is need, and give him absolution."

From the blessed Doctor's treatise addressed to the controversy in the city of Leisnig, 1523 (AE 39: 310): "For no one can deny that every Christian possesses the Word of God and is taught and anointed by God to be a priest . . . . But if it is true that they have God's word and are anointed by Him, then it is their duty to confess, to teach, and to spread [His Word] . . . it is certain that a Christian not only has the right and power to teach God's word but has the duty to do so on pain of losing his soul and of God's disfavor. Indeed a Christian has so much power that he may and even should make an appearance and teach among Christians—without a call from men—when he becomes aware that there is a lack of teachers, provided he does it in a decent and becoming manner."

The official doctrinal position of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is in complete agreement with the good Doctor Luther. The *Brief Statement* of the Missouri Synod declares: "Since Christians are the Church, it is self-evident that they alone *originally* [emphasis original] possess the spiritual gifts and rights which Christ has gained for and given to His Church . . . . Christ himself commits to all believers the keys of the kingdom of heaven, Matt. 16:13–19, 20; 1 Cor.11:23–25. Accordingly we reject all doctrines by which this spiritual power or any part hereof is adjudged as *originally* [emphasis original] vested in certain individuals or bodies such as the Pope, or the bishops, *or the order of the ministry* [emphasis added]. . . or synods, etc." (#30, p. 14). And of those who are officers of the church, that they "publicly administer their offices only by virtue of delegated powers, conferred on them by the original possessors of such powers, and such administration *remains under the supervision of the latter* [the Church]" (Col. 4:17).

Again, regarding ordination (#33, p. 15): "Regarding *ordination* [emphasis original] we teach that it is not a divine, but a commendable ecclesiastical ordinance (Smalcald Articles; Triglot, 525, 70; M., 342).”

It is also of more than passing interest and significance that the most eminent teacher of the Lutheran church, the author of the chief symbols, namely, the Augsburg Confession and the Apology, as well as the Treatise on the Primacy and Power of the Pope, Phillip Melanchthon, was never ordained. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that he regards himself as one of the doctors (teachers) of the church to which he refers in the Treatise, 67 [*pastores et doctores*] as gifts of the ascended Lord to the church.

George F. Wollenburg, President
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Bible Passages & Principles: “Just Not Getting It”

George L. Murphy is absolutely right in asserting that “the appropriateness of ordination of women . . . is not settled simply pointing to the ‘standard’ verses in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy” (*Logia* 7, no. 3 [Reformation 1998]: 5). Unless one is a Barthian or a fundamentalist, biblical commands, temporary or not, give expression to the greater realities encased in them. This principle applies to the Old Testament regulations, including the Passover, circumcision, and regulations for the priests’ sacrifices or Paul’s admonition on head coverings for women. It also applies to administering the sacraments.

God is not arbitrary. What is required in one situation may not be required in another. Preaching is adjusting an eternal word of God to the situation of the hearers. Jesus did not follow the example of the Old Testament prophets and preach against Baal, but the principle of the first commandment required that he preach against trusting in wealth, and so he stood in the succession of the prophets.

At issue for Murphy is the nature of the commands that require head coverings for women and those that prohibit them from preaching. Are they cut from the same cloth? The principle behind each command is a divine principle, but the conclusion in the life of the church may vary. (For the record, the eighteenth-century rationalists held that the commands to baptize and celebrate the Lord’s supper were intended only for the apostles and their times, in the same way Murray handles the prohibition against women preaching.)

Paul calls the requirement for head coverings for women a custom or practice that has meaning for the Corinthians and perhaps most of the ancient western world (1 Cor 11:16). For some, an uncovered head was a sign of disrespect. This regulation reflects the deeper principle of God’s creation of Adam and Eve (1 Cor 11:7–12), an act which, apart from a specific articulated command, has an inherent divine authority within itself, as Paul explains. God’s actions, especially his creation, carry their own messages. A different culture might allow for a different custom, but the principle derived from creation must express itself within the culture in such a way that the divine principle remains intact. Paul does not speak a final word about the custom (11:16), but he does about the principle (11:7–12).

In John 18:39, the only New Testament reference outside 1 Corinthians with the Greek word for custom (συνήθεια), the term refers to the practice of the Roman governor’s releasing a prisoner on the Passover. No law required this, but good public relations between conquerors and conquered did—a small price for a benevolent dictator to pay for the good will of an occupied people.

Prohibiting women from exercising the preaching office derives from the same principle as the requirement for head coverings for women, but the conclusion is different. Ordaining women as preachers is at all times and all places disallowed.

Paul as a preacher knows how to build an argument in his sermon going from the persuasive to the threatening. First, he employs the ecumenical or catholic argument, that is, none of the other churches allow women as preachers (1 Cor 14:33). The Corinthians should look around and see that none of the churches engage in their aberrant practice. Second, it is forbidden by Old Testament Torah (14:34). This is most likely a back reference to 11:7–12, where Paul already set forth a detailed argument about woman’s creation from man and the mutual dependence of man and woman. There is no use repeating a principle on which he has already elaborated at some length. Third, he describes a woman preaching as αἰσχρόν, shameful (14:35). In Ephesians 5:12 the word applies to things so shameful that Paul does not want to mention them. This alone should cause a church that is thinking about ordaining women to think twice before doing it. Fourth, Paul claims he has the word of God (14:36), an argument that is attached to his own self-understanding as an apostle (1:1). Fifth, for his position that women may not preach he claims “the word of the Lord” (14:37); that is, he has this command from Jesus. Paul may be claiming a special revelation, or he may providing his own interpretation to Matthew 28:20 (“teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded.”) It was simply self-understood that the call of the apostles limited the ministerial office to men. Sixth, he threatens excommunication (14:38). Commentators are divided on whether this is a reference to Paul’s removing those who allow women to preach or to the judgment day. Neither alternative is attractive.

Any one of these six arguments can stand on its own merits. Put together, these arguments have the same force one might experience boating on the Niagra River. There is no doubt about the direction of water flow: don’t do it.

Our objections to the ordination of women were raised before either of the antecedent bodies to the ELCA endorsed the practice. These arguments were set forth in detail and did not simply cite Bible passages. See “May Women Be Ordained As Pastors?” *Springfielder* 36 (September 1972): 89–109 and “The Office of the Pastor and the Problem of the Ordination of Women Pastors,” *Springfielder* 38 (September 1974): 123–33. No one could say against our arguments that “the appropriateness of ordination of women . . . is not settled simply by pointing to the ‘standard’ verses in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy.” Articles of a more popular type can be found in other periodicals, including *Lutheran Forum.*

Space given any one writer in any one journal, including *Logia,* does not allow for all of the arguments against the ordination of women to be raised in each issue. Those who are intent on ordaining women will do it regardless of the detailed objections against the practice, which can be found not only among confessional-minded Lutherans, but Roman Catholics and especially the Eastern Orthodox. Richard John Neuhaus, a former ELCA pastor and former editor of *Lutheran Forum* and now editor of *First Things*, is squarely against the practice. This should count for something. One notes that Jaroslav Pelikan has left the ELCA for the Russian Orthodox Church, a group that has no truck with any discussion for ordaining women. Pope John Paul II is not enamored with women priests.

Opposition to the ordination of women is not the quirk of a few quaint, Bible-quoting LCMS clergy. There come times when shouting the prohibition (read: Bible passages) might be the only alternative left. A house on fire is not the appropriate time to give a lecture on combustion. To save the inhabitants, one word might do the trick: "Fire!" Jesus was similarly eschatological with his threats. If we survive the feminist holocaust, we can then discuss the chemistry and physics behind the cause of the flames.

The ELCA and its predecessor churches never allowed a full and fair airing of LCMS objections. On top of this, the LWF is on record as holding that ordination of women is a self-understood practice for its members. It is the new *articulus statis et cadentis ecclesiae;* this means that proper Lutherans no longer are allowed to persuade others against the practice. Ninety-five percent of the forest is burnt, and crying "Fire!" among the charred stumps will accomplish little, but it may accomplish something in our own midst where strident calls for the ordination of women have reached a higher pitch. Our sister church in Germany is divided on the issue, and the commission on theology for the Lutheran Church of Australia is recommending the ordination of women to its congregations. It is time to cry, "Fire!" Those who cannot follow Paul's arguments "are stuck with the prohibition that women should not preach." At least not ordaining women will give the unconvinced time to think it over. As the boat approaches the falls, it will be too late to row it to shore or to get out and swim.

Against the Anabaptists, Luther in the Large Catechism argued from church history for the baptism of infants. Gerson, Bernard, and John Hus were all great Christians and were baptized as infants. Infant baptism could hardly be the great evil the Anabaptists claimed. This seems a strange argument to biblicists, but it is confessional. Now let's rework the argument. The church for 1900 years did not ordain women, and look at all the Christians who believed, were baptized, and received Christ's body and blood. Now put the argument in the reverse. For 1900 years the church was in error in not ordaining women—at least the church was not all that it could have been. Now enter the practitioners of the ordination of women who have brought the rest of us out of darkness into the light. Aren't new insights the mark of the Gnostics?

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Cover Art

The artist's rendering on the cover of the Holy Trinity 1998 issue (Logia 7, no. 3) was most likely meant to be provocative and eye-catching, but was to us most disconcerting if not offensive.

The title on the head covering identifies the woman as "the Bride of Christ." But of course that cannot be! For the bride of Christ imagery is analogous to the body of Christ imagery, and our Lord is never depicted with his bride, since the two are one flesh. To suggest otherwise is to posit a kind of Nestorian ecclesiology.

What we are left with is what we see at first glance: a depiction of our Lord with his mother, who typifies the church (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 53; St. Augustine, PL 40, 3999, NPNF I.III.418).

The accompanying description says that "the drawing reflects the theme of . . . Lutheran missions" because "the mission of the church is to bear forth children of faith by the means of grace."

A depiction of an immodest mother of our Lord pregnant with a child other than our Lord himself not only lends credence to the un-Lutheran notion that the Blessed Virgin had other children (SA I, 1, 4; also Luther, St. Louis edition 2098 and Pieper 2: 308); it also suggests that she is the one who brings forth children of faith, or at least that she herself is a means of grace.

While it can be correctly confessed and depicted that the blessed Virgin Mary is the one through whom salvation came into the world, it is not orthodox to confess or depict our Lord's mother as the mother of the children of God without making her a "co-redemptrix" in the worst sense of that term. For the waters of holy baptism do not flow through or come from the womb of the blessed virgin.

Provocative depictions, like theology by one-liner, may highlight a truth, but quickly lend themselves to all kinds of other misconfessions and untruths. In a world—and among a church—that lives in and operates from and is informed by the provocative and the sound byte, the whole content of such depictions must be carefully considered or else entirely eschewed.

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LOGIA CORRESPONDENCE AND COLLOQUIUM FRATRUM

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, we hope that our Colloquium Fratrum section will allow for longer response/counter-response exchanges, whereas our Correspondence section is a place for shorter "Letters to the Editors."

If you wish to respond to something in an issue of Logia, please do so soon after you receive an issue. Since Logia is a quarterly periodical, we are often meeting deadlines for the subsequent issue about the time you receive your current issue. Getting your responses in early will help keep them timely. Send your Correspondence contributions to Logia Correspondence, 314 Pearl Street, Mankato, MN 56001, or your Colloquium Fratrum contributions to Logia Editorial Department, 314 Pearl Street, Mankato, MN 56001.

Preparing for the Future

Without Succumbing to a Theology of Glory

David R. Liefeld

In this essay[1] we will examine a personal problem facing pastors today, namely, prudent financial planning, with the understanding that this will also require careful attention to the theological hermeneutic that underlies any such consideration.[2] In particular, we will note the glaring absence of meaningful notions of Providence in contemporary life and thought (even, sadly, among Christians). We will also note the urgent need to recover a vital theology of suffering and the cross. And we will note how failure to incorporate a providential notion of suffering and the cross within the Christian stewardship of money can only lead to disaster.

INDICATIONS OF FINANCIAL RISK MISMANAGEMENT

Sherman Smith, a professional investment advisor and more recently also a Baptist pastor, writes in his 1994 book *Exploding the Doomsday Money Myths:*

> As I travel and speak to people, I meet many folks who are not saving or investing money for their future. Because they think their lives are going to remain on the same even keel, they are not preparing for economic downturns or potential personal disasters. Some are not even saving for retirement.[3]

In most of these cases, Smith is talking to Christians who have at least a passing familiarity with biblical stewardship. Yet these Christians seem to assume that living by faith means God will take care of his people without conscious planning on their part. In some cases, Smith notes, conservative Christians go so far as not purchasing life and casualty insurance because that would imply they don't trust God to take care of them.[4]

Now, it would be nice if I could assume today that pastors are immune from these tendencies, since they are after all the preeminent teachers of biblical stewardship in their congregations. And yet, according to financial planners, pastors are often the worst offenders when it comes to wise financial decisions and prudent plans for the future. Added to the normal, but sinful, *human* predisposition for undisciplined living and the *Christian* tendency for passivity when leaving the future to God, is the pastoral call to fulfill a time-consuming ministry of eternal significance, making it even more difficult for pastors to attend to the seemingly mundane demands of financial planning.

To me, one of the most glaring demonstrations of this problem is the apparent lack of prudent planning by most pastors who have opted for the clergy exemption from Social Security. As one who has also taken this exemption,[5] I know firsthand what is required to adequately replace the financial safety net provided by Social Security. I even have felt a certain amount of guilt over the years while spending only the equivalent of an employee Social Security tax on my replacement insurance and retirement coverages, rather than the self-employment rate that clergy must pay. Yet I am told that even this level of spending on my part is unusual. My financial planner says that he has enormous difficulty getting his clergy clients who have opted out of Social Security to purchase adequate replacement coverages. One of his clients told him that, in the event of disability (which, by the way, is more likely before age sixty-five than death, since a thirty-five-year-old has a one-in-three chance of becoming disabled for ninety days or longer), they would just live off his wife's income—to which my rather dumbfounded advisor simply replied: "Then why can't you do that now?" After my full-time disability began in 1995, a fraternal insurance agent in St. Louis told me that I was the only pastor not under Social Security he knew of who had so adequately provided for survivor and disability benefits.

This may seem to you only a reflection of the stupidity of those who withdraw from Social Security, but there are other indicators of more widespread problems. When I was a student at Luther Seminary in the early 1970s, I once visited a family friend who was at that time the Assistant Director of the Board of Pensions for the American Lutheran Church, headquartered in Minneapolis. She told me of pastors who would opt out of the ALC pension and benefits plan for something cheaper, only to end up many times pleading for mercy when unexpected events unfolded. Even at that time, I was impressed with how easy it might be to make decisions based on less than full understanding of the long-term implications. These days, I note with interest the Missouri Synod districts and congregations that seem to be obsessed with cheaper alternatives to the Synod's Concordia Plans, and I have serious doubts that careful attention is always paid to the important but subtly nuanced differences in coverage.

David R. Liefeld, St. Peters, Missouri, an LCMS English District pastor, is currently in disability retirement with Fibromyalgia/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome.

I also remember early in my ministry when my financial planner told me of receiving phone calls from his many clergy clients asking for advice on investment opportunities. Frequently, pastors would report to him primarily the tremendous return on an investment (like an investment in a Christmas tree farm, for instance) without comparable comprehension of the risks involved in those investments. He impressed upon me then a basic general principle of financial risk assessment: the higher the rate of return, the greater the risk.

And so, even if it is not the case that pastors are any worse than average when it comes to financial planning—which is to say that running around like a chicken with its head cut off is now probably a general characteristic of American life—there is certainly ground for presuming that busy pastors preoccupied with kingdom work are no better than the average American.

Christian Reconstructionists have been promoting several fundamental principles of so-called Christian economics:

As I have pursued an avocational study of economic theory and financial planning the last twenty years, reading numerous books and newsletters from a wide variety of perspectives, I am deeply convinced of the tremendous complexity facing us in the modern world. It is a world in which more and more responsibility is being placed on individuals. Where once pension plans were managed by experts on behalf of beneficiaries, they now frequently require beneficiaries to elect investment funds from a list of choices. Where once life insurance was either term or whole life, now the rage is variable life, which also requires the election of investment funds for cash values. On top of this is the growing popularity of 401-k, 403-b, IRA, and annuity investment vehicles, which, once again, require prudent decisions regarding investment choices.

In the face of such complexity, it is widely recognized that good and comprehensive financial advice is becoming a necessity. But there is also a deeper problem. Beyond the obvious need for self-discipline or financial advice is the question: What exactly constitutes wisdom and prudence in financial planning? Indeed, one of the reasons why so many people are so inadequately prepared for the future is that there is so much confusion about what it means exactly to be *prepared* for the future.

THE ALLURE OF A PROSPERITY GOSPEL

If you consult but a few of the hoard of so-called financial advisors out there, from accountants to insurance agents, from stock brokers to investment letter gurus, you will discover that there are as many different points of view regarding wise financial planning as there are advisors.[6] Average persons often leave such encounters with their heads spinning. Does God offer to average Christians the guidance they need to insure wise financial planning, if they will but discern and obey that guidance? Before we answer that question too quickly, let us first consider some of the current debate that rages about that topic.

In the late 1970s, I first became acquainted with the Christian Reconstruction movement and one of its most prolific and influential writers, Dr. Gary North.[7] An economic historian, North and his father-in-law, Rev. Rousas Rushdoony, were then leading the vanguard of a movement of social reform that is now having wide ranging effects throughout American Christianity. Calling for the implementation of biblical law as American civil law and wishing to turn America literally into a Christian nation, the Christian Reconstructionists have been promoting several fundamental principles of so-called Christian economics: all debt is unbiblical; debt-laden America eventually will go down the economic tubes of hyperinflation and depression; sinister elites in business, government, and media are conspiring against America to engineer a one-world government opposed to America's Christian heritage under God.

Given the presuppositions of this economic theology, those influenced by it usually expect the economy to collapse any time, Social Security to go broke, only wealth in gold and silver to endure, and only "survivalists" to thrive[8]—all of this with the rationalization that any other perspective is out of kilter with God and therefore foolish. The smart money, they say, is always with God. Taken to extremes, this kind of thinking underlies the militia mentality of a Timothy McVeigh, but it also has infiltrated the ranks of mainstream Evangelical and particularly charismatic churches.

Christian Economics may with considerable justification be labeled "prosperity theology" in that it quite explicitly outlines the principles by which God in the Bible has supposedly promised to bless materially the spiritual obedience of his people. Gary North disciple Ray R. Sutton uses the revealing title *That You May Prosper* to outline his systematic outworking of Reconstructionist "dominion theology" in terms of the covenant between God and the family, church and state. It is a conditional covenant, requiring obedience to God's Law-Word in order to be fulfilled.[9] While Sutton is far too sophisticated in his grasp of historic Reformed theology to state that this covenant of blessing always translates directly into material affluence, the end result of this covenantal logic in the popular mind is simple: those who follow God's biblical instructions for life will prosper. It's in the contract.

The problem is even deeper than Christian Reconstructionism, however. Indeed, the broad appeal of Reconstructionist notions lies within America's Evangelical culture. In a compelling cultural analysis of American Evangelicalism entitled *Less Than Conquerors,* Douglas Frank (himself an Evangelical) writes:

> We asked what the evangelicals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century wanted from Jesus. Now we have at least one important part of the answer. They wanted victory. And it appears that they wanted it now, in visible ways, in ways known by the conscious mind and felt by the feelings. They were not comforted by the promise of victory in the next life. . . . They wanted more than deliverance from the wrath to come. If salvation is really good news, they said, it

> must offer us victory in this life. This victory has got to be effective in daily routines.[10]

Writing of evangelist Billy Sunday, Frank notes that the gospel of eternal salvation in Christ "was often to be found somewhere in the sermon, but not as the center of attention."[11] What did occupy the center of attention for Sunday and his audiences was a formula by which they might regain a sense of control over their lives in a tumultuously modernizing world. As a result, according to Frank, "perhaps Sunday's deepest purpose in preaching was not to speak of God, of his victory and his salvation, but to speak of humanity and its possibilities for strength and heroism and goodness."[12]

For Frank, American Evangelicalism has a heritage and practice with strong affinities to biblical Pharisaism. The Pharisees relied on a kind of moral and religious heroism to capture control of their society for good people like themselves. Like the Pharisees, American Evangelicals have frequently substituted the self-satisfaction of moral and social reform for true repentance and faith:

> In convincing evangelicals that they could, by moral exertion and manly courage, control their destinies and the destiny of their nation, Sunday helped make them feel full rather than empty and helped them avoid the mourning of those who know their own powerlessness and the futility of their own moral efforts.[13]

According to Frank, "We [Evangelicals] are the Pharisees of our time, if anyone is. . . . Like the Pharisees, we are secure in our ancestral traditions, our religious observances, our moral heroism, our self-identity as the righteous and the godly."[14] Frank concludes, regarding the fundamental deficiency of American Evangelicalism:

> American Evangelicals, from the beginning of their history, have lived with a national ethos whose unquestioned and proudly advertised assumptions receive no support in the biblical text. These assumptions go something like this: we are in control of our own lives, of the nature of our society, and of our history. This ethos has become implicit and unquestioned in the evangelical mind.[15]

Even Sherman Smith, in his otherwise well-reasoned critique of the doomsday myths of "Christian Economics," nevertheless reveals his grounding in American Evangelicalism (the emphasis in the following quotation is added):

> *Because I trust God to protect me, I believe he will at least warn me if something life-threatening is going to happen. That's why I live a normal life free from paralyzing fear.* I drive on the highway without worrying about being killed, and I fly on airplanes knowing I could be the next statistic. I live in an earthquake zone; I take trips to tornado country; and I swim in the ocean during hurricane season.
>
> I look at the economy the same way I look at life. Although I understand the dangerous turns the economy could take, I still trust God and all his principles. That is not to say that I skip blithely down the primrose path of life. Instead, I walk confidently, knowing we are living in the day of grace and God is not going to use cataclysmic destruction to discipline his children.[16]

Although it is not at all clear how Smith defines "cataclysmic destruction," since what is cataclysmic is in the eye of the beholder (the old joke: An economic recession is when your neighbor loses his job; an economic depression is when you lose yours!), it is nevertheless clear that Smith subscribes to the notion that faith in Christ normally results in tangible and not only spiritual blessing.

American Evangelicalism has a heritage and practice with strong affinities to biblical Pharisaism.

The end result of this "theology of glory" is little different than the secular wisdom of the financial world: God helps those who help themselves. Find the right investment philosophy, select the best investment mix, discipline yourself to make regular contributions, and you will prosper. But if financial planning is so routinely grounded in a "theology of glory," then what practical difference does it make if one alternatively subscribes to a theology of suffering and the cross? This is the next deep question we must address before we can return to the more mundane issue of prudent financial planning.

A PROVIDENTIAL THEOLOGY OF SUFFERING AND THE CROSS

The popular interpreter of historic Reformed theology R. C. Sproul has recently written a provocative book entitled *The Invisible Hand.* He writes:

> The word "Providence" has all but disappeared from the vocabulary of the contemporary Christian. It is becoming obsolete and archaic. This word that once was commonplace, indeed central to Christian expression, now seems doomed to the ash heap of useful verbiage.[17]

Sproul observes that, during the Civil War, letters from soldiers routinely described their lives as being in the hands of Providence, as if the word was itself a title for God. Writes Sproul:

> This link between the *activity* of God and the very *being* of God was deeply rooted in the conviction of nineteenth-century Christians that all that comes to pass occurs under the sovereign plan and rule of almighty God. There was a constant sense that all of life was lived *coram Deo,* before the face of God.[18]

Many Christians in the past were more conscious than today of the truly awesome, even troubling, dimension of God's almighty power. They wrestled with the behavior of the biblical God, epitomized in Isaiah 45 (which I never hear proclaimed in sermons today):

> I am the LORD, and there is no other.
> I form the light and create the darkness,
> I bring prosperity and create disaster;
> I, the LORD, do all these things (Is 45:6–7).

However they reconciled human accountability for sin with God's providence, they understood clearly that it was nevertheless an almighty God with whom they had to do.

However problematic, only a potent God is worthy of our trust and our worship.

Sadly, any notion of providence has all but disappeared in our predominantly secular culture and even in our churches.[19] Worse, according to Sproul, is the impotent God often portrayed in popular American Evangelicalism: a God who is simply too nice to behave like the God of King David when he struck down the child of David's and Bathsheba's adultery (2 Sam 12:13–15). Writes Sproul:

> I heard one televangelist declare that God has nothing to do with disease and death. He assigned these tragedies to the work of Satan.
>
> Such sentiments do violence, not only to our understanding of the providence of God, but to our understanding of the whole character of God. Christianity is not a religion of dualism by which God and Satan are equal and opposite opposing forces destined to fight an eternal struggle that must result in a tie. God is sovereign over his entire creation, including the subordinate domain of Satan. God is Lord of death as well as life. He rules over pain and disease as sovereignly as he rules over prosperity.
>
> If God had nothing to do with sickness or death, Christians, of all people, would be the most to be pitied. It would mean living in a universe ruled by chaos where our Father's hand was tied by the fickleness of chance. His arm would not be mighty to save; it would be impotent. But the preachers to the contrary, God has everything to do with sickness and death. God majors in suffering. The way of redemption is the *Via Dolorosa,* the road to the cross.[20]

However problematic, only a potent God is worthy of our trust and our worship. To "protect" God by limiting his potency ultimately calls into question the viability of the Bible's entire plan of salvation.

Lest one too quickly attribute this kind of thinking to a Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, I hasten to rehearse the words of Martin Luther. In his lectures on Romans (1515–1516), Luther wrote regarding Romans 8:28: "With God there simply is no contingency, but only with us, because not even a leaf of a tree falls to the ground without the will of the Father. Just as the essence of things, therefore, also the times are in his hands."[21] In his famous (some would say infamous) *On the Bondage of the Will* (1525), Luther argued:

> From this it follows irrefutably that everything we do, everything that happens, even if it seems to happen mutably and contingently, happens in fact nonetheless necessarily and immutably, if you have regard to the will of God. For the will of God is effectual and cannot be hindered, since it is the power of the divine nature itself; moreover, it is wise, so that it cannot be deceived.[22]

The Missouri Synod's Francis Pieper writes, in concurrence with Luther:

> Must all events in the world occur just as they do occur . . . or could they happen otherwise . . . ? Scripture compels us to maintain both the necessity and the contingency. From the viewpoint of the divine providence the necessity obtains, from the human viewpoint contingency.[23]

Gerhard Forde provides a helpful, and distinctively Lutheran, approach to God's omnipotence in his *Where God Meets Man*:

> We must try to understand why Luther would not allow any speculative tampering with God's almightiness or even with the concept of "predestination." . . . If one questions God's ultimate control, then what happens here on earth has no real significance. The "down-to-earth" God is lost and we must seek him elsewhere. Baptism, the sacrament, the preaching of the Word—all those things mean nothing in particular. At best, they could only be little "helps" and trivial legalistic games, our pitiful and useless attempts to storm heaven. And we remain bound to our own folly.
>
> For Luther thought a theology based truly on the gospel must begin differently. One must begin by refusing to tamper with almighty God as he is in himself. One must begin by recognizing that God is ultimately in control in spite of the difficulties that may cause. Only then could one say that what actually does happen in his act of grace is the revelation of God's will. It enables one to say with confidence that the death and resurrection of Christ is the revelation of his will and not an accident. It enables one to say that at every moment the question of what God might or might not have in mind for you is answered by what he actually does. Thus you can say that the will of God for you is revealed in the fact of your baptism, or in the fact that you hear the gospel and receive the sacrament. . . . In other words, the only proper response to the threat of predestination is to preach the gospel—not to try to tamper with God![24]

Those who struggle with the "goodness" of our providential God must always be directed to the "down-to-earth" God in Christ.[25] Writes Forde: "When we find God's will revealed in his own-down-to-earth action, his almightiness and predestination are sheer gospel. They are the promise that God is in control and that nothing can thwart his will."[26]

To embrace this kind of God, who sends both prosperity and disaster within his good plan for us in Christ, is to confess with Job: "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised" (Job 1:21). It is to recognize that the "alien" work of the God who hides himself, namely, the sending of disaster, ultimately serves the "proper" work of God revealed in Jesus by exposing our need for him. The ongoing work of law and gospel in this kind of thinking can only be understood as a theology of the cross.[27]

Luther's clearest early formulation of the theology of the cross was at the Heidelberg Disputation of 1518. Luther wrote in theses 19 and 20:

> That person does not deserve to be called a theologian who looks upon the invisible things of God as though they were clearly perceptible in those things which have actually happened. He deserves to be called a theologian, however, who comprehends the visible and manifest things of God, seen through suffering and the cross.[28]

Walter von Loewenich, in his classic book *Luther's Theology of the Cross,* writes:

> "Cross" and "suffering" refer, in the first place, to Christ's suffering and cross. But Luther is thinking at the same time about the cross of the Christian. For Luther the cross of Christ and the cross of the Christian belong together. For him the cross of Christ is not an isolated historical fact to which the life of the Christian stands only in a causal relationship . . . but in the cross of Christ the relationship between God and man has become evident.[29]

According to von Loewenich, Luther saw that "the Christian life is a discipleship of suffering." "Our suffering," for Luther, "is God's will" and "a work of the Holy Spirit" since only "through suffering we shall arrive at the sabbath of the soul." While "Luther certainly knows of a suffering that is punishment for sin," the theology of the cross teaches us that "in contrast to the suffering of the ungodly, its purpose is not punishment and destruction but grace and cleansing." In this way, the new life in Christ is precisely the way of the cross. True peace and joy in the Lord, as distinguished from mere human emotions, are grounded in suffering: "One who seeks peace misses the true peace; one who shuns the cross will not find peace."[30]

A compelling illustration of Luther's theology of the cross are his moving words, published in 1521, regarding the powerful and the powerless in Mary's *Magnificat.* For Luther, the seemingly powerless believer is, nevertheless, the object of God's powerful, providential care:

> He lets the godly become powerless and to be brought low, until everyone supposes their end is near, whereas in these very things he is present to them with all his power, yet so hidden and in secret that even those who suffer the oppression do not feel it but only believe. There is the fullness of God's power and his outstretched arm. For where man's strength ends, God's strength begins, provided faith is present and waits upon him. And when the oppression comes to an end, it becomes manifest what great strength was hidden underneath the weakness. Even so, Christ was powerless on the cross; and yet there he performed his mightiest work and conquered sin, death, world, hell, devil, and all evil. Thus all the martyrs were strong and overcame. Thus, too, all who suffer and are oppressed overcome. Therefore it is said in Joel 3:10: "Let the weak say, 'I am strong'"—yet in faith, and without feeling it until it is accomplished.[31]

The seemingly powerful, however, are victims of the proverb "Pride goes before a fall:"

> On the other hand, God lets the other half of mankind become great and mighty to exalt themselves. He withdraws his power from them and lets them puff themselves up in their own power alone. For where man's strength begins, God's strength ends. When their bubble is full-blown, and everyone supposes them to have won and overcome, and they themselves feel smug in their achievement, then God pricks the bubble, and it is all over. The poor dupes do not know that even while they are puffing themselves up and growing strong they are forsaken by God, and God's arm is not with them. Therefore their prosperity has its day, disappears like a bubble, as if it had never been.[32]

But Luther does not suffer the reader to entertain any illusions that the ultimate victory of the righteous is as material as the hardened sinfulness of the mighty, which would only reinforce the sinful presuppositions of a theology of glory. He writes:

> Now, when he exalts them, it does not mean that he will put them in the seats of those he has cast out any more than that when he shows mercy to those who fear him, he puts them in the place of the learned, that is, the proud. Rather he lets them be exalted spiritually and in God, for they have more knowledge than all the learned and the mighty.[33]

Finally, Luther asserts that true worship of God is grounded only in this theology of the cross:

> Now, no one is God's servant unless he lets him be his God and perform his works in him, of which we spoke above. Alas, the word "service of God" has nowadays taken on so strange a meaning and usage that whoever hears it thinks not of these works of God, but rather of the ringing of bells, the wood and stone of churches, the incense pot, the flicker of candles . . . of organs and images, processions and churchgoing. . . . This alas is what the service of God means now. Of such service God knows nothing at all, while we know nothing but this . . . . Unless we learn and experience these works of God, there will be no service of God, no Israel, no grace, no mercy, no God, though we kill ourselves with singing and ringing in the churches and drag into them all the goods in all the world.[34]

Indeed, according to von Loewenich, "Only that church has the full right to call itself the church of Christ which follows her Lord in all things. Hence Luther lists cross and suffering among the marks of the church."[35] So central was suffering and the cross to Luther's theology, that Luther once said he wanted to write a book on *Anfechtungen*—the German word for trials (or depression)—because "without them no man can understand Scripture, faith, the fear or the love of God."[36]

In my experience, the pabulum of most contemporary worship regularly engenders variations of the theology of glory.

A word of caution is required, however, whenever we are dealing with the young Luther. In his lectures on Romans, for instance, Luther is still influenced by the medieval *humilitas* piety, which proposes, in effect, that we make ourselves humble so as to experience the power of God: "And as we thus humble ourselves and confess to God that we are wicked and foolish, we may become worthy to be justified by him."[37] Advising that humility will require "as many works of penance as one can possibly do,"[38] Luther also describes a plan of action by which to lose our proneness for evil: "Ah, but this can be had only through earnest prayer, readiness to learn, eager action, and much self-castigation; then, finally, the old way will be uprooted and the will renewed. For grace cannot be had *unless one works on oneself in this way*"[39] (emphasis added). Only over time did Luther himself come to grasp that true humility is not self-chosen, but a work that God himself does within us. Thus the truly humble are not even aware that they are humble: "True humility, therefore, never knows that it is humble, as I have said: for if it knew this, it would turn proud from contemplation of so fine a virtue."[40]

By the same token, it takes time for Luther to move away from the medieval piety of imitating Christ. For again, it is not at all that we must find a cross like Christ's to take up, but simply that, like Christ, God puts us to death. It is as Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it so succinctly: "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."[41] There is powerlessness; there is a cross to take up; there is death to self. But these are works of God and cannot be self-chosen, or they will inevitably become yet another scheme for self-glorification by the old Adam.[42] This is one reason that Christians must be very cautious about measuring the good works of God by outward means, particularly if that means, in effect, "God must be blessing us because our kingdom work is going so well." Luther writes of a willing and a running that is ultimately in vain even though we may "will great things and run strongly."[43] In reality, God is quite persistent in confronting us with our own powerlessness even when (especially when) we are trying to accomplish great things for God. In order for us finally to yield to whatever it is that God has chosen to accomplish with us, we must learn the hard way that God "has concealed his power only under weakness, his wisdom under foolishness, his goodness under austerity, his righteousness under sin, and his mercy under wrath."[44]

Yet, how often is this profound theology proclaimed today? Even within the putatively conservative Lutheran churches, what so often passes for a theology of the cross is merely the platitudinous refrain about the cross: "Jesus died for your sins." In place of a Christian life that is a discipleship of suffering, we too often hear happy talk about the "new life in Christ," as if Christian faith were the solution to all of sin's unpleasantness.[45] Yes, how often today is there a meaty diet of preaching and teaching about this theology of suffering and the cross?

And where among the scads of contemporary praise songs is the rich wisdom of historic Lutheran piety:[46]

What God Ordains Is Always Good (*LW* 422: 2)

What God ordains is always good:
He never will deceive me;
He leads me in his own right way,
And never will he leave me.
I take content
What he has sent;
His hand that sends me sadness
Will turn my tears to gladness.

All Depends on Our Possessing (*LW* 415: 5)

Well he knows what best to grant me;
All the longing hopes that haunt me,
Joy and sorrow, have their day.
I shall doubt his wisdom never;
As God wills, so be it ever;
I commit to him my way.

If You but Trust in God to Guide You (*LW* 420: 3)

In patient trust await his leisure
In cheerful hope, with heart content
To take whate'er your Father's pleasure
And all-discerning love have sent;
Doubt not your in-most wants are known
To him who chose you for his own.

For anyone to assert glibly that God is worshiped and the gospel is communicated in most contemporary worship services today, is to confuse infant formula with steak—which is to say that, even when simple texts have their place, they are usually far too simplistic to teach or sustain a theology of suffering and the cross.

Sadly, in my experience, the pabulum of most contemporary worship regularly engenders variations of the theology of glory. Without powerful providential messages in the steady diet of the ministry of word and sacrament, Christians today are tossed about like infants, with every shifting wind of doctrine (Eph 4:14). Without a meaty diet of hymns, sermons, and Bible classes that tell what it means to have a God, it is not possible for Christians today to grasp what it means to have a gracious God. Thus it is impossible for them to think credibly about financial planning within the providence of God.

And so, we turn now to but a bare outline of what occasioned these excursuses in the first place: What, for the Christian, constitutes wisdom and prudence in financial planning? That is, if one is to offer a meaty diet for Christians maturing under suffering and the cross, what can be said about the day-to-day management of finances?

PLANNING THE WAY WITH DIRECTED STEPS

On the basis of this broad, and all too rudimentary, treatment of a provident God who meets us in suffering and the cross, there are at least five major principles of prudent financial planning for the Christian.

1. *Financial planning is a "working out" of God's providence.* According to Proverbs 16:9, "The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps" (NAS). This simple but important concept is crucial to Christian financial planning. The final outcome of our planning is not in our hands. Our providential God is at work in the details of everything we plan in order to fulfill his purpose for us, whether or not that happens to accord with our plans. Ultimately, it is therefore the providence of God that determines the events and outcomes of our financial planning.

After Joseph was sold into slavery by his jealous brothers, it was a long and tortuous, seemingly serendipitous, process by which he eventually became the chief government official in Egypt. Only when it became evident that, in this way, God was providing for the survival of his elected ones could Joseph say of his brothers' treachery: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (Gn 50:20). And only after the fact could it be seen how the murder of Hebrew infants and the adoption of Moses by Pharoah's daughter were part of the deliverance of God's longsuffering people. How easily could chance have undone the course of redemptive history! What if Joseph had languished unnoticed in the Egyptian prison? What if the current had taken little Moses to the bottom of the river or the princess had decided to be elsewhere that day? Yet, in the words of Betsy Ten Boom (sister of Corrie Ten Boom) during the Nazi invasion of Holland: "There are no 'ifs' in God's world. And no places are safer than other places. The center of his will is our only safety."[47]

Even so, God's providence is worked out precisely through the decisions and plans we make. It is not as if we are passive pawns in a divine chess game. There inevitably must be human planning. From our point of view, it could hardly be otherwise. Even Jesus acknowledged this healthy function of the human brain when he said, "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it" (Lk 14:28)? In our experience, those who fail to plan, plan to fail.

This is the mystery so artfully captured by the Apostle Paul in Philippians 2:12–13: "Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good pleasure." However much God is at work according to his purpose, that purpose will be fulfilled in and through us. Those who suppose that God only provides immediately and miraculously (as if God will address our emergencies without regard to how we have contributed to them, simply because we have faith) have an unrealistic perception of how God works. The joke about the man whose house was being surrounded by floodwater is insightful. As the water rose, he had several offers to be evacuated. Each time he refused, saying, "God will provide." After drowning, he confronted God in irritation about his promise to take care of him, to which God replied, "I sent you a car, a boat, and a helicopter—what did you expect?"[48]

2. *Financial planning is always contingent for us.* As much as the Christian lives by faith in the gracious God revealed in Christ (the God who works all things for good according to his purpose in Christ), the Christian also faces every decision in a contingent way. As Pieper pointed out, we dare not collapse the paradox here. The necessity of a decision is only from God's point of view while, from our point of view, it remains contingent. This means that even when we are confident that God will provide, we still participate in that providence.

As a result, we need to be taught that God is constantly providing us with resources that not only sustain us now, but may also provide for us in the future when we use them wisely. To take all of the income we earn now and spend it on what we want now ignores the opportunity God provides for disciplined saving, investing, and charity. In this way, what God gives us in the good years can be a help to us in the bad years—even as God used Joseph's grain storage plans to provide for Egypt and Jacob's family during years of famine. To believe that God will provide what we desire for an income in sickness, disability, or retirement in spite of how we mismanaged the financial resources God previously entrusted to our care can be disastrous.

Ultimately, it is the providence of God that determines the events and outcomes of our financial planning.

When Jesus says that we are not to worry about what we need, since God will provide for us even as he provides for the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, he is speaking of our ultimate safety in the hands of a providential God. This does not mean that we can mindlessly squander all the material blessings God so graciously provides to us and still expect him to keep on providing them. Those who rest in the ultimate security of God's unconditional love are still confronted with the temporal wisdom of Proverbs 6:6–11:

> Go to the ant, you sluggard;
> consider its ways and be wise!
> It has no commander,
> no overseer or ruler,
> yet it stores its provisions in summer
> and gathers its food at harvest.
> How long will you lie there, you sluggard?
> When will you get up from your sleep?

A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest—
and poverty will come on you like a bandit
and scarcity like an armed man.

Or consider the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians 3:10: "If a man will not work, he will not eat." The necessity of prudent financial planning is, therefore, grounded in the intersection of our decisions with God's providence. They cannot be divorced. Each is an integral part of the whole, two different sides of the same coin.

This also means that it is never enough for a Christian to "feel led" by God to do something. This pietistic theory of planning presumes a simplistic coinciding of feelings and faith. It may well be that we believe ourselves to be led, but since everything is finally a reflection of God's will, feeling led will not resolve the question of what God is doing with us at any given moment. We must learn that God has more profound purposes than reinforcing the conviction that our feelings are invincible. It often happens to me that God leads me, after much wrestling and fretting with the choices, to make a choice I later regret. This in no way diminishes the truth of God's leading but does demonstrate that God leads us for different reasons, including growth in wisdom about consequences of choices.[49]

When the talk about stewardship is not insipid, it is more than likely heavy-handed and legalistic.

God always leads us to know our weakness and our dependence upon him. Therefore, as Sproul notes, "In the proximate, or more immediate, sense there are times when God is against us." These are times when he exposes our sinfulness. Yet, observes Sproul, precisely in this "the paradox is seen that even when God is against us he is for us. As a father chastens the child he loves, so God at times will thwart our plans and work against us precisely because he is working for our ultimate good."[50] The truly important thing is never "feeling led" so much as trusting the ultimately good purpose achieved in our lives by God's leading (Romans 8:28).

3. *Financial planning is biblical stewardship.* Most talk about stewardship in the church today is insipid and distant from the realities of everyday life. In fact, this is often intentional since, in many cases, pastors and congregations lack the courage to engage in frank talk about the inherently controversial subject of money. Unfortunately, however, when the talk about stewardship is not so insipid, it is more than likely heavy-handed and legalistic. So the church focuses only on "spiritual things," hoping that when it comes to "worldly finance" believers will somehow find a way to send some financial crumbs to the offering plate. Or the church motivates giving by telling people how God blesses materially only those who give substantially. In each case, the presuppositions are those of a theology of glory.

Biblical stewardship is properly grounded in a theology of suffering and the cross. Good stewards know how difficult life is and how easily things can go wrong. Good stewards are acutely aware not only of the suffering in their own lives, but also of the suffering that surrounds them. Good stewards, therefore, never take material blessings for granted. No matter how hard stewards work—and good stewards do realize that, from the human point of view, we usually reap what we sow—good stewards recognize that it is God who blesses our labors. And because—indeed, precisely because—good stewards also know through suffering and the cross that God may as easily choose to frustrate our labors, good stewards treasure each blessing received. There is no such thing as "easy come, easy go" for stewards educated in the school of suffering and the cross.

As a result, whatever the steward treasures will be carefully managed. First, a treasured blessing belongs to God. Therefore, the steward learns to give a sacrificial portion (illustrated by the tithe) to the work of God's kingdom. Since the steward learns to treasure the ministry of word and sacrament as the only solid ground for his own struggle to cope with suffering and the cross, the steward also learns to recognize that this ministry is desperately needed by all throughout the world. And since the steward is also learning to put to death a life of sinful preoccupation with the survival and pleasure of self, sacrificial support for God's kingdom is the spiritually healthy first step in doing that. Since the ultimate meaning of life does not consist in its length or its pleasures, the steward learns to measure "the good life" solely in terms of God's purpose and strength. The steward learns what the apostle Paul meant when he wrote that he had "learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Phil 4:12–13). The steward also learns what great joy is born of giving sacrificially even in the midst of suffering and the cross, as Paul wrote of the Macedonians: "Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity" (2 Cor 8:2). These are not abstract ideas that can be grasped through talk about them, but are only learned through experience in the school of the Holy Spirit.

Second, a treasured blessing is also for others. A steward learns to see how God works good in the lives of others by first blessing the steward. This not only means learning to be a compassionate neighbor, but also how to be a good spouse, parent, or child. A husband who spends heavily on his own pleasures to the extent that his wife has little or nothing when he dies suddenly, for instance, has hoarded rather than shared the treasured blessings of God. Therefore, one important argument for making sacrifices to purchase life, health, and disability insurance is that in this way one uses what God has already provided to benefit loved ones if or when God suddenly removes the current source of those material blessings.

A steward familiar with suffering and the cross cannot help but be sensitized to the needs of others. Therefore, Paul questions the relationship to God of those who neglect their own families: "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim 5:8). Beyond the family, it is also natural that the steward would want "to look after orphans and widows in their distress" (Js 1:27).

Third, a treasured blessing leads to priority-setting. Christian stewards do not have all the money they could possibly want. More often, it seems as though they are far short of that which they need. Therefore, Christian stewards learn to place priorities on their various needs and wants. Stewards learn how to allocate what God has chosen to provide for the day, even while they may also be learning how to be more productive. Jesus notes that it is only those who learn how to manage a little who are ready to manage more (Lk 16:10–12). Priority-setting is a healthy process of reflection upon who we are and what God is doing with us. It leads us to ponder our resources, present and future; our needs, real and imagined; our values, temporal and eternal; and our goals, selfish and altruistic. "Budget" is not a dirty word to good stewards.

Financial planning brings to our conscious awareness God's involvement in the nitty-gritty details of our lives so that in this way we can learn the secret of facing every circumstance with the strength of God. God will strengthen us to put him first in all things, to love others as ourselves, and to prioritize our expenditures. This is biblical stewardship.

4. *Financial planning is risk management.* It may seem odd to speak this way of the Christian response to God's providence. But we need to be reminded that God's providence is discerned only with the eyes of faith. From our point of view, things happen contingently, so a great deal depends on exactly what we decide to do. Thus, from our point of view, life is full of risks. These risks are not to be feared, but to be managed.

If the Christian cannot assume that life will always keep going on an even keel, and also knows how often one is subjected to suffering and the cross, the Christian considers risk management an inescapable task. Professional financial planners report that their biggest problem is getting people even to think about the financial risks they face. For a steward schooled in suffering and the cross who is well aware of how fragile our lives are even within God's good plan for us, healthy identification of risks is easier.[51]

But what about all the confusion regarding proper risk management? How does the Christian sort through all the conflicting advice about financial planning? Basically, a student of suffering and the cross will never expect to master financial planning or make all the right decisions. Indeed, such a student will have learned how easy it is to make all the wrong decisions! I sometimes flippantly say that I should peddle an infallible market timer: whenever I make a major investment decision, just do the opposite! That's not literally true, of course, but it does point to the necessary humility with which anyone who knows the theology of the cross will approach this problem. Risk management is a trial and error process. One learns slowly, often the hard way, and must resist the temptations of easy profits or sure-fire formulas.

Investment choices, for instance, need to be made with a sobering awareness of sinful human nature and its effect on financial markets. There is a real tendency for markets to pull in the last naive investor just before the bottom falls out; after all, when the last investor has come in, there are no buyers left, only sellers! The average investor, therefore, tends to buy high and sell low, because he is operating on emotions of the moment rather than on careful, reasonable evaluation of market risks. The Christian steward here faces one illustration of what it means to resist the temptations of the flesh (here, the greed to make a big profit) while learning the discipline of a more reasonable and prudent approach.

There is a lot of talk today, in the midst of unprecedented stock market highs, regarding the "new era" into which the stock market has entered. While a good case may be made for the extraordinary opportunities for further growth in an already inflated market, there are also sobering lessons to be learned from history. Other markets, notably those of the 1920s and the 1960s, were also called "new eras"—just before the same "old" market behavior became glaringly obvious through plunging stock prices. Traditionally, prudent financial managers have hedged risks with a combination of investments from money market funds to bonds to stocks, even to gold and silver. As recently as 1987, just before that year's steep market decline, investors had only 45 percent of their assets in stocks. Today that percentage may be close to 70 percent. By historical standards, this is extremely risky. And why have investors done so? Probably because the allure of an ever-rising market is overwhelming more prudent assessment of risks. Perhaps the market will continue to increase as it has in the past. But by putting most of their eggs in one basket and ignoring the risk in stock market manias, investors will multiply their losses when the stock market, as it has in the past, makes a quick trip "south."

From our point of view, life is full of risks. These risks are not to be feared, but to be managed.

One relatively unknown risk of rather major proportions now facing the prudent steward is the "Year 2000 Problem," "Y2K," or "Millennium Bug." According to a cover story article in the June 2, 1997, issue of *Newsweek,* "the trouble is rooted in a seemingly trivial space-saving programming trick—dropping the first two numbers of the date" so that 1997 is handled digitally as 97. On January 1, 2000, many computers will misread 2000 as 1900 or otherwise malfunction:

> Could the most anticipated New Year's Eve party in our lifetimes really usher in a digital nightmare when our wired-up-the-wazoo civilization grinds to a halt? Incredibly, according to computer experts, corporate information officers, congressional leaders and basically anyone who's given the matter a fair hearing, the answer is yes, yes, 2,000 times yes! Yes—unless we successfully complete the most ambitious and costly technology project in history.[52]

Because the worst-case scenario is so catastrophic (banks, insurance companies, corporations, water and power companies, federal and state governments, hospitals, and air traffic control all use the mainframe computers that are riddled with millions of lines of ancient Cobol date-sensitive code), and because almost everyone is dangerously behind schedule in assessing, let alone fixing, the problem, it is prudent to become quite familiar with the practical implications of this problem. Even the best-case scenarios predict significant disruptions in daily living, and some risk avoidance preparations should be made. Some "survivalist" tips are actually useful in such emergencies!

At least as significant as the global factors, however, are those of personal lifestyle. There are many helpful sources of common-sense advice on handling time (personal, family, and professional), financial planning, and money management. The specific advice, grounded in reason and not in faith, is probably less important overall than the discipline required to use it, the awakening awareness that all of life is risky, and the emerging understanding of what is really important in life.[53]

Having a God means learning to live patiently with what God wants for us, and this cannot become more concrete than learning to live on the income God provides to us.

Sherman Smith provides some helpful advice when he identifies seven mistakes that commonly lead to financial disaster: not living within your means, making financial decisions based on emotions, succumbing to materialism; buying on impulse, failing to consider change as one of life's "constants," over-reliance on debt, and refusing to budget. He also suggests

- planting in the right soil (avoiding gambling or speculative schemes)
- maintaining due diligence (regularly monitoring changes in risks and investments)
- saving money systematically (most financial crises can be avoided by setting aside emergency reserve funds)
- investing in stocks (overly cautious investors expose themselves to the risk of erosion from inflation and taxes with supposedly "guaranteed" investments)
- diversifying investments (hedge risks; there are no "sure things" in a contingent world)[54]

There may not be any magic secret in this advice, but it is also true that the greatest failure of ordinary people when it comes to financial planning is unwillingness to attend to these simple, common-sense principles of risk management. We too easily focus only on the big events in our lives and then look for quick, easy solutions. Prudent financial plans are rarely glamorous and rarely make spectacular gains, but they generally avoid catastrophic losses. Steady though unspectacular progress is more appealing to a patient steward who knows the risks of life well and wants to manage them carefully.

5. *Financial planning is learning to have a God.* Frankly, I know of few temporal activities that so effectively teach basic truths of the Christian faith as does managing finances. When spending outstrips income (especially with the credit card), one simply must learn to distinguish wants from needs, to set priorities on things that really matter, to budget and to patiently allow the budgeting to do its work. Having a God means learning to live patiently with what God wants for us, and this cannot become more concrete than learning to live on the income God provides to us. Many spiritual matters are ambiguous, but learning to live within a budget is not. It immediately exposes our vulnerabilities, our values, and our priorities.

After twenty-four years of full-time study for and practice of pastoral ministry, I had my most intensive education in what it means to have a God when I stopped working because of my Fibromyalgia/Chromic Fatigue Syndrome in May 1995. Physically and emotionally exhausted, I quit working without any assurance that I would receive any disability income. I quite naively assumed that the consequences of my widespread pain and chronic fatigue would be as apparent to the claims processors as they were to me. When I learned that my initial application was denied, I was deeply frightened and overwhelmed with apprehension regarding what would happen to us. I knew that we would be practically poverty-stricken relying on my wife's own somewhat limited income (she also suffers from a chronic illness), and that prospect was terrifying to me. During the dark night of the soul between the denial of my disability application and its rather miraculous acceptance over one month later, I learned as I had never learned before what I had been preaching about Luther's theology of the cross. I learned what it meant to be powerless and to feel as if all was lost. More importantly, I only began to cope with my situation, not when any of the circumstances changed, but when I accepted in faith whatever circumstances God would send.

The critical moment came during a conversation with my wife. I was once again lamenting that all of the financial plans we had so carefully made might go up in smoke, that we might lose our home, that our children's lives might be horribly disrupted, that our personal possessions might have to be disposed of, that we might not have adequate medical care or retirement. I also noted that, ironically, I could easily spare my family all of this if I killed myself; they would receive the large life insurance benefits I was entitled to if I acted before I could no longer pay the premiums. I was not truly suicidal, but only lamented the horrible irony of having so carefully created a financial safety net over the years that now seemed likely to disappear as quickly as the plant that sheltered Jonah from the sun at Nineveh.

I will never forget how I felt when my wife responded to this lengthy lament, not because she had not said anything like it before or because I hadn't already thought about it. It was only that, for the first time, I believed it was true. She said, "It doesn't matter whether we end up in a hole in the wall, David, because we will still have each other." In that moment everything became crystal clear, and it was as if an unbearable load had been lifted from my back. Of course! I thought. I may have to learn how to live on nothing. But my wife would still love me and we would go through it together. More importantly, God would still love me and would not have withdrawn one thing from me that was ultimately important to me. I still did not know how we would manage, exactly what draconian sacrifices would have to be made, but it did not really matter any more. God would lead us into dealing with that in his own time. I felt my energy returning to me as my hope renewed that God would provide—in his own way, he would provide—and we would be able to cope with it.

The success or failure of a Christian's financial planning can never be measured simplistically by an increase in wealth or the avoidance of financial difficulties.

It was only a short time before God provided the disability benefits that he had willed to withhold from me temporarily, and I must say, I am very thankful to him for that very gracious gift to me and my family. Not a day goes by that I do not look around one room or another of the house and tell God how thankful I am to him for this haven of rest we so enjoy in the midst of our difficult lives in this world. But I no longer assume that we need to have it, and I do not take it for granted. It is just a special gift I now enjoy, a gift the Lord can also take away if he so chooses, without jeopardizing my conviction that God will provide.

Obviously, then, the success or failure of a Christian's financial planning can never be measured simplistically by an increase in wealth or the avoidance of financial difficulties. It is measured rather in terms of what we learn through the process of having a God: a God who disciplines us to think of the future and not only the present, of others and not only ourselves, and of our needs and not only our wants; a God who teaches us what really matters, as often through denying as through granting our desires; a God who values patience and trust highly enough to use the frustrations of suffering to teach them; and a God who is always with us, even when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

LETTING GOD BE GOD

As anyone knows who knows me well, particularly my family, I'm basically a "control freak"—although to one degree or another we all are, since from the beginning we all have shared one overriding motive. As Douglas Frank wrote in his stinging critique of Evangelicalism: "There is only one serious agenda, and it is shared by Christians and non-Christians alike. We want to be like God. We want to know victory, to embody perfection, to wield power, to be right."[55] What God teaches us in very concrete ways through financial planning is that he is God and we are not, and that's all right. He does this by teaching us how to face and not to evade the things we fear the most. As we envision worst-case scenarios and realistically assess life's risks, we become acutely aware of our weakness and our need for God's strength. We learn how to rely on him in every circumstance as we manage what he gives us.

I used to think that the goal of my planning ahead was to spare us unnecessary suffering. Now I realize that suffering is inevitable and that planning is only a part of learning to understand that and to accept that. There is planning by which God makes even more resources available to us in the future, and there is planning by which he only teaches us how fruitless it is to plan for some things. There is planning by which God delivers us from adversity and planning by which he demonstrates that he, and not we, control what happens to us. There is planning by which we learn to take care of our needs and the needs of others, and there is planning that demonstrates how little we really need in order to have a truly meaningful life. But through all the planning that God expects us to do, what we learn by planning our way is that God does indeed direct our steps.

For Paul and for Luther, learning these "secrets" is what life is really all about. So why should we always feel the need to apologize for God when "bad things happen to good people?" Why do we keep relying on a theology of glory, however hungry the masses are for it, when it only leads to disaster? And why should we try to shield God from blame when it is only through acknowledging his hand in our suffering that we learn to cope with our lives as they are? As Paul wrote in Romans 5:3–5,

> Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us.

Let me give a final word to the grieving from the Evangelical Douglas Frank, who has grasped so well the character of our Christian life within the providence of God:

> In confident despair we wait. Not for Jesus to come and heal us by removing all troublesome feelings and making us happy. . . . Not for instant happiness, since we know we are to fellowship in his sufferings. Not for a visible victory, since his victory in some way involves our own brokenness and defeat. Not indeed for anything we would predict of Christian living, not any visible affirmation of our belief, not for answers to our human needs as we would define them. We wait, in confident despair, for the God of mercy, who comes freely as a friend to one who is an enemy. In this confession and in repentance we wait. We wait not for healing but for mercy—for the mercy that ultimately heals.[56]

Here is a theology of the cross that Luther would embrace more heartily than what usually passes for it today within the tradition that bears his name! May we too rediscover the power of this theology, not through theoretical apprehension of abstract ideas, but through the seemingly mundane textbook of financial planning, in the school of the Holy Spirit.

Soli Deo Gloria! LOGIA

NOTES

1. This essay was prepared for the Midwest Regional Pastor's Conference of the LCMS English District in September 1997.

2. It may seem entirely too mundane to devote any significant theological reflection to the subject of money and financial planning. The author assumes, however, that deep theological reflection on any subject, however mundane, will inevitably lead to consideration of the most fundamental principles of theology, particularly a proper understanding of the relationship between God and man.

3. Sherman S. Smith, *Exploding the Doomsday Money Myths: Why It's* Not *Time to Panic* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1994), 196.

4. Ibid., 193–195.

5. For me, the issue was never so much one of financial gain, as it is for so many who elect to opt out of Social Security, as one of principle. When Social Security was legislated, so strong yet was the respect for church and state separation that no provision was made for inclusion of clergy. Later, in response to clergy demand, a provision was made for voluntary inclusion of clergy, but on a self-employed basis, since there could be no acceptable taxation of churches (and there is ample precedent for this view in American constitutional law). Still later, because many clergy complained of not having been informed of this option, it was decided to include all clergy automatically unless they preferred to opt out. Only later did this automatic voluntary inclusion come to be interpreted as mandatory except in the most extraordinary circumstances. At this point, churches were also to pay Social Security tax on non-clergy employees while inexplicably leaving only clergy immune from this supposedly neutral tax. I believe that this erosion of the traditional, strict interpretation of the constitution regarding the neutral taxation of churches is potentially very dangerous (even Justice Learned Hand once wrote regarding a minimal but unconstitutional tax on churches that the power to tax is the power to govern). I also believe that the church is healthier when, unlike the sad European ecclesiastical state control, clergy are not dependent upon the state for their well-being. Unfortunately, church bodies seem merely to have acquiesced without much reflection on the wide-ranging implications of current, constitutionally questionable, regulations regarding Social Security.

6. For instance, the insurance agent promotes the benefits of whole life insurance, while the stock broker promotes the virtues of buying term insurance and investing the difference, each accusing the other of being simplistic and misleading. If one buys term and invests the difference, one can in fact make a higher return on cash value; but this presumes that the investor makes wise decisions, rarely the case on average. Furthermore, only whole life policies carry a waiver of premium provision, which also builds up cash values during disability (waiver of premium on a term life insurance policy only pays for life insurance). Since good disability coverage includes continuing preparation for retirement as well as current income, my own use of whole life and variable life policies with waiver of premium for disability has turned out to be a very important contribution to the financial safety net I had to construct in the absence of Social Security. And yet, I had to construct all of this the hard way, in the face of profoundly contradictory and confusing advice from experts—and without any real conviction at any time that I was in fact doing the right thing.

7. I read North's *An Introduction to Christian Economics* (Craig Press, [1973] 1975).

8. A good example of this crisis mentality was Gary North's ominously titled book *The Last Train Out: The Essential Survival Manual for the Eighties and Beyond* (Fort Worth, TX: American Bureau of Economic Research, 1983). North writes: "The year 1983 will be a major transition year—a year in which people will make decisions and investments that will be confirmed or overturned in 1984. More important, 1983 could provide investors with the last great buying opportunity—before interest rates explode, housing prices skyrocket, and gold coins become the investment goals of the rich, rather than an investment option of the middle class. But it could also be the beginning of the end, the year of transition before the entire world's monetary, banking, and trade system collapses in a wave of bankruptcies" (xi).

9. Writes Sutton: "It is my thesis that covenant is the mechanism for dominion and success. After all, Moses says, 'Keep the words of this covenant to do them, that you may prosper in all that you do' (Dt 29:9). If we really believe the Bible, then covenant is the key to daily living at every level." Ray R. Sutton, *That You May Prosper: Dominion By Covenant* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1987), 18.

10. Douglas W. Frank, *Less Than Conquerors: How Evangelicals Entered the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1986), 123.

11. Ibid., 183.

12. Ibid., 193.

13. Ibid., 224.

14. Ibid., 229.

15. Ibid., 224.

16. Smith, 125.

17. R. C. Sproul, *The Invisible Hand: Do All Things Really Work for Good?* (Waco, TX: Word Publishing, 1996), 13.

18. Ibid., 13.

19. Writes Sproul (14): "The prevailing assumption of our day is that we live in a closed, mechanistic universe where events occur either by fixed, impersonal laws or impersonal forces—or merely by chance. . . . People may still indulge in religious activity for purposes of personal well-being and psychological fulfillment, but religion has no relevant role in the public square or in serious reflections about the nature of the cosmos or the course of world history. The God of Christianity is in exile."

20. Ibid., 8–9.

21. Luther: *Lectures on Romans,* trans. and ed. Wilhelm Pauck (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), 250.

22. Martin Luther, *De Servo Arbitrio,* in *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation,* trans. and ed. Philip S. Watson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 119.

23. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics,* 3 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 1: 492.

24. Gerhard O. Forde, *Where God Meets Man: Luther's Down-to-Earth Approach to the Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1972), 25–27.

25. In his *Theology Is for Proclamation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), Forde elaborates: "Theology needs to recognize the difference between God not preached and God preached, between our general, abstract statements about God and the proclaimed Word of God to us. Theology that attempts to make God 'nice' ends only with a polite, societal deity whose 'goodness' is at once ineffectual, patronizing, oppressive, and ultimately terrifying (24). What are we to do about God not preached? Nothing. We are to leave the not-preached God alone and pay attention to the God clothed and displayed in the Word. . . . For the point is that not theology, but God preached is the only defense against God not preached" (27). And again: "Precisely because one allows God to be God, by whose will and appointment all things happen, one is able to declare that the concrete moment of the proclamation (the absolution, the sermon, the baptism, the supper; all given for you) is the divine act of God in the living present. . . . The moment of proclamation is the revealed will of God 'for you.' When you are there, when you are within earshot, you are the target. The almighty, immutable God breaks through the hiddenness to speak the concrete word of election to you" (36).

26. Forde, *Where God Meets Man,* 29.

27. Sounding a Lutheran law/gospel theme, Douglas Frank describes the sinful human tendency to build cities and fortresses for our own security, which the law of God must first demolish in order to prepare us for the gospel: "The posture of humility and the message of grace are fleeting realities, momentary breaks in the routines of business as usual for the inveterate builders we seem to be. The cross of Christ tells us that we will always be poor and needy, but we have become adept at transforming spiritual poverty into spiritual wealth by coating our building projects with a thin layer of what we call God's grace or blessing. . . . God crushes strongholds—even religious strongholds on which we ask his blessing—because they are ultimately built for human glorification. If we are to glorify him, we must leave our cities and our towers behind and perhaps meet him in the wilderness, where we have nothing to lean on but him" (27).

28. Quoted in Walther von Loewenich, *Luther's Theology of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1967), 18.

29. Ibid., 20.

30. Ibid., 118, 119, 124.

31. AE 21: 340.

32. Ibid., 340–341.

33. Ibid., 345.

34. Ibid., 350.

35. von Loewenich, 127.

36. Quoted in Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (A Mentor Book, 1950), 283.

37. Luther, *Lectures on Romans,* 99.

38. Ibid., 178.

39. Ibid., 111.

40. AE 21: 315.

41. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (London: SCM Press, (1962).

42. Writes Bonhoeffer: "To endure the cross is not a tragedy; it is the suffering which is the fruit of an exclusive allegiance to Jesus Christ. When it comes, it is not an accident, but a necessity. It is not the sort of suffering which is inseparable from this mortal life, but the suffering which is an essential part of the specifically Christian life. It is not suffering per se but suffering-and-rejection, and not rejection for any cause or conviction of our own, but rejection for the sake of Christ. . . . Only a man thus totally committed in discipleship can experience the meaning of the cross. The cross is there, right from the beginning, he has only got to pick it up; there is no need for him to go out and look for a cross for himself, no need for him deliberately to run after suffering. Jesus says that every Christian has his own cross waiting for him, a cross destined and appointed by God" (78–79).

43. Luther, *Lectures on Romans,* 271.

44. Ibid., 246.

45. It is not that all talk of "new life" is precluded; it is, after all, distinctly biblical language. It is only that such talk must be carefully couched in a theology of suffering and the cross so as not to titillate the old Adam with fantasies of success. Douglas Frank's insightful analysis of the Victorious Life movement within American evangelicalism can serve also as a warning to Lutherans who are overzealous in proclaiming a "new life" in Christ: "The Victorious Life movement did not seem to understand that grace would cease to be grace if it was turned into an instrument for achieving the same moral perfection, self-control, and happiness that the old works-righteousness sought. It did not know that its desires for these things were in themselves desires to escape the radical judgment and infinite mercy of God" (63).

46. Note carefully that I am not at all speaking here of musical taste, although the music will also communicate its own message along with the text and so cannot be excused as theologically irrelevant. Furthermore, as a parish pastor I always paid close attention to the singability of tunes, often substituting easier, more melodic tunes when a particularly rich text would suffer from musical distraction otherwise. And, more than most who sound a traditional note regarding Lutheran worship, I even acknowledge an urgent need to harness enjoyable, contemporary music for the transmission of confessional Lutheran texts. Nevertheless, what is at issue here is precisely the texts—the words and the message they explicitly convey.

47. Corrie Ten Boom, *The Hiding Place* (World Wide Publications, 1971), 85.

48. Here again, one must view the quite medieval Luther with some caution. Luther, like many Christians today, did make negative comments about planning ahead for our future needs. For instance, in his commentary on Mary's Magnificat Luther writes (347): "We desire to be filled and have plenty of everything before hunger and want arrive. We lay up provision against future hunger and need, so that we no longer have need of God and his works. What sort of faith is that which trusts in God, when all the while you feel and know that you have goods laid up to help yourself?" There is profound truth in what Luther writes, and it causes us to think long and hard regarding what we are really trying to accomplish with our financial planning. Are we indeed trying to take control of our own lives in such fashion that we will not need to rely upon God? If so, it is an illusion that the God of suffering and the cross will only shatter. Yet the economic theory implied by Luther is questionable. It evades the mystery of his own *simul iustus et peccator* in that it makes the abuse of financial planning by the sinner nullify the good use to which it might be put by the saint. If one were to follow that logic today, it would lead to an Amish style of life in which all insurance (not only life, but house, vehicle and health insurance) would be prohibited. Yet abuse does not nullify use. In short, the wisdom of Luther's insight cannot be viewed as inerrant in its details. Luther did not anticipate, and could not have anticipated, the complexities of the modern world.

49. I was a delegate to The American Lutheran Church convention in 1982, at which the vote was taken to form a new Lutheran church. I was opposed to the plan and had spoken several times in opposition to it. After the vote of 90 percent in favor, I ran into a pietistic pastor who I knew had also been opposed to the proposal. I asked him what he thought of the vote. He said that because the Spirit had led the church to do this, he was obligated to accept it. I looked at him incredulously and asked, "Whatever happened to 'Popes and councils can err'?" God leads, but sometimes into judgment. What we discern about his leading must be drawn from the Word of God.

50. Sproul, 65.

51. Some people who enter my cluttered study are taken aback to find two pieces of paper jutting prominently from a desktop file slot. They are titled "The Funeral Service for the Reverend David R. Liefeld." It isn't that I expect to die any time soon, but only that I don't assume that I won't. And because the funeral service is my final opportunity to say something to those I love about what God means to me, the selection of psalms, lessons, and hymns is very meaningful planning for me. In the same way, I have not assumed that I would not die young or become disabled. And it has been meaningful for me to use whatever resources God was providing at any given time to address those risks through savings, investments, and insurance. Do I think God would fail to provide for my family if my best efforts should fail? Of course not. Do I expect that my family could afford to live as we are accustomed to live now without setting aside some of what we have now in order to accomplish that? Again, the answer is no.

52. Steven Levy and Katie Hafner, "The Day the World Shuts Down," *Newsweek* (June 2, 1997), 54. They elaborate on the reasonable grounds for alarm (54, 59): "Come on, you say. Two measly digits? Can't we just unleash some sort of robo-program on all that computer code and clean it up? Well, no. Forget about a silver bullet. It seems that in most mainframe programs, the date appears more often than *M*A*S*H** reruns on television—about once every fifty lines of code. . . . 'There are two kinds of people,' says Nigel Martin-Jones of Data Dimensions. 'Those who aren't working on it and aren't worried, and those who are working on it and are terrified.'"

53. Cox News Service editorialist Marilyn Geewax wrote (wisely) on September 3, 1997: "When trying to assess risk, we focus on the factors we can control. If we think business and government have done a good job of holding down interest rates, containing inflation, encouraging global trade and controlling deficit spending, then we feel confident about investing in the nation's assets. But in the end, all investment research comes down to guesswork. . . . The factors that can most drastically affect our investments are far beyond our control. They hide beneath the Earth's surface or swirl in the atmosphere. They also lurk in the twisted minds of terrorists, who could deliberately cause massive injury. The world is full of frightful weapons—and crazy people. The best financial strategy is to spread risk by diversifying as much as possible. . . . But, in the end, the investments that can best withstand environmental or terroristic catastrophes are the ones we make in ourselves and our loved ones. By taking care of our health, increasing our education and building deep relationships with friends and family, we can prepare for the possibility of having to start over with nothing. The surest investments are those made in the heart and head."

54. Smith, 189–240.

55. Frank, 271.

56. Ibid., 166.

BAPTISM HYMN

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
In your name I am baptized;
Like my promised brother Isaac,
My heart has been circumcised:
Sinful flesh cut off in water,
Abram's sonship realized.

As the waters flooded o'er me,
Angels flew me in the ark,
Through the fleshly door in Jesus,
Which the soldier's spear did mark.
I shall voyage in his body
Till in heav'n I disembark.

Hellish Pharaoh sore assailed me,
Whipped my soul unceasingly;
Egypt held me fast in bondage,
Steeped in vile depravity.
Baptized by a greater Moses,
I passed through the crimson sea.

Born alive but dead in spirit,
Leprous was my sinful soul.
Then with Naaman I found healing
Where the Jordan's waters roll.
By his mighty Word, Elisha
Healed my body, made me whole.

Cast forth from the fish's belly,
Jonah left the darkness dread,
Pointing to the resurrection
Of the One from whom he'd fled.
From the belly of the Fountain,
Cast me forth to life from death.

Chad L. Bird
The Baptism of our Lord, 1998
Tune: "Picardy," 87 87 87

Gambling

Scriptural Principles

Glen Zweck

The material possessions that we Christians have, we have received as gifts from God. Although they are indeed gifts, we are answerable to God for the way in which we use them. The dominion that God has given man over his animate and inanimate creation (Gn 1:26–28; 2:15–17) is not absolute. God expects this dominion to be exercised in keeping with his will. He will require an accounting (Mt 25:41–46).

In fact, Scripture speaks of man as a co-worker with God in the work of creation. God creates, not only directly, but also indirectly, through his servants, supernatural and human (Ps 103:19–22; 1Pt 2:13–15; Rom 13:1–7)[1] This teaching of Scripture is also confessed in the Large Catechism:

> Although much that is good comes to us from men, we receive it all from God through his command and ordinance. Our parents and all authorities—in short, all people placed in the position of neighbors—have received the command to do us all kinds of good. So we receive our blessings not from them, but from God through them. Creatures are only the hands, channels, and means through which God bestows all blessings. For example, he gives to the mother breasts and milk for her infant, and he gives grain and all kinds of fruits from the earth for man's nourishment—things which no creature could produce by himself. No one, therefore, should presume to take or give anything except as God has commanded it. We must acknowledge everything as God's gifts and thank him for them, as this commandment requires. Therefore, this way of receiving good through God's creatures is not to be disdained, nor are we arrogantly to seek other ways and means than God has commanded, for that would be not receiving our blessings from God but seeking them from ourselves."[2]

Luther spoke of three governments, or hierarchies, through which God regulated this co-operative work. We sometimes call them orders of creation:

> The first government is that of the home, from which the people come; the second is that of the city, meaning the country, the people, princes and lords, which we call the secular government. These embrace everything—children, property, money, animals, etc. The home must produce, whereas the city must guard, protect and defend. Then follows the third, God's own home and city, that is, the church, which must obtain people from the home and protection and defense from the city.
>
> These are the three hierarchies ordained by God, and we need no more; indeed, we have enough and more than enough to do in living aright and resisting the devil in these three. Just look only at the home and the duties that it alone imposes: parents and landlords must be obeyed; children and servants must be nourished, trained, ruled, and provided for in a godly spirit. The rule of the home alone would give us enough to do, even if there were nothing else. Then the city, that is, the secular government, also gives us enough to do if we show ourselves really obedient, and conversely, if we are to judge, protect and promote land and people. The devil keeps us busy enough, and with him God gave us the sweat of our brow, thorns and thistles in abundance (Gn 3:18–19), so that we have more than enough to learn, to live, to do, and to suffer in these two governments. Then there is the third rule and government. If the Holy Spirit reigns there, Christ calls it a comforting, sweet, and light burden [Mt 11:30]; if not, it is not only a heavy, severe, and terrible task, but also an impossible one, as St. Paul says in Romans 8[:3], What the law could not do, and elsewhere, The letter kills [2 Cor 3:6][3]

Social developments since Luther's day mean that his first hierarchy, that of the home, has been divided into two. Since a person no longer works out his vocation at home, a distinction needs to be made between home and occupation. While God has called the Christian to live and work under all four of these hierarchies, and the term "vocation" includes them all, it is also customary to speak of the Christian's occupation as his vocation in a narrower sense.

Our material possessions have been given to us not only for our own need and enjoyment, but also for the purpose of serving God and our fellow men, in whatever station in life God has placed us. This is part of the way in which God governs and preserves this world through the agency of the human beings he has placed in it. We Christians, as faithful children of God, appreciative of the redemption won for us by Christ, are faced with the task of deciding what are the appropriate ways for us to use the gifts he has given us. Because he has demonstrated his love for us

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by the gift of his Son, we are anxious to respond appropriately. In this consideration, we think in particular of the duties God has outlined for us in the Table of Duties in the Catechism.

We have our duties outlined for us also in the general and particular commandments of God's law. We recall, first of all, the general instruction that we should love God with all our heart, mind, and soul. The obvious corollary is that it would not be appropriate, but would be sinful, for us to place in these material gifts the fear, the love, or the trust that we owe to God alone. Anything, therefore, that smacks of idolatry, gross or fine, is inappropriate. These things we will seek to avoid.

Then we are aware also of the need to serve God by serving our fellowmen. To help us in seeing our duty toward our fellowmen, God has given us the Ten Commandments. In each one of these commandments, there is more work than we can ever hope to accomplish.[4] We can never hope to achieve perfection in this duty. If we could, Christ would not have been sent to fulfill these commandments in our stead. These instructions, however, serve as guidelines for us as we plan our use of the material gifts God has given us. We have an obvious duty to look after ourselves so that we may fulfill our vocation. Parents have a duty toward their children, and so on. We fulfill God's plan for us and through us, not only in what we contribute of our material gifts for the church, but also in our total use of our gifts. This does not necessitate an ascetic avoidance of luxury and recreation, because this sort of asceticism distorts us and thus impairs our fitness for the task God has entrusted to us. It certainly is within God's will for parents to provide for their children as well as they can. It is also within God's will for us to provide for our own rest and recreation.

This definition, which is also quite common in Lutheran circles, erroneously defines gambling as intrinsically sinful.

Since each person is different, there is a wide range of possibilities for each one to consider in the use of his material possessions. It is in this context that the issue of gambling should be considered. In each case, the Christian will want to know that he is acting out of faith and in keeping with God's will. In the knowledge that everything is permissible for him, he will want to assure himself that it is also expedient (1 Cor 6:12, 10:23). Is this act of gambling in keeping with his desire to serve God and his neighbor? Unfortunately, before we can answer this question properly, we need to clear the path of an obstruction. This is an obstruction that has been put in place not by God but by men. This obstruction is a legalistic definition of what gambling is. This definition, which is also quite common in Lutheran circles, erroneously defines gambling as intrinsically sinful. If gambling is always sinful, the possibility never arises that an act of gambling could ever be something that is permissible within God's will.

But according to what authority does anyone insist that gambling is always sinful? The Bible nowhere has a commandment saying, "You shall not gamble." Nor does it provide us with a definition of gambling. Therefore, if we wish to know what the Bible has to say about gambling, it is necessary for us first to agree on a definition of what constitutes gambling, and second to discover what scriptural principles apply to that definition, and how they apply.

It is not the purpose of this essay to discuss the whole issue of gambling, including the practical and social considerations and the wisdom or otherwise of gambling, or the danger of addiction to gambling. Rather, this essay has a much narrower focus. It is confined to the question of seeking to determine whether gambling is always sinful, and if not, how it is to be determined when gambling is sinful. Once this artificial barrier has been removed, it will become easier to make a proper consideration on the proper use of the gifts God has given us.

A DEFINITION OF GAMBLING

All too many discussions of gambling are nothing less than legalistic diatribes. They launch straight into lambasting gambling as a sin and evil, by simply equating gambling with stealing or covetousness, without so much as a pause to define what constitutes gambling. The assumption is made that gambling is identical with stealing or covetousness; then everything that can possibly be labeled gambling is included under the umbrella condemnation. For example, the following assertion is made:

> The underlying motive in gambling and betting is covetousness. The denial of gamblers and bettors to the contrary is of no avail, as long as they continue to bet and gamble, and thus actually disprove their denials by their actions.[5]

When this statement is examined closely, it reveals an arrogant and uncharitable judging of the motives of the gambler, implicitly accusing him of dishonesty, an accusation that cannot be substantiated objectively. It presumes an omniscience that only God can possess.

In order to provide the basis for a meaningful investigation of the ethical issues involved, an appropriate definition of gambling must be sufficiently precise in order to distinguish what the essence of the activity is that we wish to denote as gambling. Many definitions that are offered are so broad and so lacking in precision that they encompass almost any human activity. The fact is that we often use the word "gamble" in such a loose sense that almost any kind of risk-taking may validly be called gambling. Under such a loose definition, even Christian faith itself can be described as a gamble. For example, if one thinks the cost too high and the truth-claims unconvincing, he may decide to ignore the claims and offers of the gospel of Christ and to ignore God, thereby risking the less certain pleasures of the future in favor of the certain pleasures of the present (1 Cor 15:32). Such broad definitions of gambling are obviously too broad to be of any practical value in the present discussion.

On the other hand, there is often such a determination to ensure that all gambling be classified as sin, and that no loophole be left by means of which any particular gamble can escape being labeled as sinful, that a single motive, such as covetousness, is attributed by definition to every act of gambling. This is sheer legalism, since it creates a law where God has not created a law. If it were really true that every gamble involved the sin of covetousness, there would be no need for the use of the word "gamble," since God already has two commandments dealing with the sin of covetousness.

The definition of gambling that is proposed here is the following: *Gambling denotes an exchange of goods and/or services in which a just equivalent is not given, the decisive element in the transaction being chance.* A virtue of this definition is that it enables an objective determination to be made concerning whether a particular act or transaction is a gamble or not, apart from the question of motive. For this reason, it enables us to consider this act in the light, not only of one motive, but of a variety of possible motives. In other words, it enables us to bring into consideration not only one-tenth of God's law but the whole law.

There are two ways in which this definition improves on rival definitions. In the first place, gambling involves an exchange, a transaction. Seen from this aspect, this definition removes from the discussion many unavoidable forms of risk-taking. It relieves us of the need, for example, of discussing whether or not it is a sin to open one's front gate and go out onto the street. This definition also emphasizes the mutuality of the transaction and avoids the one-sided concentration on the motives of one person in this transaction, which distorts so many definitions.

The second advantage of this definition is that it enables us to pinpoint more closely what it is in such transactions that justifies their being called gambling. In a normal business transaction, *A* transfers to *B* a certain amount of money in exchange for goods or services that he values more highly than the money he surrenders in exchange for them, but which *B* values less highly than the money he receives in exchange for them. In other words, in a normal transaction, both parties to the transaction receive back something that they value more highly than that which they gave in exchange. Friedman expressed it as follows:

> The possibility of co-ordination through voluntary co-operation rests on the elementary—yet frequently denied—proposition that both parties to an economic transaction benefit from it, *provided the transaction is bilaterally voluntary and informed.*[6]

Note that the values are not strictly objective and inflexible. On the contrary, they are subjective and variable. If I have just eaten, I may well value my money more highly than the bananas I see enticingly displayed on the fruit stall. Hunger, scarcity, the perceived quality of the fruit, or goodness knows what else may readily change my estimation of relative values.

This subjective element in the estimation of value introduces a gray area into the consideration of the ethics of gambling. The same is, of course, true as far as motives enter into the question of determining whether or not a particular gamble is a sin. Nevertheless, this definition enables us to make a number of determinations. It enables us, in many cases, to distinguish between what is gambling and what is not gambling.

There does remain the question of fact, namely, whether in a particular instance the decisive element is skill or chance. In many cases, an absolute determination between the relative contributions of skill and chance cannot be made. If a particular business venture fails, for example, there may be room for disagreement whether the cause of the failure was simply chance, in that there was no objective way in which the possible reaction of the buying public could be determined in advance. It could be that the market research was incompetently done. It could be that the advertising program was incompetently executed. Or it may simply be that the prejudices of the potential buyers were so deeply rooted that they could be overcome by no product or no program, no matter how sensible.

Such considerations aside, there are many acts that can be determined either to be or not to be gambling. It is not gambling, for example, if I am not asked to outlay any goods or services in exchange for the goods or services that I receive—if, for example, some firm decides to present a gift to every millionth customer, or if someone presents me with a gift of a raffle ticket. Defining gambling as an exchange of goods and/or services immediately eliminates all sorts of nonsensical arguments about whether farming, investing in a new business, or crossing the street and such like constitute gambling.

The reference to a just equivalent refers to the fact that in a capitalist economic system the essence of a transaction involving the exchange of goods implies that each party to the exchange receives in return something that he regards to be more valuable than that which he surrendered. Abuses of this system occur not only when chance becomes a decisive factor, but also when compulsion of one kind or another is applied either by individuals or by governments (bureaucratic regulation, threat of physical force, or various forms of collusion or conspiracy).

This element of freedom either to take part in the exchange or to refrain from taking part in the exchange is an important consideration when we are dealing with something like a raffle or a lottery.

OTHER (REJECTED) DEFINITIONS OF GAMBLING

1913, Hastings's Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics

While Hastings's *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* does not contain an explicit definition of gambling, it comes close in the following:

> But the immorality of gambling may be argued on higher grounds than a calculation of pleasure.
>
> a. Every gambling transaction involves a transfer of property in one shape or another. When the gambler is asked why he stakes his money on a game or a race, his reply is, "To add an interest to the game." The interest thus added is, simply stated, the interest of acquisition. If the real object were, as is claimed, merely the sport and the excitement, then men might just as well wager counters, or, for the matter of that, agree to hand over all winnings to public charities. But this is not done. The transfer of property, in one shape or another, is essential to the act. There are only three ways in which property can legitimately be acquired—by gift, by labor, and by exchange. Gambling stands outside all of these.
> b. Its motive is, however carefully disguised, covetousness. It is an attempt to get property without paying the price for it. It is a violation of the law of equiva-

lents. It is a kind of robbery by mutual agreement; but it is still robbery, just as dueling, which is murder by mutual agreement, is still treated as murder. It is begotten of covetousness; it leads to idleness.

c. It is, moreover, an appeal to chance. If in any contest skill comes in, odds are given or handicaps arranged so as to equalize the chances as far as possible. To make chance the arbiter of conduct is to subvert the moral order and stability of life.

d. It concentrates attention upon lucre, and thereby withdraws attention from worthier objects of life.[7]

The analogy drawn here between gambling and dueling may be attractive at first blush. On closer examination, however, the analogy proves to be flawed. In the first place, there are laws in Scripture that explicitly forbid the taking of life, except under conditions God himself has stipulated. In the second place, there is no law in Scripture explicitly forbidding gambling. In the third place, this analogy surreptitiously substitutes robbery, which is explicitly forbidden in Scripture, for gambling, which is not. This is verbal sleight of hand.

1954, Lueker, Concordia Cyclopedia

> Taking part in games of chance or hazard for money, the expectation being of a large return on the smallest possible stake—an obvious transgression of the Seventh Commandment.[8]

1954, A. E. Schirmer

> An act by which one or more persons seeks to get, upon the basis of chance and without giving a just equivalent, the money or goods of another person or persons.[9]

This definition suffers from several weaknesses. In the first place, if we are speaking of a ten-penny raffle in which the prize is a chocolate bar, we are speaking of something that may validly be called gambling, but we are hardly speaking of "seeking to get . . . the money or goods of another person or persons" (Explanation of the Ninth Commandment). We may well be seeking nothing more than a harmless bit of fun. From this aspect, the definition is using a steamroller to crack a nut. But, more seriously, it inaccurately defines all gambling as covetousness when there may well be other motives that prompt a particular gamble. For example, someone may participate in an office sweep on the weekend's football matches in order to demonstrate to himself and others his competence as a student of the game. Someone may well decide, on a trip to the races, to heighten his interest in the outcome of a race by means of a wager, while someone else may prefer an ice cream or a glass of champagne. The amount of money involved and the variety of possible motives of the gambler are more significant to the ethics of the act of gambling than this definition allows for.

The basic problem with this definition of gambling, as with many others, is that it initially defines gambling in terms of a single motive, covetousness, but is then applied indiscriminately to concrete acts where the motives can only be assumed and not demonstrated objectively. It is, to mix metaphors once again, verbal sleight of hand. Since motives are the province of the heart and not readily susceptible of objective verification, such a definition has no practical value. When we attribute motives to peoples' actions, we are dealing with assumptions and guesswork, not with facts.

There is no point in adopting a definition of gambling that simply equates gambling with covetousness. What we are doing thereby is defining a concrete act in terms of a single motive or attitude. The name "gambling," in this case, adds nothing useful. We would be better off forgetting about the word "gambling," and sticking with the commandment against covetousness. If we wish the word "gambling" to be meaningful, we have to define it in terms of a concrete act.

1974, William J. Petersen

> Gambling . . . is taking an artificial risk for the hope of excessive gain far beyond what the investment of time, money or skill would justify. A gamble is a transaction whereby your gain is someone else's loss—or vice versa.[10]

1983, Lutheran Church of New Zealand

> seeking one's own material gain at the expense of others through games of chance involving pecuniary risk.[11]

1988, Herman Otten

> [Gambling, according to definition, is] taking an artificial risk for hope of excessive gain far beyond what the investment of time, money, or skill would justify.[12]

This definition is further elaborated as follows:

> Gambling has four parts:
>
> 1. An artificial risk. Many risks in life are necessary to take; when you gamble, you are creating risks of your own choosing.
> 2. A selfish goal. The basic objective of the gambler is not to improve society, even when he buys a lottery ticket from the state. His basic goal is to win a million dollars.
> 3. No productive by-product for social betterment. An investment is used to benefit others; a wager achieves no social good.
> 4. A gain at someone else's expense. In an investment, everyone may gain; in betting, the odds are carefully stacked so there will be more losers than winners.[13]

RELEVANT BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

The definition of gambling proposed above makes it clear that not all gambling is sinful. Therefore, in order to determine whether a particular act of gambling is a sin, it is necessary to consult the relevant biblical principles. Which are the scriptural principles that are relevant? Both tables of the law come under consideration.

The Warning against the Sin of Idolatry (First Commandment)

In the first place, inasmuch as gambling includes an exchange of property, it is obvious that the Christian must keep in mind the need to "fear, love, and trust in God above all things."[14] Whenever we begin to trust in material things above God, we become guilty of the sin of idolatry. That applies everywhere in our lives. Therefore, it also applies to the gambler, should his gambling lead him to trust more in material possessions than in God. Where gambling is sinful, it is more likely to involve a transgression of the First Table of the law rather than the Second Table.

The Warning against the Sin of Covetousness (Ninth Commandment)

In the second place, the Ninth Commandment, as explained in the Small Catechism, warns against a danger that often applies to gambling:

> We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.[15]

What does coveting really involve? Note Luther's explanation that covetousness will motivate one to scheme to get his neighbor's possessions away from him. In other words, this is not identical with the motive of "keeping up with the Joneses," which is more appropriately identified as envy. Envy and covetousness connote two different kinds of greed.

One kind of greed says, "He has a BMW; I'd like a BMW too." This may be envy, but it is not covetousness, in that I am not necessarily scheming to get his BMW. Then there is another kind of greed. It says, "He has a BMW; let's take it away from him." That really is a crude form of covetousness. This is the covetousness that motivates a political philosophy that aims to achieve economic equality in society, not by raising the less well-off to the level of the well-off, but by dragging the well-off down to the standard of the less well-off.

If *A* sits down to a game of poker with *B* and wins his farm, has he "schemed to get his neighbor's inheritance or house"? Probably not, unless the whole thing was engineered by *A* in the hope of exploiting *B*'s sinful weakness. In this case, *A* is guilty of the sin of covetousness, whether the plan succeeds or not. In the eventual outcome, however, where *A* has won *B*'s farm, he has exploited his neighbor's sinful weakness. In other words, if A refuses to put an end to the game when it becomes obvious that *B* has lost all common sense and self control and has wagered his livelihood, he has obtained his neighbor's property "in a way which only appears right." This is a clear violation of the Ninth Commandment, a violation that is obvious, not from an examination of *A*'s heart, but from the patent result.

In the case of a raffle or lottery, however, is *A* really guilty of the sin of covetousness if he purchases a ticket with the hope of winning a major prize? Once *B*, and the millions of other mugs who purchase tickets, have purchased tickets, to whom does the money really belong? Either it belongs to the organization running the raffle or lottery, or it is owned equally or in proportion, by all who have purchased tickets, and is being held in trust by the organizers. In this case, is *A* really seeking to obtain his *neighbor's* possessions? In other words, is the sin involved covetousness or some other sin? If there is sin involved, is it not rather idolatry? For that matter, is it necessarily a sin for people to cooperate in this way in order that some among their number may obtain large gifts? Is this any worse than someone who hopes to make large profit from putting a new product on the market? Is it a sin to make a large profit in order to prepare for the lean times ahead?

Is it really a sin, and if so, what is the sin, if a hundred people, or a thousand, or a million—or even ten million—agree to make a weekly contribution of one dollar each into a common fund in order that one or more of their number, selected by chance, may enjoy the benefit of a large gift?

Consider the following argument in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*:

> On certain conditions, and apart from excess or scandal, it is not sinful to stake money on the issue of a game of chance any more than it is sinful to insure one's property against risk, or deal in futures on the produce market. As I may make a free gift of my own property to another if I choose, so I may agree with another to hand over to him a sum of money if the issue of a game of cards is other than I expect, while he agrees to do the same in my favor in the contrary event. Theologians commonly require four conditions so that gaming may not be illicit.
>
> a. What is staked must belong to the gambler and must be at his free disposal. It is wrong, therefore, for the lawyer to stake the money of his client, or for anyone to gamble with what is necessary for the maintenance of his wife and children.
> b. The gambler must act freely, without unjust compulsion.
> c. There must be no fraud in the transaction, although the usual rules of the game may be allowed. It is unlawful, accordingly, to mark the cards, but it is permissible to conceal carefully from an opponent the number of trump cards one holds.
> d. Finally, there must be some sort of equality between the parties to make the contract equitable; it would be unfair for a combination of two expert whist players to take the money of a couple of mere novices at the game.
>
> If any of these conditions be wanting, gambling becomes more or less wrong; and, besides, there is generally an element of danger in it which is quite sufficient to account for the bad name which it has.[16]

Even if one disagrees with the equation of gambling with insurance or the futures market, it is difficult to assert that the basic argument is in error.

The Warning against the Sin of Stealing (Seventh Commandment)

There are circumstances in which someone is so obviously acting irresponsibly in wagering his livelihood that it would be tantamount to stealing his livelihood away from him to get it by gambling:

> We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbors' money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.[17]

We need to remember that the general commandment of love, as well as the specific commandments, place upon the Christian a positive duty of helping his neighbor.

The Desire to Get Something for Nothing

A consequence of man's fall into sin is that, thenceforth, work has become painful toil (Gn 3:17–19). To use gambling as an attempt to sidestep this burden smacks of a theology of glory. St. Paul's warning against stealing contains a general principle that teaches we should be prepared to work for a living: "He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need" (Eph 4:28). In this connection, we need to keep in mind St. Paul's warning: "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and specially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim 5:8).

Spending on one's own recreation is valid. The amount or proportion of one's income devoted to this cause may vary considerably from one individual to another.

In considering the desire to get something for nothing, we need to keep in mind something that is taught to us both by experience and by observation of the loving and considerate way in which God acts. God knows very well that not everyone is able to deal with large amounts of money. Therefore, before he gives us large amounts of money, he prefers to train us gradually in the proper use of our money. Experience teaches us that many lives are destroyed by the sudden acquisition of money, which the recipient is incapable of managing and controlling. Poverty cannot be eliminated simply by throwing money at it, because lack of money is only one of the factors involved in poverty. The ability to make a wise use of the money one has is also another factor.

In this connection, it may also be noted that it is the individual who is in the best position to judge how disposal of his income should be apportioned. Experience teaches us that attempts to regulate the individual's use of his money from outside simply fail, because only God is omniscient. Spending on one's own recreation is valid. The amount or proportion of one's income devoted to this cause may vary considerably from one individual to another.

SOME TEST CASES

The Stock Market

A wide variety of transactions take place in the stock market. Many of these are essential for the economic well-being of the country. Through the stock market, entrepreneurs obtain the funds that are necessary to launch a new company in order to market a product that benefits the users, as well as providing a profit for the investor.

Many transactions that take place in the stock market, however, are more parasitic in nature in that they contribute nothing to manufacturing output, but simply provide opportunities for large profits for those who happen to guess correctly what is going to happen to the price of various stocks and shares. In other words, many of those who deal in the stock market are engaged in gambling, some more skillfully than others. The question naturally arises whether gambling for a livelihood in this way is a manifestation of love for God and for one's neighbor.

Insurance

At first glance, it may appear that insurance schemes fit the definition of gambling adopted above. After all, many people cooperate in paying into a fund, but only a few receive the payout. There may well be insurance schemes that are as much gambling as any lottery. There is a fundamental difference in principle, however. One does not—unless one desires to sample the accommodation of prison—insure one's possessions with the object of collecting the amount stipulated for the loss of those possessions. The fundamental principle of insurance is quite different. One insures what one cannot afford to replace. Hence, an insurance scheme is in principle a cooperative scheme for sharing the risk of the loss of one's property. What one receives in exchange for one's insurance premium is the assurance that, in the event of loss of the insured possessions, the effect of this loss will have been cushioned by the cooperative venture. In principle, an insurance scheme does not seek to benefit from the factor of chance, but mitigates its deleterious effects. Thus, far from treating chance as a decisive factor, an insurance scheme in principle prevents chance from becoming a decisive factor. Of course, there may be differences between plans and realities. Miscalculations occur in practice, and insurance companies fail, but we are concerned here with the principle behind insurance, rather than with the practice.

This interpretation of insurance is supported by Hastings's *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*:

> In the same way, it is said that to insure one's life or one's property is to make a bet with the Insurance Company. But the whole object of insurance is the very opposite of the gambler's; it does not create risk, it counteracts the inevitable chances of life, and equalizes them by wide distribution. These risks are ascertainable in their aggregate incidence, though not ascertainable in any individual case. The general effect, therefore, of insurance is to add to the stability of life. The general effect of gambling is to destroy that stability.[18]

In keeping with this principle, it does in fact happen that some commercial enterprises operate their own internal insurance scheme. For example, a farmer who discovers that the insurance premiums on his farm machinery amount to the replacement of one major piece of machinery each year may well decide to forego any external insurance scheme. He may find it feasible instead to minimize the possibility of the simultaneous loss of all his machinery.

In principle, therefore, it may be said that insurance does not intrinsically involve an exchange by means of which one seeks to gain a disproportionate return on one's investment. What one purchases by means of one's insurance premium is the assurance of a buffer against unacceptable loss. Of course, this does not mean that there may not be some insurance schemes and some aspects of ways in which some insurance companies operate that do not fall under our working definition of gambling. These are not an intrinsic part of insurance in itself, but are rather an abuse of the fundamental principle of insurance.

A Bet at the Races

Is it through skill that the successful bettor selects the winning horse? The fact that the bookies always win in the long run seems to belie that suggestion. Is it necessarily the case, however, that every bet at the races is a sin? What if one person decides to spend on gambling at the races the same amount that someone else decides to spend on drinking beer? On what grounds is this labeled sin?

One-Armed Bandits

Is it a sin for a Christian to play the slot machines and other kinds of one-armed bandits? Here again, it is doubtful whether one is justified in insisting that the occasional use of a few spare coins in this way is a sin. The machine is rigged to return only a small proportion of the money placed in it. But those who have placed money in it have done so freely. The money no longer belongs to them. To what extent a Christian resorts to these machines will be determined by the general considerations concerning the use of his material possessions detailed above.

Monopoly

Is it a sin to play the game of Monopoly, since the very object of the game is to gain possession of the property of the other players? Note that in the game of Monopoly an exchange of goods does not take place. One is merely shuffling toys, just like someone who has been issued with specially printed "play money" to use in a casino.

The Question of Offence

What about the suggestion that a Christian should not gamble, no matter how innocently, lest his example lead into sin someone else who proves to be more readily addicted to gambling?

The short answer to this objection is that, in speaking of giving offence, St. Paul does not have in mind the vague possibility that someone unknown to me may be led astray. Rather, he has in mind the case where I know that a particular individual is weak in faith and likely to be led astray by my action (1 Cor 8:9–13; Rom 14:15).

CONCLUSION

What has been established in this essay is that not all gambling is in itself sinful. A wide range of circumstances and motives enters the picture. This may be disturbing to some. It is natural for us to want black-on-white, open-and-shut cases, with a clear set of rules or guidelines. The desire for this state of affairs is, at best, an idle dream in any sphere of Christian ethics. The legalist refuses to reconcile himself to that state of affairs. The Christian must.

Yet that is not the end of the story. There are all sorts of practical considerations that deserve attention. Above all, the Christian needs to keep in mind that the real question he must ask himself is not, Is gambling a sin? Instead, the real question for the Christian, redeemed by God's grace, is, What is a God-pleasing way for me to use the gifts he has given me? How can I best serve God and my fellow men with them?

NOTES

1. Regin Prenter, *Creation and Redemption,* trans. Theodore I. Jensen (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955, 1967), 203–204.
2. LC I, 26–27; Tappert, 368.
3. Martin Luther, *On the Councils and the Church* (1539), AE 41: 177.
4. Martin Luther, *Treatise on Good Works* (1520), AE 44: 15–115.
5. A. E. Schirmer, "Statements for Discussion on Gambling and Betting," Queensland District of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia, Synodical Report of the 35th Regular Convention, 1954, 6.
6. Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 13.
7. J. L. Paton, "Gambling," in James Hastings, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (New York and Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark and Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), 6: 166.
8. Erwin L. Lueker, "Gambling," in *Lutheran Cyclopedia* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1954), 401.
9. Schirmer, 6.
10. William J. Petersen, *What You Should Know about Gambling* (New Canaan, CT: Keats Publishing, 1974), 78.
11. Social Questions Committee of the Lutheran Church of New Zealand, *New Zealand Lutheran,* February 1983.
12. Herman Otten, "What You Should Know about Gambling," Christian News (December 12, 1988), 14.
13. Ibid.
14. Meaning of the First Commandment, *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991), 9.
15. *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation,* 11.
16. *Catholic Encyclopedia* (London: Caxton Publishing Company, and New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909), 6: 375.
17. *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation,* 11.
18. Paton, 167.

Melanchthon's Use of Augustine in Apology Article IV

Albert B. Collver III

The Lutheran shibboleth[1] of *sola gratia, sola fide,* and *sola scriptura* was not entirely rejected by Rome during the Reformation. In fact, Rome attempted to demonstrate that it too could confess this in part. *Sola gratia* was not a problem, because Augustine had defended the doctrine of grace against the false teaching of Pelagius. On account of this, Rome affirmed that man was saved by God's grace alone. *Sola fide,* on the other hand, was a stumbling block. The fact that Apology Article IV is entirely devoted to *sola fide* is a responsive echo to Rome's inability to confess it. "By faith alone" is, perhaps, the crux of the Reformation. On the other hand, Rome did not have a great deal of difficulty with *sola scriptura,* perhaps because "for some time certain Catholic writers,"[2] such as the Brethren of the Common Life, had stressed it. In fact, the *Confutation* was "an accumulation of Bible-texts"[3] that attempted to answer the Augsburg Confession from Scripture alone.

In light of this, it is perhaps surprising that the Lutheran Symbols, which confess that all doctrine is derived from Scripture alone, make free use of patristic quotations in support of their argument. On the surface, this may appear to contradict *sola scriptura,* or at least lead one to ask why the fathers are used. Furthermore, quotations from the fathers are not limited to the Confessions, but appear in the private writings of both Melanchthon and Luther, and in the writings of their disciples such as Martin Chemnitz. It should therefore not be surprising that Melanchthon would also make extensive use of the fathers throughout the Apology, although in Article IV he almost exclusively uses Augustine and his anti-Pelagian writings.

Melanchthon quotes four fathers in Apology Article IV: Ambrose, Augustine, Cyprian, and Jerome. None is quoted more than once, except Ambrose and Augustine, who are quoted two times and nine times respectively. Half of the Augustine quotations and a fourth of the patristic quotations in the Apology occur in Article IV. This is also the longest article and the center of the controversy between Rome and the Lutherans about how justification takes place. Article IV of the Augsburg Confession clearly confesses that "men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith."[4] This article also condemned the Pelagian heresy, which taught that men were justified by their works. The *Confutation* agreed that the Pelagians were in error for teaching that man could "merit eternal life by his own powers without the grace of God."[5] It countered the Augustana, however, by saying that "it is entirely contrary to Holy Scripture to deny that our works are meritorious."[6] The issue at stake is not grace alone, but faith alone.

Considering the issue, it may at first seem strange that Melanchthon makes use of Augustine, the doctor of *sola gratia.* Melanchthon first quotes Augustine in Ap IV, 29–30.[7] Immediately preceding this quotation, he lists four falsehoods that this article will refute.[8] The first falsehood to be refuted is "that we merit the remission of sins by means of our works."[9] The remaining three falsehoods are derived from the first. Next he presents evidence proving that the four preceding statements are false. Melanchthon writes, "We have testimonies for this our belief, not only from the Scriptures, but also from the Fathers. For in opposition to the Pelagians, Augustine contends at great length that grace is not given because of our merits."[10] Then he quotes Augustine's *On Nature and Grace:* [11]

> If natural ability by means of free choice and by learning, in what way he is obligated to live, and by a good life he is capable himself, then Christ has died for nothing, then the scandal of the cross is empty. For what reason do I not yet here cry out? On the contrary, I will cry out and I will reprove that of yours with Christian grief: Christ has become empty, you who are justified by nature; you have fallen from grace. For being ignorant of the righteousness of God and wishing to establish your own righteousness that is not subject to God. In the same way, indeed the end of the law, so actually Christ is the savior of a corrupt human nature for the righteousness of all who believe.[12]

The first thing to note is that the quotation is taken from Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings. In fact, all the quotations except one are taken from these writings. Augustine is saying that the law does not work righteousness. For Melanchthon, this quotation from Augustine is a "testimony" affirming the Lutheran teaching. This teaching is not derived from Augustine, only affirmed by him. In this first quotation Melanchthon has established that the fathers are witnesses to doctrine. If Rome can con-

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demn the Lutherans for their teaching, they must also condemn the father who testifies to it.

The next quotation is found in paragraph 87,[13] whose confession is clearer than the first. The point at issue concerns what deeds of the law Christ abrogated. Melanchthon reports that "the adversaries interpret that this refers to Levitical ceremonies."[14] He counters that Paul means *tota lege* ("the entire law"). Melanchthon, in interpreting Romans, calls on Augustine to be his witness. "But Augustine teaches correctly that Paul speaks of the entire law, as he discusses at length in his book *Of the Spirit and Letter,* where he finally says":[15]

> This, therefore, having been considered and discussed according to the resources that the Lord deemed worthy to give, we conclude man is not justified by the precepts of a good life, except through faith in Jesus Christ.[16]

Here Augustine confesses that a good life cannot justify. Jewish ceremonial laws are not about living a good life but about types of food and the like. Augustine is referring to the Decalogue. It cannot justify a man; only faith in Jesus Christ is able to justify. His testimony is damning, either for himself and the Lutherans or for Rome. The very position that Augustine testifies to as truth is being condemned by Rome. If the Lutherans are wrong in their interpretation of Romans, so is Augustine. Either way, Augustine cannot be claimed by Rome because he is not their father. Therefore, Rome cannot be catholic.

If Rome can condemn the Lutherans for their teaching, they must also condemn the father who testifies to it.

Not only does Melanchthon demonstrate that Rome lacks a claim to catholicity, but in the next quotation he also demonstrates that Rome's situation is much worse. His usual practice in quoting a father is not to provide commentary on the quotation; however, in paragraph 106 he does provide commentary on Augustine.[17] For this reason, paragraph 106 is given in its entirety:

> According to the same thought, Augustine writes many things against the Pelagians. In *On Spirit and Letter* thus he says, "Therefore, naturally, the justice of the law puts forward, that whoever accomplishes it, he will live in it, so that everybody who recognizes his own infirmity, not by his strength nor by the letter of the law itself, that is not able to take place, but by faith which brings together the justified and will accomplish it and he will live in it. A work by rule which whoever does it, he lives in it, it will happen only in one justified. On the other hand, justification is achieved out of faith." Here he clearly says that the justifier is conciliated by faith and that justification is obtained by faith. A little later, "Out of the law we fear God, by faith we hope in God. But to those fearing retribution, grace is hidden, the laboring soul under such fear, etc., flee by faith to the mercy of God, so that he may offer what he commands." Here he teaches that the soul is frightened by the law, but consolation is received by faith. And he teaches first to apprehend mercy by faith, when we undertake to do the law. A little later we shall cite other things.[18]

Melanchthon begins this quotation by referring to the topic at issue, which is found in paragraph 102.[19] It says that Scripture is full of testimonies proclaiming we are justified by faith in Christ Jesus. The beginning of paragraph 103 reads, "Here and there among the holy fathers similar testimonies are extant,"[20] which then leads to the Augustine quotation. Note that Melanchthon identifies the quotation as one of many from Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings—in this case, *Spirit and Letter,* 29, 51. With this introduction Melanchthon demonstrates that he is not limited to one or two quotations from Augustine, but has many to draw from. Thus he is not putting words into Augustine's mouth. It is also important to note that Melanchthon quotes from the anti-Pelagian writings, thereby implying Rome is Pelagian. If Rome is Pelagian, her teaching is in error and she cannot be catholic.

The most important portion of the Augustine quotation is this: "Justification, on the other hand, is achieved by faith"[21]—the same teaching confessed by the Lutherans in Augustana IV and Apology IV. Thus the Lutherans are no more innovators in doctrine than Augustine. In fact, both are simply confessing what Scripture teaches.

Unfortunately, Augustine is not usually recognized for his teaching of *sola fide.* Robert Eno writes that Augustine, the most influential western father, "holds a very special place of honor in this area of grace and justification."[22] He seems to be recognized more for his teaching on grace than on faith, however. Eno later says of Augustine's teaching, "Our sins are forgiven by grace through faith. But Augustine, verbally at least, puts more emphasis on grace than on faith."[23] We should note that the Pelagians were fond of the phrase *fides sola,*[24] which may have caused Augustine to emphasize grace more than faith.

Philip Schaff in his *Church History* claims that all of Lutheran doctrine is based on a faulty understanding of Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings. He writes:

> In Augustine the anti-Pelagian system was checked and moderated by his churchly and sacramental views, and we cannot understand him without keeping both in view. The same apparent contradictions we find in Luther, but he broke entirely with the sacerdotal system of Rome, and made the doctrine of justification by faith the chief article of his creed, which Augustine never could have done.[25]

Perhaps it is true that Augustine could not have gone as far as Luther, but then he was not in the same situation as Luther. The Pelagians denied grace. Rome did not deny grace but faith. Also, Melanchthon would not have been afraid to critique Augustine by saying that he should have gone further than he did. It should also be noted that later on Augustine more clearly confessed *sola fide* than he had done in his early writings. His anti-Pelagian writings ranged in date from 412 to 429 A.D. His Donatist writings, which form the basis of his doctrine on the church, were written between 393 and 420. Schaff would have us pit his Donatist writings against his anti-Pelagian writings, rather than let us see him emerge a theologically more mature Augustine toward the end of his life.

The next question to answer is, What did Augustine understand the phrase "by faith" to mean? C. P. Bammel, in his article "Justification in Augustine and Origen," answers, "By the words 'by faith' they understand 'by faith alone without works.' Augustine is particularly keen to emphasise [*sic*] that justification is without antecedent merits and that works before faith are useless."[26] Bammel recognizes the same teaching in Augustine that Melanchthon does—justification by faith apart from works.

If Augustine's confession is the same as that of the Lutherans, Rome's condemnation and rejection of the Lutherans constitutes a rejection of Augustine.

These modern authors are helpful in defending Melanchthon against the charge of placing words into Augustine's mouth. Augustine indeed taught justification by faith, and Melanchthon quotes clear statements of his to show that the Lutherans are not innovators of doctrine. Rather, he shows, it is Rome who has become the innovator in straying from the common confession of the church regarding justification by faith. Once again, by citing Augustine, Melanchthon testifies against the catholicity of Rome.

There are two more quotations to be considered before some concluding comments can be made. In paragraph 172, Melanchthon quotes from Augustine's *Retractions,* one of his latest works.[27] Here Melanchthon calls on Augustine to testify that good works cannot be done apart from faith: "All the mandates of God are completed when whatever is not done is forgiven."[28] Thus it is forgiveness on account of Christ that completes the law. Man cannot totally do the law. If the law cannot be fulfilled in its totality, it is of no use. Here, while Augustine does not use the phrase *sola fide,* he nevertheless teaches it. This is the point Melanchthon demonstrates. Faith alone was not the major point of contention when Augustine wrote against the Pelagians, but in a clear way he proclaims grace alone while assuming faith alone. He does not always state faith alone explicitly, but the teaching is nonetheless present. Perhaps Rome missed *sola fide* because Augustine did not proclaim it more clearly. This is where the Apology clarifies and corrects Augustine with Scripture, which is precisely what Augustine would have desired.

The final quotation of Augustine used by Melanchthon is the only one not to come from the anti-Pelagian writings. Instead, it comes from the Donatist writings. This quotation and following explanation from paragraph 400 perhaps clarifies best why the fathers are used in Article IV.[29]

> And Augustine says: "The question is, Where is the church? What, therefore, are we to do? Are we to search for it in our words, or in the words of its head, our Lord Jesus Christ? I reckon that we have to search in his words, who is true and best acquainted with his own body." Therefore, the judgments of our adversaries do not upset us, since they defend human opinions opposed to the gospel, opposed to the authority of the holy fathers who wrote in the church, opposed to the testimony of pious minds.[30]

Augustine would call us back to the words of Christ, not to his words. Melanchthon concludes that the charges leveled against the Lutherans by Rome are spurious because the Lutherans heed the voice of Christ and confess in unison with the voice of the church fathers—both of which Rome ignores.

The use of Augustine in Apology Article IV may be summed up as demonstrating continuity with the church through the ages. Several conclusions may be drawn from this. As already stated, if Augustine's confession is the same as that of the Lutherans, Rome's condemnation and rejection of the Lutherans constitutes a rejection of Augustine. This effectively takes Augustine away from Rome. He is not their father, because they have rejected his teaching as he received it from Christ. If Augustine is catholic, then Rome is not. Also, by using quotations from Augustine that are written against the Pelagians, Melanchthon essentially shows that Rome is Pelagian. Further, Augustine has said that the Pelagian heresy was a novelty.[31] Thus Melanchthon shows that Rome has innovated by not holding to the ancient doctrine of justification by faith. Finally, Augustine is not used to prove or to invent doctrine. He simply is a witness for the Lutheran (catholic) teaching and serves as a testimony against Rome.

NOTES

1. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics,* 3 vols. (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 3: v.
2. E. G. Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 9.
3. F. Bente, Introduction to *Concordia Triglotta* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921; reprint, Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House), 85.
4. *Triglotta,* 45.
5. Johann Michael Reu, *The Augsburg Confession: A Collection of Sources with an Historical Introduction* (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1930), 350.
6. Reu, 351.
7. *BSLK,* 165.
8. Ap IV, 25–28.
9. *BSLK,* 165: "quod per opera nostra mereamur remissionem peccatorum."
10. *Triglotta,* 129.
11. *De Natura et Gratia* 40, 47. Text from *BSLK,* 165.

12. "Si possibilitas naturalis per liberum arbitrium et ad cognoscendum, quomodo vivere debeat, et ad bene vivendum sufficit sibi, ergo Christus gratis mortuus est, ergo evacuatum est scandalum crusis. Cur non etiam ego hic exclamen? Imo exclamabo et istos increpabo dolore christiano: Evacuati estis a Christo, qui in natura iustificamini; a gratia excidistis. Ignorantes enim iustitiam Dei et vetram volentes constituere iustitiae Dei non estis subiecti. Sicut enim finis legis, ita etiam naturae humanae vitiosae salvator Christus est ad iustitiam omni credenti."

13. *BSLK,* 178–179.

14. *Triglotta,* 147.

15. *Triglotta,* 147.

16. *De spiritu et litera* 13, 22. Text from *BSLK*, 179. "His igitur consideratis pertractatisque pro viribus, quas Dominus donare dignatur, colligimus non iustificari hominem praeceptis bonae vitae, nisi per fidem Iesu Christi."

17. *BSLK,* 182.

18. "In eandem sententiam multa contra Pelagianos scribit Augustinus. *De spiritu et litera* sic ait: ‚Ideo quippe proponitur iustitia legis, quod qui fecerit eam, vivet in illa, ut cum quisque infirmitatem suam cognoverit, non per suas vires neque per literam ipsius legis, quod fieri non potest, sed per fidem concilians iustificatorem perveniat et faciat et vivat in ea. Opus rectum, quod qui fecerit, vivet in eo, non fit nisi in iustificato. Iustificatio autem ex fide impetratur.' Hic clare dicit iustificatorem fide conciliari et iustificationem fide conciliari et iustificationem fide impetrari. Et paulo post: ‚Ex lege timemus Deum, ex fide speramus in Deum. Sed timentibus poenam absconditur gratia, sub quo timore anima laborans etc. per fidem confugiat ad misericordiam Dei, ut det, quod iubet'. Hic docet lege terreri corda, fide autem consolationem capere, et docet prius fide apprehendere misericordiam, quam legem facere conemur. Recitabimus paulo post et alia quaedam."

19. *BSLK,* 181.

20. "Exstant et apud sanctos patres sparsim similia testimonia."

21. "Iustificatio autem ex fide impetratur."

22. Robert B. Eno, "Some Patristic Views on the Relationship of Faith and Works in Justification," in *Justification by Faith*, ed. H. Anderson, T. Murphy, and J. Burgess (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985), 122.

23. Eno, 122.

24. Ibid., 117.

25. Philip Schaff, "Saint Augustine's Life and Work," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series* (Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1890–1900; reprint Albany, NY: Sage Digital Library, 1996), 1: 34–35.

26. C. P. Bammel, "Justification by Faith in Augustine and Origen," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 47 (April 1996): 231.

27. *BSLK,* 195.

28. "Omnia mandata Dei implentur, quando, quidquid non fit, ignoscitur."

29. *BSLK,* 233.

30. "Et Augustinus ait: Quaestio est, ubi sit ecclesia? Quid ergo facturi summus? In verbis nostris eam quaesituri sumus, an in verbis capitis sui, Domini nostri Iesu Christi? Puto, quod in illius verbis quaerere debemus, qui veritas est et optime novit corpus suum. Proinde non perturbent nos iudicia adversariorum, cum humanas opiniones contra evangelium, contra auctoritatem sanctorum patrum, qui in ecclesia scripserunt, contra piarum mentium testimonia defendunt."

31. Augustine, *Grace and Free Will,* 1, 6, 8. "Of this character is the Pelagian heresy, which is not an ancient one, but has only lately come into existence." *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* First Series, 5: 1104.

A CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

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Theological Literacy and Lutheran Education

ERIK PEDER ANKERBERG

I am not sure exactly when I started to feel concerned about my students' lack of theological literacy. Just as dark clouds presage an upcoming storm, many of my experiences as a teacher in a Lutheran secondary school lead me to believe that all who cherish Lutheran education should recognize that it rests in the middle of a dangerous period in its history. Perhaps my feelings of concern began several years ago when I still taught theology to high school sophomores. During our study of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman (John 4), my students and I began to discuss the problem of couples living together outside of marriage. I became more and more frustrated as a large number of my students vocally argued for couples' living together; even the students who were uncomfortable with the idea could not explain their convictions to their peers. They obviously found it difficult to call sin what it is—a violation of God's law (in this case, the Sixth Commandment) and the damning substance of man's fallen nature—and found it easier instead to rationalize sinful human behavior.

My concerns came to a head this academic year as a result of my experiences during chapel services at my school. During one particular chapel experience, the students eagerly listened to the jazzy beat of our swing choir's rendition of "Heaven Is Counting on You," although when I quizzed students later, they were unable to explain the theological implications of the song, either positive or negative. They apparently did not even want to consider the explicit works-righteousness of the lyrics. I hoped that Easter might offer the opportunity for better chapel experiences.

The first week after Easter is always a wonderful time of year. Spring is finally driving away the Wisconsin winter, and the joy of the Resurrection is the central focus of our lives. In one of our chapel services during that week, we sang two songs. The students boldly sang the rather familiar praise song "Lord, I Lift Your Name on High"; yet these same students barely stumbled through the wonderful Easter hymn "This Joyful Eastertide" (*LW* 140). The powerful language of this hymn celebrates the reality that our "love, the Crucified," this "lover of souls," has "sprung to life," destroying "sin and sorrow" so that our "flesh in hope shall rest" until we hear the "trump from east to west." My students told me it is more fun and satisfying to "lift God's name on high" and sing his praises with "praise songs," as opposed to traditional Lutheran hymns. They repeated the oft-told fallacy that they cannot truly praise God with traditional Lutheran hymnody or liturgics. They believe that the language of the praise song can best express how they are truly glad Christ is in their lives and came to save them by coming to earth to show the way, by traveling from the earth to the cross, from the cross to the grave, and from the grave to the sky, all that he might pay their debts. Yet when I asked students which of these two songs is the more powerful substantive testimony to the joy and comfort that our hope in the resurrection brings us as the fulfillment of God's saving work in holy baptism, when I asked them to consider what might be a more appropriate confession of faith and hope at their own funerals, they stared at me blankly.

What these experiences have in common is the reality that in all these cases, students reveal a marked lack of theological knowledge. Some readers might respond with the classic "So what?" Who cares about students' inability to address theological questions, or about their lack of interest in classical Lutheran hymnody or worship practices? They will argue that our schools must focus on the affective principles of faith development, that our schools must embrace the diversity of a changing culture and "client base." I certainly do not want to dismiss faith as merely cognitive activity; of course it is the active work of the Holy Spirit. Nor am I insensitive to the reality of the diversity of students that comprise the rolls of Lutheran schools. Despite these common arguments, my experiences in a Lutheran high school convince me that our students are desensitized to Lutheran doctrine and practice. In many cases, Lutheran schools are producing a general Protestant Christian generation that cannot properly distinguish between law and gospel (or justification and sanctification, for that matter). Consequently, we are producing a generation that is losing its Lutheran identity.

My notion of theological literacy springs from the work of E. D. Hirsch and his popular 1987 book *Cultural Literacy.* Hirsch argues that knowledge does not possess inherent value, but he does advocate the teaching of an "American literate culture," a flexible body of specific information that offers individuals full enfranchisement in their communities.[1]

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Hirsch laments the diminished amount of information that Americans share; he asserts that many modern Americans are "information deprived," to their own detriment. According to Hirsch, these people will struggle, because "although they can read the individual sentences, they can't make sense out of the whole." Perhaps even more frightening is Hirsch's claim that our nation's tolerance of this cultural illiteracy is what he calls a "recipe for cultural fragmentation."[2] Without a common basis of knowledge, elements of society will continue to move in more divergent directions.

The inherent value of theological literacy stems from its relationship to a personal life of faith.

Theological literacy would address similar concerns as they arise in the context of the Lutheran churches and schools. The greatest differences between this and cultural literacy lie in my contention that theological literacy is more vital to Lutheran young people because, unlike cultural literacy, it does possess an inherent value.

The inherent value of theological literacy stems from its relationship to a personal life of faith. Certainly one cannot limit the work of the Holy Spirit to the realm of cognitive learning, but theological literacy would certainly contribute to strengthening a young Lutheran's faith life. Confessing the Lutheran faith is a significant part of our identity; instead of worrying about diversity, we rejoice in the unity we have with Christ through his redemptive work. The faith we confess is the living Christ, who bestows his gifts upon us in word and sacrament to give us life, his life. Consequently, one cannot ignore the significance of that confession; one must be willing to accept the notion that being distinctively Lutheran matters, just as continually learning about Christ matters. Our theology is fundamentally Christology. If a person proves himself unwilling to embrace the centrality of that notion of justification, he is despising theological literacy (and what a frightening thought this is!). Such a person dismisses Christ himself as an irrelevant concern and cannot call himself Lutheran.

What exactly would theological literacy entail? It would involve the teaching of pure, classical Lutheran doctrine, a specific body of biblical and Lutheran confessional material that offers individuals a more complete participation in the Lutheran faith. This body of information must, by definition, be specific because of the danger of doctrinal error. The core content in the teaching of theological literacy would include the teaching of Holy Scripture, the Book of Concord, and church history, as well as the historic hymns and worship practices of the Lutheran faith. Certainly, one can easily recognize that this formula is nothing more than a format for traditional catechetical instruction; yet my experience, both in the Lutheran parish and in Lutheran schools, shows me that our young people in general lack an understanding of what it means to be Lutheran and confess the Lutheran faith. The continual fragmentation within our church bodies over issues related to our doctrine and practice testifies to the dangers of Lutheran education's choosing to ignore the theological literacy of our young people.

Many pastors, as well as my colleagues in the Lutheran teaching vocation, would respond to my concerns with the statement that our young people are not interested in dogma because dogma does not tickle the affective fancy of the modern American adolescent. I would assert, however, that this theological literacy, although not primarily directed towards affective learning, can contribute to the strengthening of faith and have a positive impact on the emotions of the learner.

The benefits of theological literacy mirror those of cultural literacy. Theological literacy offers young people enfranchisement in the history of the Lutheran faith. A strong knowledge of Scripture, church history, the catechism, Lutheran hymnody, and the divine service helps Lutheran young people "learn to participate in complex cooperative activities with other members of their community."[3] In short, theological literacy can be a means by which our Lutheran young people learn to participate fully in the worship and faith life of the Lutheran church.

The information contained in theological literacy is "shared information" in the sense that it is knowledge that today's Lutheran Christians share with their fellow believers around the world, as well as those of the church triumphant. I love to remind my students that when they pray the Apostles' Creed or sing the Nunc Dimittis in the divine service, they join their voices with the myriad of voices of the faithfully departed, together, transcending time, joyfully confessing the saving truth of the gospel.

As a result, the information contained in theological literacy helps young people make sense out of the whole. Elements of the Christian faith such as difficult passages of Scripture, parts of the catechism, even unfamiliar ancient hymns or elements of the divine service lead my students to say, "This doesn't make sense!" Yet as students are catechized in the elements of theological literacy, Lutheran doctrine and practice begin to make sense, coming together as a whole. Students begin to recognize this theological literacy as a means of expressing their value as redeemed children in God's kingdom, and their faith benefits as a result of their recognition and appreciation for Christ's gifts and the vehicles through which Christ bestows those gifts upon the church.

One might be tempted to ask how theological literacy can possibly benefit one's faith life. After all, does one need this information to be saved? I do not want to enter that debate other than to suggest that Martin Luther himself strongly encouraged the individual to continually learn about the Christian faith:

> I am a doctor of Holy Scripture, and have studied it for twenty years, and have taught it to others. In spite of that, it is still my experience that in the midst of severe temptation I get limp and wilted, just as the grass wilts in the heat of a summer drought. And if God would not refresh me with his rain and dew—that is, with his Word and Spirit—I would simply dry up and blow away. That is why the proclamation of faith must be continuously emphasized. You see, God did not give the Scriptures in such a way that you can under-

> stand and grasp them right off the bat. No, he gave them in such a way that must remain the hidden wisdom of God, a wisdom that far exceeds all human wisdom, skill, power, righteousness, and holiness. Yes, the wisdom of God is far greater than either sin or death. Before I can reach the point where I can rise above all things and despise both sin and death, before I can joyfully and in all confidence trust God's promises, I must first have both the Spirit and power of God, and must constantly be learning from study and experience. The pope and the enthusiasts imagine that they know all there is to know about faith. That's why they say, Faith, my foot! . . . What a contrast a true Christian is! He feels that he's still in elementary school, learning the ABC's of faith. He knows that his daily life is nothing to brag about, he admits his weaknesses and shortcomings and says, I'm just not getting any better . . . . That is how a believer thinks and feels about himself.[4]

Luther here emphasizes several important points. First, he confesses the reality of the law: sin causes our fallen human nature to wilt. Second, he asserts that only the power of God's Word and Spirit can revive us. For one to understand God's wisdom, for one to cling in faith to God's promises, for one to apprehend the reality of the gospel, one must possess both the Spirit and power of God, which he bestows in holy baptism, and one "must constantly be learning from study and experience."[5] Certainly, no one can fathom the Scriptures only through his own industry or scholarship. Yet this pursuit of knowledge, this pursuit of theological literacy is a necessity for the true Christian. Such study is an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to use a Christian's own weaknesses and shortcomings as tools to teach the power of Christ to him. Consequently, the reality of the Christian life is that we are all continually "in elementary school, learning the ABCs of faith."[6]

Luther made similar arguments in his preface to the Large Catechism. He asserted that "we need God's Word daily as we need our daily bread."[7] Why? Simply because "we also must use it (God's Word and the catechism) daily against the incessant attacks and ambushes of the devil with his thousand arts."[8] For Luther, the theological literacy that catechesis provides is a function of one's living faith in God, enabling the Christian daily to live the promise of the gospel. This catechesis acts as "armor" for the weak or an "antidote" for the ill. Catechesis functions as God's provision to "warn, equip, and protect" the Christian against the "flaming darts" of death and the devil.[9] Luther again reiterated the foolishness of those who despise this catechesis:

> Look at those bored, presumptuous saints who will not or cannot read and study the Catechism daily. They evidently consider themselves much wiser than God himself, and wiser than all his holy angels, prophets, apostles, and all Christians! God himself is not ashamed to teach it daily, for he knows of nothing better to teach, and he always keeps on teaching this one thing without varying it with anything new or different. All the saints know of nothing better or different to learn, though they cannot learn it to perfection. Are we not most marvelous fellows, therefore, if we imagine, after reading or hearing it once, that we know it all and need not read or study it any more? Most marvelous fellows, to think we can finish learning in one hour what God himself cannot finish teaching! Actually, he is busy teaching it from the beginning of the world to the end, and all prophets and saints have been busy learning it and have always remained pupils, and must continue to do so.[10]

Luther clearly taught the reality that theological literacy as a result of catechesis is God's work in sanctification: God himself teaches us the life he want us to live, his life, a life he must daily reteach through the waters of holy baptism. Christ's people know of no better path to follow than that of their Savior's own pattern of death to life. Theological literacy gains its impetus from the necessary consideration of one's own death and the reality of Christ's living his life within us.

Consequently, the reality of the Christian life is that we are all continually "in elementary school."

Many Lutherans might believe that such theological literacy is already instilled in students at Lutheran schools, or that the theological training students already receive should be sufficient. If our young people possess theological literacy, however, why does a common theological illiteracy manifest itself? Are we as Lutheran educators truly offering our students the best possible religious instruction? In *Cultural Literacy,* Hirsch quotes the editors of an elementary textbook used extensively throughout our country in the early part of the twentieth century. These editors chose selections for this textbook because they are "good" and because "other people know" them.[11] Hirsch's cultural literacy depends on the latter reason. The former reason, however, teaching information because it is "good," is vital as well to the teaching of theological literacy. We simply must offer our students better catechetical instruction.

This essay is not the place to analyze various theological debates that currently plague Christ's church, but I would like to address the notion of teaching the "good." Many critics of confessional Lutheranism denounce as extremists those who seem to them to love doctrine over and above people. The church and her practices must change, these critics argue, to reach modern Americans where they are, without offending them.

The reality remains that modern Americans are influenced by the ever-fluid nature of the prevailing popular culture. One of the primary missions of Lutheran education must be to offer Lutheran young people the perspective that Christ and his church work independent and outside of the parameters of the prevailing culture.

A hallmark of popular culture is its instability. The best in art, music, fashion, and television is that which is popular "right now." The current moment is what is most important; the past is passé and irrelevant and the future is unknowable. Consequently, young people often only strive to acquire current knowledge and information, in essence perpetuating a narrow, narcissistic worldview. C. S. Lewis's demon Screwtape emphasizes the power of this perspective when he tells his nephew that he finds human beings to be more susceptible to temptation when they "turn their gaze away from Him [Christ] towards themselves." Screwtape encourages his nephew to tempt humans by leading them to watch "their own minds," directing them to produce feelings there by the action of their own wills.[12] One should not be surprised that young people continually struggle with religious issues as they focus on themselves and their own emotions. Yet Christ and his gifts never change; our Lord, who "is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8 NIV), transcends the instability of this world and our sinful flesh.

If Lutheran pastors and teachers fail to give their students substantive ideas to contemplate, they will simply fill their minds and lives with whatever is easily available.

In his essay "Knowledge and Wisdom," Bertrand Russell argues that the fundamental essence of wisdom is "emancipation . . . from the tyranny of the here and the now."[13] When Lutheran pastors and teachers catechize students, they take them to another time and place, linking them to the faith of the church of the ages. When we discuss the creeds, the Ten Commandments, the office of the keys, holy baptism, and so on, we help counteract the disastrous effects of the popular culture. Left to their own devices, our students might by the grace of God stumble upon some "good" elements of the Christian faith, but they are unlikely to discover the "good" elements of orthodox Lutheranism. By taking students beyond the elements of mainstream Protestantism, Lutheran pastors and teachers can increase their awareness of the significance of Luther's rediscovery of God's true grace and goodness ("the just shall live by faith"), enabling them to draw important distinctions between Lutheranism and Protestant denominations.

Any Lutheran who has engaged in the teaching of confessional Lutheran doctrine has heard the hostile complaints of its detractors. One must remember that teachers rarely succeed in catechizing when they attempt to tell students that certain theological teachings and practices are good and merely attempt to force them to believe it. Yet the Holy Spirit is able to perform powerful work through Lutheran doctrine and practice. The language of Holy Scripture, upon which the Lutheran Confessions and the divine service expound, possesses a rich capacity to transcend the trivial elements of the prevailing popular culture. The Holy Spirit uses Holy Scripture, Luther's Catechism and other confessional documents, Lutheran hymnody, and the divine service to captivate an individual's mind and heart and to teach and strengthen the true Christian faith. What is important is to move past a theology that appeals to a lowest common denominator. When students encounter Lutheran theology and practice, they begin to realize that pure Lutheranism is complex, defying easy explanations, becoming richer after repeated exposure. No student can make these discoveries within a vacuum; pastors and teachers must expose their students to the complexities of Scripture, church history, the Lutheran Confessions, Lutheran hymnody, and the divine service as they begin to engage in a comparative discussion about quality.

Further, I would argue that God continually calls us to pursue that which is good, both in theology and practice. Paul encourages the Christians in Philippi to pursue that which is good:

> Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things (Phil 4:8 NIV).

Here Paul is certainly emphasizing theological truth and practice. Lutheran pastors and teachers are called to help students transcend the trivial and to introduce them instead to theological dogma and practice that are good and true. My students might want to argue that the latest popular song is a powerful example of the use of poetic skill, but I am an irresponsible English teacher if I don't emphasize the lasting legacy and poetic power of Milton, Shakespeare, Dickinson, or Frost. If Lutheran pastors and teachers fail to give their students substantive ideas to contemplate, they will simply fill their minds and lives with whatever is easily available; and in today's theological climate they will easily be attracted to the dogmatic dangers of contemporary Christian music, WWJD bracelets, Protestant literature, ecumenical groups such as Promise Keepers, and the tenets and tactics of the Church Growth Movement, all theological traps that continue to plague Christ's church.

In many ways, Lutheran education in America has exemplified the benefits of teaching theological literacy. For examples I need look no further than my own family. My sainted father was a faithful Lutheran pastor who continually supported Lutheran education at all levels throughout the years of his ministry. I remember with fondness how my father would help me learn my memory work as a child. Not only would I recite Scripture passages, the hymns, and the catechism to him, but we would also talk about how these seemingly outdated writings continually affect the Christian's everyday life.

On numerous occasions, my father would recount his experiences with elderly shut-ins or terminally ill members of our congregation who could find tremendous comfort in the promises of Scripture, the catechism, and various hymns (especially Easter hymns) they had memorized as children. Now at the end of their earthly journeys, these texts brought to life the reality and power of the gospel, reinforcing their hope in the resurrection. As my own father lay on his deathbed, nearly unconscious, he could whisper the words of the divine service and make the sign of the cross as his fellow pastor and best friend brought him the Lord's body and blood. We as a family could joyfully pray that the Lord, who allows us to see with our own eyes and taste with our own lips the salvation he has prepared "in the sight of every people," would now let his "servant depart in peace." Now, if one were to transport this scene to fifty years in the future, could one assume that a Lutheran family would gather around the deathbed of a loved one and find that same comfort and joy in words of the divine service or the message of Easter hymns? Or would this family settle for the banal "Shine, Jesus, Shine" as a substitute? Such a frightful alternative is certainly conceivable even today.

I cannot argue that cognitive theological knowledge alone will make my students better Christians. Such claims would be irresponsible in the sense that they are intangible and immeasurable. Nor can I speak with authority about the theological curriculum at all Lutheran schools today as to whether or not they still excel at teaching theological literacy. One of my purposes for this essay is to encourage Lutheran teachers to ask themselves whether this is so and seriously to consider the implementation of a systematic teaching of Lutheran doctrine and practice in their schools. I believe with all my heart that the theological literacy which true Lutheran catechesis provides is a powerful and efficacious tool in the Holy Spirit's working to give us faith and life.

My sainted father contended throughout his life that Christ never leaves his church without a witness to the true faith. My sincere prayer is that Lutheran schools may never exist without the same witness to the true faith.

How should Lutheran teachers respond to the idea of theological literacy? I believe the worst plan would be to ignore it. Many so-called Lutherans might challenge these claims, but I urge them prayerfully and thoughtfully to engage these arguments. I close with a few suggestions Lutheran pastors and teachers might consider.

First, Lutheran pastors and teachers must concentrate on catechesis in the home. Luther insisted that the head of the household is responsible for teaching the catechism, acting as priest to the members of the family. This can certainly take the form of family devotions that emphasize praying the catechism, singing the hymns of faith, and studying Scripture. Most important in home catechesis is that the family worship together in their home congregation. One simply cannot find a substitute for the divine service where the gospel is preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered according to a pure understanding of the gospel (AC VII). The Christian can only find Christ there in the gifts he gives.

Second, congregations must ensure that catechesis and theological literacy are primary functions of the church. The pastor must preach the gospel in its purity and administer the sacraments as the means of grace. Catechesis must not be a means of initiation for adolescents and new members only, but must be a continuous process for all members. Congregations must look to the divine service and the church's historic hymnody as God-given tools to praise God and confess the true faith. We truly gather together as Lutheran Christians to receive Christ's gifts as he gives himself to us in the divine service, and so we must continually bring young people into the divine service to receive the blessing of Christ's gifts.

Third, Lutheran schools must take seriously their responsibility to encourage theological literacy. In order that students and their families might find forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation, Lutheran schools must continually direct them to that place where Christ may be found, the divine service, within the context of the worship life of their own congregations. Lutheran colleges and universities must offer a more thoroughly comprehensive theological training in order to properly prepare future church workers to teach the faith. Church workers should continue the formal study of theology throughout their careers. Lutheran congregations and schools should also examine their methodology for delivering catechetical instruction. We have the responsibility for ensuring that the content of religious instruction centers on a substantive, diligent study of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. Another possibility is to use pastors more effectively in teaching theology in Lutheran schools. Too often we forget that pastors are the chief teachers not only of their congregations but of Lutheran schools as well. Finally, in the context of classroom devotions and school chapel services, Lutheran schools must reinforce the worship practices of historic Lutheranism that students are hopefully experiencing within their own congregations. We should sing psalms and the powerful hymns of the Reformation, highlighting their continuing relevancy to Christians of all ages throughout eternity.

Congregations must ensure that catechesis and theological literacy are primary functions of the church.

I began by raising concerns about whether or not Lutheran schools continue to catechize students in a manner that facilitates theological literacy. I want to conclude by reinforcing my conviction that Lutheran education, having lost its true sense of purpose and focus, is in the middle of an identity crisis. Although I am not a theologian by vocation, I find that many of my concerns mirror those Martin Luther addressed in his time. Luther asserted that education is a matter of spiritual gain and loss.[14] He placed on parents, and through parents on the school, a heavy responsibility, that of raising children "for God's service."[15] If parents and Lutheran schools stand in the way of teaching the true faith, then those individuals are "guilty of the harm that is done when the spiritual estate disappears and neither God nor God's word remains in the world."[16] Luther simply wanted to emphasize that children belong to God and are his; parents and schools have the responsibility to train children and give those children back to God to serve him.[17]

Luther readily decried the ease with which Christians can pervert the process of educating children. An educational process that fails to teach the true Christian faith turns schools into institutions that are "death traps, the very ramparts of hell, to the hurt and detriment of the church."[18] If one teaches in a manner that merely prepares the student to "look only to the belly and to temporal livelihood,"[19] Lutheran education becomes an unfortunate accomplice in

> making a place for the devil and advancing his kingdom so that he brings more souls into sin, death, and hell every day

> and keeps them there, and wins victories everywhere; the world remains in heresy, error, contention, war, and strife, and gets worse every day; the kingdom of God goes down to destruction, along with the Christian faith, the fruits of the suffering and blood of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit, the gospel, and all worship of God; and all devil worship and unbelief get the upper hand.[20]

The problem becomes clear: if Lutheran education abandons the core teachings of the true faith, then the devil simply reduces Lutheran educators to the role of pawns in his efforts to put the souls of Lutheran young people in jeopardy.

This does not need to be the fate of Lutheran education at the end of the twentieth century. Lutheran education can provide a context for God's transformation of people's lives. If Lutheran education continues to direct young people to the Word of God, to the office of public ministry (those individuals who are truly Christ to his people), to the divine service (where Christ bestows his life-saving gifts), then the Holy Spirit can preserve the church in the true faith.

Luther clearly esteemed the vocation of teaching, asserting that it "surely has to be one of the supreme virtues on earth to faithfully train other people's children."[21] Yet for that virtue not to become a vice, Lutheran education must remain faithfully committed to confessing the true faith. Despite the difficult obstacles the general protestant climate and the prevailing popular culture present, Lutheran educators must remember that "God will not and cannot fail those who serve him faithfully, for he has bound himself by the promise given in Hebrews 13[:5], "I will never fail you nor forsake you."[22] This is the promise to which Lutheran educators must cling. "God is a wonderful Lord. His business is to take beggars and make them into lords, even as he makes all things out of nothing, and no one can disrupt him in his work."[23] He transforms death into life in holy baptism and can continue that good work through the true catechesis that Lutheran education should and must offer.

I am proud of much that Lutheran schools offer. As I pursue the vocation in which God has placed me, I pray that we, as Christ's church, may continue to pursue that which is good and most spiritually edifying for all of God's children. May God grant us the grace to rejoice and boast, not in our own words or works, but in God's faithfulness, the faithfulness he reveals in the living Christ, his cross, and his continuing life-giving work in our lives.

NOTES

1. E. D. Hirsch Jr., *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), xv, 22.
2. Ibid., 21.
3. Ibid., xv.
4. Martin Luther. *House Postils*, ed. Eugene F. A. Klug (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), 134–135).
5. Ibid., 135.
6. Ibid.
7. LC, Pref. (Tappert, 360).
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., 361.
11. Quoted in Hirsch, 131.
12. C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 29.
13. Bertrand Russell, "Knowledge and Wisdom," in *Portraits from Memory and Other Essays* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), 174.
14. Martin Luther, "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School," AE 46: 219.
15. Ibid., 222.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 223.
18. Ibid., 225.
19. Ibid., 229.
20. Ibid.

21 Ibid., 253.

22. Ibid., 233.
23. Ibid., 250.

A Lutheran Goes to Rome

John Nordling

Aestiva Romae Latinitas (Summer Latin in Rome) is not any kind of "crash course or rushed Latin nightmare," said the program brochure, but rather a "complete and direct, concrete and gradual experience of the entire Latin language itself . . . covering the past 2200 years." It has been held in Rome for eight weeks every summer since 1985, and I went abroad to experience Latin in the manner described from June 4 to July 16, 1997. As a Latin professor who had never been to Rome before, I was in need of a cultural encounter with the lands and peoples about which I teach.

There were other ways of getting to Italy for summer study, of course: NEH grant possibilities, an archaeological site experience in Rome and Naples, an arrangement with the American Academy in Rome. But each of these had application requirements or stipulations that, I felt, were less than ideal for me at present. A former Latin professor of mine had attended Summer Latin in Rome several years ago and raved about it. It was an opportunity to study the Latin language itself on location, in the heart of the ancient empire. The man who had organized Summer Latin was Father Reginald T. Foster, raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in a typically American Catholic home. By a set of curiously interlocked circumstances, however, young Reginald had come to excel in Latin at precisely the same time as the Catholic Church was reducing Latin's significance in the mass and in the academic curriculum. Now he serves in the Vatican as the head of a small college of churchly Latinists who convene each day to translate papal documents into a Latin prose that rivals that of Cicero. Thus, in addition to the intensive Latin encounter six days per week, seven hours per day, participants could also tour the monuments of Rome, Latin texts in hand. My heart was set: I had to go. Actually purchasing a round-trip ticket to Rome gave point to my last-minute requests for more money and helped my wife, Sara, and me to plan our summer, six weeks of which would be spent apart from each other. The day of departure came, and off I flew.

THE FIRST FEW DAYS = *DE PRIMIS DIEBUS*

I came to Rome five days before Summer Latin began so that I could experience Rome on my own terms. One commonplace of ancient and medieval biography is that of the wandering pilgrim or scribe who finally encounters Rome for the first time. How will my direct encounter with "the city" (as the ancients designated Rome in antiquity, simply *urbs*) compare to the image of Rome in my mind, shaped by Latin texts for many years? The writings of Augustine, Jerome, Aquinas, Luther, Gibbon, *et multi alii* record such Rome encounters, and I had envisioned a similar process of discovery for myself.

Thus I spent the first few days of *my* pilgrimage sleeping off jet-lag, seeing the touristy things Father Reginald would likely not want to spend time on later, and walking just about everywhere to orient myself to this impossibly huge, crowded, and overwhelming city. In those first few days I saw the Colosseum, Campidoglio, Piazza Venezia, Pantheon, Trevi Fountain, Spanish Steps, Castel Sant' Angelo, and the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli. I had seen none of it before and could not risk missing any of these places due to obligations imposed later by the Latin instruction. Rome struck me as a typical modern city such as exists also in America (Chicago, for example)—with the important difference that there is in Rome a curious symbiosis between things ancient and modern. One can expect at any moment to turn a corner and find crumbling Servian Walls (378 b.c.), columns of a temple built right into a modern substructure, Latin inscriptions above any one of the open fountains flowing free as in the ancient manner (there are few "drinking fountains" in Rome), a Catholic priest hurrying off to mass or to hear confession. I enjoyed transcribing Latin inscriptions into a notebook kept for that purpose. Latin writing is everywhere, even on the most modern of buildings. By copying these contrived texts, and trying (not always successfully) to decipher their subtle meanings, I preserved them for future students and prepared myself for the eventual encounter with Father Reginald.

That meeting occurred on June 9, in front of the Basilica San Pancrazio, located on the Janiculan Hill of Rome. A group of perhaps forty-five people surrounded a stout, red-complected man whose blue eyes glowed piercingly from deep within a balding skull. Instead of priestly garb he wore denim dungarees and a long-sleeved work shirt buttoned all the way up, so that he seemed to exude sweat from every pore in the blazing sun. *This* was Father Reginald = *Ecce! Pater Reginaldus est.* As I walked up and joined the group, Father Reginald was engaged in a frequently self-interrupted roll call, enjoying old friends and making new while checking the names of newcomers against a master list. Fortunately, said he, the Latin proof-sheets submitted

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months ago had already "scared off and eliminated" some participants (nervous twittering at this); then too, of the ninety to one hundred applicants from throughout the world who had expressed an interest lately, it was only to be expected that half or fewer would actually commit themselves to studying Latin in Rome for several weeks during the hot summer. So *perhaps* there might be room for us after all. In a few minutes we would cross the street and "begin immediately . . . [glimpsing] the whole Latin language, in active and passive exercises and fun, from the first hour" (final letter to participants, April 1997). And that is exactly what happened.

DAILY INSTRUCTION = *DE INSTITUTIONE COTTIDIANA*

The hours of Latin instruction were to take place in a children's school run by the Sisters of the Divine Love, a teaching order located in Italy and Peru. All forty to sixty people who might comprise the Latin group at any one time (participants, sweethearts, occasional parents, friends from previous years, and curious hangers-on) would convene in the school's auditorium, seated at desks and tables sized to elementary school-aged children. It was hot in there, and noisy, but Reginald thought street noises and children screeching outside honed the ear to listen more carefully to instructions spoken in both Latin and English—rather the way children were taught the Latin language long ago, right off some busy thoroughfare. Instruction for the *Iuniores* ("Junior Latinists") would begin each day at *hora secunda post meridiem* (2 P.M.), Father Reginald explained, and would extend until 3:30 P.M., at which time there would be an *intervallum* of perhaps thirty minutes. At 4 P.M. instruction began for mixed Juniors and Seniors, and at 6 P.M., for the *Seniores*. Of course, participants were free to attend any or all of the sessions they desired, regardless of ability, but teaching would be adjusted to the two levels identified. For those who could not get enough at the regular sessions, there was the more informal setting known as *sub arboribus* ("Under the Trees") where, from 8 P.M. to dark, the really hard-core Latinists could gather around a jug of wine, randomly chosen texts, and spoken Latin fellowship as the sun sank upon the darkening hills.

> ***What is needed now are teachers who courageously dare to have students read, speak, and even think living Latin thoughts.***

No textbook existed for any of the sessions. Each time he teaches a Latin course, Father Reginald ransacks monastic libraries and archives to bring together a great chorus of Latin texts and authors from throughout the ages. It would be tedious to list them all, but for our reading pleasure he had assembled a *few* rarely read "classical" texts (for example, Cicero letters, Lucan, Publius Syrus, Plautus), and a *lot* more ecclesiastical Latin texts from every period of church history (Vulgate, hagiographies, papal pronouncements, chanted canticles, medical texts, epitaphs, abecedaria, and more). Fifty-four sheets *in toto* had been prepared, each sheet twice the size of a legal pad, and completely covered with fine Latin script on one side. "Lest we run out," Father Reginald said. "And there's a *lot more* where that came from!"

Such a vast collage seemed to suggest that there is much more Latin in the world than any one person can possibly read, even in a lifetime so completely devoted to Latinity as Father Reginald's has been. Yet Latinists ought to become aware of this abundance because it will all be so excellent, superb, brilliant, and worthwhile for our students (evaluations proffered by Reginald, no matter the text). What has *hurt* the study of Latin everywhere is the emergence within Latin literature of so-called classic texts that all readers of the language are expected to "master." This has lead to an unfortunate emphasis upon the rote memorization of standard forms for their own sake, boring vocabulary and grammar shoved at students for many years, so that *perhaps eventually* one may slog through the same hackneyed passages of Virgil's *Aeneid* or Caesar as one's own pitiable ancestors did. What is needed now in the successful teaching of the language, fulminated Father on more than one occasion, are teachers who courageously dare to have students read, speak, and even think *living Latin thoughts* from day one! Put the "standard texts" away and pull out something else (there's so much from which to choose!). Allow your students to see that Latin has had many forms and colors and textures, like music resounding down through the ages. So if they are having trouble with Bach and Haydn (cf. Cicero and Caesar), let them indulge in the language's other styles and textures and rhythms. They'll like this approach and teach themselves the forms and grammar with which we used to punish them. *Get out of the way*, O stodgy Latin professor, and trust that the Latin language itself will motivate, heal, convert, and inspire your diverse students just as it always has, long before *you* came along! Know what texts to use and how to present them, but allow your students to rise to the high level Latin requires. They will rise, you know; they have to. Trust me in this: *Credite id mihi!*

Frequent tirades along these lines were intended—obviously—for the Latin teachers of our group, and Reginald's whole attitude implied that if you weren't teaching Latin yet you soon would be; it was thus the sacred duty of each of us to export *Latinitas* to the four corners of the world, like triumphing legionnaires in Caesar's army. Quite a few of the participants *were* in fact high school or college teachers, graduate students seeking to internalize the language, and undergraduates from throughout the United States who contemplated a career in classics. But not everyone fit this profile. Several more were Roman Catholic parish priests, monks, seminarians-in-training, and area students attracted to Summer Latin from the Gregorian University in Rome (Reginald teaches there during the academic year). One was a Supreme Court Justice from Sydney, Australia, and four or five hailed from the great universities of England. About the same number of Germans attended, striving to add English as much as Latin to their arsenal of active languages.

A young Russian named Igor knew at least five modern languages fluently: English, Russian, French, German, Italian. Although he looked like Mick Jagger, and still supports himself occasionally as a musician in a rock band, Igor was preparing to take monastic vows and needed Latin to understand the divine liturgy. Igor thought that the mass should always be conducted in Latin, no matter where public Christian worship may occur on earth. Always trying *to understand* the mysteries of the mass, *to get a lot out* of the service, *to like* the sermon are annoying Protestant intrusions that should be recognized as such and so expunged. If worshipers need to *understand*, let us prepare a vernacular translation of the mass and place it in a parallel column beside the superior Latin vocables, averred Igor during one informal discussion outside of class. The beauty and the majesty of the mass will sustain the worshipers, elevating them from petty contemporaneousness to worship that is timeless, holy, and eternal.

During that same discussion Father Reginald told the idealistic Igor not only that he disagreed with such views himself, but that Igor was *crazy* for holding them: *amentissimus es!* ("You are quite out of your mind!"). Father Reginald enjoyed locking horns with people on any subject, tossing his own flamboyant ideas into some mix without taking himself or an antagonist too seriously. Only Latin mattered, and this for its own sake; all other opinions, convictions, and even heresies could be tolerated, provided only that they contribute positively to the learning environment. Texts were not to be studied beforehand (as in most Latin classrooms) but approached spontaneously, as if for the first time. Reginald would help with the problem areas, but he was far more interested in our coming to terms with the fine points of a Latin passage, or appreciating a style, than simply deciphering broadly what it meant. Any text provided an opportunity to understand the Latin language inside and out. Therefore, actually *say*, in Latin, the passive of that active form, the plural of that singular. How might that verb sound in the subjunctive mood? in the indicative? What would it look like in the infinitive, future active participle, gerundive, supine? If given this English sentence ("He loved the Latin language the older he became"), Latinize it *now* and do so *correctly*! After the shock of such confrontation before fifty pairs of staring eyes, the mind would kick in and Latin would come welling forth from deep inside: *Latinam eo magis amabat linguam, quo senior fit.* "Good!" Father Reginald would beam. "You can't go any further in Latin than that!" It was supremely gratifying to survive a Father Reginald barrage with some trace of dignity intact by providing correct, rapid-fire answers to each one of his questions. But those who put on airs of Latin superiority could be humbled, quickly. He knew each Latinist's name and breaking point by the end of the first week, encouraging the weak, challenging the strong, ignoring no one. Our collective goal was to become "the best Latinists in all the world" = *ut fiatis optimi discipuli Latini omni in mundo.* Daily progress was made to this end.

TRIPS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES = *DE ITINERIBUS ALIISQUE ACTIS*

Such Latin feats exacted a toll from people, not least from Father Reginald himself. As he constantly reminded us, he had been teaching the Latin course these many summers not for his own benefit, but for ours, and for the sake of the glorious Latin language itself, which he hoped would last *in saecula saeculorum* ("forever and ever"). Provided that one was a properly prepared Latinist, could get to Italy on one's own, and feed and house oneself somewhere in modern Rome, there was no charge for the Latin instruction itself—although "free and totally anonymous contributions" to the purse were certainly acceptable (program brochure). Two sets of worksheets were prepared each week, and meticulously corrected, but there were no grades assigned as such, and absolutely no academic "credit" given for the class ("damnable obstacles" to the cause of true learning, huffed Reginald when asked about this once). So the course was somewhat open-ended and could be adapted to the changing interests and abilities of those who participate each summer.

Texts were not to be studied beforehand but approached spontaneously, as if for the first time.

The schedule suggested that there should be six days of Latin instruction to one day of travel. Early Sunday morning was Father Reginald's preferred time for gathering the group at one of Rome's train stations and then leading us off on an excursion of either full- or half-day duration to some famous locale. Although these trips constituted a refreshing change from the regular routine, they were not a vacation from the Latin enterprise. Far from it. Each trip was "scripted" (*iter litteratum*), meaning that archaeological site plans, relevant pictures, and pages of pertinent Latin verbiage had been compiled beforehand into neat little booklets for every tour. To the casual eye we resembled just one more tourist group to accost the monuments of Italy. But our guide was different: a Latin instructor who used the very ruins of Roman antiquity to elucidate Latin texts we held in hand. This method of teaching Latin had an impact even upon complete strangers who happened also to be on site. Tourists craned to listen. Museum curators and archaeological site directors paused in their work to say hello, for most of them knew or had heard of the famous Father Reginald. Even children came running to listen to this man who could prattle on and on *in lingua Latina.*

Under such guidance I was privileged to visit Roman Ostia, Hadrian's Villa, Tivoli, the probable place of Caesar's murder, Rocca Secca, Formiae, and Fossa Nova (the last three associated with St. Thomas Aquinas), Alba Longa, and the Capitoline Hill of Rome. At Ostia we sat amid the weedy ruins of the inn where Monica, St. Augustine's mother, died, and read the full account of her death in *Confessions* 9. Looking up, I was startled to see several of my colleagues weeping quietly at the beauty and humanity of the piece. We concluded the Caesar tour beneath a massive bronze statue of Julius Caesar overlooking the Forum, right hand raised in the posture of *adlocutio* ("address"). Chaplets had already been set adoringly at Caesar's feet by modern Romans, so we added a burning votive candle and toasted Caesar's ghost with fine red Falernian. Our tour of the abbey at Fossa Nova where St. Thomas Aquinas died in 1274 was capped by a hearty banquet of pasta, vegetables, cheese, stone-baked pizza, and *gelato.* Then the trip home on one of Italy's ultra-modern electric trains. All the fleeting impressions and experiences cannot now be described, although I *did* thankfully write some of it down in the same red notebook that contained my transcriptions.

> ***Many of the undergraduate Latinists had never engaged "a real Lutheran" before.***

Another dimension of Rome that Summer Latin revealed to me with clarity was the Roman Catholicism of the place. Rome continues to draw millions of pilgrims from throughout the world. Monks and nuns, many resplendent in bright robes and habits, flock regularly to the city to keep in touch with monastic superiors, consult the Vatican archives, fulfill some spiritual quest. Most of the Latinists in my immediate group were devoutly Roman Catholic, and I came quickly to realize that I was the only Lutheran of the bunch. So I became something of a sounding board for the Lutheran faith. Many of the undergraduate Latinists had never engaged "a real Lutheran" before, and some came to me with specific questions. Such learning is always a two-way street, of course. So I'd ask members of our group about specific items in the ecclesiastical texts we were reading, or about rituals of the daily office I had observed in churches throughout the city. One evening after supper I witnessed a spirited discussion among my Catholic friends as to whether the (traditional) Tridentine Mass, or the (more innovative) *novus ordo,* is best suited for the church at this time. (A similar debate rages in Lutheranism between Church Growth proponents and liturgical purists.)

Father Reginald realized that, in my case, a "Lutheran minister" had been admitted into his fold of mostly Catholic sheep. For the most part I comported myself appropriately, although I could not keep from wincing visibly at the works-righteousness evident in a series of sermons prepared by Pope Leo the Great to inspire the faithful to generous almsgiving: "by your offering God will liberate the poor man from his toil, and you from the multitude of your sins" (*Tractatus* 6.11). There is an accent here which many Lutherans would find disconcerting, as though one's forgiveness before God depends on almsgiving. But sound Christian teaching properly elevates Christ, for "He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 Jn 2.2). Lutherans have always stressed that alms and service really "good" in God's sight proceed after coming to a joyful faith in Christ, never before—as though one could earn or merit favor in God's sight on one's own, apart from Christ (Ap IV, 81, 165). The good works proceeding from Christ-centered faith do, to a point, "liberate the poor man from his toil," as Leo says, and may even exert a salubrious effect upon the structures of this world. But moral and social improvements are always secondary, incomplete, and provisional—even among Christians, who remain sinners until the end (LC II, 57–58). Only Christ remains forever. Of course, Christ's people accomplish good works in the world, but these remain largely hidden from outward discernment and are holy in God's sight only by virtue of a faith that clings to Christ alone (Ap IV, 189–191). This is the type of theological reaction a Pope Leo sermon on almsgiving might provoke from many pristine Lutherans such as myself.

Reginald noticed my discomfiture and asked if it was a case of Lutherans not paying alms for theological reasons, or perhaps they were just plain greedy! This had a pleasantly explosive impact upon the group. He was jerking my chain to complete a synapse between the scruple of a modern Lutheran and the glorious Latin of an earlier pope who had produced a piece well worth reading, matters of doctrine aside. Father Reginald avoided "pointless theological argument" (as he called it), yet was constantly on the prowl for those Latin texts that he knew would stir individual members of our group. So for my benefit we read a superb Luther-Erasmus exchange. Another Latin-Astronomy major from Harvard insisted that we read a portion of the *Sydereus Nuncius* in which Galileo excitedly describes his discovery of the *perspicillum* ("telescope"). Still another college student recited perfectly from memory a large chunk (one legal-sized page, very small script) of Laurentius Valla's *In Sex Libros Elegantiarum Praefatio.* Marvels of memory and other feats of Latin virtuosity were not uncommon in a group so completely devoted to the one enterprise. Several of the participants were resolved to converse only in Latin during class, at meals, or on a trip, and I myself delivered a twenty minute oration *de Latinam docendo linguam ad Universitatem Valparaisiensem* ("About Teaching the Latin language at Valparaiso University"). This talk by "the Lutheran boy" (*puer Lutheranus*) was enthusiastically received by an overflow crowd in the auditorium, but other colleagues spoke with equal Latin facility on other themes too.

THE FINAL DAYS AND RETURN HOME = *DE DIEBUS ULTIMIS ET DOMUM REDITU*

My time in Rome was over almost as quickly as it had begun. Time passed rapidly because every available moment was spent to the full on Latin endeavors. I missed Sara, and wrote fifteen postcards home to her. (She could not write back because, when she finally learned my Rome address, it was almost time for me to leave. Mail from the U.S. to Italy requires at least two weeks.) I departed Rome two weeks early in order to attend a family wedding in Wisconsin, so spent my final days in Italy on places not yet seen or on others requiring more attention: St. Paul's outside-the-walls, Appian Way, Museum of Roman Civilization, Circus Maximus, Roman Forum, Palatine Hill, St. Peter's Basilica, the Vatican Museum. One cannot see it all. Indeed, it is exhausting even to try. Four days before departure I was pickpocketed late one evening aboard Bus 64. It is especially this bus that conveys first-time pilgrims from Termini Station to St. Peter's Basilica; on it wolves often fleece the unsuspecting lambs. Thus was I obliged to spend several prime hours of time at the end finding the *Divisione Stranieri* ("Aliens Department"), and there filed a police report.

On my final day Father Reginald insisted that I be the last to translate a bit of *De Apostolatu Maritimo,* a papal encyclical Reginald and his associates had Latinized earlier in 1997. The paragraph describes how even sailors, far out at sea, can "earn a full indulgence" (*indulgentiam plenariam lucrari*) by attending to various disciplines a pope may impose. This was Father Reginald's way, I think, of saying goodbye to the lone Lutheran Latinist. Friends of the summer crowded around to wish me well: *Vale! Fac ut valeas!* Then the flight home and preparations to teach my own Latin students at Valparaiso University. This is a holy undertaking, and important at a university *sub cruce* ("under the cross"), as Valparaiso claims to be. The chapel is not St. Peter's Basilica, nor is Valparaiso Rome, but pilgrims and scholars are drawn here too, and the glories of Latin literature need to be taught well on this campus for serious minds to ponder and engage.

> ***So goes the argument for inner truth, beauty, humanity, which one hopes will continue to be part of any education worthy of the name.***

Why Latin in 1998? Why should such diligence and effort be expended nowadays upon a discipline that apparently has no immediate, tangible, or financial reward? This is the question that education pragmatists continue to pose with increasing intensity. This whole essay has been a kind of response to that question. If education *is* only a means of making a living, of acquiring skills needed to succeed in today's workforce, then Latin (and related courses) may seem indeed to be a waste of time. But if education is more than this, if it is a precious time in one's life to consider what *other* men and women, in *other* ages, believed was good, holy, and true—then perhaps disciplines like Latin still have much to offer. I often think of Latin as a kind of time machine that links properly prepared modern readers to nearly all of the literature that has mattered deeply to western peoples over the past 2,200 years. Of course, one can read much of this literature in translation! Yet such literature loses much in translation, to repeat that tired cliche. What is lost is not merely the technical skill of translation, the mental rigor of engaging Cicero in his own language, to cite but one author—but also the ability to see the world from the perspective of the ages, *sub specie aeternitatis* ("under the gaze of eternity"). It is a curious fact that most of what mattered to Cicero thousands of years ago matters still today, and always will matter. That is because an unbreakable humanity unites such a one as Cicero to all those people, ancient and modern, who are privileged to study his literature.

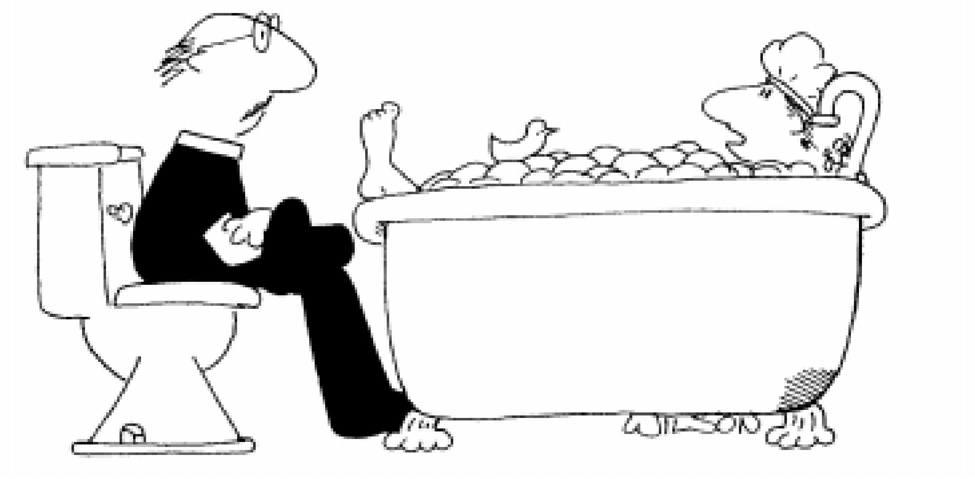
So goes the argument for inner truth, beauty, humanity, which one hopes will continue to be part of any *education* worthy of the name (from *educo -are* = to bring up, rear, educate). But even pure education pragmatists should pay attention to the skills and abilities that can enable those who study Latin to get ahead, also in our time. As I constantly tell my students: if you succeed at Latin you can succeed at anything you set your heart upon. Learning this language requires a superior character, if not intelligence, diligence over the long haul, attention to detail, an ability to read between the lines, and a host of other virtues that will enable any student to succeed at life, regardless of chosen profession.

Why Latin? Here is my final parting shot, drawn this time from the latest syllabus revision of Latin 101 (I had my beginning students stand and recite this paragraph on the first day of class):

THE WORK OF THE SEMESTER

Our goal: A stimulating, joyful, and experiential encounter with the Latin language and just a few of those millions of people who thought, spoke, and wrote in this glorious language. . . . It is a rare privilege and a priceless honor to study Latin at all in this day and age. Therefore, we shall engage ourselves to the full as we embark upon this *lifelong adventure*!

Inklings



You know, Pastor, there IS something to be said for cold formality.

COLLOQUIUM FRATRUM

"Through the mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren . . ."
Smalcald Articles III/IV

A Response to Jonathan Lange

The cover of the Holy Trinity 1998 issue of *LOGIA* reminded me of those I.Q. tests from years ago. They would show you a picture in which something just wasn't right and you had to point out what it was. Now think. What is wrong with a picture of a first-century Jewish young woman who is great with child, modestly covering her head while exposing her swollen belly? That inherent contradiction (as well as a sense of modesty in all of us which says, "I really don't want to see this") obscures whatever it is that the drawing was designed to communicate.

In a similar way, Pastor Lange's thought-provoking article in the same issue contained much that is beneficial and timely but was also unfortunately obscured by an inner contradiction. On the one hand, Pastor Lange writes that "It is unwarranted to infer from the above that Scripture is not the Word of God or that it is not effective" (39–40). Having carefully read "the above" several times, it is difficult not to infer just that!

It is good to extol the oral word and to direct every Christian to receive the gospel as it is proclaimed by the one rightly called by God through the church. No Christian may be content with the Bible alone if that means that the ministry of the word and sacraments is neglected or rejected. Likewise every Christian ought to mark and avoid anyone who presumes to preach without God's call. Pastor Lange is surely correct in emphasizing the biblical and confessional pattern of thought (paradigm, if you will), which is that the oral word that is preached by the preacher whom God has sent is the means by which God intends to speak and give his gracious gifts to sinners who would certainly perish without them. There is a popular and foolish notion that even many nominal Lutherans have embraced that says, in effect, "I got my Jesus and my Bible so I don't need no church or preacher!"

It is the Bible itself that says that God's word is to be preached, and that God's sheep are to hear his voice in that preaching, and that the preaching is to be done only by those whom God has called, and that this ministry is given to Christ's church on earth so that we may be confident that the one called through the church is also called by God. Our Lutheran Confessions agree with the Bible. This needs to be said again and again. It is good that Pastor Lange has said it.

But it appears to me that Pastor Lange has said too much. His article, "How Are They to Believe? Romans 10:14–15 in the Light of the Lutheran Confessions, " strongly suggests that the gospel is not the gospel unless it is preached by a minister who is rightly called. Lange writes:

> The confessors genuinely understood this God-given office [the preaching office] to be the locus of the faith-effective word and the one and only place where God intended man to hear his voice . . . .
>
> If the greatest act of worship—the preaching of God's word—ceases, there is simply no gospel, teaching, or faith. In this doctrine of the Lutheran Symbols, St. Paul's rhetorical question is echoed, "how can they believe unless it is preached?" From this it is clear that preaching and the word stand in such unity that one does not exist where the other is not (36).
>
> Unless a preacher has a legitimate call (that is, God's command to preach), he does not have the ability to preach the gospel. For where God has not caused the gospel to be preached, it is not preached (39).

It appears that for Pastor Lange there is no gospel apart from the activity of preaching, and there is no preaching unless the preacher has a legitimate call. Reading the Bible will not create faith. Listening to the gospel spoken by someone other than a rightly called minister will not create faith. Reading Christian literature that faithfully presents the pure gospel will not create faith. The words spoken by parents, Christian teachers, neighbors, brothers and sisters, and anyone else who is not called to preach cannot and will not produce faith because God has chosen to limit the efficacy of his word to the word that is spoken by one who is rightly called into the office of the ministry. This appears to be Pastor Lange's teaching.

While conceding that "the Lutheran Symbols do not exclude reading from the means of grace" (40), he goes on to assert: "There is little evidence in the symbolical books to suggest that conversion of the unbeliever can be effected by private reading and meditation on the Word" (40).

So the Bible is not a means of grace after all. While St. John (Jn 20:31) and St. Paul (2 Tim 3:15) say that the Bible itself is a means of grace, able to elicit faith and to save, Pastor Lange argues that the Bible "serves an essentially law function" (42, note 41) as rule and norm, not as a means of converting anyone.

No Lutheran will deny that the form in which God's word ordinarily comes is as it is preached by those whom God has chosen and sent. The Lutherans who condemned the enthusiasts were extolling not just the written Scriptures but also the oral word, the word preached by the preacher who is called by God (as well as the absolution spoken to the penitent). It has not been the custom among us, however, to pit the oral word against the written word as if the former is more efficacious while the latter serves only a normative, thus an allegedly "law" function. Pastor Lange writes: "By this we are reminded that the heresy of enthusiasm consists not in a rejection of the Bible as the means of conversion, but in the rejection of preaching as the means of conversion" (36).

But the enthusiasts did reject the Bible as a means of conversion! Yes, the focus of the Lutheran emphasis was the oral word, and it was specifically the oral word that they had in mind when condemning enthusiasts as they do, for example, in SA III, VIII. But Luther certainly did not limit his condemnation of enthusiasm to their rejection of the oral word. He writes, "Thus we shall be protected from the enthusiasts—that is, from the spiritualists who boast that they possess the Spirit without and before the Word and who therefore judge, interpret, and twist the Scriptures or spoken Word according to their pleasure."

The heresy of enthusiasm is a rejection of preaching as a means of conversion, yes. It is also, however, a rejection of the Bible as a means of conversion. Or are we to assume that the enthusiasts condemned so harshly in the Smalcald Articles did indeed affirm the Bible as a means of conversion? It is not an "either/or" proposition. Preaching cannot be a means of conversion unless the Bible is already a means of conversion. The former presupposes and depends upon the latter.

It is a given that the word will be spoken. Among no one is the word not spoken. The issue with the enthusiasts is not whether or not the word will be spoken, but on how God works, how the Holy Spirit is given, whether or not God may be found only in the word. The fact that it is oral is not what makes it efficacious. The efficacy of the oral word depends entirely on whether or not that oral word conforms to the written word. If it doesn't, it isn't God's word! It therefore cannot be efficacious. Does Pastor Lange mean to say that words may be spoken that conform entirely to the written word, that is, that convey precisely the true teaching of the gospel as it is given in the Bible, and yet are not efficacious because the one who has spoken has no external call from the church and therefore has not been sent by God?

The various attributes of the Scriptures stand or fall together. It is not possible that the Bible can be God's word as rule and norm and yet somehow lack the inherent efficacy to create and sustain saving faith. I agree wholeheartedly with Pastor Lange's argument that only those sent by God can speak for God. This is a truth that he does well to emphasize. It is God's sending that insures that what is spoken is indeed God's word and thus capable of saving those who hear it. On the basis of this very argument we must insist that the Bible is efficacious no matter who reads it or explains it or in any way communicates its message, precisely because *the authors of the Bible were sent by God!* Had they not been sent by God, Scripture would not be God's Word. But they were sent by God; therefore the Bible is God's Word, and therefore it retains unto all generations the power to convert unregenerate sinners. If it does not have this power prior to and apart from the preacher preaching it, then it is not God's Word. Then the sending or calling or putting into office of the preacher or the act of preaching would be that catalyst which somehow transforms the dead letters into living words capable of eliciting justifying faith. This is precisely the kind of notion that Luther and the reformers rejected when condemning enthusiasm. It is on account of the nature of the Bible as God's Word that we can be sure that the scriptural preaching of the rightly called minister is a means of salvation.

Furthermore, since the Bible must be inherently efficacious if it is indeed God's Word, then the biblical gospel retains the power of God to save even if it is communicated by someone other than the called minister of Christ. Pastor Lange writes, "any attempt to communicate the gospel message outside of the context of the church gives neither word (preaching), sacraments, gospel, forgiveness, nor holiness" (37).

What does it mean to "communicate the gospel message outside of the context of the church"? Surely this is quite literally impossible. Where the one is, so is the other. This is the whole point of those portions of the Large Catechism and the Apology that Pastor Lange cites. What does "outside of the context of the church" mean? Does Pastor Lange mean to say that apart from the speaking of the rightly called minister of Christ there are no word, sacraments, gospel, or forgiveness? Then what does he mean? That a layman talking to a friend at work cannot speak words that give the forgiveness of sins? Then what does he mean?

It appears to me that Pastor Lange is saying that words that convey the truth of the gospel are ineffective to engender faith unless those words are spoken by the man with a legitimate, that is, churchly call, presumably one in accordance with AC XIV. None of his many citations of the Lutheran Confessions or the Lutheran fathers show this to be their teaching. When we are warned by the Lutheran fathers not to listen to those who have no call, we are never told that these folks might well be speaking the true gospel, but that we shouldn't listen to them because, since they have no call, the true gospel they speak is not really preaching at all and cannot produce faith.

If I have missed something, and Pastor Lange is not saying what it appears to me that he has said, perhaps he would be so kind as to point out what it is. I am sure that I am not the only one who wants to know.

Rolf Preus
East Grand Forks, Minnesota

Jonathan Lange responds:

Pastor Rolf Preus sees an inherent contradiction in my article, which explores the meaning of Romans 10 in the thought of our Lutheran Confessions and confessors. In the paragraphs that follow, he asserts that this contradiction is my own and not that of the Lutheran fathers. He fails, however, to prove his point on both counts. First, he fails to prove that the contradiction that is apparent to him is, in fact, a contradiction. Second, he fails to show that my summary statements are anything other than accurate statements of what our Lutheran fathers taught.

Dealing with the apparent contradiction first, Preus asserts that "the various attributes of the Scriptures stand or fall together. It is *not possible that the Bible can be God's Word as rule and norm and yet somehow lack the inherent efficacy to create and sustain saving faith." This assertion simply misses the point, because the point at issue is not about the inherent nature of the Bible; the argument is entirely about how it is put to use.*

The Scriptures are indeed the Word of God. Does this mean that no matter how one puts them to use that they have an inherent power to create and sustain saving faith? Surely Pastor Preus is not arguing that, because "the various attributes of the Scriptures stand or fall together," when I use the Bible to hit somebody on the head, saving faith may be created thereby. But do the Scriptures cease to be God's Word at that point in time? No. Do they temporarily lose their "inherent power to create and sustain faith?" No. Nevertheless, that inherent power is not put to use when the Scriptures are used as a bludgeoning tool because they are not being used according to their intended use (Nihil habet rationem sacramenti extra usum a Christo institutum) (*FC SD* VII, *85*). *This is the Lutheran principle that Dannhauer cites:*

> *Apart from its use, as it is deposited on parchment and paper, Scripture in itself does not have any kind of power, physical or inherent, that is capable of producing supernatural effects. Indeed, as often as Scripture speaks of its own efficacy, it always has reference to its use.*[1]

Pastor Preus himself admits that "[*i*]*t is a given that the word will be spoken." That, after all, is its proper and intended use* (proprium). *While I am quite sure that Pastor Preus would not assert that Scripture is put to its proper use in the act of striking—and I am reasonably sure that he would even agree that their proper use is preaching—the question here is about private reading. Is that identical to preaching? If not, and if it is nevertheless numbered among the designated uses of Scripture, what purpose does that use serve? Is the* proprium *of private reading identical to that of preaching?*

Preus does note that I have plainly confessed that both the private reading of the Scriptures and the hearing of scriptural preaching are numbered among the means of grace. Here also, however, he sees a contradiction. When I noted the silence of the Lutheran Confessions on the possibility of conversion through "private reading and mediation on the Word," he retorts, "[*s*]*o the Bible is not a means of grace after all." This argument is only valid if one can similarly argue that since the Lord's Supper is not given as a sacrament of conversion but rather for the converted while the work of conversion is assigned to baptism and word, then the Lord's Supper cannot rightly be deemed a means of grace. I reject this argument and recognize that each of God's various gifts to his church is unique and serves to accomplish its own divinely mandated purpose. We are not permitted to lump all the means of grace together and speak of them as though one were exactly the same as the other in every respect except for its outward form.*

Next, Pastor Preus asserts that "[*i*]*t has not been the custom among us, however, to pit the oral word against the written Word as if the former is more efficacious." This statement serves as a bridge to Preus's second contention: namely, that the fathers nowhere reflect the assertions that I put forth. In fact they do. It was C. F. W. Walther who first brought this customary way of speaking to my attention. As I wrote on page 40,*

> *Walther pointed out in his treatise* Church and Ministry [*that*] *it was Luther's judgment that even if they do read it* [*the Bible*] *at home, the Word is neither as fruitful nor as efficacious as when it is publicly proclaimed by the mouth of the pastor whom God has called and appointed to preach and teach it to you.*[2]

Again, in his commentary on Malachi 2:7 (1526) Luther says:

> *This passage is against those who hold the spoken Word in contempt. The lips are the public reservoirs of the church. In them alone is kept the Word of God. You see, unless the Word is preached publicly, it slips away. The more it is preached, the more firmly it is retained. Reading is not as profitable as hearing it, for the live voice teaches, exhorts, defends, and resists the spirit of error. Satan does not care a hoot for the written Word of God, but he flees at the speaking of the Word (AE 18: 401; St. Louis Ed. 14: 2172).*

These are just two of the numerous places[3] *where Luther speaks in such a way as to distinguish the effect of the oral word from that of the written Word. I'm not sure, however, that Luther would agree that this is "pit*[*ting*] *the oral word against the written word." At any rate, it was precisely the purpose of my essay to explore why Luther might follow such a custom—even if we no longer do.*

In Pastor Preus's critique he cites numerous summary statements out of my article and takes exception to them, but never once does he deal with the particular statement of that Lutheran father that I am seeking to summarize. While I realize that his space was limited, it would have been helpful if he had attempted somewhere to demonstrate exactly how I am misreading the Lutheran fathers. Merely asserting it does not make it so. For example, Pastor Preus asserts:

> *None of his many citations of the Lutheran Confessions or the Lutheran fathers show this to be their teaching. When we are warned by the Lutheran fathers not to listen to those who have no call, we are never told that these folks might well be speaking the true gospel, but we shouldn't listen to them because since they have no call the true gospel they speak is not really preaching at all and cannot produce faith.*

In fact, the Lutheran fathers do indeed assert just this. Luther says in his commentary on Psalm 82 (1530):

> *They [both pastors and rulers] should exhort and command their people to be on their guard against these vagabonds and knaves and to avoid them as sure emissaries of the devil, unless they bring good evidence that they were called and commanded by God to do this work in that special place. Otherwise no one should let them in or listen to them, even if they were to preach the pure Gospel [wenn sie gleich das reine Evangelium wollten lehren], nay, even if they were angels from heaven and all Gabriels at that! . . . Therefore, Christ, too* (*Lk 4:41*)*, would not let the devils speak when they cried out that He was the Son of God and told the truth [die Wahrheit sagten]; for He did not want to permit such an example of preaching without a call" (AE 13: 65; St Louis Edition 5: 722, 60–61.).*

How can this statement be interpreted otherwise than that such “folks might well be speaking the true gospel”? While one might wish to argue that Luther was wrong or that he did not really mean it, one cannot simply assert that he never said it.

Likewise Martin Chemnitz in his Examination of the Council of Trent *writes:*

> *These things must be considered in a call of the church, in order that both the minister and also the church can state with certainty that God is present with this ministry and works through it* [*Matt. 28:20; John 20:22; 2 Cor. 3:6; 1 Cor. 3:5-9; John 20:23; Matt. 16:19*]. *Therefore Paul says in Rom. 10:14 ff. that those who are not sent by God cannot preach in such a way that faith is received from that preaching—faith which calls upon the name of God, so that we are justified and saved. These things are certain from Scripture.*[4]

Should we interpret this to mean that one who is not “sent by God cannot preach in such a way that faith is received from that preaching” for the simple reason that such a person cannot “convey precisely the true preaching of the gospel”? That, apparently, is Pastor Preus’s position. Chemnitz, however, does not explain himself in that way. On the contrary, in his Enchiridion *he asks: “May one seek or undertake the ministry of the church who has neither learned the fundamental Christian doctrine, nor understands it, nor has the gift to teach others?” To this he answers: “By no means.” Next he asks: “Should, then, one who is somewhat endowed with those gifts, on his own initiative . . . claim for himself the office of teaching in the church?” To this, also, he answers, “By no means” (citing Romans 10:15 first of all). Here it is clear that Chemnitz has in mind not only those who have not “learned the fundamental Christian doctrine, nor understand it, nor have the gift to teach others.” Rather, it is precisely these people with sound learning, understanding and teaching ability that he denies the right to undertake the teaching office because they still lack a proper call. Here he most definitely speaks of people who are quite capable of speaking “words which convey precisely the true teaching of the gospel.” In the next question of the sequence he even goes further: “Are they [these people who are endowed with these gifts] to be heard, or can they be profitably heard by the church, who have no proof of a legitimate call?” To this also, he simply answers, “No” (citing again Romans 10:14–15).*[5] *By these words, Chemnitz clearly states that someone who is orthodox by training and personal understanding and is apt to teach in every way, save alone for having a proper call, cannot be heard profitably by the church.*

Moreover, the context of Chemnitz’s previously noted statement in his Examin *cannot be overlooked. Chemnitz is engaging Trent on the question of whether our churches “are able to have a true sacrament of the body and blood of Christ.”*[6] *Here they cannot be bickering about the ability or non-ability of formulating a statement that “conveys precisely the true teaching of the gospel.” For the discussion is about the use of a set liturgical formula, the* verba *of Christ’s institution, a formula that is identical whether a Lutheran pastor or a Catholic priest is speaking it.*[7] *Yet even in this context, when Rome asserts that there is no true sacrament apart from the legitimate call, Chemnitz unqualifiedly agrees with this by saying,*

> *To begin with, it is certain that no one is a legitimate minister of the Word and the sacraments—nor is able rightly and profitably to exercise the ministry for the glory of the God and the edification of the church—unless he has been sent, that is, unless he has a legitimate call* (*Jer. 23:21; Rom. 10:15*).[8]

While in the case of preaching one might conceivably argue that one who is not called could not possibly “convey the truth of the gospel,” yet in the case of the sacrament, most anybody can correctly enunciate the prescribed liturgical formula whether he has a legitimate call or not. Still Chemnitz holds that he neither rightly nor profitably exercises the ministry without a legitimate call.

Pastor Preus is right. It does appear to me that Pastor Chemnitz is saying that “words that convey the truth of the gospel are ineffective to engender faith unless those words are spoken by the man with a legitimate, that is, churchly call, presumably one in accordance with AC XIV.” If Pastor Chemnitz has not said what it appears he has said, perhaps someone would be so kind as to point out what it is he has *said. If we are going to come to grips with the theology of the Lutheran Confessions, we must be willing to grapple with the actual teaching of their authors and not simply read into the Confessions our own twentieth-century American understandings. We must be willing to wrestle with their actual words and come to terms with them. That struggle may end in the conclusion that they were wrong about this or that. But we cannot circumvent the struggle by simply asserting that they never said it.*

Once we have come to grips with the actual words and thoughts of the fathers, they must be evaluated on the basis of the Scripture. St. Paul asks: “How can they hear unless it is preached? How can they preach unless they are sent?” (Rom 10:14–15). These rhetorical statements call for negative answers. They call for the conclusion that there is no hearing apart from preaching and there is no preaching unless the preacher has been sent. How can one conclude otherwise? It is the strength of the Lutheran Church that the Holy Scriptures are taken at face value even when their meaning conflicts with reason or sensitivities (Sola Scriptura). *So Luther and Chemnitz both answer Paul’s rhetorical questions in the negative, and their answers are reflected in the Lutheran Confessions. They did not answer Paul’s questions by blithely asserting that there is indeed hearing without preaching and preaching without sending. They were simply stuck with the words of St. Paul. So are we.*

NOTES

[1] Robert D. Preus, *Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism,* 2 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), 1: 369 (“How Are They to Believe,” note 44).

[2] Cf. Martin Luther, *The House Postils,* ed. Eugene Klug (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 2: 337, 7; St. Louis Ed. 13b: 2253, 7.

[3] For example, Smalcald Articles Pref. 6; *Sermons of Martin Luther,* ed. J. N. D. Lenker (reprint Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), 1: 31, 44–45, 371–373; 6: 141.

[4] Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent,* 4 vols., trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), 2: 705–706.

[5] Martin Chemnnitz, *Ministry, Word and Sacraments—An Enchiridion,* trans. Luther Poellot (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), 28.

[6] Chemnitz, *Examination,* 2: 704.

[7] The Roman additions to the *Verba* (the sacrifice of the mass) do not enter Chemnitz’s argument.

[8] Chemnitz, *Examination,* 2: 705.

REVIEWS

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

Review Essay

Herman Sasse: A Man for Our Times? (Essays from An International Theological Symposium Marking the Centennial of the Birth of Dr. Hermann Sasse, The Twentieth Annual Lutheran Life Lectures held at Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada, October 30 to November 1, 1995.) John R. Stephenson and Thomas W. Winger, editors. St. Louis: Concordia Academic Press, CPH, 1998. 271 pages. Paperback.

The essays in this collection are all intriguing and interesting, beginning with Ronald Feuerhahn's marvelous short biographical essay on Sasse. Sasse's life reads like a work of adventure fiction! From the killing fields of World War I, to world ecumenical gatherings, to Nazi persecution, to academic struggles, to self-imposed exile in Australia, Sasse's life is inspiring. Feuerhahn tells the story well. (This essay makes it even more clear that it is important for Concordia Publishing House to publish Feuerhahn's longer biography of Sasse.)

Lowell Green's essay on Sasse's struggle with his Erlangen colleagues is also a fascinating look at Sasse's life story. This essay appeared in LOGIA a number of issues ago. Reading it again, I once more asked myself this question: If Sasse had been a pro-Barthian ecumenist, would he have achieved the same level of fame as Dietrich Bonhoeffer? Bonhoeffer's involvement in a bungled attempt to assassinate Adolf Hitler resulted in his "martyrdom" and virtual canonization by the Christian community. But Sasse, not Bonhoeffer, was the Lutheran theologian *par excellence*. Because Sasse's theology took the ecumenical approach of Barth and company to task, he has been shuffled to the side by present-day Lutherans who find much more of an ally in Bonhoeffer than in Sasse.

John Wilch continues the review of Sasse's relationship with the Nazis. Sasse's involvement in the *Bethel Confession* of 1933 was overshadowed by his refusal to kowtow to Barth and the *Barmen Confession* of 1934. As recent scholars have noted, the *Bethel Confession* "deserves and demands a central place in the historiography of the German church struggle . . . as a confession of the Christian faith in the face of an anti-Christian world view with perennial manifestations . . . it deserves to be taken seriously as part of the most important legacy of the German church struggle, the legacy of faithful witness to Christ" (74). Sasse's work against the Nazis in the early 1930s might have born fruit if more of the German people had become involved in speaking out against the Nazis.

John Kleinig provides an overview of Sasse's lifelong interest in the liturgy and proper Christian worship. He offers the reader an amusing account of the student in Australia who challenged Dr. Sasse by arguing that the pastor and congregation is free to adapt the liturgy to local circumstances.

> In response to this suggestion, Sasse thundered in full fury that the liturgy did not belong to any pastor or any worship committee or any congregation; it was the liturgy of the church. Since it belonged to the church, only the church could change it. And then only for some good reason (117).

We can only imagine how loud Sasse's "thunder" would be today.

Thomas W. Winger's essay, titled "The Confessing Church: Catholic and Apostolic," is a fine summary of Sasse's ecclesiology. For Sasse, nothing was more important than confessing Christ and his church. To confess Christ was to confess his church, and a proper confession of church is always a confession of Christ; for the church is precisely the gathering of believers by Christ himself around his gifts given in word and sacrament, the gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. Winger particularly highlights Sasse's penetrating analysis in "Confession and Theology in the Missouri Synod," which is now available in English in the collection of essays edited by Kloha and Feuerhahn (*Scripture and the Church: Selected Essays of Hermann Sasse*, Concordia Seminary Press, 1995).

Sasse had an extremely high regard for the Missouri Synod. He recognized that the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod was the last hope for any sort of significant confessional Lutheran influence on the world theological scene during the twentieth century. That opinion remains valid to this day, and is perhaps more true now than ever before, particularly as we witness the disturbing developments in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and throughout the Lutheran World Federation, and sadly, even in Sasse's beloved Lutheran Church in Australia. Because of his high regard for the LCMS, Sasse was very concerned by trends he witnessed in the Missouri Synod.

Winger underscores Sasse's most important concern: "The Lutheran Confessions no longer play the role in the life and in the theological thinking of the Missouri Synod, in fact, of all American Lutheranism by far, which they played during the nineteenth century."

Sasse's diagnosis of Missouri's malaise is still appropriate. Even in 1951 he was able to wonder if the Missouri Synod had lost the joyful connection between right confession and right worship. Thus he asked:

> Are we mistaken if we miss this joy with our brethren in the Missouri Synod when they speak of the Confession? . . . In the case of the old Missouri of Walther it is still plainly noticeable that here, even as in the classical time of Orthodoxy, dogma and liturgy belong together" (141).

Not to belabor this point, but as proof of Sasse's assertion that the "old Missouri of Walther" is noticeably different than contemporary Missouri, one need only note the painful reaction one receives from persons who should know better, or who claim to be Waltherian, when Walther's position on the ministry is cited. For example, see Walther's consistent assertion that orthodox Lutheranism knows of no emergency situations that justify the administration of the sacrament by a layman, or his strong insistence that the historic patterns of Lutheran liturgical worship are what serve the cause of confessional Lutheranism best. Ironically, today some regard as "high church" Walther's insistence on the central place of private confession and absolution in the life of the Lutheran parish.

Kurt Marquart provides an excellent discussion of Sasse's view of Holy Scripture in his essay, "Hermann Sasse and the Mystery of Sacred Scripture." With his typical eloquence, Marquart helps us to understand how

> [t]he venerable doctor of the church whose hundredth birthday we celebrate this year, taught us anew to see Scripture, Sacrament, and Church in light of the supreme mystery of the Incarnation, and that in turn in light of the Pauline-Luther theology of the cross (167).

Marquart's firsthand accounts of his dealings with Sasse, which were not always free of disagreement, show us that Sasse matured greatly in his view of Scripture during his years in Australia, and particularly in the last decade of his life. Sasse's most controversial statement on Scripture came in the infamous "Letter 14," a letter that was used by the professors of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, to defend themselves, and was printed and distributed against Sasse's express wishes. Sasse responded by saying, "I wrote this in 1949/1950 when I was still not able to see the problems of inerrancy properly, as none of us German professors, even the most conservative, were" (179).

Sasse came to realize that Barth's view of Scripture finally resulted in a "Nestorian tearing apart of the divine word and the human word." Marquart does recognize that "it is not clear even in these discussions that Sasse ever broke quite free of that sweeping historical-philosophical panorama which Barth had devised as the backdrop for understanding seventeenth-century Orthodoxy" (179).

Marquart explains how Sasse provides a christological parallel,

> a parallel, or a paradigm of which inspiration is an analog—not an identical copy . . . . The Christological analogy, properly applied, checkmates every effort to pry loose from the singular mystery of the divine-human text a more or less autonomous "human side," which might then become a fitting object for critical operations (184).

In perhaps the most charitable and fair assessment of Sasse's struggle with the whole issue of inerrancy, Marquart writes,

> Whenever Sasse ran up against this boundary, he drew back. He refused to cross it, for he knew that to do so would be to sacrifice the *est* of his and the church's solemn confession that Holy Scripture *is* the Word of God. He also must have noticed that others who tried to run with his rhetoric often suffered derailment (184).

Sasse tried to find some middle way between classical Lutheran Orthodoxy and Barthian higher criticism. But he never did. And this explains why his proposed major work, *De Scriptura*, never was produced. Marquart is convinced that Sasse realized that his search for a third way was impossible. But this does not diminish Sasse's important contribution to a distinctively Lutheran view of the Bible. Merely defending the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures, vital as that is, is not enough to safeguard its proper interpretation and exposition. And simply because there are other brothers and sisters in Christ who share our high view of the Scripture's reliability does not mean that they share an equally high regard for the marks of the church and a consequent understanding of what the gospel is all about. Sasse's "strategy" was "to see the mysteries of Scripture, Church, and Sacrament as part and parcel of the one great Mystery of Christ, God and man, crucified and risen" (185).

Marquart kindly explains that for Sasse,

> despite the recurrent, philosophically induced, haziness on inerrancy in detail, [he] aimed at a consistent integration of Incarnation, Word, and Sacrament. There can be little doubt that this objective is deeply, indeed uniquely, Lutheran, and that from its vantage point various inadequacies of convention and often smug theologizing may and even must be criticized (185).

Marquart puts matters well when he writes:

> Christians are never faced with Scripture in the abstract—any more than they encounter an abstract Christ or an abstract Sacrament. The church, as Sasse always insisted, is gathered by God not around a noncommittally "open Bible," but round the Confession, that is, the rightly understood and proclaimed Bible (186).

Marquart's essay in this collection is without a doubt one of the most significant and deserves to be very carefully read and reread.

Of equal significance is the essay that follows Marquart's essay, "Where Rhine and Tiber Met: Hermann Sasse and the Roman Catholic Church," by Dr. Gottfried Martens. Martens's contribution is truly a unique gem in this collection of excellent essays. Martens traces Sasse's relationship to the Roman Church and his consistent attitude toward Rome. As is the case with all true Lutherans, there is in Sasse a deeply conflicted ambivalence toward the Roman church.

Most recently, Lutherans who had been gushing on about the remarkable breakthrough that had allegedly been achieved with Rome in the Declaration on Justification were drawn up short by the Vatican's forthright statement that there remain substantial differences that the most recent statement has not resolved. In fact, anyone who knew even a little bit of history on the subject was able to realize that the Vatican's response to this document reveals that little in fact has changed from the Council of Trent! Sasse realized this too.

Through his contacts with Cardinal Bea, Sasse gradually changed his attitude about Vatican II. At the beginning, Martens tell us,

> Sasse rejoiced about the new style of the updating as it was introduced by Pope John XXIII. Sasse observed the respect shown by Roman theologians for their separated brethren and the pastoral language that took the place of the speedy anathemas of the past (199).

Sasse was particularly impressed by Rome's desire to reach out for opportunities for ecumenical dialogue. He acknowledged Rome's bold initiatives toward reform across their church. But then Sasse came to realize that "the Roman Church would never be again what she used to be before the Council" (200). Finally, Sasse was so concerned that the Roman Church had embraced the Protestant zeal for ecumenism that he declared that the rock of St. Peter was beginning to crumble. He was dismayed by the "decay of the Mass, the breakdown of church discipline, and a process of secularization that did not spare the Roman Church either" (200). Throughout his life, Sasse was careful to sound Luther's wise observation that the church had not perished under the papacy, and that even in the church of the pope, the gospel and sacraments were present.

Marten's essay is masterful in his survey of Sasse's relationship to Rome. Sasse was continually fair and even-handed in his assessment, even while, for example, he remained the thoroughgoing Lutheran. Whenever he turned a critical eye toward Rome, the other was fixed firmly on the failings of his own church. That is why, in 1959, Sasse wrote in a letter:

> It seems as if all the earthly denominations which like to confuse themselves with the Una Sancta, need a myth in order to be able to live and justify their own existence. Rome needs the myth of the primacy of jurisdiction for Peter and his successors, a myth that was neither known to the New Testament nor to the church of the first centuries . . . . The Anglicans . . . need the myth of the "apostolic succession". . . . Do we Lutherans perhaps have our own myth, too? Is our myth perhaps the presumption that we are still the church of the Reformation, the church of the *sola fide,* of the *sola Scriptura,* the Church of the real presence? What has been left from the great doctrines of the Reformation aside from the time-honored Book of Concord that so many pastors . . . have never read completely, and a bunch of "open questions" (215)?

The essay by John Stephenson, "Holy Supper, Holy Church," delves into Sasse's lifelong devotion to the Sacrament of the Altar and its defense from its enemies "both foreign and domestic." Stephenson reveals how Sasse, providentially, discovered confessional Lutheranism during his studies at a Reformed seminary in Hartford, Connecticut (1925–1926). There Sasse first encountered the writings of Wilhelm Löhe. From that point he stepped "outside the respectable mainstream to believe, teach, and confess a dogma which Prussian jackboot and Enlightenment scholarship had almost erased from the church of his homeland" (224), and developed "unfashionable convictions about the Sacrament of the Altar [that] made him an insufferable odd man out among university theologians in the decades dominated by Karl Barth" (225).

Sasse's conviction about the Lord's Supper was that, even as baptism is necessary for salvation, so the Lord's Supper is necessary for the life of the church. His first magisterial treatment of the Supper was in his short book *Church and Lord's Supper,* written in 1938. (This fine little book has been translated by John Stephenson and will be published as one of the volumes in the new collection of Sasse in English, *Christ and His Church: Essays by Hermann Sasse,* along with his other shorter treatment of the Supper, "The Doctrinal Decision of the Formula of Concord on the Question of the Holy Supper," published in 1941 in the collection of essays titled *On the Sacrament of the Altar.*)

In these significant works, Sasse "crafted this century's liveliest, deepest, and most convincing exegetical defense of the Real Presence, proving to all but the most radical higher critics that the earthly Jesus was the sole author of the ongoing feast of His body and blood" (226). Sasse consistently brought readers to the irrefutable conclusion that, as Elert described, the Words of Institution, and Paul's report of these words, are the most ancient "document of Christianity that bears witness to Christ's words in direct speech" (229). Stephenson reports that Sasse "was keenly mindful that Jesus spoke the Verba at the most solemn juncture of His earthly life, so that with the Words of Institution, the prophetic office of Christ is fulfilled, and His high priestly work begins" (229).

Stephenson points out that Sasse "began to break with the Melanchthonian stranglehold on Lutheran eucharistic theology that set in when John Gerhard displaced Luther's and Chemnitz's teaching on the Consecration which is still to be found in FC SD VII, 73–87." In a sad turn of events, it appears that some Lutheran synods have back-peddled and mitigated the view of the consecration that was obvious to Luther, namely, that our Lord's true body and blood "are truly present, distributed, and received by virtue and potency of the same words which Christ spoke in the first Supper" (FC SD VII, 75). Sasse grasped the biblical realism of Luther and so was able to confess that "[t]he consecrated bread is the body of Christ also when it lies on the altar or when the pastor holds it in his hand. This is the Lutheran view" (232).

If anyone believes this to be perhaps an isolated opinion of Luther's alone, but not a view of his immediate heirs, one need only refer to the 1569 *Short Confession* that Martin Chemnitz produced for the 1569 *Corpus Doctrinae* that was incorporated into the church order of the dutchy of Braunschweig-Wölfenbüttel. Chemnitz writes,

> The question is whether that which is present in the Supper, which is given by the hand of the minister, which is received with our mouths to eat and drink, is only bread and wine. He who is Truth itself answered this question: "That which is there present, that which is given by the hand of the minister and received with our mouths, that is my body, that is my blood" (Chemnitz, *Kurzer Bericht,* trans. M. Harrison, unpublished, 1998).

Why is there any debate or hedging on what our confessors meant when they indicated that our Lord is "present, distributed, and received" in his Supper?

Stephenson offers us encouragement to read and study Hermann Sasse's writings on the Supper.

> Sasse cannot do our theology for us. He is, though, a spiritual father given for our nurture. His impassioned testimony to the Lord's Supper, its essence, and its benefits, poses to each of us the urgent question: can we do without the rite once instituted in the upper room, which bridges the gap between the yesterday of the earthly Jesus and the tomorrow of our Lord's glorious return, the mystery which lavishes on us everything that our divine-human Savior is and has?" (234).

Dr. Norman Nagel offers an enlightening discussion of "consubstantiation." Simply put, there "never was such a word until the sixteenth century. It was conceived and born in darkness and survives only as it battles against the light" (240). There is no doubt where Nagel stands on this term! Nagel cautions against a standard catechetical exercise: "Rome has only body and blood. The Reformed have only bread and wine. We Lutherans have all four. This is the doctrine of the Lord's Supper!" (240). The ironic thing, as Nagel demonstrates, is that any Lutheran who looks fondly on "consubstantiation" as a good explanation of the Real Presence is embracing a term and a theory that was first used by the Reformed to make fun of the Lutheran position on the Lord's Supper. Nagel shows how the great Lutheran divines, such as Gerhard and Hollaz, rejected the term "consubstantiation." Already in 1560, that stalwart defender of the Supper against Calvin, Heshusius, rejected the term. The christological implications of the term are thoroughly explored in this typically erudite essay by Nagel.

The volume concludes with a winsome banquet speech by the former president of the Lutheran Church—Canada, the Rev. Dr. Edwin Lehman. He recounts how his introduction to Hermann Sasse occurred when he was given a copy of Sasse's *This Is My Body* by a pastor's widow. Lehman encourages us to learn these important lessons from the life of Hermann Sasse: to think theologically, to have a sense of history, to retain a sense of the whole church, to be ready and willing to confess, and to have a pastoral heart. For Sasse, there was no greater office, no more significant calling, than to be one of Christ's men in the pulpit.

This book is highly recommended to anyone who wishes to gain a better understanding of and deeper appreciation for the work of Dr. Hermann Sasse.

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Renaissance and Reformation. By Eric Voegelin. Edited by David L. Morse and William M. Thompson. Volume 22 of the Collected Works of Eric Voegelin (Volume 4 of the History of Political Ideas by Eric Voegelin). Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1998. 309 pages.

Eric Voegelin, who died in 1985, had possibly the finest philosophical mind of the twentieth century. Though he was especially distinguished in political philosophy, his work was far from confined to that field. Though he disdained *propositional* metaphysics, he was most definitely a metaphysician: he believed that God could be known through unaided reason as well as through Scripture. He is of special interest to Lutherans for two reasons. First, he sometimes called himself Lutheran, as he did in *Who's Who in America*. Second, in the book under review he offers a previously unpublished critique of Luther, which is the most scathing I have ever read, far more serious than anything by a Roman Catholic.

Voegelin grew up in Germany and Austria, a child of a mixed Protestant-Catholic marriage. His parents reared their children alternately as Catholics and Lutherans, and when Voegelin was born, the Lutherans were *an der Reihe*. He must have had a very bad experience with the Lutheran Church, possibly in confirmation class, which he would have attended in Vienna. In any case, he could not accept the doctrines of the Lutheran or any other church; and, although he read the Bible as an adult (see the first volume, entitled *Israel and Revelation*, of his *Order and History*), he did so as a higher critic.

The book at hand is extraordinarily rich. It begins with a superb chapter on Machiavelli, emphasizing the cultural factors that contributed to his revolt. Much of this chapter first appeared in 1951 in the *Review of Politics*, and I have dealt with it in chapter 16 of the second edition of my *Toward a Response to the American Crisis* (Christendom Press, 1993). Then comes an enlightening chapter on Erasmus and Thomas More, followed by the long chapter on "The People of God," which was translated into German and published as *Das Volk Gottes* in 1994; the chapter deals with sectarian movements, beginning with those of the Middle Ages, as antecedents of twentieth-century totalitarianism. (I reviewed the German translation in the June 9, 1997, issue of *Christian News*.)

Finally comes a chapter on Luther and Calvin. For obvious reasons I am going to concentrate on this chapter in this review, and, within the chapter, on what Voegelin says about Luther. (He actually deals more harshly with Calvin than with Luther, if that is possible, calling the former "a thoroughly unsavory, murderous character" [276]). Moreover, in the section on Luther, I am going to concentrate on what Voegelin says under the subheading "Justification through Faith." There he deals with more basic matters than he does in his other remarks on Luther, where he focuses on the adverse social and political consequences of the Reformation. We may agree that the Reformation had mixed results historically, and that Voegelin takes some new tacks in this area, but these are not matters with which I wish to deal in a journal of theology.

Voegelin seems to have thought that Western civilization reached the zenith of its spiritual development with Saint Thomas Aquinas's concept, articulated in the *Summa contra gentiles,* of *fides caritate formata,* or faith formed by love. Faith here is seen as a response to the love of God as imparted through his grace. I suspect that this idea meshed with Voegelin's own spiritual experience; and, while I wish in no way to denigrate the spiritual experience of Voegelin, Saint Thomas, or the Middle Ages in general, it should be said that Saint Thomas's concept fails to take into account what God in Christ did for man on the cross, unlike the Lutheran conception of faith as trust in the promises of God.

Voegelin has three major complaints concerning Luther's teaching about justification and faith. The first is that it made an incision between body and soul, so that it became possible for persons to behave very badly while being justified. The second is that Luther pronounced some bad behavior good. The third is that Luther looked forward to an earthly paradise despite his assertion that the world is imperfectable. I shall deal with each of these charges in turn.

Voegelin develops the first charge in these passages:

> All the Christian needs is his faith. The fulfillment of the commandments is not necessary for righteousness; in releasing man from the commandments, faith liberates man from the consequences of impossible fulfillment. Through faith alone, the soul becomes one body with Christ; the holiness and justice of Christ become the property of the soul, while the vice and sin of the soul are unburdened of Christ.
>
> The optimistically sounding exposition covers a spiritual tragedy; for the exchange of properties in the mystical marriage of the soul with Christ means precisely what it says. The unburdening of sin through faith is no more than a vivid conviction of salvation, assuaging the despair of the soul; it does not redeem the fallen nature itself and raise man through the imprint of grace into the *amicitia* with God (253).

Amicitia is the friendship between God and man associated with *fides caritate formata.* Now, one way of responding to these passages is to say simply that Luther was Lutheran and not Catholic, that he had a more pessimistic (and arguably more realistic) view of human nature than Saint Thomas. Beyond this, one should note, as does Voegelin himself, that Luther saw man as responding to faith and justification through love toward his fellowman. Voegelin quotes but fails to appreciate a beautiful passage from Luther that anticipates twentieth-century talk of horizontal and vertical transcendence:

> A Christian does not live with himself, but in Christ and with his neighbor: in Christ through faith; with his neighbor through love. Through faith he rises above himself to God; from God he then descends below himself through love; and thus remains forever in God and godly love (255).

We come now to the following troubling statement by Voegelin:

> Whether a work is good or evil cannot be decided by standards of ethics; it depends on the justification or nonjustification of the man through faith alone. "The person must be righteous before all good works; and good works follow and stream forth from the good and righteous person." "If a man does not believe and is not a Christian, all his works are of no value; they are vain, foolish, punishable and damnable sin." But if he is justified through faith, then all his actions, without exception, are transfigured into good works (258).

The two direct quotations of Luther in the middle do not support Voegelin's radical conclusions in the first and last sentences of his statement. Luther believed that, in a sense, only the faithful can do good works, not because the good works of, for example, Socrates were really inherently wicked, but because they did not suffice to get him to heaven. From this proposition, however, it does not follow that *all* the works of the faithful are good. If Luther had believed that, he would not have retained the Office of the Keys.

Right after the statement of Voegelin's that I quoted in the last paragraph, Voegelin writes, "The society of the justified priests and kings in Christ, in its natural existence, realizes a realm of paradisiacally transfigured loving work" (258). But if Luther did not believe, even as a result of fancy wordplay, that everything the justified do is good, he surely did not believe in the kind of paradise Voegelin describes. To believe in it he would have had to be as inconsistent as Voegelin argues he was (257), for Voegelin truly says four pages earlier: "He [Luther] remained firmly orthodox on the point that the new heavens and the new earth were beyond this life; there never would be a terrestrial paradise in history" (254).

If I read him correctly, Voegelin advances the notion that Luther's attack on the idea of *fides caritate formata* and his espousal of justification through faith alone were due to a desire to take love out of faith and make it a "world-immanent, constitutive principle" of a terrestrial paradise (258, 259). Readers familiar with Voegelin's other works will recognize here a preposterous suggestion that Luther was a modern gnostic who sought to "immanentize the Christian eschaton." Anybody capable of believing these things about Luther is so much a child of the twentieth century that he cannot understand a man for whom the most important question in the world is, What is necessary to inherit eternal life?

I have dealt, I think, with Voegelin's most serious charges against Luther. In conclusion, I should like to quote a paragraph from Voegelin's own conclusion to his section on Luther:

> Luther attacked and destroyed the nucleus of Christian spiritual culture through his attack on the doctrine of *fides cari-*

> *tate formata*. Through the *sola fide* principle, faith became a unilateral act of trust in an externalized revelation codified in Scripture. Through this metamorphosis, faith lost the trembling intimacy of a formation of man under the touch of grace, precariously in danger of being forfeited through the temptations of optimistic confidence and pride of righteousness. Instead it became (though this was most probably not Luther's intention) an empirical consciousness of justification through faith that did not affect the substance of man. We have discussed the consequences of this split of human nature (267).

The quantity of truth in this paragraph is extremely small. Most of the paragraph is so manifestly specious as to render unnecessary my taking the reader through a sentence-by-sentence analysis of it. Most readers will be perfectly capable of criticizing it themselves.

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After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity. By Miroslav Volf. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

❧ The title is intriguing. The author's purpose is to articulate an ecclesiology that models the relationships within the Trinity. His work, a *Habilitationsschrift* at the University of Tübingen, was borne out of a desire to formulate a response to modern society's perception (particularly in the United States) that at the core of belonging to the church lie the values of freedom and equality. Volf focuses on the local church, which embodies these values and presents itself as "an icon of the Trinitarian community" (25).

The author's primary interest is ecumenical. He himself comes from a "Free Church" background. But he begins his study by conducting a dialogue with the Roman theologian Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and the Orthodox Metropolitan John Zizioulas. Although ecclesiological thinking is not uniform in either of their traditions, Volf believes that both exemplify common (if not dominant) postmodern expressions of premodern ecclesiological thinking.

According to Volf, Ratzinger's understanding of the church is based on the idea of *the whole*. In the Godhead *the whole* is the one substance of God, which has its basis in the Father. Thus the Godhead relates internally and acts externally as one divine subject. In the church this translates into one subject acting also, in a hierarchical way similar to that in the Trinity. It begins at the top and works downward: pope, bishop, priest, congregation. Accordingly, the local church has no meaning or validity outside of its relationship to the top.

Zizioulas begins at the bottom and works upward. The local church is what is decisive. This church is a Trinitarian community based on Zizioulas's understanding of the Trinity: the one (Father) constitutes the many (Son and Spirit). In the local church it is the one (Christ present in the eucharist with the bishop/priest as Christ's representative) constituting the many (the laity). Through the bishop the church is bonded with other eucharistic churches temporally by means of apostolic succession and spatially by the bishop's participation in synods of Orthodox churches.

Volf criticizes both of these understandings. First, they are too hierarchical and fail to take the laypeople adequately into consideration. Second, they are not really *catholic* at all; these views of the church are each too exclusive and deny the presence of the church in other Christian communions. In part 2 of his book, then, Volf presents his understanding of the church, the view he considers to be truly catholic, apostolic, and Trinitarian.

In chapter 3, "The Ecclesiality of the Church," Volf defines the church's ecclesiality as follows: "Every congregation that assembles around the one Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord in order to profess faith in him publicly . . . [and] is open to all churches of God and to all human beings, is a church in the full sense of the word" (158). Volf points to the Word as constitutive of the church. Nevertheless, his understanding of the sacraments is deficient. While he concedes that the church must have them, "they can be what they are for the persons who receive them" (154).

Perhaps the best chapter in the book is chapter 4, "Faith, Person, and Church." Here Volf explores the relation between being Christian and belonging to the church, as well as the relationship of Christians to other Christians. It is the same Spirit who dwells in the hearts of believers everywhere, and through this indwelling he unites them in an eschatological communion with the Triune God (189).

Volf presents an engaging view of the Trinity in chapter 5, "Trinity and Church," a view he calls *reciprocal interiority*: "In every divine person as a subject, the other persons also indwell; all mutually permeate one another, though in doing so they do not cease to be distinct persons" (209). This corresponds to his view of the church: All persons are "interdependent and catholic" yet at the same time "autonomous subjects" (220). But this analogy to the church has no basis in the Scriptures. To use the language of a model that has basis in the Scriptures (sheep and shepherd/pastor and flock), Volf's view of the church would make it all flock with no shepherd. Also, for Volf there is unity in the church through the charismata of the Spirit, but these gifts are generalized and have no specific locatedness.

Chapter 6, "Structures of the Church," deals with the question of the "offices" in the church. Relations within the Trinity are not hierarchical but symmetrical and reciprocal; so those in the church are to be open and participative. Volf tries to show, as in the previous chapter, how relationships in the church are grounded on mutuality and love. Again, however, his understanding of the Spirit's working is generalized. And to protect the Spirit's sovereignty and give him freedom to work where and how he pleases, Volf cautions against "formalizing" any structure in the church, since that would give people the false impression that "in the actions of others one is actually encountering God" (242). This means that the Spirit is unpredictable, and that there can be no certainty that any of his gifts can be found.

The final chapter, "The Catholicity of the Church," is another helpful one. A church is catholic if there is present in it the "fullness of salvation"; and recognizing this presence in other communions implies a recognition of their catholicity. Thus there is unity and multiplicity. Volf is able to perceive the presence of the church more ecumenically than either Ratzinger or Zizioulas, but there is no discussion of doctrine or confession in determining the boundaries of the church catholic.

There is much that Volf's book has to offer. His discussion of Roman and Orthodox ecclesiologies as well as his own proposals (well documented with references to leading German theologians of both the sixteenth and twentieth centuries) help to clarify the dynamics of ecumenical dialogue and the positions of the various Christian communions in the world. For Lutherans he provides the opportunity to articulate (or rearticulate) their own ecclesiological understandings. The book is definitely worth reading.

Yet one must be aware that a major flaw runs through almost every chapter of the book. There is little if any awareness of what the Scriptures teach about the office of the ministry and the sacraments. The presence of Christ in the church is generalized, and in this model the believer can find no assurance in the means of grace. Any ecclesiology that does not understand and take into account the office and the sacraments is a deficient ecclesiology.

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Come to the Feast: The Original and Translated Hymns of Martin H. Franzmann. Introduced and Edited by Robin A. Leaver. St. Louis: Morning Star Music Publishers, 1994.

In Leaver's preface he writes: "Although [Franzmann] did not write many of them, and relatively few have entered into common use, his marvelous hymns need the exposure they deserve." I couldn't agree more. And yet, despite the fact that *Thy Strong Word* is nearly every LCMS pastor's favorite hymn, and the same crowd is reservedly fond of O *Lord O God of Heaven and Earth,* Franzmann's other hymns are largely unknown. Even this book, despite having a copyright date four years old already, seems to have gone unnoticed by even his fiercest advocates.

This book attempts to achieve Leaver's stated goal of providing exposure for Franzmann's hymns by providing all twenty of his original hymns and his nine hymn translations. But that only accounts for thirty-five of the 159 pages. Leaver doesn't merely reproduce the hymns. In addition to the hymns, he includes a concise biography of Franzmann, a careful analysis of the hymns and Franzmann's creative process, and a history of how the hymns have been received and by whom. Besides that introductory material, Leaver also attaches four sermons, two of which appear in *Ha! Ha! Among the Trumpets* (reprint St. Louis: CPH, 1994), and one of which was preached not by Franzmann, but in his honor. The fourth is entitled "The Devil Has All the Good Tunes?" Franzmann's reputation and the title of that sermon alone ought to convince Lutheran preachers to lay hold of this book. Finally, Leaver also references all the hymns with chronological, metrical, first-line, and copyright indexes.

All of the introductory material and indexes are useful. But besides the hymns themselves, the real meat of this book is the few paragraphs of commentary on each hymn that Leaver provides. For the most part the commentary is historical details: what occasion the hymn was written for, when and where it was written, and which hymnals, if any, included it. Where he has access to such information, Leaver also tells what Franzmann himself said about a hymn and details as to how he changed the hymn over time. This often allows us a marvelous look inside the working of Franzmann's mind and piety.

That the Franzmann family and the Concordia Historical Institute worked closely with Leaver is evident, as is the fact that Leaver was a loving student of Franzmann. All who are interested in poetry—especially the sung poetry of the church—and all who are charged with preaching the word will find themselves returning to this book again and again, to reread and meditate upon the profound and eloquent phrases and couplets of Franzmann's prophetic hymns.

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Make Disciples, Baptizing: God's Gift of New Life and Christian Witness. By Robert Kolb. St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Publications, Fascicle Series, 1997. 105 pages. Softcover. $6.95.

As the title indicates, Kolb's book seeks to make the connection between baptism and Christian witness. How may Christians talk about baptism in their conversations with those outside the faith? How can the rite of baptism convey the message that new Christians are being incorporated into the congregation? How does baptism provide a framework for assimilating people into the Christian life? Kolb takes evangelism, witness, incorporation, and assimilation, which are generally bereft of any sacramental association, and links them to a baptismal theology and practice. That is the distinctive contribution of this book.

First, though, Kolb lays out the presuppositions for a scriptural understanding of baptism: baptism is gospel, it is sacrament, and it is God's word. Over against the "spiritualizing tendencies" of contemporary Western culture, the scriptural view is that God does indeed act to save through baptism. "God's recreative power is lodged in his Word" (20).

"Baptism is as new and fresh and surprising as the incarnation itself" (25). So says Kolb in introducing a survey of the biblical testimony to baptism. Briefly skimming over the significance of water in the Old Testament and the nature of John's baptism as bridging the Old and the New, Kolb moves on to the classic New Testament texts. He groups them according to the images they convey of God's baptismal action. Baptism kills and makes alive (Romans 6, Colossians 2). Baptism bestows new birth (John 3, Titus 3, 1 Peter 3). It cleanses (Galatians 3, 1 Corinthians 6, Ephesians 5). Baptism incorporates us into God's family (1 Corinthians 12). Kolb explores the Book of Acts in order to affirm the inseparable relationship between repentance, baptism, and faith, all as gift and work of the Holy Spirit. Kolb concludes this biblical survey by saying: "Baptism is the Spirit's tool for bringing sinners into death with Christ in his tomb and bringing them into the new life of the reborn children of God. That is the message of the New Testament regarding Baptism" (62).

Having set the biblical foundation, Kolb moves into his distinctive material relating baptism to evangelism. Baptism is not the first topic we mention in Christian witness, for "baptism" is a word of gospel. The first stage is to help the person see the inadequacy of his or her false gods—those things that give that person a sense of identity, safety, and meaning. When the law has done its work, then we bring in the good news of Christ. Baptism can enhance our witness. For example, to those who wish they could die because of their failures, we can bring the welcome news of "God's baptismal gift of death to the sinner and God's gift of new life in the sacrament" (70). To those who feel alienated and isolated, we may say how baptism incorporates us into God's family. The various biblical images of baptism lend themselves to occasions for "baptismal witnessing." Kolb closes this chapter with an excursus on discussing baptism with those who would deny its sacramental nature.

The rite and ritual of baptism can help to communicate the reality of what is going on in the sacrament. "The seriousness and the celebration of this act of God must be impressed upon congregation and convert alike" (92). Kolb makes some practical suggestions. To show that the person is being joined to that body of Christ which is gathered around the font, baptism should be public, within the worship setting. The white robe and the candle can reinforce the awareness of the new identity bestowed by God. Celebrating one's "baptismal new-birthday" according to the church calendar is an intriguing idea Kolb offers, as is providing sponsors for adult converts.

Finally, baptism provides a framework for living the Christian life. It frees the baptized for holy, truly human living—living with the mindset of Christ, living as a gift for others. Baptism begins the whole life of repentance—the rhythm of daily dying and rising, the practice of confession and absolution.

"Baptism's ray falls across every day of our lives, brightening them all with the restatement of God's commitment to us, his children" (87). This is the light that shines throughout this little book by Kolb. And while it is "light reading" also in the sense of being short and easy to read, it does serve its purpose.

One of the criteria I have for judging whether a book was worthwhile is this: Did it stimulate my thinking? *Make Disciples, Baptizing* did just that. It helps the reader to think about baptism theologically and exegetically, as well as from the practical perspectives of evangelism, liturgy, and piety. For a little book, that's not bad.

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How the Bible Came to Be. By John Barton. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997. 100 pages.

Reading *How the Bible Came to Be* was a nostalgic experience for me. It took me back to my American Lutheran Church seminary days in Columbus, Ohio, where I was made to acquaint myself with historical criticism and a host of little -*geschichte*s, redactors, and their *sitz im leben*s. What Barton does in this little, easy-to-read book is to take the reader on a quick crash course in the critical, modernist approach to the Bible. There is nothing new or cutting-edge, critically speaking, in the book, just a straightforward presentation of the garden-variety view of the Bible that has been taught in the average liberal college "Intro to Bible" course for the past thirty years or so. My nostalgic interlude was not altogether a happy one, for I remember that the critical approach to the Bible to which I was exposed in seminary had a depressive effect on my confidence in the Bible as the Word of God as I entered parish ministry. But I got better.

The problem for Barton is that this whole idea of the Bible as the divinely inspired Word of God makes the Bible very two-dimensional and boring. It is so much more interesting and intellectually satisfying to view the Bible as a purely human product that came together in a bewilderingly hodge-podge manner, so that those interested in such things can speculate and postulate to their hearts' content without worrying whether that troublesome God might really have been involved. Barton's intended audience is the general reader, possibly the typical parish Bible study attendee. Therefore, the discussion is non-technical and contains little in the way of defense or proof. It is simply a descriptive presentation of the way liberals read the Bible.

The author begins with a very brief overview of the contents of the Bible for the benefit of the reader who knows nothing at all about it. Then he discusses how the books of the Bible came to be written. Here I was able to renew my passing acquaintance with Messrs. J, E, D, and P, with Mr. Pseudonymous Authorship, and with Dr. Deutero-Isaiah. As we learn of redactors and editors, we also learn that few books were written by their stated authors or those assigned from antiquity by tradition. For Barton, any claim to divine involvement in the production of the Bible must be so buried under the human activity that for all practical purposes it is irrelevant.

There is one new thing in Barton's book that I don't remember being much discussed when I was in seminary. You see it frequently on TV in programs like "Mysteries of the Bible." Long-rejected books like the Gospel of Thomas and other apocryphal and pseudepigraphal books are "rediscovered" and treated as though they were excluded and suppressed by a naughty, authoritarian church. Now that we have them, they show that the selectivity that resulted in the Bible was just as much church politics as it was divine guidance. Of course, we all know that such books were never really suppressed, and that they have long been available for the perusal of any interested person. And we know too that reading much of the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal literature is a bit like reading the Book of Mormon. You think: "Here's a guy who's not very good at it, trying to write as though he's writing the Bible."

Having discussed how the various books were written and how they were collected, Barton goes on to explain that these books came to be regarded as *Scripture* rather than as mere books, which led to their being treated and used differently than we use other books. In particular, Barton mentions the propensity to claim that all of the Bible is relevant to our present concerns, the propensity to claim that the Bible is relevant for all people, the practice of harmonizing discrepancies, and the tendency to attribute deeper meaning to the text of the Bible than that of ordinary books, as, for example, Christian interpretation of the Messianic Prophecies of the Old Testament. It is his opinion, stated frequently, that such an approach to the Bible prevents us from seeing it for what it really is: a very interesting and valuable book but not the Word of God in the historic sense of that term. Of course, as we look from ideas like Barton's to the state of the generic American Protestant churches that are informed by such ideas, we are treated to a stunning object lesson on the maxim "Ideas Have Consequences." Given the choice of truth or consequences, better to stick with truth.

It should be plain to the reader that I do not like this book. But it is not because John Barton doesn't write well. His presentation is well done, covering a lot of ground in a short space. Rather it is because the ideas in *How the Bible Came to Be* are a spiritual and theological dead-end.

I would never recommend this book to the general reader. There is one purpose for which I could recommend it, though, and that is as a quick overview of critical, modernist bibliology for college and seminary students who will then be taught better.

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Postmodernizing the Faith. By Millard J. Erickson. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1998. 163 pages.

It seems that almost every time I hear a keynote address or a paper at a theological conference, I hear the refrain "We're living in a postmodern world" thrown in somewhere. I don't know what to think about postmodernism. Is it a new worldview, a new intellectual movement, or simply secular modernism in despair? Reading *Postmodernizing the Faith* did not answer my question fully, but it helped me to clarify my thoughts and move me a little further along the road. It serves as a good introduction to further reading on the subject.

For the modernist, knowledge was objective, certain, and good. Universal systems of explanation were possible and desirable. The individual knower was a heroic model, and progress was inevitable. Other words that describe modernism are naturalism, humanism, and anti-authoritarianism. The postmodernist views things very differently. He or she denies the objectivity and the goodness of knowledge, denies universal absolutes, rejects the idea of progress, and replaces the individual knower with community-based knowledge, including the idea that there are other channels of truth than reason, including intuition.

This book presents six Evangelical responses to postmodernism, three negative and three positive. On the negative side, David Wells calls for a return to the biblical concept of truth. The biblical writers were convinced that the revelation of God they had received and proclaimed was true in the absolute, universal, enduring sense. We are to call people out of the pluralism of our age into the worldview of divine revelation. Thomas Oden, former modernist, calls for a postmodern recovery of classical Christianity, which he calls paleo-orthodoxy. He relates a revelatory experience: He was packing in preparation for a research year away from his personal library. After carefully choosing which books were essential to take, he noticed that none were from the twentieth century. Last among the negative responses to postmodernism is Francis Schaeffer. He asserts that only orthodox Christianity gives the real answers to man's need to know who he is, what truth is, and what is the solution to man's predicament (sin). But in order for modern people, steeped in relativism and subjectivism, to hear the Christian answer, we must do presuppositional pre-evangelism. That is, we must show the logical conclusions and consequences to the modern/postmodern worldview in order to show it as a dead end. Then modern people will be able to hear Christianity's answer.

Next the book presents three positive responses to postmodernism. Stanley Grenz calls for a revision of evangelical theology in the direction of postmodernism, particularly with regard to community-based truth, anti-rationalism, wholism, and pietism. Richard Middleton and Brian Walsh want to steer us away from propositional truth to view the Bible as narrative that we enter and live in as participants. This approach to Scripture is controlled by postmodern opposition to "metanarratives" and oppression. Keith Putt, the most radical of the pro-postmodernist Evangelicals, recommends that evangelicalism adjust its ideas of the objectivity of truth, the referential understanding of language, to accommodate postmodern ideas such as deconstruction.

Erickson presents each of the above perspectives and then points out what, in his opinion, is good and bad about each. In the end he recommends a combination of some aspects of Walsh/Middleton and Grenz with their narrative approach to Scripture while not giving up on the objectivity of truth. What is needed is to adjust the presentation and not the content when communicating with the postmodernist world. To this modified appreciation of these semi-postmodernist Evangelicals, Erickson adds the presuppositional pre-evangelism and apologetic of Francis Schaeffer, which is a decided "no" to postmodernism and a call to lead people away from it. A blending of aspects of these two views holds the most promise for an effective response to postmodernism.

Postmodernizing the Faith was helpful to me as an introduction to the relationship of Christianity to postmodernism. The Lutheran reader will have to become accustomed to a bit of Evangelical terminology and perspective, but that done, the book is a good starting point. As I increasingly hear the term mentioned in theological circles, I continue to wonder whether we are talking about having entered a new era, or whether we are simply seeing the effects of secular modernism on its late twentieth-century adherents. History shows that whenever Christianity accomodates itself to secular worldviews, mischief happens. Just think of Aristotelianism and its impact on the medieval church. Therefore, while I might hesitate broadly to endorse the theology of Wells, Oden, and Schaeffer, I concur with their negative assessment of postmodernism and with their claim that the classic Christian faith gives the answers that the postmodern world desperately needs.

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The Lutheran Confessions on CD ROM. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997.

With more and more publications being made available in a digital format, it seemed only a matter of time until the Lutheran Confessions would be digitized as well and made available to the computer-savvy theologian. Some portions of the Book of Concord have been available through various internet sites for some time now; but to the best of this reviewer's knowledge *The Lutheran Confessions on CD-ROM* from Northwestern marks the first time that the entire *Triglotta* edition of the Book of Concord has been issued in a digital format. Everything that one would find in the printed edition is also found on this disk, including Bente's *Historical Introduction to the Book of Concord,* and most importantly, the complete text of the Confessions in Latin, German, and English.

This is more than just a text file of the Lutheran Confessions. As a part of the Logos Library System, it utilizes the powerful Logos engine and links to other Logos products. Users already familiar with Logos Bible Software will feel right at home. For those unfamiliar with the Logos product, the basic Logos 2.1 program, which has the King James Version of the Bible with Apocrypha, is included. The manufacturer explains the basic principle of the system:

> Logos Library System brings together books of all kinds into an integrated library system, with hyperlink cross-references, topical browsing, note-taking, and above all, powerful, multi-book searching. The integration of many reference works in the Library enables users to search for combinations of information that were never before possible apart from weeks or months of laborious effort. Added electronic enhancements make even the most complex material accessible, easier and more efficient to use than printed editions (Logos Research Systems, *Logos 2.1 User's Guide* [Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.] 1997.)

For those unfamiliar with the Logos format, the first few attempts at using the program can be a bit daunting. As with all programs it simply takes time, exploration, and experimentation to unlock the software's potential.

Arguably the most useful feature of this program is the search function. Even a novice can easily search for a particular word, combination of words, or phrases found in the Confessions. The only difficulty I had in searching the *Triglotta* was with how search results are displayed. When one searches a Bible text on Logos, results are shown by chapter and verse. This is very handy. When the same sort of search is done in the Confessions, however, results are displayed by subject without reference to book, article, or paragraph number. One can view the context of the search result (the sentence from which it was taken), but still without citation. Even if one "jumps" (by means of double-clicking on the search result) to the text in which the reference was found, it is still difficult to identify the document or article without manually scrolling through the text until finding a title or using the Sync Browser function of the program (which will identify the article in the Library Browser). Even when a particular text is copied and then pasted into another document (a feature that automatically creates a footnote in one's word-processor document), the appropriate citation is missing. What appears is "Bente, F., *Concordia Triglotta* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997)," regardless of the origin of the citation within the Book of Concord. This is a serious drawback when using this software as a reference or research tool. For simple one-word English language searches, I still find the printed edition of the *Concordance to the Lutheran Confessions* to be much handier. Of course, when looking for multiple words or phrases, or for searches in Latin or German, the digital route is much easier and faster.

Another nice feature of this software is the insertion by the manufacturers of hyperlinks into the text. This enables the user immediately to jump to references in the text simply by clicking on them. For instance, if one is reading a particular passage in the Confessions and comes across a reference to John 15:5, instead of manually paging through the Bible to find the verse, one simply clicks on it and jumps to that verse in the Logos Bible. Cross-references within the Confessions work the same way, making this type of study and research much easier. Unfortunately, this feature is only available in the English text. Other nice features include the ability to create one's own links, bookmark passages, record notes digitally, and of course, copy text and paste it into one's word processor.

Overall, I found the software to be very useful, if a bit overpriced (around a hundred dollars). But if you use your computer for research and are tired of looking up and then retyping passages from the Lutheran Confessions, this CD-ROM may well be worth the money.

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Perpetua's Passion: The Death and Memory of a Young Roman Woman. By Joyce E. Salisbury. New York: Routledge, 1997.

This volume does several excellent things at once. Above all, it tells the stirring history of the Christian martyrs of North Africa during the first part of the church's third century, thus providing Christians of today with a powerful encouragement to remain faithful to their Lord against all worldly pressure to deny him. Second, it presents a host of data on a level that readers who are not technically trained, but who at least are patient enough to proceed carefully, can read and comprehend. Third, it offers in its late chapters an insightful explanation of how the church's age of Roman persecutions contributed much to a medieval piety that in many superficial ways seemed so different. And finally, the book typifies well the relatively recent methods of reconstructing Christian history along psychological and anthropological lines—with an element of feminist concern, to boot.

In almost all matters, Salisbury has covered the territory in breadth and depth, from the archaeology of Carthage to the dynastic rivalries of Rome. The author's knowledge makes the book quite readable, but also very dense for its size, especially for the reader still becoming acquainted with many of the facts.

The book first deals with the question why, especially in the case of the recent wife and new mother Perpetua, women and men were willing to enter the arena and die in the year A.D. 203 for being Christians rather than succumb to the pleas of loved ones for them to satisfy the Emperor's demands. Salisbury finds a reasonable explanation in two sources: religious beliefs and types of sacrificial devotion that had developed in the Roman world by that time, and the powerful effect of miraculous phenomena in the early church. In other words, the book grants cultural influences a fair amount of credit but then turns to the Christian community itself for final answers. From the latter comes the answer that in the church Perpetua and her friends sensed "the presence of God."

The middle section gives a great deal of information on what actually took place inside the arena, and no one who follows Christ can read this material unmoved. That much of the book is based on—and quotes liberally—a diary that Perpetua kept and then handed to a friend right before death, makes it all the more inspiring. The graphic detail is often painful to read.

The final part of the book then attempts to show what impact these deaths had upon the thought and life of the church from which the martyrs arose. We are taken from Tertullian and the actual periods of persecution into later controversies between Montanists and Orthodox, "Rigorists" and "Realists," and ultimately between Augustine and the Donatists. The origin of relics, the later redactions of female martyrologies, and the rise of bishops are all discussed.

Overall, the scope is quite bold, and the book is well executed. Obviously, any work that synthesizes so much in so short a space is vulnerable to attacks by historians with alternative interpretations, but Salisbury makes hers as enjoyable as it is informative and, quite often, convincing. The popular penchant for interpreting all church history as a struggle between enthusiastic visionaries and orthodox authoritarians at times grows irksome, but in the main the construction avoids becoming laborious.

Where the book truly fails, however, is at the foot of the cross itself. Anyone to whom the letters of Paul have provided not just food for spiritual and scholarly thought but a crucified Christ in whom one sees all of one's own sufferings hallowed will note the deficiency. In the chapter "Christian Community," how loud the author's silence is on the crucifixion of Jesus himself in explaining why his disciples two hundred years later gladly died for him! Arguing that dreams, visions, and healings in the Christian community compelled people to give their lives for their faith, while at the same time not discussing the connection that numerous early Christians made between the death of Jesus and their own, is not objective historiography. The author, perhaps in attempting to remain scientific, flatly ignores the major dimension of Christian faith, namely, that the title *Christ* was established for Jesus in his death on a Roman cross.

More than one early Christian writer pointed out that Christians adore, second only to God the Father, "a crucified man." It wasn't just that they believed in a resurrection, but that they believed "he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again" (2 Cor 5:15). The careful reader will be stunned at how thoroughly this learned historian chronicles early Christian martyrdom and almost never treats the death of Jesus Christ. The early church certainly referred to it.

Nevertheless, this book is a mine of historical details and thoughtful connections. And above all, Salisbury has given us a very up-to-date and solid presentation of a story that all Christians should read and hear—perpetually.

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Briefly Noted

Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters. Edited by Donald K. McKim. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.

❧ This handbook narrates the history of the Scriptures within the church by providing biographical sketches of key scholars from the early church to the present day along with descriptive presentations of their theological commitments and interpretative approaches to the text. Each entry concludes with a bibliography of primary sources and secondary studies. Eleven interpreters are included from the early church, seven from the Middle Ages, nineteen from the Reformation era (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), twenty-eight from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and thirty-seven from the twentieth century. One wonders why some of these figures were included while others were omitted. For example, John Wesley is included, although he is not remembered as an exegete or interpreter of the Bible. On the other hand, several notable biblical interpreters are omitted. One looks in vain for chapters on E. W. Hengstenberg, C. F. Keil, and Franz Delitzch of the last century, or Peter Stuhlmacher, Bo Reicke, Anders Nygren, John Bright, or Martin Hengel of the twentieth century.

Nevertheless, the *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters* is an impressive volume. Here readers can gain valuable insights into a wide array of biblical scholars. Some are well known, such as Jerome, Bengel, and Bultmann. Others such as Friedrich August Gottreu Tholuck, Heinrich A. W. Meyer, and Adolf Schlatter are less known to American readers, yet deserving of study. McKim has covered the theological spectrum, including representative figures as diverse as James Barr and J. Gresham Machen. Readers of LOGIA will especially be interested in Kenneth Hagen's treatment of Luther, Robert Kolb's entry on Flacius, and Roy Harrisville's essay on von Hoffmann.

Liturgy and Music: Lifetime Learning. Edited by Robin A. Leaver and Joyce Ann Zimmerman. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998.

❧ This book is a collection of essays covering a rather wide range of topics related to liturgy and church music. Zimmerman in her chapter on the liturgical assembly raises the question as to who is the subject of the liturgy, providing an answer that is consistent with Vatican II. Several chapters are devoted to particular parts of the service such as the homily and the general intercessions. Thomas Talley is the author of a chapter on the liturgical year that nicely summarizes his extensive book on this topic. Several chapters focus on issues of "liturgical spirituality." The three essays of Robin Leaver make the book worth purchasing. Leaver provides chapters entitled "What is Liturgical Music" (chapter 13), "Liturgical Music as Homily and Hermeneutic" (chapter 21), and "Liturgical Music as Anamnesis."

Hebrews. By Victor C. Pfitzner. Abingdon New Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.

❧ Victor Pfitzner, of Luther Seminary in Adelaide, Australia, has provided readers with a helpful commentary on a complex book. Especially welcome is Pfitzner's appreciation for the liturgical and sacramental dimensions of Hebrews. While Pfitzner's commentary is based on the NRSV, he does not hesitate to criticize this translation when such criticism is appropriate.

Martin Luther's Easter Book. Edited by Roland Bainton. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1983.

❧ Along with its companion volume, *Martin Luther's Christmas Book,* this devotional treasure has been brought back into print by Augsburg. Bainton has skillfully excerpted, condensed, and translated portions of Luther's passiontide and Easter sermons for devotional reading. Beginning with our Lord's journey to Jerusalem and culminating in his mandate to Peter to feed the sheep, Bainton allows Luther's sermons to interpret Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection. The beauty of these gems from Luther is enhanced by the inclusion of woodcuts by Virgil Solis.

Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel. Edited and translated by Theodore Tappert. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1997.

❧ This volume, first published in 1955 as part of the Library of Christian Classics, has finally been resurrected! Tappert has arranged Luther's pastoral letters into twelve chapters covering such themes as encouragement for the persecuted, consolation for the bereaved, comfort for the sick and dying, advice in time of epidemic and famine, counsel for troubled marriages, cheer for the despondent, and counsel for pastors facing problems. These letters reflect Luther's profound insights into the theology of the cross and the application of the gospel to those whose calling puts them under the cross.

JTP

LOGIA FORUM

SHORT STUDIES AND COMMENTARY

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH'S MISSION

Henry P. Hamann's book On Being A Christian *has apparently become available again. It is a commendable text for confessional Lutherans. The following passage directs us to what is and what is not the mission of the Church* (113–114).

The marks of the church determine the mission of the Lutheran Church in the world. It is in the world to bear clear, genuine, unambiguous witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to the sacraments he instituted: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. It is there to make this witness both to those who are Lutherans and to those who are not, both to Christians and to non-Christians, for it is entrusted with the very Word of God, the Word of salvation . . . .

Discerning readers will probably think at this point of the argument that I have been guilty of a grave omission in my account of the mission of the church. They will be aware that most churches in the world—and especially the large representative bodies like the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation, as well as the pope of Rome—have assumed for themselves a leading role in the endeavor to bring about a better world. The various churches make solemn declarations on a whole host of important concerns: on war and peace, on poverty and health, on justice and human rights, on freedom and the role of women in society. The churches have much to say on the proper action of governments in all quarters of the globe, calling upon them to change such-and-such a policy and enact such-and-such reforms. Knowing all this, it may well be a matter for wonder that the present description of the mission of the church has failed to speak of such activity as part of that mission.

The answer is that the confessional Lutheran just does not consider these matters to be part of the mission of the church. A distinctive teaching of Lutheranism comes up here: the doctrine of the Two Kingdoms—although this traditional view has also been discarded by a great part of the modern Lutheran church.

IS NOTHING SACRED?

A sermon preached on 1 Corinthians 7:20–24 by the Rev. Dr. David Scaer at Kramer Chapel, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, on September 25, 1998.

The idea of sacred places is becoming extinct. Also lost is the idea that some people stand out from the rest of us because of who they are. Pastors are following the lead of politicians and are called by first names. If Jimmy and Bill are our presidents, Pastor Bob, Pastor Phil, Pastor Harry are our clergymen. No one is more important or better than anyone else. All are equal. In a similar way sacred places are becoming less sacred. Historically Lutheran churches have the pulpit to one side to allow an unobstructed view of the altar. The unspoken but clear message is that the church is sacred space.

Some churches have done away with altars and pulpits and replaced them with stages. The unspoken but clear message is that no place is more sacred than any another. Upon entering these churchly auditoriums, one considers the possibility that if it were not Sunday morning, he or she may have found his or her way into a high school gym where the cheers and the pounding of basketball shoes from Saturday night's game are still heard. Pulpits, like altar rails, are construed as barriers between the minister and the people, and every barrier between God and man, pastor and people, must be torn down. Even in traditional churches, preachers abandon their pulpits and stroll friendly aisles. The ministerial ideal is Oprah. A cordless microphone is the bishop's staff. The congregation becomes an audience and the parishioners become consumers.

Sacred persons and places are vanishing. Whatever I do in the church, I can do at home or vice versa. My home is the church. The kitchen table is my altar. All are preachers. All are missionaries. All are Bible class leaders. All are ministers. Per-

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sonal faith is what really matters. Whatever the minister does, any parishioner can do. It is a revision of an ancient popular song, "Anything you can do, I can do better." The one difference is that people who get their names into the *Lutheran Annual* are professionals. The rest are amateurs. Unheard against the roar of this maelstrom of ecclesiastical egalitarianism are the words of St. Paul, "Everyone should remain in the state in which he was called."

Neophyte preachers will soon discover that the people jump to conclusions never intended. Paul's sermons were twisted in every which way, at least according to Peter. His hearers jumped to conclusions he never intended. Any doctrine isolated from the body of Christian truth by the congregation can become the seed bed of heresy. Christ's return in judgment occupied a central place in apostolic preaching. The Christians in Thessolonica used this doctrine as an excuse for self-imposed unemployment and turned inactivity into a Christian virtue. Perhaps they were already looking for an excuse for an extended paid vacation. Paul's preaching about Christ's return gave them the excuse they were looking for. Most church problems border on the bizarre. The unemployment in Thessolonica was no exception.

In the environment of this chapel, one hesitates to say that St. Paul favored a Calvinistic work ethic. The Bible opens up with a God who is at work creating the world, and in the words of Luther he still works to preserve it. God commanded Adam to work, even if after he had sinned, sweat dripping into his eyes made that work less pleasant. Work belongs to the fiber of our humanity. We are made in the image of the God who works. St. Paul claims that the necessity of working belongs to the doctrine Christ entrusted to all his apostles. Jesus said we must work the works of his Father while it is day, for the night comes when no man can work.

St. Paul said his work was preaching Christ: "We preach not ourselves, but Christ crucified." In spite of this self-deprecating statement, Paul often preached about himself. He said he was the chief of sinners, a persecutor of the church of God. He also said some good things about himself. He claimed that he worked more than all the apostles. In how Paul lived, believers could see the life and death of Jesus. He was an example to others.

Second Thessalonians provides a marvelous array of Bible passages for anyone who is convinced that most unemployment is an endemic fault of the underclass, a personality defect, which can be conquered by an act of the will and a determination to be a better Christian. Unemployment during the Great Depression of the 1930s and currently in the countries of the former Soviet block is hardly the choice of the people.

Part of the Christian proclamation is helping all in distress, including those who want to work but cannot. Unemployment for religious reasons is an entirely different matter. Sitting around doing nothing, even if you claimed to be waiting for Jesus, is not an excuse to collect unemployment benefits from the church. St. Paul deals harshly with the piously unemployed. They are to be ostracized from the Christian community, which presumably includes exclusion from the Lord's supper. Starvation is the means of last resort to bring about compliance. "If anyone does not work, do not let him eat." Perhaps we can agree with the socialistic gospel of "each according to his needs," as long as the person cannot work. Paul's final argument is himself. He and his companions had come close to working themselves to death. Sooner or later what we are works its way into our sermons.

Predictably Greek and then Hebrew are eye-openers for new seminarians. Getting dogmatics straight is another struggle. Early church is a swamp. Much more difficult is how you live your life as a preacher. Most here are not ordained, but you are no more private persons than this chapel is simply another building like a gymnasium or garage. This building is sacred. Because you are designated to be preachers of the gospel, your persons are sacred. Your voices are the voice of God and your lives are the life of Christ.

President Al Barry called our attention to the agonizing national debate over whether our highest government officials are entitled to lead private lives that contradict the obligations which they are sworn to uphold. The American political processes will resolve this question, but for us who are Christ's ambassadors this question has already been answered by St. Paul. The Thessalonians not only had a commandment that they should work, but they were to imitate him. What we do and how we live confirms the gospel that we preach.

Fourth-year students and more particularly their wives are understandably reluctant about losing their private lives for the sake of the public image of the holy ministry. You cannot do one thing in your private lives and another in your public lives. Ministerial profession and personal commitment cannot be separated. Separating the man from the office is only another form of Nestorianism.

What we are as ministers penetrates our entire existence. The office of the ministry is not like a benign tumor without any relation to who we are. There is an active communication of attributes between who we are and the gospel we preach. The message we preach shapes our lives and our lives give form to our preaching. Many of you have come to the seminary because you intend to imitate the lives of pious pastors who strongly influenced you in your decision for the ministry. St. Paul lived his private life in such a way that the Thessalonians could find an example of how they too should live. He believed his life, his sufferings, and his death were images, mirrors, and icons of Christ's life and death, a kind of picture book. But his life was more. Christ's sufferings were actually enfleshed in St. Paul. Brothers, we have no choice but to let these sufferings come to expression in us to whom the gospel is now entrusted. "For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us.

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is living in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, we did not eat any one's bread without paying, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not burden any of you. It was not because we have not that right, but to give you in our conduct an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: If any one will not work, let him not eat."

TOO ROMAN CATHOLIC

The first president of the Missouri Synod worked long and hard to restore a common historic liturgy to the church when so many churches were following their own devices. C. F. W. Walther's efforts received some negative feedback. He responded in a publication that he edited for many years: Der Lutheraner *(the predecessor to the* Lutheran Witness*), as in this example, translated from the July 19, 1853, issue, volume 9, number 24, page 163.*

Whenever the divine service once again follows the old Evangelical-Lutheran agendas (or church books), it seems that many raise a great cry that it is "Roman Catholic": "Roman Catholic" when the pastor chants "The Lord be with you" and the congregation responds by chanting "and with thy spirit"; "Roman Catholic" when the pastor chants the collect and the blessing and the people respond with a chanted "Amen."

Even the simplest Christian can respond to this outcry: "Prove to me that this chanting is contrary to the Word of God, then I too will call it 'Roman Catholic' and have nothing more to do with it. However, you cannot prove this to me."

If you insist upon calling every element in the divine service "Romish" that has been used by the Roman Catholic Church, it must follow that the reading of the Epistle and Gospel is also "Romish." Indeed, it is mischief to sing or preach in church, for the Roman Church has done this also . . . .

Those who cry out should remember that the Roman Catholic Church possesses every beautiful song of the old orthodox church. The chants and antiphons and responses were brought into the church long before the false teachings of Rome crept in. This Christian Church since the beginning, even in the Old Testament, has derived great joy from chanting. . . . For more than 1700 years orthodox Christians have participated joyfully in the divine service. Should we, today, carry on by saying that such joyful participation is "Roman Catholic"? God forbid!

Therefore, as we continue to hold and to restore our wonderful divine services in places where they have been forgotten, let us boldly confess that our worship forms do not tie us with the modern sects or with the church of Rome; rather, they join us to the one, holy Christian Church that is as old as the world and is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

DRILL AND KILL?

Vince Lombardi said, "Practice makes permanent. Perfect practice makes perfect." If Luther and Lombardi agree on anything, then it must be right.

The following article, entitled "National Issue: Does Good Practice Make Perfect? Six in Ten Educators Say No; Researchers Say Yes," by Matthew Robinson, is from the April 24, 1998, issue of Investors Business Daily, Inc.

Nothing attracts more ire from modern educators than asking children to memorize and practice, whether it be their spelling words or multiplication tables. When polled last year, some six of ten education professors objected to having kids memorize material. These educators, who teach K–12 teachers, warn that practice, homework and direct, systematic instruction turn kids into automatons, stifling their creativity and ultimately dooming their ability to learn. They even have a term for it: "Drill and kill."

The result? American kids spend less time working under instruction, and do less homework than their global peers. But new findings in cognitive science and psychology support drills and practice. "Nothing flies more in the face of the last twenty years of research than the assertion that practice is bad," asserted Professors John Anderson, Lynne Reder and Herbert Simon of Carnegie-Mellon University. "All evidence . . . indicates that real competence only comes with extensive practice. By denying the critical role of practice, one is denying children the very thing they need to achieve competence," they wrote in a recent study. "The instructional problem is not to kill motivation by demanding drill, but to find tasks that provide practice—while at the same time sustaining interest."

That idea is causing a stir in the education world. Anderson, Reder and Simon are applying their findings in cognitive psychology to challenge the education status quo. Kids, they argue, can learn better through "deliberate practice"—through hard work and constant feedback to master knowledge and tasks. Of course, this is what most Americans think of when they are asked about education. They think of learning core knowledge that will be useful later in life.

"Nobody expects someone to be great without a great deal of practice and time in sports or music," Anderson said. "But it still seems that in the area of education, there is the notion that all we have to do is give a child a critical insight or inspiration and everything else will fall into place. Intellectual competence has to build up with the same kind of deliberate practice as musical talent or athletic ability," he added.

The education establishment's views on practice and memorization go back to the beginning of the century. They were popularized by progressive educators such as John Dewey, William Heard Kilpatrick and Carl Rogers. Ideas in education drawn from these thinkers go by many names: rationalist or romantic theories of learning, constructivism, situated learning, project-style learning and discovery learning. The theories have in common the belief that kids need only look inside themselves for knowledge. In this view, education is all about letting kids discover what they need to learn. In fact, some theorists claim that kids are actually hurt by direct, systematic instruction.

And such ideas get broad support in schools of education. Fully 92 percent of education professors say that "teachers should see themselves as facilitators of learning, who enable their students to learn on their own." Only 7 percent think teachers should be "conveyors of knowledge who enlighten their students with what they know." They also believe that direct instruction leads to "routinization." This, they think, drives out understanding.

"These valid objections to purely verbal, fragmented and passive education have . . . been used as a blunt instrument to attack all emphasis on factual knowledge and vocabulary," wrote E. D. Hirsch in *The Schools We Need*. California learned the hard way that romantic theories of education don't work as well as direct instruction. The State Board of Education reversed its position in 1995 on whole language reading theory. Whole language says that kids learn to read the same way they learn to speak—by absorbing new words in the reading situation. Instead of teaching kids to sound out words and break down harder words, they would learn to guess words' meaning from context.

In other words, kids were largely left on their own to "discover" how to read and spell. After almost a decade of practicing this method, the state scored at the bottom of national reading tests. The nation's biggest state now backs using direct instruction—including phonics instead of whole language to teach reading. "Children vary in the amount of practice that is required for automaticity and fluency in reading to occur," the state's Comprehensive Reading Leadership Program found. "Some need to read a word only once to recognize it again with greater speed; others need more than twenty exposures. . . . Therefore, it is vital that students read a large amount of text at their independent reading level, and that the text provide specific practice in the skills being learned."

Translation: Learning requires reinforcement— practice and memorization—to master a subject. "It's the missing link in American education," said Arthur Bornstein, a memory training expert in Los Angeles. "Schools tell kids what to learn, but not how to do it." Bornstein coaches schools on how to help students remember what they're taught. Bornstein has watched schools slowly move away from stressing drills. "It's a tragedy," he said, "but too many schools now assume kids will just pick up things as they go along."

Some experts argue that the education establishment's downplaying of deliberate practice helps explain American students' lower test scores. In the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, American students were near the bottom. U.S. high school seniors scored nineteenth out of twenty-one nations in math. In science, they scored sixteenth. American kids get nearly an hour less homework a day than the foreign average—1.7 hours compared with 2.6 hours.

A study by James W. Stigler, professor of education at the University of California, Los Angeles, found that the average Japanese student gets instruction 90 percent of the time spent in the classroom. American kids get it only 46 percent of the time. But cognitive research shows practice isn't just important for students. Teachers need it, too. Asian teachers spend much more time preparing to teach lessons. And although American teachers have smaller classes, they get less prep time.

But do drills stifle creativity, as many educators charge? No, says Temple University psychology professor Robert W. Weisberg. Weisberg has studied the link between creativity and knowledge in artists such as Mozart, Picasso and Jackson Pollack. What he's found is surprising. "It's a paradox," Weisberg said. "There is evidence that deep immersion is required in a discipline before you produce anything of great novelty. Before you look at significant achievement, expect to see ten years of deep immersion to gain knowledge." But, he noted, "There is this concept that genius has leaps of insight way beyond everybody else. If you look at the backgrounds of these people, there is much more of a progression. They don't make leaps—they build in small pieces." Studies show that the brain actually changes with deliberate practice. A report in the journal *Science* shows that the cortical areas of the brain devoted to controlling the fingers actually expand for expert violinists.

Of course, repetitive drilling has its skeptics. "If deliberate practice just meant rote memorization, then I wouldn't like it," said Boston College psychology professor Ellen Winner. "If (it) means working at something until you get it just right, like in a play, then I am all for it."

EVIL PIETISM

Northwestern Publishing House has just made available a very important and timely translation. It is The Complete Timotheus Verinus *by Valentin Ernst Loescher. This work, originally written in two parts (1718 and 1721), "is the most comprehensive analysis of the pietistic movement in the German Lutheran Church." With the resurgence of pietism in our own day, it is a work that needs to find its way into the hands of many. The following excerpt comes from pages 49–50.*

Pietism in general is an evil; but there are also some specific evils. First, there is the pious-appearing indifferentism; by that I mean that the revealed doctrines, faith, the supports for serving the preservation of religion (church constitutions, the symbolical books, polemics, an accurate style of teaching, and church ordinances), even religion itself, have been made indifferent and unimportant, even suspicious and objectionable. Some of these pietistic doctrines and practices were inherently connected with indifferentism, others flowed from it.

Second, there is the incipient fanaticism, or Crypto-enthusiasm; the means of grace and the ministry have been depreciated, and even revoked, through pietistic doctrines and practices; in their place, coarse enthusiastic and fanatical things were commended, defended, and excused.

Third, there is the so-called theoretical operatism, or work-righteousness; the works of men have been too highly regarded and have been mingled into the basis of salvation, namely, into righteousness by faith.

Fourth, there is millennialism; many have sought and hoped for the end of Christ's kingdom of grace and cross, and the beginning of an absolute kingdom of glory in this life.

Fifth, there is terminism, which cuts short in this life God's gracious will to save all.

Sixth, there is precisionism; the sharpness of the law has been enlarged and increased and the inquisition was reintroduced.

Seventh, there is mysticism; through pietistic doctrines and practices, false and harmful conceits, if only they appeared to be spiritual and holy, were introduced as divine secrets.

Eighth, there is perfectionism; pietistic doctrines and practices have led men to overstep the mark, and to introduce a home-made fulfilling of the law and an imagined paradisiacal condition in this life.

Ninth, there is reformatism; the present condition of the church has been regarded as completely corrupt, so that a fundamental reformation, or the establishment of a completely different church, is needed. All of these special evils will be treated in more depth below so that they are less often misunderstood. The schisms and doctrinal separations, which were caused intentionally and without sufficient reason, will not be forgotten.

But in all these things, there was something else, very special, which characterizes pietism even more accurately. A conceited striving for piety in doctrines and practices was mixed into all, or at least into most of the theological points of religion; they regarded these points as nothing without their kind of piety. They altogether, or for the most part, approved or excused the movements and harmful exploits which have arisen up to this time. They denied that an evil called pietism was present in the church.

CATECHESIS: STUDY OR PRAYER?

A scholastic approach to the catechism does not serve us well. If someone were to give us the choice between studying the catechism and praying the catechism, should we not prefer the latter? If by the word "study," however, it was meant that we should scrutinize our lives in light of God's accusing law in order to be led to daily repentance and delight in the life-giving gospel, that would be a different matter.

The catechism was not designed to treat God as the object of rational human understanding. Consider, for example, what we actually gain by covering all the attributes of God. Do we in any way imagine that poor miserable sinners might revere and adore him better if we conceptualize him as omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent? Do we imagine that if only God were presented majestically, sinful human beings will praise him all the better? Or is it likely that we will be tempted to run God by attributes that we have synthesized from his Word? (God is all-loving. This doesn't seem loving. Therefore God must not approve of it.) That is altogether different from the Lord revealing himself to us that we may know our sin, confess it, and thrive now and eternally by his gifts which bring forgiveness, life, and salvation.

The catechism serves us best where it directs us to know our sin, to confess it, and to flee for the righteousness that comes in Christ alone. This becomes evident not only in Luther's Catechisms but also in his prayers. For this reason, I have come to appreciate greatly the little book *Luther's Prayers,* translated by Herbert Brokering and recently republished by Augsburg Fortress.

In his Small Catechism, Luther treats the Fourth Commandment in this fashion:

> Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother[that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long upon the earth].
>
> *What does this mean?* We should fear and love God that we may not despise our parents and masters, nor provoke them to anger, but give them honor, serve and obey them, and hold them in love and esteem.

Consider next how this influenced his prayers:

> I acknowledge and confess to You my painful disobedience and sin. Contrary to this commandment of my God, I have not honored my parents, I have been disobedient, often grieved and offended them, received their parental correcting with impatience, complained against them, despised their well-meaning admonitions, and have easily followed the advice of the crowd and of trouble-makers. You justly condemn such disobedient children and deny them a long life. Many go down and perish miserably before they reach maturity. For who does not obey father and mother must obey the officers of the law or wretchedly lose his life through the wrath of God. All this grieves me and I pray for grace. Amen.

And again,

> I pray to You in behalf of myself and all the world: grant Your grace and richly pour Your blessing upon the home and state. Help us from now on to obey our rulers, to resist the devil, and to refuse to follow as he tempts us to disobey and to fight. Enable us by our deeds to improve our homes and nation and to preserve peace for Your praise and glory, for our own benefit, and for furthering everything that is good. Grant that we may acknowledge these gifts and give You thanks for them. Amen.

Luther hereby shows us that the Catechism is not something for mere rational study. Rather, it overflows into our daily prayer and piety. Our language and our relationships find a language wherein our lives and God's Word meet for our great joy and comfort.

If you would like to see how these things are beginning to come together in a little booklet that we use daily at our Academy, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Zion Lutheran Academy, 2313 S. Hanna St., Fort Wayne, IN 46803.

JAB

USING THE LITURGY

It was so obvious that I overlooked it. As I visited and counseled in homes and hospitals, I neglected a simple but vastly rich tool for the joy and edification of others: the liturgy. Once it hit me, I began to look more intently at how the divine service might serve throughout the week.

The language of the liturgy has been deeply planted in the lives of so many people. From childhood, probably even before they were capable of reading, church members have been singing and saying the responses to the versicles, the Gloria in Excelsis, the Sanctus. What a blessing it is when a pastor in his personal visits relates the liturgy to life! This extension of the divine service into the daily lives of people is nothing short of bringing Christ and his word. And what a blessing when adult catechumens are brought into this! The joy grows geometrically when all Christians know how to encourage one another with such psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs of which the historic liturgy consists.

Upon entering a household or a hospital room, the greeting "The Lord be with you" can be the first thing out of a Christian's lips as opposed to "Hi! How are you doing?" This casual greeting seems all the more desultory when spoken to a person in pain on the hospital bed because of our daily disingenuous use. One might go on to relate accounts from the Scriptures where this greeting was made, who said it, and how it applies to the present situation.

"Lord, have mercy upon us." Relate how the Kyrie Eleison is the Christian's constant prayer as reflected in the Bible passages that relate the persons and conditions when these words were found on human lips—and in the ears of a gracious Savior.

What does it mean for the distraught soul that the Lord God is Lord of *Sabaoth*—to be distinguished from *Sabbath*? What does it mean for such a person to have the word *hosanna*—Save now!—on her lips (and what does a hosanna "in the highest" actually relate if one traces its usage exegetically)?

What a rich thesaurus is available to those who do not overlook the obvious! Review the liturgy with a mind to relating these precious words both in the pulpit and on the street. Once you begin, there may be no stopping you.

Do not make arguments for the liturgy. Use it. Apply it as the Balm of Gilead. When people have come to receive the liturgy in the way of Christ's comfort and peace, you will not have to argue for it—they will demand it. It will not be torn from their hearts. They will never have the appetite to sell this birthright for some kind of emotional stew of the day, because they will be filled. And you will never be at a loss for words. (Or if you are, there's always the Hymn of the Day/Week.)

THE TWISTED CROSS

Doris L. Berger. The Twisted Cross. *The University of North Carolina Press: 1996. 341 pages. $16.95. Reviewed by Irene Groot, a teacher and writer whose work has previously appeared in the* Adoremus Bulletin, *September 1998.*

In this thoroughly researched and tightly written book, Doris Berger traces the development of the German Christian movement in the Third Reich. While the history of this pro-Nazi Protestant sect is interesting in and of itself, the greatest value of *The Twisted Cross* lies in documenting how changes in theological ideas and language can be used to promote a socio-political agenda.

Despite opposition from many prominent Protestants such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Karl Barth and general indifference from the Nazis themselves, the German Christian movement was influential as a change agent in the 1930s and '40s. At its peak, it had more than 600,000 members, roughly 2 percent of the German Protestant population. For twelve years, the People's Church—as the movement called itself—effectively promoted Nazi anti-Semitism in the name of Christianity.

Trend-spotters will find the chapters "The Anti-doctrinal Church" and "The Church Without Rules" of special interest. Ominous parallels to dissident varieties of American Catholicism abound. The People's Church was anti-doctrinal, anti-legalistic, anti-intellectual, anti-hierarchical, and anti-Roman; favored emotion-charged liturgies; disapproved of authoritative texts; and focused on developing the sense of community. It reinterpreted theological vocabulary, symbols, and sacraments in the "spirit" of the German *volk*. The movement met on Protestant real estate in congregations under the leadership of pastors to create the illusion of continuity with historical Christianity.

The People's Church was explicitly anti-doctrinal. "Considerations of orthodoxy, dogma, or confession," they argued, "must not interfere with the spiritual communion of all Germans." In 1935 a German pastor remarked that the Jewish influence on Christianity built "a fence of orthodoxy as the Pharisees once did."

German Christians were anti-intellectuals who disliked authoritative texts. In a 1937 meeting, they accepted a resolution stating," A demon always resides in the written word." Berger explains, "Through banal objections about vocabulary, German Christians discarded core tenets of Christianity and exposed their revolutionary transformation of the content of Christian faith."

The movement rejected the universal nature of Christianity and had an abiding hatred for Roman Catholicism. Hopes to expand German Christian influence through supra-confessionalism were consistently dashed against the rock of German Catholicism and its ties to the Vatican. The People's Church began and ended at the German border.

Liturgists like Christian Wilhelm Bauer developed new rituals to provide experiences in communal self-affirmation while disguising the movement's doctrinal nihilism. Bauer wrote, "[C]reation of a genuine spiritual community depended on access to their rational." He developed liturgies that blended biblical language with fairy tales and myth, forming a syncretistic stew not altogether unfamiliar to American Catholics who have attended a liturgical workshop. Only those elements of Christianity that created a spirit of community found a place in the German Christian rituals. Hymns, including pseudo-psalms, were used to produce emotional involvement while suspending reason and judgment.

A lack of objective reality characterized the movement. While not submerged in the neo-paganism that pervaded both Weimar and Nazi Germany, the People's Church was influenced by the mythological and subjectivist spirit of the age. The historical resurrection became "a symbol of the resurrection within our own *volk*." Christian symbols and holidays were reinterpreted as expressions of the "spirit" of the *volk*. Use of the cross was discouraged and Advent wreaths were reinterpreted. In short, Christianity was transformed from a religion based on the historic act of atonement to a ritual expression of Nazi ideology.

The People's Church, wholly engaged in building community, had little interest in the rights of individuals. The Sterilization Law of 1933 as well as the Euthanasia Program of 1939 met no German Christian opposition. On the contrary, *Genetic Cultivation and Christianity* was written to justify Nazi eugenics in German Christian terms.

At the end of World War II, the People's Church shouldered part of the blame for Germany's widespread capitulation to Nazism. Nonetheless, it was rapidly reabsorbed into mainstream German Protestantism. The history of this period, as well as that of the Weimar era that preceded it, merits close attention since, in some respects, it parallels our own times. When we hear appeals for an American democratic model to replace the hierarchical *magisterium* and "horizontal consensus" to replace the Pope, we have to ask: Is horizontalism a neologism for collectivization, pre-Nazi-style? It would seem to be a very short step from "The Church is People" theology to "The People's Church." Ideas have consequences—and they are not necessarily what we intend.

JAB

ADJUSTED GOSPEL, ADJUSTED CHRIST

A sermon preached on Galatians 1:1–10 by the Rev. Dr. Norman Nagel on Pentecost 2, 1998.

The Galatians have it laid into them straight and solid—no beating about the bush. There's good news and there's bad news. First the good news.

It's an apostle who's talking; therefore, it's not just his two bits' worth: "not from men nor through men, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead." You can't get anything more solid than that. So what follows, what comes of that? Churches is what comes from that. Not some isolated human specimens, but joined together in church. They know who is being addressed, and to them another lot of foundational core data is given in the greeting; grace is the first bestowing word, and with grace comes peace, the real thing, "from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ." And what comes with Jesus Christ? He is the one "who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen." Got that?

You can't get any more good news than that. But what follows? Not the going on of the good news, the gospel; that has been displaced by something called "another gospel." How can you tell the difference? By Christ. Another gospel has another Christ, not the one the apostle has just recalled them to, the one they have deserted.

The apostle won't let them stop short of facing up to Christ. Knocking Paul out does not get them clear of Christ, the one they are replacing with another Christ. Now that is something they are unwilling to admit. Nobody is challenging Christ, oh dear, no! The problem is really only in what more is said to be about Christ. That can always be improved, expanded, interpreted relevant to our questions and problems, worked into our program. And these must be something that we can show for it, and that best what God expects, demands: like circumcision.

No one admits to adjusting Christ; it's the gospel we're working on. The apostle won't let them get away with that. Adjusted gospel is adjusted Christ, and for an adjusted gospel you don't really finally need Christ. The apostle goes on to make this clear. Can you go on talking a gospel that can go on, even if Jesus had not been crucified? Then "the stumbling block of the cross has been removed"(5:11). "Then Christ died to no purpose" (2:21).

The only Christ who is your Savior is the one crucified. The death he sins is your death for your sins. He did it in your place.

> I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who 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. I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification, were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose.

"To pervert the Gospel of Christ" is then "to nullify the grace of God . . . then Christ died to no purpose."

If that is the Christ you are talking about "you have fallen away from grace." There can't be much worse bad news than that. It is the rejection, the opposite of the good news. The good news was all about what Christ has done: they have turned away from him to something else, to something they call a gospel, running it still under his name. Tricky business. That is bad enough, but there *is* still worse bad news; it targets those who have been preaching another gospel. They get the straight curse.

The preachers of "another gospel" do not come straight out against Christ. The apostle says, "Watch out, they are not straightforward." He gives some clues to help us recognize what is going on. "They make much of you." Persuasive talkers; what are they working you toward?

They may indeed say loads of nice things in praise of Christ, ("Oh, how I love Jesus"), but then comes the hooker: but if you want to make sure of Christ, there is something you'd better see that you working on: Christ plus something more. That something else which is added to Christ is clearly "from men." This is quite clear as it is referenced to men, evidenced by men. The history of the church tells of the unapostolic succession of things added to Christ as Christ-clinchers, evidences we can show that Christ works. Look at us, or worse still, look at me. There is every variety of such infringements of Christ. Spot your own special one. What is it to which you look to make Christ for sure?

The preachers of another gospel in the churches of Galatia were thumping circumcision. "Christ is great; we don't deny any of the good things that Paul has been telling you about him, but if you want to sure it's OK with you before God, you'd jolly well better be circumcised, for that is undoubtedly commanded by God." So they had God and his law backing them up. It's in the Bible.

The preachers of another gospel nowadays can't get you with circumcision, so what are they thumping as additions to Christ to make it show to make you sure it's OK with you before God? If he is blessing you, why is that? If you want to be sure of his blessing, what is it you'd better be doing? Are you tithing? Do you have more than one pair of shoes? If you're a believer, are you a disciple? Are you happy? Don't you want to be? Here's how to make it happen with Jesus. Let me tell you about me and my Jesus.

Faith plus obedience is not faith alone, that is, Christ alone. The apostle makes it clear that another gospel is not a gospel at all, and what is not gospel is law. And if that's how you want it with God, there's no bad news worse than that.

There's good news and there's bad news. What's for you? Get it straight and clear. Read on further in Galatians, all the way, until everything you add to Christ in order to make him sure has been stripped away and you have nothing left to be sure of but only "our Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen."

No, not yet Amen. Be sure you get to chapter 5 and chapter 6. And there Paul seems to have three goes at ending the letter—like some sermons you may have heard. We are not saved by imitation of Paul but only by the message delivering Christ, that is, the gospel, which he has made an apostle by the Lord to proclaim.

"Cast out the slave."
"You were baptized into Christ."
"For freedom Christ has set us free;
stand fast therefore, and do not
submit again to a yoke of slavery."
"If I were still pleasing men,
I should not be a servant of Christ."
Amen.

LUTHER ON GENESIS 3:12

See how superbly the vicious nature of sin is pictured here. Adam can in no wise be forced into a confession of his sin, but he denies his sin or excuses it as long as he sees that he has any kind of hope or excuse left. It is not amazing that in the beginning he hoped to be able to cover his sin and that he accuses God rather than acknowledge that he has sinned. But this is amazing, that he still persists in his excuse after his conscience has convicted him and he himself has also heard his sin from God. He does not say, "Lord, I have sinned; forgive me my debt; be merciful"; but he passes on the guilt to the woman. It is the nature of sin not to permit the soul to flee back to God but rather to force it into a flight away from God.

There is a well-known teaching in the schools of the rhetoricians that if one has been charged with a crime, he should either deny it or defend it as having been committed legally. Adam does both. In the first place, he denies his offense and says he is frightened by the voice of the Lord, not by his sin. But when he is convicted, so that he cannot deny the deed, he tries to defend himself with the claim that his action is lawful. "If," he says, "Thou hadst not joined this woman to me, I would not have eaten." Thus again he traces the sin he himself had committed back to God and accuses God of his own sin. There just is no end to sinning once one has turned away from the Word. . . .

Such is the working of the Law, that when the Law stands alone without the Gospel and the knowledge of grace, it leads to despair and ultimate impenitence.

FROM REALITY TO AN IDEA

From an unpulished translation by John Stephenson of Sasse's Church and Lord's Supper, *page 98.*

In light of everything that we have said about the Lord's Supper on the basis of the New Testament, the fate of a church that has lost the sacrament of the altar is clear. A church that does not continually gather around the supper must undergo secularization. It must irreversibly turn into a piece of the world, because the supper establishes the boundary between church and world. This conclusion is confirmed by the experience of church history and especially of the history of worship in the last few centuries. The destruction of the supper is followed by the disappearance of the living remembrance of Jesus from the hearts of Christians, especially of his suffering and death.

Thus, in the century of the Enlightenment, the fading away of the person of Jesus as the biblical Redeemer into an indeterminate universal teacher who might just as well be called Moses or Socrates, was bound up with the decline of the supper as the celebration of his inextinguishable remembrance. We have already spoken at length about the connection between the sacrament of the altar and belief in justification. Where Jesus Christ no longer himself speaks to us in the holy supper the gospel "given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins," the message of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world necessarily fades away.

Christ certainly speaks this his gospel to us not only in the supper, but also in each of his words. He certainly does not need the sacrament in order to impress this message on us, but he is pleased to make use of it. He has not only once offered the sacrifice for the sin of the world, nor does he merely keep on having this fact proclaimed. Rather, he who is high priest and sacrificial lamb in one gives us a share in his sacrifice here and now. The unique occurrence on the cross, which is at once a truly historical and truly supra-historical happening, is rendered present when Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen one, gives us his body sacrificed for us to eat and his blood shed for us to drink. Where this no longer happens because Christians have stopped celebrating the supper, Christ's sacrifice turns from a reality into an idea, and the vicarious satisfaction for sins turns from a fact into a theory. In the place vacated by faith in the Son of God "who loved me and gave himself for me" steps the intellectual conviction of the correctness of the doctrine of reconciliation. This doctrine will then very soon turn into a topic for general philosophical discussion, bandied about in apologetics; and it will eventually undermine faith altogether as it fuels doubt. Thus the gospel itself dies with the supper.

UNWORTHY TO THE ALTAR

A portion of a sermon by Chrysostom (P.G. 58, Hom. 82–3, par. 4, On Matthew, col. 743).

What I am saying, I say to you also who minister, as well as to you who are ministered to. For it is necessary that I also address myself to you; that you may distribute the sacred gifts with great caution. For your punishment is not light should you, knowingly, admit anyone to the Communion of this Table whom you know to be unworthy of it. His blood will be required at thy hand (Ezek. xxxiii. 8). And even though he were a general, or a governor, or even he who wears the crown, should he draw near unworthy, forbid him: for higher is your authority than his. For if a spring of pure water were placed in your care for your flock, and you saw a sheep coming, with its mouth smeared with mud, you would not let it put down its mouth to dirty the well. Now you have been given charge of a well, not of water, but of Blood and the Spirit; and should you see someone draw near who is soiled with sin, a more grievous thing than clay or mud, and you are not moved to wrath, and you do not drive him away, how do you deserve to be forgiven? It was for this God honoured you with this dignity, that you might exercise judgement in these things. This is your office; this is your own security; this is your whole crown: not that you may go about clothed in a shining white habit.

And how, you may ask me, can I know about this person or that person? I am not speaking of those you do not know, but of those you do know. And shall I say something more serious? It is not as dreadful to be possessed by evil spirits such as those of whom Paul speaks as to tread Christ under foot, and to hold the blood of the testament unclean, and offer an affront to the Spirit of grace (Heb. x. 29). He who has sinned and comes to Holy Communion, is lower than one possessed by a demon. For those who are afflicted by an evil spirit are not on that account punished. But these others should they come, unworthy, to the altar, they are handed over to everlasting punishment.

Let us drive away not these only but all without exception whom we see draw near who are unworthy. Let no Judas receive, lest he suffer as Judas did. This Gathering is also the Body of Christ. Watch therefore, you who fulfill the office of deacon in these Sacred Mysteries, that you do not provoke the anger of the Lord by not purifying His Body: that you do not give a sword in place of food. And though such a one should approach the altar out of ignorance, exclude him, and be unafraid. Be in fear of God, not of man. For if you fear a man, you will be laughed at, even by him. But if you fear God, you will have the respect of men. Yet, if you do not dare to do this, then bring them to me. I shall not suffer that this be even attempted. I would lay down my life first, before I would present the Lord's Blood to one who was unworthy of It; and pour out my own blood rather than give this Fearful Blood contrary to what is fitting.

But if you do not know who is unworthy, though exercising much care, then there is no fault on your part. For what I am saying is about those who are well known. If we correct those, God will soon disclose those we do not know. But if we do not disturb those who are known to be unworthy, why should God make the others known to us? I say these things to you, not to drive these away, not simply to cut them off, but that we may lead them to do what is right, that we may take care of them. For by doing this God will be gracious to us, and we shall find many who will then receive worthily.

And for our own zeal, and because of our care for the souls of others, our reward shall be very great. And to this may we all attain, by the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SMALL ERRORS

From Less than Words Can Say, *by Richard Mitchell (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), pages 67–69. Since the Lord chose to communicate law and gospel by words, we do well to watch out even for small errors in both syntax and doctrine.*

Those who have the habit of correctness and precision can do things by design; those who don't usually have to depend on luck. And when we fly in airplanes or undergo surgery or file our tax forms, we feel better if we can depend on something more than luck. It isn't luck that rings the right phone in Honolulu—it's simply correct dialing. (Getting a dial tone is luck.) We are a notably superstitious people, but we aren't superstitious enough to believe that our keys fit our locks by a marvelous stroke of good fortune. Our world is more and more crowded with things that will work only if lots of people have been correct and precise. That they seem to work less often and less well is a sad fact directly related to the third-grade teacher who can't spell. Here are some other people who can't do things:

In May of 1978 the executive secretary of the Michigan Board of Pharmacy wrote, in a letter to a Michigan physician: "Costs of administration of the act is considered and controlled substances fees merit an increase because of administration costs."

A Department of Transportation manual suggests that "If a guest becomes intoxicated," you might "take his or her car keys and send them home in a taxi."

George Washington University offers after-hours courses for the convenience of federal employees. Among its offerings you can find "Business and Proffessional Speaking" and "Effective Writting." The latter is a non-credit course, which is some consolation.

What do such small errors mean? What do we know when we see that a high-ranking government official cannot, invariably, make his verbs and subjects agree? Do you suppose that *he* is intolerant of small errors in other matters as he would probably want us to be in this matter? Would he say of equivalent mistakes in his bank statement: "Well a dollar here, a dollar there—it's just a little mistake"?

Missouri: Not Just a State

Coming across the Mississippi River into Saint Louis on the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1955, I was not overly impressed with the state where I would study for four of the next five years. Missouri was not New York and Saint Louis was not New York City. In spite of Saint Louis's claims to being a cosmopolitan city, in comparison to the place I called home, it was not. No subways. No beaches. No oceans. The Ozarks were not the Poconos or the Berkshires or the Catskills. A trip to Perry County and the shores of the Mississippi, where the synod's founding fathers had landed, only added to youthful conviction that our church body had a human side. Upon seeing that "Zion on the Mississippi," it became obvious that this was a faith-statement for which the historical evidences were inconclusive.

My grandmother, a Fort Wayne native and a granddaughter of the Lutherans who had helped establish the synod, used her sharp wit to ask about "the other states" in the synod's official title, "The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States." In her mind, chief among the other states would have been Indiana. Why put Ohio in the title? Once there was an Ohio Synod, but it was wrong on predestination. Michigan has always had more Missouri Synod Lutherans than Missouri. Why not the Michigan or Illinois Synod? Of course, there were historical reasons, of which the best may have been that some Germans had called themselves the Michigan Synod and the Swedes were a formidable presence in Illinois. Even today the Missouri Synod has three districts in Illinois.

Wilhelm Löhe had brought more Lutherans to the Great Lakes area, but C. F. W. Walther became commander-in-chief, and titles are handed out by the victors. For the sake of modernization "Ohio and other States" were squeezed out of the title. Still later, "Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod" was abbreviated to LCMS. It may be just a coincidence that in the same timeframe Kentucky Fried Chicken became KFC. Fried foods were out, especially for those concerned with arterial accumulation of fat, but the old trademark of the Kentucky colonel has been introduced.

The argument for a name change for the synod is that Missouri is so geographically freighted, that someone from Kazakstan or Germany or California might come to the conclusion that our church is limited to one particular place in the United States. Probably most people living outside the United States do not know where that place is. Expand that to include most New Yorkers. It is argued that a name like the Missouri Synod is too provincial for a church with worldwide mission and confessional ambitions. Of course, it is with this provincial name that the Missouri Synod made a reputation for itself in European theological world as a church that actually believed something. "Missouri" separates confessional Lutheran missionaries from all the others. We are not the only church with provincial nomenclature. The Church of Rome approaches geographical universality with one quarter of a billion members or one of out every two persons who claim to be Christian. Perhaps we could determine who knows more about the home province: Missouri Synod Lutherans or Roman Catholics?

A very early experience of pastoral ministry was the discovery that Lutherans who were not members of the Missouri Synod were less certain as to which synod they belonged. Those were the days of the ULCA, UELCA, ELC, ALC, and NLC. Church officials knew how to unscramble this alphabetic soup, but the members themselves often did not know which letters fit their church. It was like memorizing phone numbers. Some can do it; the rest of us are never quite sure. Out of frustration many people said they were members of the Missouri Synod, even if they were not. This was a clear opportunity for mission work, but for others this might have been considered moving sheep from one fold to another.

Back then the Wisconsin Synod had not thought of WELS, an abbreviation that later gave birth to a logo of a real well and an oaken bucket with the superscription "Come to the WELS." Get it? It was probably test-marketed for evangelistic purposes. When alphabetized Lutheranism was boiled down to the LCA and ALC, there was added to the pot AELC, the Association of the Evangelical Lutheran Churches. "Association" meant that no hierarchical church like the LCMS would tell their congregations what to do. Instead they are now choosing Episcopal bishops to let them do that. This algebraic formula—LCA, ALC, and AELC—came together to form the ELCA, the same letters in a different combination.

Use of the more simplified LCMS instead of Missouri Synod fell into the alphabetic soup tradition of North American Lutheranism, but the combination "MS" had the advantage of limited prior use. It could have been used for Lutheran Church—Minnesota Synod or Michigan Synod, but no one thought about it in the nineteenth century. Closely resembling this alphabetical identification of Lutheran churches is the New York Stock Exchange, where certain companies are assigned certain letters, a code known to stock brokers and savvy investors.

Some suggestions for a new name for the synod are sectarianly frightening. "International Lutheran Church" is cultic, like calling a denomination "The Church of God," "The Church of Christ," or the "Apostolic Church of God." It is not as bad as "King James Version of the Bible Church." "International" implies a church of two or more nations, but nations as political entities are comparatively modern phenomenon. Germany and Italy became nations only in the nineteenth century. Nations are here today and gone tomorrow. To some, "international" in the title may camouflage American imperialistic ambitions.

"Concordia" has been suggested because of its confessional connotations. "Concordia Lutheran Church" carries the message that the churches in the fellowship of the synod still adhere to the Concordia, the Book of Concord, with all the Lutheran Confessions. It would be a statement of faith, especially in the face of the ELCA defection to the Reformed. This meaning of Concordia is rarely appreciated or exploited now. Use of the word *concordia* for the synod's schools, publishing houses, retirement homes, and some churches has produced little more than a slew of word-study sermons on the word *concordia* in urging group harmony.

Another possibility is ELCA. Not improbably, these letters standing for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America might be vacated by the present occupants. The next step for that church would be to drop "Lutheran" from its title and, with their Reformed sisters and brothers, form the Evangelical Church in America, the ECA. Hardly an original thought, it would only take advantage of what has already happened in Germany, where Lutherans and Reformed are gathered under the umbrella organization of the Evangelical Church in Germany. ELCA and ELC would cause great confusion, however. We would have to explain that, historically and gratefully, we were neither of these churches.

Just how detrimental to evangelization is the name "Missouri Synod"? Does any synod pastor ever stand up in the pulpit and urge the non-churched present to join the Missouri Synod? Even the word "Lutheran" in sermons is probably limited to Reformation Day sermons. Our pastors visiting prospective members on mission calls do not introduce themselves as Missouri Synod pastors. The non-churched rarely know the difference between Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian. Evangelism is not the place to bring up denominational differences. Sooner or later the pastor is going to have to say that our church accepts the entire Creed, including the virgin birth and the resurrection; is opposed to abortion and women pastors; accepts the historicity of the Bible; allows for no other teaching on the Lord's supper than that it is the actual body and blood of Christ; and that other churches like the ELCA are lax on these requirements. Knowledgeable members of other churches know that this is a description of the Missouri Synod. "Missouri," like "Lutheran," is a statement of faith and not a place or a person.

A major objection to the continued use of Missouri Synod as our church title is that it is too geographical and does not reflect what or where the synod is today. It is said to be parochial or at least provincial. Using this reasoning, names like the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Communion (Church of England), the Russian Orthodox Church, the Antiochian Church, and so forth should also face change. There are many more Roman Catholics in South America than there are in the city of Rome or perhaps in the entire Roman Empire. Southern Baptists are found north of the Mason-Dixon Line. Some American Evangelicals have found no cultural obstacles in joining the Antiochian Orthodox Church. One would have to check the religious encyclopedias to find out if this communion still has a church in Antioch and whether this Antioch is in Syria or Pisidia. With all churches, the place of origin in their titles is associated with what they believe.

The word "Missouri" not only suggests a history, but it has immediate recognition among other Lutherans and a great many Christians. We are the church that held to biblical inspiration and inerrancy in the mid-1970s. Lutheran World Federation members know what "Missouri" stands for. We are the Lutherans who do not ordain women, who have not signed an agreement with Rome (not the place but the church) on justification, and who still believe that the Reformed are wrong in their teachings on the Lord's Supper. Losing the word "Missouri" would surely be putting our light under a bushel.

Before we become overly concerned about those who favor dropping "Missouri" from the Missouri Synod, because of a lack of recognition, perhaps we should say something about those who do not recognize the word "Lutheran." European Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and British Anglican Christians have no idea who or what Lutherans are. How about New York City, where I was brought up? This is also true in Germany, of all places, where one is either *evangelisch* or *katholisch. Lutherisch* rings fewer and fewer bells in the land of Luther.

The advent of air conditioning has helped sublimate some of my early negative feelings about the State of Missouri, but I still prefer New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Even after forty years in the Midwest, I am an easterner; however, I was born a Missourian and by God's grace I hope to die one. Sectarian? Not really. Some of us take the same attitude to Luther's doctrine. It is not man's but God's. When it comes to changing provincial names, how about New York Life, Texas Instruments, Pittsburgh Glass, Northwest Airlines, Burlington Coat Factory, Union Pacific? Whatever we do, save us from becoming the "International Lutheran Church." Rome has a better claim to being international than we do. Catholics like Rome because Peter and Paul were martyred there. Joyous irrelevancy! Missouri was where confessional Lutheran theology made its most significant revival in the nineteenth century. The Missouri Synod. Joyous irrelevancy!

David P. Scaer
Fort Wayne, Indiana
Ultimate Impenitence

WHAT THE AFRICAN BISHOPS CAN TEACH BISHOP SPONG

In the summer of 1963, Michael Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury, addressed a congress of Anglican churchmen in Toronto. In that keynote speech one item was rather remarkable. As reported by *Time* magazine, the Archbishop called for a new sharing of missionary responsibilities: "Let African and Asian missionaries come to England to help to convert the post-Christian heathenism in our country and to convert our English Church to a closer following of Christ" ("One Big Family," *Time*, 82.8 [23 Aug 1963], 49. The article was a report on the Second Anglican Congress).

This must be seen as an amazing admission of the failure of the Anglican Church, and others, in Britain and Europe generally. What is also remarkable is the way in which the archbishop's prophecy is being fulfilled. The *Time* magazine report of the archbishop's call ended with the comment: "The archbishop may get his wish some day." That day seems to be at hand. For the latest evidence of this we review the events of the most recent Lambeth Conference held in London this summer. There was something rather dramatic about this conference.

The conference is the gathering of all the Anglican bishops of the world; approximately 750 attended this year. It is named after the official London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Palace, across the Thames from the Palace of Westminster and Houses of Parliament. It was founded in 1888 and has continued to be held every ten years since then—with the exception of war times when the schedule has been altered (for instance, in 1920 and 1930). While the conference is not a legislative body, it is a symbol of the state of the Anglican Church's unity under the leadership of Canterbury. It is by its very nature—a conference of bishops—indicative of the nature of Anglicanism. In other words, there is nothing that unites Anglicans except the historic episcopate.

While often the proceedings are described by the press in terms such as "dull and predictable" (Auberon Waugh, "Something Old out of Africa," *The Sunday Telegraph* [London] [2 August 1998]), from time to time there are occasions of greater significance, for example, *the* famous "Lambeth Quadrilateral" of 1888, the universal appeal to all churches in 1920, or the debates on the Church Union of South India in 1948 and 1958. This summer things seemed to start in the "predictable" vein, with an agenda dominated by the voices of liberal western—especially American—churchmen, addressing particularly social and political issues. This summer, for instance, there were discussions on international poverty and pollution and on third-world debt.

But also this summer came a debate, not merely a discussion, you will note, on sexual ethics and the authority of Scripture. The debate, held on August 5, was chiefly between the liberal Americans—Bishop Spong in full cry—and evangelicals, chiefly from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The main point of the discussion was about homosexuality. After a debate that was described as "long and tortuous," a subject of "bitter argument" ("Anglicans on Homosexuality," *The Christian Century* 115, no. 22 [12–19 Aug 1998]: 742), the conference offered a remarkably strong statement: that "'homosexual practice' is 'incompatible with Scripture' and urged sexual 'abstinence' for all people 'who are not called to marriage'" (Ibid.).

The remark earlier that Bishop Spong was "in full cry" gives reference to his injudicious remarks about African churchmen and their views of the topic of debate. One report states that

> the Conference was brought to life on Thursday by the American bishop who announced that African bishops could not be expected to share his advanced, politically correct views because, effectively, they were just down from the trees. Bishop Spong, of Newark, New Jersey, put it more delicately than that, but not much more delicately. As reported by Andrew Carey, son of the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the *Church of England Newspaper,* he said, "Africans are one step up from witchcraft." He denied using the word witchcraft, but declared African Christians had "just moved out of animism into a very superstitious kind of Christianity." He said they had not faced "the intellectual revolution" of the West, and influences of Copernicus and Einstein were not on their "radar screen" (Waugh, "Something Old").

The American bishop referred also to the fact of completely different cultures. Note for instance the exchange between a bishop from Nigeria and one from America. Bishop Peter Adebiyi stated that approving homosexual relationships would be "evangelical suicide" for Anglican churches in Africa. To this came the response of Bishop Catherine Roskam of New York City: "to *condemn* homosexuality is evangelical suicide in *my* region" ("Anglicans on homosexuality").

The conference is not only of interest for what was debated, but also for what it indicates about the future. It "offered a glimpse of what Christianity may well look like in the next century." The glimpse is of a "conservative surge," indeed conservative enough "to make some of the prelates of the Episcopal Church in the United States and the Church of England appear as marginal players in a landscape their institutions once dominated" (Gustav Niebuhr, "In England with the Anglicans in Full Cry: A Conservative Surge Surprises," the *New York Times*, 9 August 1998).

Michael Ramsey perceived something in 1963 that may take other, more enlightened churchmen much longer to grasp, that the African and Asian Christians can teach the churches of the world the faith once received. It is sad what this reveals about so-called western Christianity, but gives great encouragement to hear the confession made by Christians in the so-called Third World.

Ronald R. Feuerhahn
St. Louis, Missouri

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Baptism

By David Scaer

An orthodox, yet fresh presentation on the sacrament of baptism. Dr. Scaer offers analysis both of the Roman Catholic and the Reformed views of baptism, compares recent and current Lutheran worship forms with historic Lutheran baptismal practice, and provides a thorough defense of infant baptism. He provides the reader with a strong indictment against those who would deny God's work in this precious sacrament.

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