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Editor's Note

In 2019, Prof. Dr. Werner Klän received the honorary doctor of letters from Concordia Seminary in recognition of his exceptional scholarship in confessional Lutheran theology, church history, and ecumenical theology. Dr. Klän has served the church as a pastor and professor on behalf of the SELK (Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche), a German Lutheran church body in fellowship with the LCMS. Throughout his distinguished career Dr. Klän has been one of the most respected and influential theologians in the SELK, teaching especially at their seminary, the Lutherische Theologische Hochschule in Oberursel as full professor, now emeritus. For those of us who have worked with him over the years, he has been a delightful colleague, a churchman worth emulating, and a theologian who continues to inspire and illuminate.

His article published here is dedicated to the faculty of Concordia Seminary as a sign of fellowship and gratitude, and we are delighted to feature it. The ecumenical responsibilities of the Lutheran church are carried out in a variety of contexts, and LCMS pastors are not always aware (understandably) of efforts and developments around the world. Dr. Klän's article gives us a nice overview of the various ecumenical dialogues and documents on the Lord's Supper that have involved Lutherans, including a close examination of the most recent, *Together at the Lord's Table: A Statement of the Ecumenical Study Group of Protestant and Catholic Theologians*, 2019. Even more importantly, Dr. Klän gives a critical theological assessment of these efforts, bringing the Lutheran confession of the real presence to the center.

Continuing the theme of the Lutheran Confessions, our own Robert Kolb gives us a *Forschungsbericht*—a state of research—for the confessional documents themselves. New resources have been made available in the last decade that need more careful consideration and scholarly work. For example, a new critical edition of the Book of Concord—the *Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche* (BSELK) 2014—is the new standard for any studies in the Lutheran Confessions. Likewise, the *Controversia et Confessio* project has made available critical editions of the documents that surround the various controversies that led to the Book of Concord, and they are ripe for further research. Throughout we are reminded once again that merely labeling oneself as "confessional" is not sufficient, as Kolb observes, "the tasks of theological interpretation and application challenge a new generation of students. They are called to continue to voice the Lutheran confession of the faith for

the household of God in an age in which this confession has more to say than ever."

Finally, Mark Seifrid offers a detailed review essay on John Barclay's *Paul and the Power of Grace* (2020). Barclay's book offers an accessible presentation of Paul's theology of grace based on his earlier scholarly work *Paul and the Gift* (2017). Seifrid helps us appreciate both the strengths and weaknesses of Barclay's important interpretation of the apostle.

Spring is upon us, reminding us once again that the season of Christ's resurrection has supplanted the "winter of our sins" and promises to us a bright and eternal summer. For this we can only ever be grateful.

Erik H. Herrmann
Dean of Theological Research and Publications

In Memoriam: Horace D. Hummel

It has been over twenty-five years since Horace Hummel retired from the seminary faculty, but the presence of his persona has remained, and his influence now continues into a third and fourth generation. For those of us in that second generation, coming as students in the post-walkout years, the gravitas that he brought (with a certain counterpart in Martin Scharlemann as graduate professor of New Testament) not only reassured us of a solid academic foundation but also would shape our understanding of Old Testament—and biblical—theology in profound ways.

In similar recent encomia we have noted several others who left positive and thriving parish ministry to come to Concordia Seminary in those critical years starting in the fall of 1974. Horace Hummel came as a dedicated scholar with an academic pedigree back to W. F. Albright at Johns Hopkins University and included studies at Heidelberg with Gerhard von Rad and at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. More importantly, he came as one who had confronted the changing landscape in biblical studies and had worked his way through both the insights and the pitfalls of historical-criticism and the hermeneutical quagmire that was the uncertain foundation underneath it all. Of course, this raised suspicions, as he had taught—but not for long—in various institutions with insipient liberal approaches.

But by the time he came to the seminary to begin what would be a twenty-one-year tenure, he had found a home in a place that affirmed, as did he, the solid foundation of the word of God as, yes, the word *of God*, living and active in all its truth, purity, and power. And he showed the way for so many of us who were working through the same issues. He helped us keep our balance between losing the divine authority of Scripture on the one hand and falling into the rationalistic approaches of fundamentalism on the other, as though affirming inerrancy solved all the problems and did most of our work for us. Yes, God's word is infallible and inerrant, but we approach biblical studies with all the tools and expertise of our human faculties, including careful and competent attention to historical context and grammatical details. But these skills are all used *ministerially* and never without proper humility before the text, under the text, and in service of the text as that word of Yahweh, spoken and written for our learning.

But particularly applied to the "Old Testament," the Torah and Prophets, Dr. Hummel opened an understanding of this great foundation to the holy history of God's salvation in Jesus that claimed it as our own. It was not to be truncated into

simply a history of an Israel unrelated to us (as "Jewish history") interspersed with promises of God's Savior to come, sometimes read almost as New Testament texts written in advance. He showed how the word of God, connected also to sacramental sign, was living and active in the daily lives of God's people Israel, who were saints and sinners in God's family into whom we, too, have been incorporated, grafted into the vinestock. The word that would become flesh (*logos incarnatus*) was the word becoming flesh (*logos incarnandus*), and to learn to appreciate the power of that word in ancient times was also the key to proclaiming the power of that word to every time.

It is hardly an overstatement to assert that Horace Hummel played a pivotal role in reinvigorating "First Testament" studies for Lutheran evangelicals in general and for The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod in particular. His first magnum opus, aptly titled *The Word Becoming Flesh* (Concordia Publishing House, 1979) still stands as a testimony to the breadth and depth of his understanding. Much more than an "introduction" (*Einleitung*) or even an *Einführung*, it stands also as a rich biblical theology covering the breadth and depth of the entire Old Testament. Students (who often report the need to read the book out loud in his distinctive cadence for full appreciation!) will recognize that his barbs against critical assumptions remain as sharp and well-placed as ever. Those who did not know him personally will come to appreciate his approach and insights, succinctly summarized in so many of his aphorisms, such as the "scandal of particularity," "Israel reduced to One," "dialectical negation," the relationship of "holiness" and "glory" as *deus absonditus* and *deus revelatus*, and his relating the OT to the NT through typology as bud to flower or "latent" to "patent." Most helpful was his perennial caution not to read Christ too quickly *into* the OT but to be sure to read him *out of* the entire prophetic history that laid the foundation for God's "once for all" great Day of Yahweh, a day of judgment and salvation for Israel and through Israel, now fulfilled in us, for and to all nations.

His interests broadened into the related field of archaeology, the "ground of our being," as he liked to quip, and he revived, for a time, the institutional commitment to field research through participation in digs at Abila of the Decapolis, Tel Tuneinir in Syria, and with Rudy Dornemann, an LCMS colleague and then director of ASOR (at that time the American Schools of Oriental Research), at Tel Qarqur in Syria. We never quite recaptured the role that Concordia Seminary once played in its work at Ta'anach in the '60s, but he recognized the importance of our involvement and even leadership in what is otherwise a somewhat neglected area of biblical studies.

His other great emphasis was worship, properly grounded in the sacramental presence of the glory of God (*kaḇoḏ Yahweh*). There, in worship and cult, revealed in tabernacle and temple and through such prophetic windows as Isaiah 6 and the entire book of Ezekiel, God's presence intersects with his people on earth, and the *communio sanctorum* unites all the company of heaven with the church militant, empowering us through, yes, word and sacramental sign. It is appropriate that his second

great magnum opus became the two-volume commentary on Ezekiel (Concordia Publishing House, 2005, 2007), closing with the prophet's vision of the new temple, beyond anything made with human hands, in a city named by the words of divine presence, "Yahweh is *there*."

It would remain an understatement to observe that Dr. Hummel was a theological heavyweight. His classes brought rich insights and high expectations, often accompanied by fear and trembling on the part of students who, let us say, may not have had the same intensity for daily prep or the needed propensity for immediate recall of the Hebrew verbal system. His professorial style and mannerisms become legendary, his fluttering inflection accompanied by that mighty hand and outstretched arm that we remember so fondly.

Horace Hummel came to the seminary in 1974 and retired in 1995. Retirement also meant relocation to southern California, as close to a middle eastern climate as could be found domestically. But as learned as he was, he never lost touch with his roots in the good earth of Nebraska. His dear wife, Ruth, was a gifted teacher and leader in childhood education, and with her Sunday school class she planted a fig tree at their congregation as a living object lesson with truly biblical roots that continues to bear fruit. In the end, Horace's baptismal life was as simple and profound as a child's dependence on God's grace, provided through faithful pastoral care in word and sacrament by his pastor, Jeffrey Horn, surrounded by the worshipping community at Gloria Dei, Escondido, another local manifestation of the great body of Christ that transcends space and time and joins us to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.

From spade to stole, from details of Hebrew text to the breadth of history and theology, from the prophetic word proclaimed in word and signs to the prophetic word made sure and made flesh in a Savior, who is Messiah and Lord, Horace Hummel articulated a rich biblical theology and left a legacy of service that is defined by the highest academic and intellectual standards. As he now has joined that great cloud of witnesses, we give thanks for the communion of saints and all the company of heaven, with whom we acclaim both the holiness and glory of Yahweh Seba'oth (Is 6:3), the "Holy One of Israel" (*qadosh yisra'el*) who has revealed his glory (*the kabod Yahweh*) in the face of Christ Jesus (2 Cor 4:6). Until that great and final day of Yahweh, his legacy lives on in what he has taught and those whom he has taught, unto the third and fourth generation.

To God alone be the Glory! (It is the *kabod of Yahweh*, after all!)

Further Reflections

At the risk of extending this tribute into a full-length essay, I would offer a few further thoughts, not so much on the life of Horace Hummel but on what his presence meant not only for the generation who knew him firsthand but also as seminary and church move forward into those generations to come.

One would likely not describe Horace Hummel as a bridge builder. But his legacy may serve well as a bridge to another time that we forget at our peril, where his persona serves as a touch point. That begins with his own contribution to what might be dubbed that "greatest generation" of the LCMS that led us through the post-war boom and then helped hold us together through the theological mine fields that culminated in the controversies of the '60s and their impact into the '70s and beyond. Many of those issues continue in festering pockets of under- and over-reactions that still drive a host of controversies and infighting today. As noted above, Horace worked his way through the crucial hermeneutical issues of biblical interpretation, daring to discuss and debate on the pages of the then *Concordia Theological Monthly* and later *Concordia Journal* that even today serve as a rich resource for the debates, and debates within the debates, of those times.

While he came down solidly on the side of our confessional doctrine of Scripture, he also avoided any naïve appraisals or simplistic assertions about difficult issues and real interpretive questions. Any reader of his *Word Becoming Flesh* can quickly attest to that. He would not settle for crude rejection of scholarly arguments simply because they reflected a liberal point of view, but one had to engage the evidence and presuppositions, on their own terms, on what we know and don't know, and on the strength and logic of argumentation, hidden assumptions, and the ministerial use of the critical thinking skills given as a gift from our Creator. His comprehension of the ancient world around the biblical record attests to the importance of the *historical* aspects of "historical-critical methodology." But he was adamant in rejecting the *critical* assumptions and the mischief to which they inevitably lead.[1] Such "magisterial" use of reason was replaced with the ministerial insights from grammatical expertise, working with the *sensus literalis* of verbal inspiration from within the rules and *usus loquendi* of the original languages. Hence "historical-critical method" became in our circles the "historical-grammatical method."

In greatest measure, Horace Hummel opened not only the world of the Torah and Prophets but even more so the theological richness of the Old Testament as part of the one, holistic biblical theology that is anchored in promise/salvation, law/gospel, word and sacrament, and perhaps his favorite dialectic "both/and," holiness and glory (see Isaiah 6:3 and our eucharistic version in the Sanctus). The quote did not originate with him, but it still resonates: "God's holiness is God's glory concealed (*deus absconditus*); God's glory is God's holiness revealed (*deus revelatus*).

For him, the Old Testament was not simply an interesting history of Israel, or of "the Jews," which he adamantly reminded us would be an anachronistic appellation if applied to the sons of Israel before the post-exilic period, when those in Judah (Yehud) were dubbed "Yehudites." Nor was this first part (though about 75 percent) of the whole word of God simply a lode of messianic promises to be mined for what they could tell us in advance about Jesus or of God's predictive foreknowledge.

Predictive, messianic promises, yes—but first with a message to God's people then and there with application to their lives of sin and grace and their struggle to be the people of God in a world that was paganistic, syncretistic, and hostile to the ways and means of the only God. This God was both Creator and Redeemer, the true king of the kingdom of God, which in turn was entrusted to the human stewardship of the house and lineage of David. In short, the prophetic word amidst God's holy history was, chronologically at least, first a word of "forth-telling," or proclamation and preaching the whole counsel of God to God's people then, and through them to all nations. Yes, it was also fore-telling, but as Christ was to be read "out of" and not "into" the historical context of God's interaction with his people Israel. That history was not empty but was being filled along the way. Yet it was not "full-filled" until the promised Messiah, Savior, and King brought God's ultimate fulfillment into history even as we now celebrate the ongoing sacramental presence of the Christ who has come, who has died, who has risen, and who will come again.

One can still encounter a durable misunderstanding among Lutherans that the Old Testament is "law" and the New Testament is "gospel," as though the "new covenant" of Jeremiah 31:31 is something radically new and unattached to what was before, except by contrast. In fact, the "new covenant" is eschatological, when we will all "know Yahweh" and have the torah relationship so internalized that the Old Adam can no longer distort it. That this was established in Christ's sacrificial gift of body and blood, given and shed for the remission of sins, is precisely the point of the new age breaking in, already but not yet. But there was also a sense of "already" also in the BC era, when the covenant relationship ("I am your God; you are my people") was the bedrock of their relationship with Yahweh, sealed by the mark of infant circumcision on the eighth day, anchored in the promise and actual deliverance of the exodus, and signed by the sacrificial blood that connected communicants to the sacrifice (Ex 24:8) as a type of the "once for all" blood of the covenant and sin sacrifice yet to come, even as we are touched by the blood of that sacrifice already made.

Dr. Hummel espoused a profound understanding of biblical typology, properly distinguished from liberal mischief with similar vocabulary that wrongly divorced the Old Testament theological substance from that of the New (though he had to explain and defend himself time and time again from those too eager to raise suspicions). A condensed summary can be found in his *Word Becoming Flesh* (16–18). In sum, he recognized the work of God in both word and deed, in word and sacramental sign, as patterns of God's activities within the historical realities already before the word became flesh. For example, Christ is prefigured and anticipated by Moses (a person), the exodus (as an event), and the tabernacle and sacrificial cult (as institutions), all of which communicated God's salvation and life (salvation by grace through faith) to his ancient Israel, just as word and sacrament bring those same gifts to us of the full and fulfilled Israel.

This became a refreshing alternative to what is often a somewhat ahistorical reading of Old Testament texts as *only* a sourcebook of prophecies about Jesus, somewhat as points of light in a pre-Christian world otherwise darkened by law, ritual, and rubrics—what might be called a "Lutheran" form of Marcionism, whose New Testament God and "operating soteriology" was understood as radically different from that of the Old Testament.[2] Here the Lutheran dichotomy of "law and gospel" can almost work against us, and Dr. Hummel would patiently remind us that "torah" is not simply to be translated as "law," especially in Lutheran circles. Better, as a parallel to the "word of God" (e.g., Is 2:3), torah is much more the "gospel" in the full or wide sense as we describe the whole revealed counsel of God, both his will to be followed and his way of salvation by grace alone, which in turn empowers living according to his will.

Further, his strong emphasis on solid exegesis remains a reminder that we must, again and again, go back to the texts and do the hard work of translation, even first establishing the text itself to be read. Interpretation begins within the historical and grammatical contexts in which those producers of our prophetic history of salvation were carried along by the Holy Spirit. Especially within our tradition of dogmatic exposition and Confessional commitments, it is a healthy reminder that *sola scriptura* is still the *norma normans*, the only source, rule, and norm of our theology. Again, that is not to deny the need for dogmatic formulation, which Hummel affirmed, defended, and engaged within his interpretive methodology. But theology starts with our primary texts, and biblical preaching is grounded in the exposition of the biblical text, driven by close, careful, and competent reading.

Concomitant to his modeling of exegetical depth would be his overall commitment to scholarship and research at the highest levels. His own academic pedigree put him into circles that gave access to the best scholars in the world, some of which were also graduates of Concordia Seminary, such as Near Eastern scholar Delbert Hillers and noted archaeologist Paul Lapp, both also within that Johns Hopkins coterie. He was remembered fondly by my own doctoral advisor (also that of Paul Raabe), David Noel Freedman, general editor of the Anchor Bible. Hummel's dissertation and its published summary on the "Enclitic *Mem* in Early Northwest Semitic, Especially Hebrew" (JBL 76 [1957], 85–107), while seemingly obscure to most of his students, was a significant contribution to Hebrew studies and is often cited in scholarly textual notes. His engagement with secondary literature to augment his focus on the primary text was a paradigm for the kind of breadth and depth of learning which has long been a hallmark of Lutheran higher education. He fostered our participation in professional groups such as ASOR (see below) and the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL), which remains a touchstone not only for monitoring the vast spectrum of research but also for our own sane and biblically grounded voices to be heard in the sometimes wild and wacky forum of ideas that too easily dominates public opinion.

Hummel's interests in archaeology were noted above, as he came of scholarly age also in a time when Concordia Seminary played a role in biblical archaeology even internationally. The work at Tel Ta'anach back in the 1960s was cosponsored by Concordia Seminary and the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR, now the American Society of Overseas Research), still the world leader for near eastern archaeological research. There was even a symposium on archeology at Concordia in 1969 featuring G. E. Wright, another student of Albright at Johns Hopkins and then Parkman Professor and the Curator of the Semitic Museum at Harvard, probably the biggest name of that generation. Various papers were then published in the *Concordia Theological Monthly* in 1970 (41:9, October 1970), including one by Horace Hummel when he was a visiting professor at Notre Dame. Such efforts became a bit of an incubator for many in the LCMS to gain interest and even field experience. So was also Hummel's work in the '80s and '90s, with an attempt to form a Concordia Archaeological Society as a way to coordinate and foster interest, especially also with colleagues at Concordia University schools (where there have been those with such interests, such as Mark Schuler at Concordia, St. Paul, who served as codirector at the Hippos-Sussita Excavations, and Mark Meehl at Seward, whose doctoral work carried on at Johns Hopkins and who has done field work at Tel Miqne-Ekron, Tel Raqai, and Abila of the Decapolis. David Adams of the current seminary faculty has worked at Khirbet Qeiyafa, a recent site that has already borne some significant findings that seem to confirm King David's activities in the Shephelah. Our colleagues at Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne had partnered with Pepperdine and the Israeli Antiquities Authority to participate in the Banias Dig (ancient Caesarea Philippi.) That synodical collegium never took root, but Hummel's passing now provides a look at what once was and might have been with some encouragement for what might yet be.

With focus on exegetical theology, Hummel never lost sight of the wider range of interests that surround the task of "interpreting reality theologically." His focus on the worship of ancient Israel grounded a rich theology of sacramental worship that still provides an anchor in a sea of protestant worship influences and serves as a constant connection to the catholicity of confessional Lutheran theology. He was an avid reader of—and contributor to—ecclesiastical literature and editorials (such as *Interpretation, Lutheran Quarterly, Lutheran Forum* and its monthly *Letter*, edited for many years by Richard John Neuhaus) and often posted trenchant comments and commentary as a Theological Observer in the *Concordia Journal*. Though strong in his own convictions and opinions, he fostered a sense of churchmanship that engaged church and world outside our own parochial circles, enriching our interactions and reflections within and contributing to the larger discussions that need to hear our voices as well.

Horace Hummel certainly came from the old school of educational philosophy,

and he would have scoffed at the idea that his syllabi should state one, much less articulate his personal strategic approach to "meeting students' needs." He was very much the "sage on the stage" as any kind of pedagogical model, but in today's world there is almost something nostalgically refreshing about the simplicity of an unstated but assumed learning outcome that could be summed up as "learn everything you can!" or, more specifically, "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest what I say in class along with all the assigned material." It could go without saying that the goal was for students to develop the theological foundation, both in sheer knowledge as well as into the higher levels of any taxonomy of learning, so that a pastor's preaching and teaching were solidly grounded in substance, whatever the style. And often that starts with the hard work of memorizing vocabulary and paradigms, knowing facts, and being held responsible by the stern discipline of a challenging pedagogue. Not every student may have appreciated his approach, but there was much to be learned and much more to be gained, even if final grades did not seem to reflect it. And it was all in the service of rich pastoral formation, built on the assumption that pastors are, by definition, biblical theologians, preferably competent ones with a theological well that runs deep, yet ever seeking more breadth and depth, refreshment and renewal. Relational skills are another matter, and an important one, as are a host of pastoral skills, but without substance anchored in the biblical text even the greatest communicator will have nothing authoritative to say.

And so, we have lost a giant. But even in his absence, now and for generations to come, his legacy lives on. We go forth, onward and forward on the shoulders of giants, that cloud of saints and witnesses that surround us and connect us from past to future, until we gather for that great royal banquet on the Mountain of Yahweh (Is 25:6–9), where death is swallowed up in victory and God will reign forever. Yes, then, and in his sacramental presence now, the *kabod Yahweh* fills his temple amidst a city whose name is "Yahweh is *there*"[3] (Ez 48:35).

Andrew Bartelt
Professor Emeritus

Endnotes

1 I remember a car trip returning from the inaugural meeting of the Central States regional SBL meeting at the University of Missouri, where both he and Martin Scharlemann predicted the eventual bankruptcy and demise of the critical enterprise, though both were well aware of the pervasive nature of assumed "assured results" becoming almost axiomatic, as has become the case in, say, Pentateuchal studies, or the reconstruction of the developmental history of Israelite religion largely along evolutionary lines from primitive and prophetic (cf. "protestant) to the burdensome complexities of priesthood and ritualistic cult (cf. "catholic").

2 One can even trace a troubling strand of anti-Semitism in various pockets of Lutherans, built on the assumption that the New Testament has superseded the Old, with its "Jewish" ways of being God's people.

3 The form uses the *He Directive*, in my opinion at least implying God's movement to fill the temple and all the earth. Hummel discounts the "locative he" and suggests it has little force other than paragogic (*Ezekiel 21–48,* 1387). I am willing to suggest more significance, related also to my argument that the "filling" of all the earth in Isaiah 6:3 is transitive. Yahweh's presence is more than static, he comes to us, comes down to us, and he would engage and empower us into the *missio dei* that carries forth his presence into all the world until Christ comes. This is the symbolic force of the Recessional, carrying the cross of Christ and the name of Yahweh, now signed upon us in the Aaronic benediction, out the door to the end of the earth (in both space and time), starting in our immediate neighborhoods. Hummel hints at this, "so if the locative *he* has any force, it might be akin to the second (not the first) advent of Christ." This is, after all, the new Jerusalem of Revelation 21, unnamed until this final verse in Ezekiel 40–48 to distinguish it from the earlier, corrupted Jerusalem that had fallen. But, as Hummel notes, its reality is already "with us" (cf. "Immanuel" and the basic covenant formulation, "I will be your God, and you will be my people"). To close with Hummel's own closing words (*op. cit.* 1389),

> All this means that we enter his temple preeminently in worship, where he is spiritually and sacramentally present. And as the "Jerusalem above" (Ps 137:6; Gal 4:26) descends upon the pilgrim city below, momentarily erasing the boundaries of space and time, we proleptically participate in, but also empirically look forward to, the Day when the last enemy will have been destroyed (1 Cor 15:26, 54), and we, with all the saints in glory already, will forever be "there," where Yahweh is. "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rv 22:20).

Articles

The Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ
A Confessional-Lutheran Examination of an Ecumenical Statement

Werner Klän

Werner Klän is professor emeritus from Lutherische Theologische Hochschule Oberursel. He has served as professor and guest lecturer in Germany, South Africa, and the United States. He also serves as co-chair of the Bilateral Dialogue Group International Lutheran Council (ILC) and Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU). He received an honorary Doctor of Letters degree from Concordia Seminary in 2018.

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honoris causa largitione
gratus hoc scriptum dedicat auctor[1]

Preliminary Remarks: Confessional with an Ecumenical Intent

More than a generation ago, a rather well-known, ecumenically minded Lutheran theologian, who was committed to the confession of the Lutheran church in the form of the Book of Concord of 1580/84, including the Formula of Concord of 1577, was still able to express the hope that "there are also Catholic churches and the vast majority of all Christians in the world that believe and are convinced that the consecrated elements are truly—not just figuratively—the true body and blood of the Savior.[2] This was Hermann Sasse, whose theology of the Lord's Supper was concerned with the presence of what Christ "sacrificed for our sins on Golgotha"[3] in the sacrament of the altar. He could say pointedly: "There is no gospel without the

Editor's note

Translated from the German by Erik Herrmann.

real presence. *The Lord's Supper is a component of the gospel, the gospel is the content of the Lord's Supper.*"[4]

For Sasse, the motif of making the past and the future present was the guiding principle: "An unrepeatable historical event ceases to be in the past and becomes present. This happens in the divine service, when God proclaims to his people what he once said in a single moment of history." This happens both in word and sacrament.[5] For the "*Marana tha* is both the prayer for the second coming and the coming of the Lord in the Lord's Supper."[6] In any case, it is imperative that "what makes the sacrament a sacrament, is the presence of Christ."[7]

In Lutheran terms this cannot be said differently than in the connection of the "*real presence* of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper" with the "reality of the incarnation."[8] Sasse, completely in line with the Lutheran confessional writings, sees here the "deep difference in the understanding of divine revelation and in thinking about God" which exists between the Lutheran church and Reformed theology. This is manifested in the "Lutheran *finitum capax infiniti*—or rather should one perhaps say, *infinitum capax finiti*?"[9] For Sasse, therefore this "opposition," is "just as church-dividing today as it was 400 years ago."[10]

The Lutheran "sacramental realism"[11] thus defines the concept and subject matter of the "real presence" not only as Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper, but rather precisely as "the true presence of his body and blood and the forgiveness of sins," created by Christ's "word of the divine omnipotence" in the consecration.[12] As far as the reality of the gift is concerned, there is also no "difference between East and West. In the sacrament as in the *mysterion*, the thing meant by the body of Christ is the same. It is the body, born of his mother Mary, who died on the cross, who was buried, who rose from the dead, who ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father." In sum: "This and nothing else is the church's dogma of the Lord's Supper."[13]

It is also here that the "inner connection between the church and the Lord's Supper" must be sought and found, the inner connection "between the body of the Lord, which we receive at the altar, and the body of the Lord, which is the church."[14] According to Paul (1 Cor 10:16f.), "the *koinonía* of the body and blood of Christ . . . coincides with the *koinonía* of the church."[15] For the gift of the sacrament, "the body and blood of the Lord are the *sancta* given to the communicants, making them *sancti* and thus uniting them to the unity and communion of the body of Christ."[16]

This decidedly confessional position does not exclude an ecumenical readiness for dialogue, especially for Lutherans: "Every word of the confessions can and should be reformed at the moment when we are granted the insight that the Bible is to be understood differently than the Lutheran Reformers understood it. For this reason, we are open to dialogue with all other denominations and to the further development of the confession."[17]

Foundational Lutheran Principles

For Martin Luther, there is no doubt regarding the presence of the body and blood of Christ, constituted by the creative word of Jesus Christ's testament spoken on his way to his death, which retains its creative, performative power beyond Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.[18] The words of the Lord's institution, as God's word, are thus constitutive factors of the sacrament, because "as the word of the Creator in the mouth of Christ, they transform the creaturely natural elements, lifting them up, without eliminating them, into the new word-reality that is Christ's own."[19] This is a "joining together" constituted by the "identifying est."[20] In this event, according to Luther, "the natural and eschatological body of Christ . . . are distinguished and at the same time related to each other."[21] Thus, by virtue of Christ's creative speech, a sacramental unity of a new quality is achieved,[22] which in any case remains "without analogy."[23]

The *Confessio Augustana Invariata* follows Luther in this knitting together of the body and blood of Christ with the elements of bread and wine. If one reads the reciprocal epexegesis of the German and Latin versions, then Melanchthon's bridge to the medieval Western tradition is unmistakable: the true body and blood of Christ, present "under the form" of bread and wine, are distributed and received.[24]

The act of God's institution and his saving self-commitment are constitutive for the Lutheran concept of the sacraments. Melanchthon certainly retains the idea of a word's referential connection to that which it signifies, characteristic of the Augustinian concept of sacraments.[25] He follows—like Luther—the definition of the sacrament as a "visible word" (*verbum visibile*), so that its peculiarity lies in the illustration of what the word already says.[26] The meaning and effect of the word and the performance of the Lord's Supper in worship are thereby identical—namely the forgiveness of sins which renews the communion between God and man; the mode of communication, perception and reception of salvation is admittedly different.[27]

In the confession of the Lutheran church the essence of the sacrament of the altar is founded exclusively on Christ's words of institution on Maundy Thursday.[28] The real presence of the body and blood of Christ under bread and wine as meal is thus constituted in God's order, which is more than a "context of its institution." This emphasis on the body and blood of Christ points to, if not concentrates our focus on, the Lord's sacrifice at Calvary as a culmination of his work of salvation.[29]

Also, and especially at Holy Communion, Martin Luther emphasizes "God's word and order or command"[30] as that which brings about and constitutes the sacrament, namely the institution by Jesus Christ himself. In the controversies, especially with the Swiss Reformation, a "figurative" interpretation of the words of institution, according to which only their "pictorial significance" is valid, is rejected. Rather, the literal meaning of the words of the institution must be preserved. In this, the Lord's Supper has its objective ground and permanence. Thus, the distinction

The celebration of the holy meal is always a celebration of the community of Jesus Christ; the sacrament belongs amid the people of God.

between Zwingli's Zurich Reformation and Luther's can be marked by the fact that in Switzerland it is about "remembrance instead of sacrifice," in Wittenberg it is about "the ever-new self-presentation" of Christ.[31] This is based on the fact that "in the apostolically testified words of Christ in the Lord's Supper Christ himself speaks to the congregation."[32] However, it must be maintained that through Christ's words of institution the bread and wine are unmistakably identified with his body and blood,[33] through which the forgiveness of sins is communicated, the fellowship with Christ is renewed, and the strengthening of the faith, which is always in need of strengthening, takes place.[34]

It is God, not the Christian, who is the subject of this event and actions, even as the catabatic direction of the event forms the structure: "for the milling/grinding of itself with the promise of Christ and the distribution of Christ's body and blood under the bread and wine continues to be the delivery of Christ's gift that the Christian accepts with thanksgiving."[35]

The reception of the gifts of the Lord's Supper, in the way that Christ himself ordered the celebration of this sacrament and commanded it to be understood throughout the Christian church, is constitutive of the sacrament, since it is offered as a meal. It is to be considered the testament of Christ, which the church may not alter. According to the Reformation view, the insistence on the lay reception of the chalice and the celebration of the Eucharist "in both forms" is also to be counted among them, since it clearly corresponds to the mandate of the Lord (Mt 26, 27; 1 Cor 11, 20ff.) as well as to the practice of the early church.[36] Likewise, receiving the body and blood of Christ "with the mouth" must be regarded as a genuine part of Lutheran communion theology: The bodily dimension of the celebration of the sacraments must not be minimized, since it is a matter of Christ in his sacrificial form, and thus in its "holistic" application "for us."[37]

The celebration of the holy meal is always a celebration of the community of Jesus Christ; the sacrament belongs amid the people of God. The "consecration" of the eucharistic gifts of bread and wine is carried out in the whole event of worship (*tota actio*). This includes the worshipping assembly, the preparation of the gifts, their blessing through the Lord's words of institution, the distribution, reception, eating and drinking, and the proclamation of the salvation that Christ has acquired and earned by this self-donation.[38]

It is obvious that there were increasing differences in Luther's and Melanchthon's

conceptions of the sacrament of the altar, as well as tensions between the theology of Württemberg and Wittenberg in the second half of the sixteenth century.[39] It can be seen how Melanchthon distanced himself from Luther in the development of his statements, and how few possibilities of understanding there were from the very beginning "between the classical Philippist concept and the Württemberg position," represented by Johannes Brenz and his students. The tensions that arose early on subsequently proved to be the fundamental differences that no longer seemed reconcilable. In the settlement of these divergences and differences, inspired by Martin Chemnitz and carried out in the Formula of Concord, the *communicatio idiomatum realis* is understood as a "context of events"; the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament of the altar is rooted in the creative-omnipotent word of Christ that also establishes realities that "pre-eschatologically" cannot be grasped by human insight.[40] Yet there is and has been a legitimate effort to describe, as far as possible, a scripturally informed, factually appropriate, conceptually exact, definition of the institution, reality, meaning, and effect of the Lord's Supper. According to the latest confessional text in the Book of Concord, this includes the following: that Christ's body and blood are truly and really present, given together with their presentation and distribution in connection with the earthly elements, that the bodily reception of these gifts "with the mouth" is the eating and drinking of precisely these gifts of Christ's body and blood, regardless of the faithful or moral disposition of the communicants.[41]

Ecumenical Interim Results Prior to the ÖAK Statement

After some years of mainly bilateral conversations about the understanding of the Lord's Supper and the Eucharist, several years ago a renewed appeal was made in the German ecumenical community to continue the dialogue about the Lord's Supper/Eucharist.[42] There was also a comprehensive report which maintained that there was a "far-reaching consensus on the question of the real presence in the Eucharist."[43] The following statements from the ecumenical discussions of the last four decades are regarded as compatible, commensurable but not contradictory.

So it says in the Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue:

> Communion with Christ in the Eucharist presupposes his true presence, effectively marked by the bread and wine which in this mystery become his body and blood. . . . The elements are not merely signs: Christ's body and blood are truly present and truly given. (*The doctrine of the Eucharist, [Windsor Declaration]* 1971, §§ 6; 9)[44]

Anglicans and Lutherans agreed on the following formula:

> Both churches affirm the true presence (real presence) of Christ in this sacrament, but neither of them seeks to define exactly how this is done. (*Pullach Report*, 1972, § 68)[45]

The Leuenberg Agreement established as a common position of Lutheran, Reformed, and United churches:

> In the Lord's Supper the risen Jesus Christ in his body and blood given for all gives himself with bread and wine through his promised word. Thus he gives himself unreservedly to all who receive bread and wine; faith receives the meal for salvation, unbelief for judgment. (*Leuenberg Agreement*, 1973, § 18)[46]

It could also be formulated as a result of Methodist/Roman Catholic discussions:

> Christ is present in the Eucharist in the fullness of his human and divine being . . . It is a unique way of Christ's presence; it is mediated by the sacred elements of bread and wine, which are effective signs of the body and blood of Christ within the Eucharistic action. (*Dublin Report*, 1976, § 59)[47]

A result of earlier Lutheran/Roman Catholic discussions:

> In the sacrament of the Lord's Supper Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is fully present with his body and blood under the sign of bread and wine. Together, Catholic and Lutheran Christians confess that in the Eucharist the body and blood of the Lord are truly received. (*The Lord's Supper*, 1978, §§ 16; 62)[48]

The outcome of the Reformed/Roman Catholic dialogue says it differently:

> The presence (i.e., of Christ) is . . . both sacramental and personal. Thus we gratefully acknowledge that both traditions, the Reformed and the Roman Catholic, stand by the belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist." (*The Presence of Christ in the World*, 1977, Phase I, § 91)[49]

In the World Council of Churches convergences in the concept of the Lord's Supper have been achieved in the sense that "in the eating and drinking of the bread and wine . . . Christ grants communion with himself"; the Eucharist is defined as "the eucharistic meal" and "the sacrament of the gift" and, considered from the point of view of thanksgiving to the Father, as an "anamnesis or memorial of Christ", as an "invocation of the Spirit" and as a "communion of the faithful" (*Lima Document*, 1983).[50] It can also be said in this way:

> The Eucharistic meal is the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, the sacrament of his real presence (Real Presence). . . . But the manner of Christ's presence in the Eucharist is unique. Jesus said over the bread and wine of the Eucharist: 'This is my body . . . this is my blood.' What Christ said is true, and this truth is fulfilled every time the Eucharist is celebrated. The Church confesses Christ's real, living, and acting presence in the Eucharist."[51]

Between Anglicans and Scandinavian Lutherans this statement could be made:

> We believe that at the Lord's Supper (Eucharist), under the forms of bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ are truly present, distributed and received. In this way we receive the body and blood of Christ, crucified and risen, and in him the forgiveness of sins and all the other gifts of his passion. (*Porvoo Declaration*, 1992, § 32h)[52]

The convergence between Lutherans and Orthodox was highlighted:

> Lutherans and Orthodox adhere literally to the words of Jesus "This is my body; this is my blood." They believe that in the Eucharist, bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ to be consumed by the communicants. How this happens is considered a deep and true mystery by both. In order to access this mystery, Orthodox and Lutherans have reflected on their respective traditions and have come to different conclusions about what happens here. (a) Lutherans speak of Christ's "real presence" in the Eucharist and describe the body and blood of Christ as "in, with and under" the bread and wine . . . (b) Orthodox confess a true transformation (*metabole*) of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ through the words of institution and the action of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharistic *anaphora*. The medieval doctrine of transubstantiation is rejected by both Orthodox and Lutherans.[53]

These results are still fraught with tension in the multilateral ecumenical context, and so their compatibility is questionable. How is the explicit rejection of the "medieval doctrine of transubstantiation" by Lutherans and Orthodox,[54] (admittedly it was not more than a theory until its dogmatization by the Council of Trent), to be understood in relation to the Roman Catholic doctrine and church, for which the decisions of the Tridentinum are still binding, even if they are reformulated in the theological discussions of the twentieth century? How should the confession of the "real presence of Christ in the Eucharist," as the Catholics and Reformed say,[55] be considered compatible with the confession of Catholics and Lutherans that "in the

Eucharist the body and blood of the Lord are truly received"?[56] Or with the statement of Anglicans and Scandinavian Lutherans that "under the forms of bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ are truly present, given and received"?[57] How is the statement, according to the results of the Methodist/Roman Catholic dialogue, that the "sacred elements" in the celebration of the sacraments "are effective signs of the body and blood of Christ" to be interpreted?[58] Is this in line with the view in the Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue: "The elements are not merely signs: Christ's body and blood are truly present and truly given"?[59] And how is all of this to be coherently related when in these multilateral talks no determination of the relationship of the elements of bread and wine with the body and blood of Christ has been made?

Walter Cardinal Kasper, the former president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, has concluded, especially considering the results of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue, that a number of "unresolved issues" still need to be discussed. They concern, for example, "the doctrinal formulation and the duration of the eucharistic presence of the Lord," the doctrine of the "sacrificial character of the Eucharist," which "still gives rise to disagreement," but also the question of real presence in the sense of a "transubstantiation" of the elements of bread and wine.[60] And he poses the question precisely: "Is Luther's own position on real presence . . . reconcilable with the Lutheran churches' widely accepted position of the Leuenberg Agreement, and have the Lutheran-Reformed controversies about the real presence been overcome?"[61] From the confessional Lutheran perspective, the answer can only be "No!", because the view of the Lutheran confession that the Lord's almighty words of institution bring about its reality is not preserved in that document, rather it is disputed.[62]

But even if one analyses only the statements of one of the interlocutors in the different results of dialogue, there are still difficulties that are not easily resolved: How can it be considered harmonious when Lutherans on the one hand state that "in the Eucharist the bread and wine become Christ's body and blood," but on the other hand emphasize that "Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is fully present with his body and blood under the sign of the bread and wine," and again claim that "the risen Jesus Christ in his body and blood given for all gives himself with bread and wine through his promised word"? Apparently, these are regarded as only minor differences. Even if the mode of change, in which the bread and wine now become the body and blood of Christ, is regarded in the Lutheran/Orthodox course of conversation as a "mystery," the unavoidable tendency is for both sides to try to define what it means "to become." The differentiating description of Jesus Christ's presence as God-man, which in connection with his body and blood takes place under the sign of bread and wine, which Lutherans and Catholics testify together, clearly loosens this relational structure; the concept of sign remains rather vague, and the statement clearly falls behind the terminology of the IV Lateran Council, which was taken up

by the *Confessio Augustana* with the phrase "under the figure of bread and wine" and thus as common to tradition. Closer to this (admittedly Western church) way of understanding about the gifts of the sacrament of the altar in relation to the elements is the Anglican-Lutheran formulation. On the other hand, the prepositional phrases in the provisions of the Leuenberg Agreement make it even more difficult to find an exact formulation for the relationship of the elements of bread and wine to the gift or gifts of body and blood. For the convergences in the Lutheran/Roman Catholic conversations of the past decades the belief "in the eucharistic presence of Jesus Christ" is stated as the presence of the "exalted Lord." This statement, however, clearly lags behind the progress of earlier Lutheran/Roman Catholic dialogues.

Irrespective of the difficulties mentioned, there have been efforts for some time to prepare a "Joint Declaration on the Lord's Supper."[63] Sketches for such a declaration have already been drawn,[64] and the president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Kurt Cardinal Koch, has already put forward such a possibility.[65] It is admitted that "especially the controversies about the 'sacrificial character' of the Lord's Supper and the Eucharist, as well as the different conceptions of the 'real presence' of Jesus Christ in the events of the Lord's Supper liturgy or the Eucharistic celebration are still considered as not yet ecumenically clarified."[66] According to the author, theologians and churches should aim at taking important steps on the way to the goal "of Eucharistic and Communion fellowship of all Christians" by the "description of a differentiated consensus."[67] From the Protestant perspective, such a project is supported with little reservation as "ecumenically desirable and . . . obvious and possible,"[68] since despite all of the indisputable differences "no church-dividing opposites" exist.[69] However, there were still differences that had to be dealt with in the theology of the priestly/pastoral office and ecclesiology.[70]

The ecumenical dogmatics of Wolfgang Beinert and Ulrich Kühn[71] also represent contributions to the safeguarding of the ecumenical progress of these dialogues, at least of the common Roman-Catholic/Protestant efforts, but they also make the shortcomings of previous dialogues stand out clearly. Thus it can be said about the Lord's Supper across denominations: "One must understand the interpretive words of Jesus about the bread and wine . . . as words of a *sacramental identification* of body and bread, blood and wine."[72] The interpretation of "body" and "blood" based on exegetical insights suggests a tendency towards a personal understanding: '"Body" (Greek: *soma*) refers to the person of Jesus in his corporeality, "blood" (Greek: *haima*) to a person as a living person—in blood is life."[73] But with it a soteriological interpretation is connected, in which "the reference to Jesus's death becomes tangible"; but there is no mention of the sacrifice of the church in the New Testament texts.[74] With regard to the question of the real presence it is noted that in the *Leuenberg Agreement* "a personalization of the Lord's Supper is made," but most significantly "that in it the Christ's sacramental connection to the 'elements' bread

and wine is not completely taken up, and so an essential concern of the Lutheran tradition was not addressed, a concern which had always been stated as the presence of Christ's body and blood 'in, with and under' bread and wine." Consequently, "the sacramental integration of the elements was not sufficiently expressed."[75] Nevertheless, what remains as the ecumenical outcome is, in the end, only the double definition of doctrinal boundaries that prevent a "falsification or volatilization of the confession of Christ's real presence in the Lord's Supper," as it was formulated already in 1979 in the common Lutheran/Roman Catholic document "The Lord's Supper": The "Eucharistic encounter with Christ" is a "mystery," "which conceptually can probably never be adequately grasped."[76]

However, if one would attempt this with such ecumenical intention, an example of one solution is:

> The "presence" of Jesus Christ is experienced in the meal, which is a sign of God's unbreakable loyalty to the covenant. Jesus himself has put the gifts of the meal into this context of interpretation. According to their nature, bread and wine are transformed when the commemoration of Jesus Christ is celebrated: The interpretive words present the context of the sign given by Jesus in terms of its original setting. The presenting memory, which happens in the Spirit of God, transforms the gifts of the meal according to the sense that Jesus gives to them. Bread and wine remain as meal gifts, but their nature is changed. They are now effective signs of Jesus's willingness to die, in which the depth of God's love shines out.[77]

The prerequisite for this representation is the conviction that "the category of 'relationship' gains a constitutive meaning" for the interpretation of the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist. Therefore, "a personal, relational terminology was more helpful than the use of natural-philosophical terms and factual categories."[78] The desired and—allegedly—achieved approximation of the traditional ways of understanding and interpreting the real presence is then seen in the fact that the "confessional positions . . . do not differ in the faithful acceptance of the true presence of Jesus Christ in the event of the Lord's Supper, but in the concrete description of the connection of that presence with the gifts of bread and wine."[79]

The Statement of the Ecumenical Study Group of Protestant and Catholic Theologians "Together at the Lord's Table"

Now the statement of the Ecumenical Study Group of Protestant and Catholic theologians (OÄK), "Together at the Lord's Table," has been public since September 2019.[80] It is based on the assumption "that the theological dialogues conducted ecumenically in the past decades have succeeded in reaching such a degree of

understanding in all issues connected with the Holy Communion/Eucharist which had been controversially discussed in the sixteenth century that it is no longer permissible to regard the remaining differences as church-dividing."[81] It is stated that regarding "the theological meaning of the Holy Communion/Eucharist" there is "unanimous agreement."[82] Therefore, the goal is "to recognise and support all efforts which affirm the theological meaning and, on this basis share the concern to celebrate the Holy Communion/Eucharist together."[83]

As *petitio principii* it is stated:

> According to New Testament witness, Jesus gives himself to his followers in bread and wine. No action of the Church, no liturgical forms and institutional rules, no differences in origin and tradition can and should stand in the way of this gift.[84]

Consequently, the "Common Witness"[85] of the theologians of the ÖAK contains a formula found for the sacrament of the altar—to start with—that unfortunately represents nothing but a reproduction of the results of the "Leuenberg Agreement," namely:

> In his body and blood, given to all, he [sc. Jesus Christ] offers himself to them as they trust in his promise and partake of the bread and wine in the eucharistic celebration of Holy Communion.[86]

A church which is consciously bound by the Holy Scriptures and the confessional documents of the Lutheran church in the form of the Book of Concord of 1580/84 must still oppose this with a *Non possumus*.[87]

From a Lutheran point of view, too, important and approvable results of this statement are to be appreciated. This applies to the reference to the "special role" of the Last Supper of Jesus in relation to the other meals he celebrated; it is therefore not only their continuation.[88] Also the emphasis on the "sacrificial character of Jesus's death" is to be welcomed.[89] The same holds true for the understanding of the biblical findings on "remembrance"; in the sense of "re-enactment," it is correctly recorded and understood.[90]

From the confessional Lutheran perspective, also the view that Christ is "the acting subject of the meal" can meet with approval, as well as the plea for a regular celebration of the Lord's Supper "at Sunday services," the "conduct of the celebration" by an "ordained person," the *sumptio sub utraque* as the rule, and the "worthy disposal" of the *relicta*, the emphasis on the "uniqueness of Christ's atoning sacrifice on the cross," and the rejection of the theological positions on the sacrifice of the mass.[91] Also the "emphasis on thanksgiving, the *anamnesis* and *epiclesis*"[92] is welcome,

if and because there "the idea that God's action at creation takes precedence over any response by humanity is expressed in appropriate words."[93] Thus it applies "that it is not people who bring about the presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Communion, but that rather God himself by the Holy Spirit grants his presence to those who ask him for it." It is also acceptable that the offering of gifts is "not the church's own work."[94]

Fundamentally Lutheran positions shine through in other places as well: For example, there is an accurate reception of AC XIV, whose statements are "in accordance with Roman Catholic teaching" and mark the difference between the ordination-bound ministry and the "general/common priesthood of all believing baptised persons."[95] Unfortunately, the statement about the sacramental character of ordination as understood in Lutheran theology shines less brightly.[96] Melanchthon may well call the "*ordo*" "*sacramentum*" when he talks about the "*ministerium verbi*."[97] That the ordination is an "action once and for all that is not repeated" is also consistent with Lutheran convictions.[98]

It is gratifying to note that the celebration of the sacrament "encompasses all temporal dimensions,"[99] as Hermann Sasse had already said.[100] The fact that the present document also emphasizes an internal connection between sacramental communion and ecclesial fellowship is in line with Pauline and Lutheran understanding, as already emphasized by Hermann Sasse.[101]

> Together all Christian traditions read the scriptures and are convinced that the term "*koinonia*" (communion) is the key word in Paul's eucharistic texts. Because Jesus Christ allows us to share in his salvific life and death, his "body and blood," believers are most closely accepted into a life of fellowship with him. That is why for Paul, therefore, the *koinonia* which results from the Lord's Supper is not simply participation, but *common* participation through sharing. Common participation shows its efficacy wherever it turns the participants into a fellowship community. The inner connection of the believers with Christ and with one another is expressed in the interweaving of the three meanings of "body of Christ," which is of central significance for Paul: the body of Jesus Christ as sacrifice on the cross, the Body of Jesus Christ as Eucharist, the Body of Jesus Christ as the Church. Participation in the eucharistic body means inclusion in the "body of Christ."[102]

Unfortunately, the text places quotation marks around the "body and blood of Christ exactly at this point in a way that leaves the reality of precisely this gift in the dark and casts doubt on it. That is why also the concept and matter of the "real presence" remain under-defined, at least from the perspective of confessional Lutherans, for instance in the following:

> Luther and the Lutherans upheld the real presence of Christ over against Zwingli, who interpreted the presence of Christ in bread and wine purely in the sense of *anamesis*, and subsequently distanced themselves from Calvin as well, being unable to follow his attempt to go beyond Zwingli and consider the presence of Christ as a spiritual work.[103]

Strictly speaking, it can be said that Luther and the Lutherans were (and should be) concerned with the advocacy of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ. The expression "real presence of Christ" remains vague and ambiguous; even the formulas of "Gregory the Great's strong emphasis on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist" or the assumption attributed to Luther of the "real bodily presence of Christ in the elements"[104] do not help to remedy this fundamental weakness in the document. This way of speaking simply lacks theological precision; but this is precisely how it functions as a bridge of understanding.

This lack of precision corresponds then also to the assertion that the Protestant side in the time of the Reformation had rejected "the idea of a transformation of the bread and its explanation in the sense of the doctrine of transubstantiation"; this applies at most to the perception of a dogmatization of transubstantiation by the Council of Trent.[105] The German text of CA X clearly alludes to the formula of the IV Lateran Council of 1215 with the formulation that the "true body and blood of Christ are truly present in the Lord's Supper under the form of bread and wine."[106] The Apology can even take up the motif of "transformation" [*mutatio*] when Melanchthon, referring to "the canon of the Greeks," says: "*Id enim testatur conon missae apud illos (of the "Greek" church), in quo aperte orat sacerdos, ut mutato pane ipsum corpus Christi fiat*."[107]

The answer to the question of the "quality" of the eucharistic gifts must prove to be decisive on the fact that they "impart *communio* with the Lord."[108] Here one encounters the main thesis of the document's exegetical results:

> Jesus promises his people that he will be present with and for them after his death at the shared meal and will give himself to us. The way of thinking is that of *representation*. In the meal, bread and wine represent Jesus Christ. The giver is present in person in his gift. Thus the meal with its gifts is a representational symbol and pledge of the presence and closeness of Jesus Christ, who shares himself with us in this meal.[109]

The Leuenberg Agreement, whose linguistic gesture is already alluded to in this quotation, is finally expressly used as a reference text for the common witness: "Jesus Christ gives himself to us in his body and blood given for all through his promised word with bread and wine (cf. Leuenberg Agreement 15, 18)."[110]

The personalistic reduction in defining the gifts of the Lord's Supper persists throughout the document. From a Lutheran point of view, this is extremely regrettable. For this proposition includes, for example, the denial of an "identification of the flesh and blood of Christ with the elements in material and substance."[111] The Lutheran language of the body and blood of Christ being present "*vere et substantialiter*"[112] aims precisely at the fact that "the materiality of the gifts is considered to indicate the real incarnation of the Logos."[113] Indeed, this language follows logically from the incarnation of the Logos and is thus more than a mere indication. The fact that the Lutheran authors repeatedly and explicitly guarded against a "Capernaitic," that is physical-materialistic misunderstanding of their concept of reality by wanting—certainly provisionally—their concept to be understood as "sacramental"[114] should belong to the basic knowledge of the history of Christian dogma.

For all that is welcome in this document, a confessional Lutheran church must therefore set its "*non possumus*" against these conclusions. On the other hand, it must insist with determination that the different confessional positions of the various churches today continue to hinder the formation of binding church fellowship, particularly in terms of eucharistic fellowship. We hold fast to the fundamental conviction that the church's confession as consensus is "an indispensable prerequisite for responsible fulfilment of the church's mission to proclaim the gospel and administer the sacraments, and as such a *conditio sine qua non* of clarified and declared church fellowship."[115]

> An echo of this fact can also be found in the ÖAK:
>
> A full communion of the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant churches at the Lord's Table not only requires mutual recognition of ministries, but also an agreement on the understanding of the relationship between fellowship at Holy Communion/Eucharist and communion of the churches. It must also be clarified whether and to what extent church communion necessitates agreement on all questions of the order of ministry.[116]

From the perspective of the confessional Lutheran churches, this was and is a *sine qua non* of establishing and shaping church unity.

Conclusion

With regard to the "mystery" *as* or even *in* the "sacrament" Hermann Sasse could already say: "Here all philosophy comes to an end."[117] For it must—and can—be stated exegetically that the body and blood of Christ in the words of institution do not simply mean the person of Jesus, but "the body of Jesus as the one given into

death, as the analogy to the words over the chalice shows."[118] In systematic evaluation, this can be formulated as follows: "He is present with his body and blood, the very attestation that explains to us that his sacrifice was indeed offered for us, but continues to have a present and lasting meaning before God." It is therefore the "presence of Christ's eternal sacrifice in the context of the worshipping community."[119] Even if Lutheran theology is afraid of linking the idea of a sacrificial presence of the body and blood of Christ to its sacramental presence,[120] the gifts of the body and blood of Christ are inseparable "from his person and the destiny of that person on Good Friday and Easter."[121]

The different confessional positions of the various churches today continue to hinder the formation of binding church fellowship, particularly in terms of eucharistic fellowship.

Nor can Christ's words of institution be detached from the reality of God's incarnation in Jesus of Nazareth, so that what stands behind Luther's view of the sacrament of the altar must still be said as a warning: "With the real presence the incarnation of the eternal Son of God falls, the whole Christian faith falls, the Church of Christ falls."[122] From here, the *proprium* of the sacrament of the altar can be defined in the Lutheran way of speaking as "Christ here gives himself by means of body and blood in oral consumption."[123] This view and conception, indeed this biblical truth, may seem "offensive, namely that Christ in the offering up of his life is truly present in these gifts, that it is Christ's body and blood that are consumed."[124] For contemporary sensibilities in particular, this may seem objectionable. According to a study from 2004, the classical theological distinctions of the Lord's Supper are little regarded or even remembered among the traditions of the various churches today, nor are the specifics of the respective denominational understandings of the sacrament of the altar or what is determined to be the actual gifts offered in this sacrament.[125] The clear, indeed "disturbing"[126] conclusion is: "In many cases in the confessional traditions there is neither an exact knowledge of one's own argumentation with regard to the presence of Jesus Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist nor even an insight into the background of other convictions."[127]

All churches and denominations are faced with the challenge to enter a new dialogue; one that deals with the fundamental biblical witness and with other insights that Christians have gained from the New Testament about the sacramental presence of Jesus Christ from the New Testament. Such dialogue must also deal with the various formulations in the history of theology and its authoritative documents, as well as those expressed in their eucharistic liturgies and experienced and preserved in their respective history of piety.

> Eucharistic fellowship is possible if it is seriously desired. Its realisation presupposes patient clarification and overcoming of the obstacles standing in its way. It requires the exposition of a common view of the Lord's Supper and of remaining differences which are nonetheless regarded as acceptable. Differences in the doctrines on Holy Communion and its liturgical practice must be taken into consideration, as must the interrelationship between the ministry of the celebration and the understanding of the ecclesiastical ministry, as well as the respective regulations of church law for admission to the Holy Communion.[128]

The renewed deliberation of one's own theological and ecclesial convictions is an indispensable requirement for the understanding of different views. This belongs to the very logic of dialogue. Lutheran theology and the Lutheran church must not refuse such an approach. In the statement discussed here, this has only partially succeeded since not all the remaining differences can be regarded as acceptable.

The Lutheran church, however, in her confession and in the certainty of speaking according to the words of sacred Scripture, resolutely defends the true presence of the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament of the altar and the distribution of these gifts and their fruits to those who receive the sacrament. This conviction has been shared for centuries by the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox churches of the East, as well as by confessional Lutherans.[129] Moreover, the Lutheran church emphasizes that when individual believers receive Holy Communion, they receive the unique culmination and fruit of divine salvation. In addition, the community-strengthening effect of the sacrament of the altar is highlighted, a view shared with many others. The Lord's Supper is a standing offer to strengthen trust in God, to renew the purified relationship with God, and to deepen the union with Christ.[130] It is important, particularly in the celebration of the sacrament of the altar, "to hold fast that not only bread and wine but also the body and blood of Christ are received under these elements."[131] The specific and unique feature of Holy Communion consists precisely "in the fact that Christ here gives his body and blood as a sign of his presence to all who come to eat and drink."[132]

Endnotes

1 "To the Reverend Faculty of Concordia College, in the City of St. Louis, Missouri, as a sign of ecclesiastical fellowship and as a sign of gratitude for the gift of the honorary Doctor of Letters, the author dedicates this writing."
2 Hermann Sasse: Ein letztes Wort zu "Leuenberg," in *Corpus Christi: Ein Beitrag zum Problem der Abendmahlskonkordie,* ed. Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf (= LBl 117/118, October 1979), Erlangen/Hermannsburg 1979, 147.
3 "Hermann Sasse: The Lutheran Understanding of the Consecration" in Norman Nagel, ed., *We Confess the Sacraments* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1985), 121. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from the German are mine, W.K.
4 Ibid., emphasis original.
5 Sasse, *Corpus Christi*, 3rd chapter: Ausblick, ibid., 88, 90.
6 Ibid., 91.
7 Ibid., 92.
8 "Herman Sasse: Inkarnation und Realpräsenz," in *Corpus Christi* (FN 1), 117.
9 Ibid., 116; emphasis added.
10 Ibid., 119.
11 Ibid., 120.
12 "Hermann Sasse: Zum lutherischen Verständnis der Konsekration" in *Corpus Christi* (FN 1), 129–145.
13 Sasse, *Corpus Christi* (FN 1), 20. Sasse refers to Luther's hymn "O Lord, We Praise Thee," LSB 617.
14 "Hermann Sasse: Vorwort zum Sammelband" Vom Sakrament des Altars, in *Corpus Christi* (FN 1), 122.
15 Sasse, *Corpus Christi* (FN 4), 14.
16 Ibid., 21.
17 "Hermann Sasse, Rede auf dem deutschen Lutherischen Tag in Hannover, Juli 1935," in *Corpus Christi* (FN 1), 108.
18 Cf. Joachim Ringleben: Der Sinn der Einsetzungsworte nach Luther, in Joachim Ringleben/Jobst Schöne/Karl-Hermann Kandler (Hg.): Das Mahl Christi mit seiner Kirche (= Lutherisch Glauben. Schriftenreihe des lutherischen Einigungswerks 4), Neuendettelsau 2006, 13–31; cf. Jobst Schöne: Das essbare Heil. Was Martin Luther vom heiligen Abendmahl bekennt, in: Ringleben/Schöne/Kandler, Das Mahl Christi, 33–49, reprint in: Jobst Schöne: Botschafter an Christi Statt. Versuche, Groß Oesingen 1996, 8–13.
19 Ringleben, Der Sinn der Einsetzungsworte (FN 17), 24.
20 Ringleben, Der Sinn der Einsetzungsworte (FN 17), 26, cf. WA 26, 443, 29–31.
21 Ringleben, Der Sinn der Einsetzungsworte (FN 17), 28, cf. WA 26, 382, 8–12, cf. Ibid., 380, 20–28.
22 Ringleben, Der Sinn der Einsetzungsworte (FN 17), 30.
23 FC SD VII 38, "inusitata", BSELK 1470, Kolb/Wengert 599; cf. Schöne, Das essbare Heil (FN 17), 42.
24 BSELK, 104f., Kolb/Wengert 44f.
25 Cf. ApolCA XIII 5, BSELK 510–513; Kolb/Wegnert 219f.
26 Large Catechism,5th Part, 8–14; 31, BSELK 1134–1137, Kolb/Wengert 467f.
27 "Idem effectus est verbi et ritus"; "ritus … est quasi pictura verbi, idem significans, quod verbum. Quare idem est utriusque effectus", ApolCA XIII 5, BSELK 523, Kolb/Wengert 219f.
28 FC SD VII, 42–59, BSELK 1470–1481, Kolb/Wengert 601–603; this is also assumed for the consecration, cf. FC SD VII, 73–82, BSELK 1484–1489, Kolb/Wengert 606f.
29 FC SD VII 62–65, BSELK 1480–1483, Kolb/Wengert 604; cf. FC SD VIII 78, BSELK 1538f., Kolb/Wengert 631.
30 Large Catechism, 5th Part, 4, BSELK 1132–1135, Kolb/Wengert 467.
31 Dietrich Korsch: Die Gegenwart Jesu Christi im Abendmahl. Einleitung in: id. (ed.): Die Gegenwart Jesu Christi im Abendmahl, Leipzig 2005, 16f.
32 Reinhard Schwarz: Selbstvergegenwärtigung Christi, in: Korsch, Die Gegenwart (FN 30), 28.
33 Schwarz, Selbstvergegenwärtigung (FN 32), 43.

34 Large Catechism, 5th Part, 20–32, BSELK 1138–1143, Kolb/Wengert 468–470.
35 Schwarz, Selbstvergegenwärtigung (FN 32), 43.
36 AC XXII, BSELK 132–135, Kolb/Wengert 81f.; ASm III 6, BSELK 766–769, Kolb/Wengert 320f.
37 Sasse, Corpus Christi (FN 1), 50f.
38 FC SD VII 84, BSELK 1488f., Kolb/Wengert 607.
39 Johannes Hund: Das Wort ward Fleisch. Eine systematisch-theologische Untersuchung zur Debatte um die Wittenberger Christologie und Abendmahlslehre in den Jahren 1567 bis 1574 (= FSÖTH 114), Göttingen 2006, 97–111.
40 Hund, Das Wort ward Fleisch (FN 38), 701.
41 Robert Kolb: Die Konkordienformel. Eine Einführung in ihre Geschichte und Theologie (= OUH.E 8), Göttingen 2011, 141.
42 Nicht nachlassen im Dialog: Abendmahl/Eucharistie 2012, ÖR 61 (2012), Heft 4.
43 Susan K. Wood: Die Eucharistie: Ökumenische Errungenschaften und bleibende Unterschiede; in: ÖR 61 (2012), 389–410; I will concentrate on the statements on the real presence (of Christ's body and blood) in the sacrament of the altar but omit those on the sacrifice (of the Mass); cf. also Walter Cardinal Kasper: Harvesting the Fruits. Basic Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue, London / New York 2009), 173–198.
44 Anglikanisch/Römisch-katholische Internationale Kommission: Die Lehre von der Eucharistie, 1971, in: DwÜ 1, Paderborn / Frankfurt am Main, 1983, quoted in Wood, Gegenwart (FN 42), 397.
45 Internationaler anglikanisch/evangelisch-lutherischer Dialog, Pullach-Bericht, in: DwÜ 1 (wie Anm. 133), 63f., quoted in Wood, Gegenwart (FN 42), 395.
46 Konkordie reformatorischer Kirchen in Europa, in: DwÜ 3, Paderborn / Frankfurt am Main, 2003, 727, quoted in Wood, Gegenwart (FN 42), 395.
47 Bericht der Gemeinsamen Kommission der Römisch-katholischen Kirche und des Weltrats Methodistischer Kirchen, in: DwÜ 1 (FN 43), 437f., quoted in Wood, Gegenwart (FN 42), 398.
48 Gemeinsame Römisch-katholische/Evangelische-lutherische Kommission: Das Herrenmahl, Paderborn / Frankfurt/M. 1978, 17; 39; cf. Wood, Gegenwart, 395.
49 Reformiert/Römisch-katholischer Dialog: Die Gegenwart Christi in der Welt, 1977, Phase I, in: DwÜ 1 (wie FN 43), 507, quoted in Wood, Gegenwart (FN 42), 398.
50 Taufe, Eucharistie und Amt. Konvergenzerklärungen der Kommission für Glauben und Kirchenverfassung des Ökumenischen Rates der Kirchen, in: DwÜ 1 (FN 43), 557–567.
51 Ibid, 560.
52 Porvooer Gemeinsame Feststellung DwÜ 2, Paderborn / Frankfurt am Main 2003, 766, quoted in Wood, Gegenwart (FN 42), 396.
53 Gemeinsame lutherisch-orthodoxe Kommission, 13. Vollversammlung, Bratislava (Slowakei), 2. 9 November 2006: Das Mysterium der Kirchen. D/1. Die Heilige Eucharistie im Leben der Kirche, DwÜ 4, Paderborn/Leipzig 2012, 516f.; emphases in the original.
54 Ibid.
55 Reformiert/Römisch-katholischer Dialog: Die Gegenwart Christi in der Welt, 1977, Phase I, in: DwÜ 1 (wie Anm. 22), 507.
56 Das Herrenmahl (FN 47), 39.
57 Dass zumindest für das 16. Jahrhundert ein unüberbrückbarer Gegensatz zwischen lutherischer und reformierter Abendmahlsauffassung bestand, ist evident; vgl. Jan Rohls: Geist und Zeichen. Die reformierte Abendmahlslehre in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung, in: Dietrich Korsch: Die Gegenwart Jesu Christi im Abendmahl. Einleitung in: ders. (Hg.): Die Gegenwart Jesu Christi im Abendmahl, Leipzig 2005, 51–78; charakteristisch für die Unterschiede in der Bestimmung des Stellenwert dieses Streits ist, dass die Reformierten "diese bleibende Differenz […] für nicht derart gravierend" hielten, dass "sie dadurch die Übereinstimmung mit den Lutheranern im Fundamentalen aufgehoben sahen"; ebd., 78.
58 Bericht der Gemeinsamen Kommission der Römisch-katholischen Kirche und des Weltrats Methodistischer Kirchen, in: DwÜ 1 (wie Anm 22), 437f.

59 Anglikanisch/Römisch-katholische Internationale Kommission: Die Lehre von der Eucharistie, 1971, in: DwÜ 1 (wie Anm. 22).
60 Walter Cardinal Kasper, *Harvesting the Fruits: Basic Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue* (London/NY: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009), 186–190.
61 Kasper, Harvesting the Fruits (FN 36), 192.
62 Cf. Werner Klän: Bekenntnis und Sakramentsgemeinschaft – Anfragen an die Tragfähigkeit des Modells der "Leuenberger Konkordie" aus konkordienlutherischer Sicht, in: Werner Klän / Gilberto da Silva (Hg.): Die Leuenberger Konkordie im innerlutherischen Streit. Internationale Perspektiven aus drei Konfessionen (OUH.E 9), Göttingen 2012, 84; not that much differently Dorothea Sattler: Auf dem Weg zu einer "Gemeinsamen Erklärung zum Herrenmahl"? Eine offene Frage im Für und Wider, in: ÖR 61 (2012), 426f.
63 Sattler, Auf dem Weg (FN 61), 411–428.
64 By Harding Meyer and Gunther Wenz, cf. Sattler, Auf dem Weg (wie Anm. 38), 414.
65 Sattler, Auf dem Weg (FN 61), 413.
66 Sattler, Auf dem Weg (FN 61), 417.
67 Ibid., 421; 411
68 Friederike Nüssel: Ist eine "Gemeinsame Erklärung zum Herrenmahl" möglich und sinnvoll? Überlegungen aus evangelischer Sicht, in: ÖR 61 (2012), 437.
69 Ibid., 434.
70 Ibid., 438.
71 Wolfgang Beinert / Ulrich Kühn: Ökumenische Dogmatik, Leipzig / Regenburg 2013.
72 Ibid., 659, emphasis in the original.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid., 659f.
75 Ibid., 676.
76 Ibid., 677; cf. Das Herrenmahl (FN 47), 17.
77 Dorothea Sattler / Friederieke Nüssel: Menschenstimmen zu Abendmahl und Eucharistie. Erinnerungen – Anfragen –Erwartungen, Frankfurt am Main / Paderborn 2004, 209f.
78 Ibid., 205.
79 Ibid., 209.
80 Volker Leppin / Dorothea Sattler (Hg.): Gemeinsam am Tisch des Herrn / Together at the Lord's table. Ein Votum des Ökumenischen Arbeitskreises evangelischer und katholischer Theologen / A statement of the Ecumenical Study Group of Protestant and Catholic Theologians (= Dialog der Kirchen 17), München 2020.
81 Together at the Lord's Table (FN 79), 85 (1.3.1).
82 Ibid., 85 (1.3.1).
83 Ibid., 86 (1.3.4).
84 Ibid., 103f. (3.11.2).
85 Ibid., Chapter 2, 87f.
86 Ibid., 87 (2.1).
87 Cf. Werner Klän: Bekenntnis und Sakramentsgemeinschaft, in: Werner Klän / Gilberto da Silva: Die Leuenberger Konkordie im innerlutherischen Streit. Internationale Perspektiven aus drei Konfessionen (= OUH.E 9), 74–91.
88 Together at the Lord's Table (FN 79), 92 (3.4).
89 Ibid.
90 Ibid., 93 (3.5)
91 Ibid. 118–120 (5.4).
92 Ibid., 120–122 (5.5).
93 Ibid. 120 (5.5.2).
94 Ibid., 121 (5.5.4).

95 Ibid., 127 (6.2.2)
96 Ibid., The statement turns to the well-known questions about the office of the ministry (general priesthood of the believers, ordination, succession, apostolicity) and makes remarkable statements such as: "The orderly ministry that is bound to ordination is part of the Church's being. It is not derived from delegation at the behest of the congregation, but to divine vocation and institution" (ibid. 127, 6.2.3). A Lutheran can agree to this with all his heart—but the question is whether this will be accepted in the liberal Protestant camp and by Christians who are formed by "free church" approaches. But then the statement concludes, "taking pneumatological aspects into account," that "church ministries are clearly and publicly effective," and therefore, are to be recognized "as the work of the Spirit" (ibid., 131, 6.3.5). In this way, any kind of ministry is granted the legitimation of divine institution because of its "fruitfulness" (ibid.). Ordination, however, is thus downgraded without any doubt, and the way is paved for the "mutual recognition of ministries" (ibid.,132, 6.4)—but which "ministries" and where do they derive from? Is there still an independence, a specificity of the ordained ministry left? In any case, the authors of the statement hold that according to their argumentation "no theological argument stands in the way of the mutual recognition of the apostolicity of ministries" (ibid.). This, however, must be doubted.
97 Apol XIII 11, BSELK 514; "But if ordination is understood with reference to the ministry of the Word, we have no objection to calling ordination a sacrament." Kolb/Wengert, 220.
98 Together at the Lord's Table (FN 79), 128 (6.2.6).
99 Ibid., 101 (3.10.5).
100 Cf. Sasse, *Corpus Christi* (FN 1), 90
101 Together at the Lord's Table (FN 79), 133f. (7.2).
102 Ibid.
103 Together at the Lord's Table (FN 79), 114 (5.2.2).
104 Ibid., 110 (5.1.1)
105 Ibid.
106 AC X, BSELK 104, Kolb/Wengert 44f.
107 ApolCA X 2, BSELK 424-427, Kolb/Wengert 184.
108 Together at the Lord's Table (FN 79), 102 (3.10.8).
109 Ibid.
110 Ibid., 118 (5.4.2).
111 Ibid., 102 (3.10.8).
112 ApolCA X, BSELK, 425; "the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present," Kolb/Wengert, 184.
113 Together at the Lord's Table (FN 79), 102 (3.10.8).
114 "We believe, teach, and confess that the body and blood of Christ are received not only spiritually through faith, but also orally with the bread and wine, though not in a Capernaitic fashion but rather in a supernatural, heavenly way because of the sacramental union of the elements." FC Ep. VII 15, BSELK 1260; Kolb/Wengert 506.
115 Gunther Wenz: Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche. Eine historische und systematische Einführung in das Konkordienbuch, Bd. 1, Berlin – New York 1996, 149; transl. W.K.
116 Together at the Lord's Table (FN 79), 132 (6.4).
117 "Hier ist alle Philosophie zu Ende" Sasse, *Corpus Christi* (FN 1), 24
118 Gerhard Delling: Abendmahl II. Urchristliches Mahl-Verständnis, in TRE I, 53, quoted by Karl-Hermann Kandler: Die Verwaltung des hl. Abendmahls, dogmatisch und praktisch-theologisch, in: Joachim Ringleben / Jobst Schöne / Karl-Hermann Kandler (eds.): Das Mahl Christi mit seiner Kirche (= Lutherisch Glauben, Heft 4), Erlangen 2006, 58, transl. W.K.
119 David P. Scaer: Taufe und Herrenmahl im Leben der Kirche, in: Manfred Roensch / Jobst Schöne (eds.): Die eine heilige christliche Kirche und die Gnadenmittel, Erlangen1980, 181; transl. W.K.
120 Cf. The report of the discussion, ibid., 196f.

121 Karl-Hermann Kandler. Christi Leib und Blut. Studien zur gegenwärtigen lutherischen Abendmahlslehre (AGTL NF 2), Hannover 1982, 128, transl. W.K.
122 Sasse, *Corpus Christi* (FN 1), 77, transl. W.K.
123 Kandler, Christi Leib und Blut (FN 123), 140, transl. W.K.
124 Reinhard Brandt: Ob die Worte: "Das ist mein Leib" wohl feste stahn?, in: Korsch, Die Gegenwart (FN 33), 135, transl. W.K..
125 Dorothea Sattler / Friederike Nüssel (eds.): Menschenstimmen zu Abendmahl und Eucharistie. Erinnerungen – Anfragen –Erwartungen, Frankfurt am Main / Paderborn 2004; on „true and real presence of Christ in the celepration oft he Supper" ("Wahre und wirkliche Gegenwart Jesu Christi in der Feier des Mahls"), cf. ibid., 194–210.
126 Karl Rahner: Ökumenische Theologie der Zukunft, in: Einheit in Vielfalt. Schriften zur ökumenischen Theologie, Sämtliche Werke, Bd. 27, Freiburg 2002, 115, quoted by Sattler / Nüssel, Menschenstimmen (FN 127), 201.
127 Ibid., 200f., transl. W.K.
128 Together at the Lord's Table (FN 79), 115 (5.2.4).
129 "Et comperimus non tantum Romanam Ecclesiam affirmare corporalen praesentiam Christi, sed idem et nunc sentire et olim sensisse Graecam Ecclesiam." ApolCA X, BSELK 425, 15–17, quoted in German: "So wissen wir, das nicht allein die Römische, sondern auch die Griechische Kirche die leibliche gegenwart Christi im heiligen Abendmal geleret" FC SD VII, BSELK 1460, 14–15; "We know that not only the Roman church but also the Greek church teach the bodily presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, Kolb/Wengert, 595.
130 LC, Fifth Part: The Sacrament of the Altar 35, Kolb/Wengert, 470.
131 Brandt, Ob die Worte: "Das ist mein Leib" wohl feste stahn?, (FN 126), 136, transl. W.K.
132 Theologische Feststellungen zu den Arnoldshainer Abendmahlsthesen – Lutherische Theologische Hochschule, quoted in Kandler, Christi Leib und Blut (FN 123), 139, transl. W.K.

Recent Research on the Lutheran Confessional Writings

Robert Kolb

Robert Kolb is mission professor emeritus of systematic theology at Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis. *Luther's Treatise* On Christian Freedom *and Its Legacy* is one of the most recent of his many published works.

The Lutheran confessional documents gathered in the Book of Concord present the heart of what Luther, Melanchthon, and their students bequeathed to the Christian church. The Formula of Concord charted a path to conciliation and concord among the adherents of the Augsburg Confession, as the Formula labels those in the Wittenberg circle. The Augsburg Confession and its Apology, the Smalcald Articles, and the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope were all aimed at the proper conduct of ecumenical discussions within the larger household of faith. Throughout the history of those who took the Book of Concord as their secondary authority for confessing the biblical faith, many Lutherans have participated prominently in conversations with other Christians. My own teacher Hermann Sasse is a good example of this engagement with fellow believers of other traditions. My own church body has neglected this part of the example of Augsburg to too large an extent. But the treasures of the Lutheran confessions have more to say in the twenty-first century to Christianity and to the world, as well as to those who claim the name "Lutheran," than ever. Our proper presentation of the *Concordia's* teaching and confession must be based on careful study, including study of the contexts of the documents, for it to continue in faithful fashion what confessors of the early church and the sixteenth century have bequeathed us.

No text flows from an author's pen apart from the author's context. To understand any piece of writing from the history of the church, both the accurate rendering of the text and the reports that aid comprehending the context are

No text flows from an author's pen apart from the author's context.

necessary for our honest use of documents in our own time. In both regards, recent scholarly work has greatly enhanced the study of the documents in the Book of Concord. In view of the rich research on the history and context of the ecumenical creeds,[1] this article will concentrate on the other confessions, authored in the sixteenth century. This brief survey discusses the rich insights contained in a host of article-length studies in periodicals and volumes of collected essays only in a few cases.

The Sources

The updating of the text in 1930 replaced the *Concordia* of Johann Tobias Müller (1804–1884) published in 1848. A group of German scholars was assembled hastily in the late 1920s to prepare this new edition as part of the celebration of the four-hundredth anniversary of the Augsburg Confession. The publisher, Günther Ruprecht (1898–2001) of Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht in Göttingen, resolved soon after its appearance that the preparation of the text had proceeded too rapidly and that a revision should be initiated.[2] The project languished after a beginning in the 1980s and was resumed with the support of the Evangelical Churches of Germany (EKD) in earnest after the death of the then leader of these efforts, Gottfried Seebaß (1937–2008), of the University of Heidelberg. His former student, Irene Dingel of the University of Mainz, and director of the Institute for European History in Mainz led a team of scholars in completing the new edition that appeared in 2014. This team included Adolf Martin Ritter (Heidelberg) for the ecumenical creeds; Volker Leppin (Tübingen) for the Augsburg Confession; Christian Peters (Münster), assisted by Bastian Basse and Rafael Kuhnert, for the Apology of the Augsburg Confession; Klaus Breuer (Heidelberg) and Hans-Otto Schneider (Mainz) for the Smalcald Articles and the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope; Robert Kolb (Saint Louis)[3] for Luther's catechisms. Dingel edited the Formula of Concord. Marion Bechtold–Mayer (Mainz) and Johannes Hund (Mainz) provided editorial assistance for the entire project and edited the *Catalogus Testimoniorum*.[4] The 1930 edition had sought to publish the earliest version of the documents available although in the case of the Augsburg Confession the text was created by the editor out of existing drafts that attempt to present what was read to the imperial diet June 25, 1530, rather than the 1531 *editio princeps*. The 2014 edition uses a variety of texts as well but adheres more closely to the principle of making the version used by subsequent generations—the history of the actual impact of the documents—available. Particularly important is the text of the Formula of Concord as published in the Book of Concord of 1580, with the translation of 1584, replacing an earlier manuscript version of Jakob

Andreae. Thus, students now have a text that better suits analyzing the role of that played by the documents as they were accessible to those who used the Book of Concord after 1580.

In addition, Dingel and her team produced two volumes of related materials to illuminate the origins and contexts of the documents. Particularly valuable is the second volume; it contains the first collection ever of the documents that form the stages of development that led to the text of the Formula of Concord, from Andreae's "Five Articles" (1568/1569) and his *Six Christian Sermons* (1573) through "the Swabian Concord," "the Swabian-Saxon Concord," and "the Maulbronn Formula" (1573–1576) to the Torgau Book, plus the stages of development of the preface by Jakob Andreae. Dingel and Marion Bechthold-Mayer provided carefully edited texts of these documents.[5]

To delve more deeply into the background and path to the Formula of Concord, Dingel, with another team of researchers, has produced what by 2023 will be nine volumes of edited treatises of various lengths from the controversies leading to the Formula of Concord. The series is entitled *Controversia et Confessio*. Its volumes cover controversies over the Augsburg Interim and the Leipzig Interim or Proposal for the Saxon Diet, the Majoristic controversy, controversies over the third use of the law, the synergistic controversy, original sin, along with responses to Anti-Trinitarian writings, and critiques of Andreas Osiander's doctrine of justification. One volume presents documents from the Crypto-Philippist or "Crypto-Calvinist" controversy on the Lord's Supper.[6]

Contributing to our ability to assess the political context in which the confessional documents came to be written are two projects centered at the University of Leipzig. The first opens up the correspondence of Elector Moritz of Saxony, especially important for the analysis of the "Leipzig Interim."[7] The second is beginning to edit the correspondence of Elector Johann of Saxony as well as his brother and predecessor, Friedrich the Wise, under the direction of Leipzig professors Armin Kohnle and Manfred Rudersdorf.[8] Volume 1 of a projected six-volume edition of correspondence of "southwest German theologians" from 1550 to 1620 is also making correspondence of key figures in the background of the Formula of Concord, such as Johannes Brenz and Jakob Andreae, accessible to researchers in the period.[9] Alongside edited texts of Andreas Osiander[10]—for the background of article three of the Formula of Concord—and Martin Bucer[11]—for the unfolding of the "Wittenberg Concord" cited in article seven of the Formula of Concord and the context of the use of the Augsburg Confession in the 1530s and 1540s—these volumes call for closer study of the personal dynamics that advanced the formulation of the Wittenberg theology in the genre of confessional writings.

Recent Scholarly Studies

Irene Dingel's processing of the work she has done on the Book of Concord is largely in German, but English-language readers can have access to her treatment of the development of the final product[12] and to her interpretation of the development of the concept of "the body of doctrine" under Melanchthon's influence in article-length studies in translation.[13] Her appraisal of the significance of the Book of Concord for defining the term "Lutheran" also sheds light on how the Concordia came to be and to assume its role in the church.[14]

The master work of Erlangen professor Wilhelm Maurer on the construction of the text of the Augsburg Confession and its interpretation[15] has not been replaced. Furthermore, relatively little book-length study of the context or the content of the Augustana has appeared recently. An exception is the careful study by Ragnar Andersen of the negotiations and circumstances in which the confession was drafted and defended in Augsburg. He demonstrates that Luther, Melanchthon, and their colleagues had set two goals for the diet: conciliation with their establishment opponents and confession of their understanding of Scripture. Melanchthon only reluctantly abandoned the efforts at conciliation, but he carried through effectively in confessing the faith.[16] A new and crucial investigation of the unfolding of the controversy over the sacraments between 1524 and 1528 by Amy Nelson Burnett traces the evolution of arguments on all sides as in those years. Dispute emerged from Luther's differences with his Wittenberg colleague Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt into the broader arguments with Ulrich Zwingli and (most importantly, Burnett convincingly contends) Johannes Oecolampadius, along with several Anabaptist authors over not only the Lord's Supper but also baptism and confession and absolution.[17] Treatment of the sacraments in the Augsburg Confession and the Apology arose out of these disputes. Gordon A. Jensen's study of the Wittenberg Concord of 1536 carefully assesses the development and impact of this document that was aimed at the reconciliation of south German Evangelicals led by Martin Bucer with the Wittenberg theologians. It aids in understanding the development of the Wittenberg treatment of the Lord's Supper.[18]

Relatively little book-length study of the context or the content of the Augustana has appeared recently.

Few scholars have lent time to analyzing the composition and use of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, but in 1997 a meticulous overview and analysis of the Apology initiated a fresh stage in its study. Christian Peters's elucidation of the changes introduced by Melanchthon's revision of the quarto edition of the Apology in April 1531, provoked by Luther's urging that the defense of the Augsburg

Confession was urgent, led to the text translated by Justus Jonas and incorporated into the 1580 Book of Concord, the octavo edition of September 1531. Luther's suggestions for changes were largely responsible for the revision.[19] Conversations with Peters launched Charles Arand into studies that bring Peters's insights into English and go beyond his work in several aspects exploring the ways in which Melanchthon's rhetorical scholarship aided his communication of the gospel in the Apology.[20]

The Smalcald Articles and the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope are rightly called the neglected documents of the Book of Concord. Further study of the former must incorporate the insights of William R. Russell[21] and Werner Führer,[22] both of whom have provided extensive assessment of the composition and content of the Articles within the body of Luther's teaching.

Further probing the text of Luther's Catechisms on the basis of their use of the tradition of the ancient and medieval church must rest upon the detailed and theologically acute examination by Heidelberg professor Albrecht Peters.[23] Charles P. Arand's study of the context in which Luther composed his catechisms and his analysis of their structure, with helpful suggestions for interpretation and use, provides English-language readers a useful, insightful introduction to these texts and their foundational role in the life of the Lutheran church.[24] The instructional and devotional engagement with the texts of both catechisms finds models and support in two recent popular explorations for application of their texts to daily life by Timothy J. Wengert, John Pless, and Robert Kolb.[25] Though not strictly scholarly investigations, these presentations are based on solid theological assessment of these essential tools throughout Lutheran history and sensitive pastoral conversation with Luther in these volumes.

In the past fifty years an explosion of research on specific facets of the controversies leading to the Formula of Concord stimulate further use of the documents edited in the *Controversia et Confessio* series. The introductions to the controversies and to the individual documents in the individual volumes of the series furnish researchers insightful overviews of the course of those controversies. The following survey lists almost exclusively books; especially in the case of the Formula, the wealth of literature in essays in periodicals and volumes of collected essays extends what is discussed here significantly.

The clarification of how to interpret and apply the legacy of the Wittenberg reformers took specific shape because of the religious policy of Emperor Charles V promulgated after his victory over Evangelical princes and towns in the Smalcald War of 1546–1548. The document formulating this policy came to be dubbed "the Augsburg Interim."

In 1997 a meticulous overview and analysis of the Apology initiated a fresh stage in its study.

Joachim Mehlhausen (Tübingen) edited its text,[26] which also appear in *Controversia et Confessio* volume 1. Studies of the composition, content, and impact of Augsburg Interim offer a variety of perspectives on the political and theological factors involved in its propagation and influence on German ecclesiastical and political life in the years following its publication in 1548.[27] The adiaphoristic controversy that grew out of the Leipzig "Interim" has attracted little historical research since Hans Christoph von Hase's study of 1940. Von Hase placed the protest against the proposed imposition of its compromises in the context of the opposition to the National Socialist regime by the Confessing Church.[28] General background for the controversies that ensued in the context of the religious policies of ducal Saxony is meticulously examined in the dissertation of the US American historian resident in Germany, Daniel Gehrt.[29] Dingel has also provided orientation to the "culture of controversy" of the period, which she sees not as simply strife for strife's and power's sake, but as a necessary process of clarification in a continuation of the medieval university disputation in public print and to some extent in the vernacular.[30]

Further study of Formula of Concord article one on original sin must take into consideration two recent biographical studies of Matthias Flacius Illyricus, whose contention that original sin becomes the "substance" of the fallen sinner sparked the controversy solved in this article. Oliver Olson focuses on Flacius as a defender of the integrity of Luther's theology; Luka Ilic traces Flacius's gradual radicalization as a representative of the reformer's way of thinking.[31] Friedhelm Gleiß's thorough examination of Flacius's confrontation with Viktorin Strigel on issues relating to the freedom or bondage of the will in the Weimar Disputation outlines how Flacius's thinking on original sin developed in the context of his defense of the boundness of the sinful will.[32] The stages in the debates over the role of the will in "conversion"—both coming to faith and repentance, as the word was understood in the sixteenth century—reveal how Wittenberg students processed what Luther and Melanchthon had taught them on the will in facing questions new and old in the wake of the adiaphoristic controversy and the breakdown of trust within the Wittenberg circle. Articles two and eleven of the Formula came out of a delicate process of struggling with God's total responsibility for all things and the responsibility he has fashioned as part of being human in his image.[33]

Andreas Osiander aroused controversy with his peculiar doctrine of justification, derived from his orientation to kabbalistic exegesis. He defined righteousness as the indwelling divine nature of Christ, a kind of divinization even though he did not use the term. He rejected Luther's doctrine of the forensic transformation of sinners into children God through forgiveness wrought by Christ's death and resurrection. His views brought practically all in the Wittenberg circles onto the barricades of refutation. Formula of Concord article three resolved the controversy with a resounding rejection of Osiander's misunderstanding of the nature of redemption and

of faith. This controversy remains highly relevant in our age in which, like all ages, sinners want to be "like God" rather than the human creatures the Creator created us to be. Not only Osiander's edited works, mentioned above, enhance further study of this controversy. Timothy J. Wengert's wide-ranging, precise analysis of the several dozen treatises by individuals across the spectrum of the Wittenberg circle highlights the several facets of Luther's and Melanchthon's teaching on justification by faith that Osiander had failed to integrate into his thinking.[34]

The controversies over Wittenberg professor Georg Major's defense of the phrase "good works are necessary for salvation," the proper distinction of law and gospel, and the third use of the law—Formula articles four through six—helped clarify the relationship of saving faith and the fruits of faith. Deeper probing of Major's life occurs in article length in a number of studies, many in the volume *Georg Major (1502–1574): Ein Theologe der Wittenberger Reformation.*[35] Wengert's study of the early stages of the dispute over the role of the law in the Christian life between Melanchthon, with Luther's support, and their student Johann Agricola[36] advances earlier studies.[37] The so-called antinomian controversies of the 1550s and 1560s are thoroughly scrutinized and interpreted by Matthias Richter on the basis of printed and archival materials.[38]

This controversy remains highly relevant in our age in which, like all ages, sinners want to be "like God" rather than the human creatures the Creator created us to be.

By 1570 the most burning, pressing disputes within the Wittenberg circle revolved around the issues of the nature of the presence of Christ, specifically his body and blood, in the Lord's Supper and related questions of Christology. Recent research has probed deeper into several aspects of these debates that issued into articles seven through nine of the Formula of Concord. The erudite, painstaking analysis of the christological debates by Theodor Mahlmann continues to build the foundation for research into specific aspects of those discussions.[39] Melanchthon's views that played a major role in the related controversies[40] and the clash between Joachim Westphal, pastor in Hamburg, and John Calvin over the Lord's Supper[41] have become clearer through fresh examinations of the sources. Key to the precise setting of the formulation of articles seven and eight of the Formula was the so-called Crypto-Calvinist—more accurately Crypto-Philippist—controversy in electoral Saxony in the 1570s. The detailed investigation of Johannes Hund has given us insight into the course of the struggle that divided Melanchthon's faithful followers in Saxony and elsewhere, with perceptive theological analysis of the concerns of all involved.[42]

None of the documents in the Book of Concord purport to be a manual for pastoral care, but their way of thinking biblically guide pastoral practice.

The publication of the Formula of Concord in the Book of Concord attracted fierce criticism from a spectrum of Reformed theologians, from adherents of Matthias Flacius, and some notice from Roman Catholic theologians. The storms of rejection that swirled around the Concordia at the end of the sixteenth century are carefully rehearsed and analyzed by Irene Dingel in her *Concordia controversa*.[43] This study gives stimulus for further research into the use of the Book of Concord during the years between its publication and the career of Johann Gerhard (1582–1637), a kind of "black hole" in Lutheran history.

Finally, the Lutheran confessions cry out to be confessed and applied to the lives of God's people. None of the documents in the Book of Concord purport to be a manual for pastoral care, but their way of thinking biblically guide pastoral practice. Timothy Wengert has demonstrated how that works in his approach to the Augsburg Confession and to the Formula of Concord; on the basis of pastoral and personal experience he illustrates how each article of these two documents pierce to the heart of the problems encountered as believers interact with the world around them, with their own inner struggles, and with the Lord who has redeemed them.[44]

Despite the growing number of studies into the content and context of the Book of Concord, many facets of the documents and the period from 1530 to 1580 remain as challenges for future research. Beyond that historical research, the tasks of theological interpretation and application challenge a new generation of students. They are called to continue to voice the Lutheran confession of the faith for the household of God in an age in which this confession has more to say than ever.

Endnotes

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28 *Die Gestalt der Kirche Luthers, Der Casus Confessionis im Kampf des Matthias Flacius gegen das Interim von* 1548 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1940). Von Hase was a cousin of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

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Christ and Community
Reflections on John Barclay's Reflections on Grace

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John Barclay recently has given us a short, but dense volume that supplements his lengthy exploration of Paul's understanding of grace, gifts, and giving.[1] This second gift from Barclay is much more than a condensation of his initial volume. Here he offers his continuing reflections on what it means to know God's grace and to receive the gift of salvation. Together, the two volumes represent a career of reflection on Paul's gospel in the face of questions raised by E. P. Sanders's *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* and the "new perspective on Paul" that followed. This "new perspective" has grown old and is perhaps about to disappear. The arguments have stagnated. But Barclay has not. He freshly retraces his earlier discussion of grace, gifts, and giving, with sensitivity to the questions of the Reformation along the way. Following his brief, but penetrating expositions of Paul's letters, he turns to contemporary "perspectives" on grace, and then offers his own perspective on the meaning of God's grace for the present moment. I offer here my own reflections on Barclay's reflections on grace.

Barclay's thoughtful and wide-ranging discussion is centered on two basic claims concerning Paul. First, Paul understands grace in terms of its absolute "incongruity." This "incongruity" (one of six possible "perfections of grace" that Barclay discerns) is found in the favor and mercy of God given without consideration of the worthiness of the recipients. This "incongruity" pertains not only to God's initial granting of grace. It accompanies them all along their way.

Second, Barclay rightly affirms the necessity of our response to God's gift of salvation in Christ. God's grace is given to us as we are, but it does not leave us as we are. Moral transformation, as Barclay puts it, was not an optional extra in Paul's understanding of grace. Like Bonhoeffer before him, he is worried about "cheap grace" and suspects that within appeals to the purity of "grace" an antinomian message may hide. Contrary to modern Western notions of "gift"—which Barclay regards as fed in some measure by Protestant Christianity—the "return" of a gift, including the gift of God in Christ, need not destroy the gift or unmask it as an economic exchange (cf. Jacques Derrida). On the contrary, the return of the gift and its circulation serves to establish community. Modern notions of altruism or disinterested benevolence display an individualism that is alien to Paul.

In Barclay's reading, the purity of God's grace within the human response is secured for Paul not merely by Christ, but *in Christ*. The new life effected by the grace of God is an "ex-centric" existence in Christ (91–93, page numbers are from *Paul and the Power of Grace*). Those who believe in Christ live in a transformative relationship with him, in which they are given "a new mindset operative in new patterns of behavior, appetite and practice" (95). Out of this transformative relationship with Christ, grace "remolds the self and recreates the community of believers" (125). This new *habitus* (as the concept is used by Pierre Bourdieu) remains outside of us, bound to our new relationship with Christ. It does not function as a condition for a second gift. Future judgment does not depend on our collaboration with grace.

One cannot help but appreciate Barclay's careful reflection on the text, his attention to the Christian tradition, and his concern to restate the significance of Paul's gospel for Christian life in our time. I wonder, however, if his proposal presents an ideal of Christian transformation and community, rather than giving account of the actual Christian community and life as it is reflected in Paul's letters—and as we know and experience it today.

Barclay's two primary concerns are worth examining more closely. His entirely appropriate conception of "the incongruity of grace" would take on a sharper contour, I would suggest, when we recognize its setting within the drama of the human contention with God (cf. Rom 3:1–8). According to Paul, God reconciled us to himself through the death of his Son when we were not merely unworthy, but outright enemies (Rom 5:10). It was God who gave his Son into death for us. But we were the ones whose "feet were quick" to shed Christ's blood (Rom 3:15; Is 59:7). God's grace does not always reach its τέλος. It is often met with ingratitude, as Paul's letters make clear. The church in Corinth "divided Christ" into factions (1 Cor 1:13). Someone in the church was behaving worse than the pagans. And the church was celebrating it (1 Cor 5:1–2). The more Christ's apostle loves the Corinthians, the less they love him (2 Cor 12:15). His appeal, "Do not receive the grace of God in vain!" was well-grounded (2 Cor 6:1). He finally asks them to judge whether Jesus

Christ is in them or not (2 Cor 13:5). Matters are no better in Galatia, where believers have been drawn away from "the One who called them by the grace of Christ" for another gospel (Gal 1:6). Paul wryly comments that he has become their enemy by telling them the truth (Gal 4:16). Even if matters elsewhere are better than in Corinth or Galatia, Paul's other letters reveal churches that in one way or another failed to respond to God's grace as they ought. Sarah's justified laughter has its counterpart in the "incongruous grace" that accompanies the church all along its way.[2] The seed is sown indiscriminately and bears its fruit only occasionally. God's grace remains grace, whether or not it works transformation. That judgment falls on those who ignore this grace does not diminish it. It presupposes it (Rom 2:4–6).

As Bonhoeffer rightly insists, it is only as Jesus Christ stands between us that we can come to one another in true community.

None of these observations undermine Barclay's proper affirmation of the "incongruity" of God's grace, or his equally valid insistence that God expects a return from his grace. They do, however, warn us away from the ideal of the happy community, in which "works of compassion and mutual support that circulate within the community of believers and spill out from them to others" (150). The experience of the earliest community in Acts was evanescent and was immediately subverted by a Derridean lie (Acts 5:1–11). Paul, for his part, was quite aware of the danger of a gift functioning as an economic transaction in disguise. He would rather die than accept a gift from the Corinthian church (1 Cor 9:15), even though he happily receives a gift from some of its members (1 Cor 16:17–18). In thanking the Philippians for their gift, he makes it clear that he did not need it (Phil 4:10–13). Instead, he is glad for the increase of the "fruit" accounted to them (Phil 4:17). They have offered a sacrifice to God, the true and only benefactor (Phil 4:17–20). Contrary to Barclay's reading, Paul does, in fact, transpose the Macedonian gift from himself to God. He does so in order to guard its proper return to God the Giver (Phil 4:20). His disruption of what might have been a merely human circulation of the gift thwarts the instrumentalizing of that gift in the manipulation of the other—in this case, Paul himself (10). Neither Corinth nor Philippi may claim the role of benefactor and make the apostle their client. For this reason, I suggest, Paul could not and would not have given his "self *into* a collective 'we'" where interests may be pooled and benefits shared (157). No community, not even Christian community, is free from the danger of oppression (cf. Lk 22:25). Despite Barclay's admirable appeal to the centrality of Christ and the "ex-centric" nature of a Christian, I am not persuaded that he has come to terms with the nature of community as Paul understood to be created in Christ. As Bonhoeffer rightly insists, it is only as Jesus Christ stands between us that we can come to one

another in true community.[3] Otherwise we seek to dominate one another with our own ideals of community. We can give thanks that all of us have tasted of community here and now. But community remains for us a matter of faith and hope, just as it was for Paul: *credo in sanctorum communionem*.

My difference with Barclay on the question of our "transformation" and the community that arises from it is rooted in a differing conception of "ex-centric" transformation of believers in Christ. Barclay properly rejects the grounding "transformation" in terms of an ontology of substance as it is usually understood. In such an understanding, "transformation" necessarily loses its "ex-centric" nature. But a purely relational conception of "transformation" brings its own difficulties. What, precisely, is the nature of our relationship with Christ? Barclay's statements on the matter bear a certain ambiguity. On the one hand he affirms that the grace given by Christ is *Christ himself*. Paul speaks of believers being *born* through their conversion (122). At the same time, he is able to say that "the believer becomes a new person in total self-identification with Christ" (122). How much of our "transformation" then depends on the "ex-centric" Christ, and how much on *our* self-identification with Christ? A mere appeal to the concursus of divine monergism and human response does not answer the question of location, which is essential to Barclay's understanding of "ex-centricity." The gift is objective: it happened in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ (124). The gift is subjective: it is "received and operative as the total reformulation of the self" (124). Does "transformation" then finally depend on the human act of reception, worked by Christ through the Spirit though it may be? If so, the work of God in Christ finally may be regarded as immanently present within the social, psychological, and moral forces that are operative in the improvement of the human being. What is the relationship, as Paul understands it, between our "transformation" and the word of the gospel and the faith it effects?

Clarification comes, I suggest, from Paul's simple, yet profound statement: "I have been crucified with Christ. I live, yet it is no longer I, but Christ lives in me." (Gal 2:19b–20a). In affirming that Christ lives in him, Paul confesses that Christ has possessed the whole of him, including his bodily life. He has been baked into one cake with Christ, as Luther affirms and Barclay notes (22). As Barclay rightly insists, Paul does not thereby become an automaton of Christ. Paul remains—"I live!" But it is no longer Paul who lives, but Christ who lives in him. We are dealing here with the paradox from which all Christian living proceeds: Christ and the human being are simultaneously one and distinct. The nature of "participation" in Christ that constitutes this paradox receives definition in Paul's following words: "the life that I live, I live by faith . . ." (Gal 2:20b). Christ's giving of himself into bodily death does away with our existence under the divine curse. His bodily resurrection establishes our new person. Outward "transformation" is thus the necessary epiphenomenon of a more fundamental, material reality. The paradoxical presence of Christ in the

human being—"I, yet not I"—is established by Christ's act of love. It is mediated by the apostolic word concerning him, including the word that Paul speaks here for the benefit of the Galatians. Faith, which Paul here seeks to mediate to the Galatians, comes through his word concerning Christ. Here we meet an ontology of the word that effects what it announces. Relation and substance meet in the self-giving Christ and the word that proclaims him. I see no other way in which to retain the Pauline *extra nos* that Barclay rightly affirms. Christian living is nothing other than the resurrection from the dead that has intersected the present in Christ (Rom 6:1–11).[4] Barclay's construal of our "transformation" by Christ does not fully take into account Paul's understanding of the re-creation of our person—body and life—in Christ.

These reflections on "transformation" and the community worked by grace are inextricably bound up with Barclay's proper insistence that God expects a return from his grace. Luther and the Lutheran Reformation recognized this matter and wrestled with it. We shall return to the Lutheran response below. In view of the questions of "ex-centricity," "transformation," and community discussed above, it is not clear to me that Barclay has sufficiently clarified how and why the return of God's grace does not disrupt grace. I offer here two reflections on this question.

It is only right that we owe God thanks and praise for our existence, and even more for our salvation in Christ. But, how, we may ask, can there be a return gift to the Creator? It is not immediately clear how the "priority" of the Creator's grace (another of Barclay's six possible "perfections of grace") allows for any such return. Paul, citing the prophets, is emphatic on this matter: "No one has given to God . . . all things exist from God, through God, and to God" (Rom 11:35–36). How then can God expect a return of his grace? The answer for Paul and the rest of Scripture, I would suggest, is that God's grace makes its own return to God through us. Isn't our return of thanksgiving (χάρις) in response to grace (χάρις) in reality a reception of God, the Giver? Without thanksgiving, there would be a mere grasping or enjoyment of the thing given, but not a reception of the gift and the Giver.[5] Should not the doing of good to our neighbor itself be understood as an act of thanksgiving? To echo Paul, "What do you (sg.) have that you did not receive? This observation corresponds to Paul's deflection of the gift of the Philippians that we noted above. The gift that was given to him was more fundamentally, "a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God." (Phil 4:18).[6] In this light, we might enlarge Bonhoeffer's claim concerning Christian community: Because Christ stands between me and my neighbor, we have community in him. Because Christ, who is present in my neighbor, stands between me and my Creator, I may make a return to the Creator—a return that turns out to be nothing other than a reception of the Creator's saving work in Christ. In giving thanks to God by "becoming Christ" to our neighbor, we enter into God's grace and more fully receive and recognize that grace. In Christ, God, who in the neighbor is the recipient of our thankful response, remains beyond the neighbor,

both supplying the means to give and also making us into givers, as he himself is Giver (cf. Mt 5:43–48).

This dynamic is at work in the figural imagery of agriculture within the Scriptures. Throughout them, fields, vineyards, trees, and fruit are employed in metaphorical description of the exchange of gift and return between God and human beings. In goodness and grace to human beings, God creates "the fruit of the lips" that give him thanks.[7] The doing of good to the neighbor is also pictured in an agricultural figure, as for example, in Paul's reference to the "fruit of the Spirit" and to the "harvest" that comes from "sowing to the Spirit" (Gal 5:22; 6:8–10). As with Paul's christological statements in Galatians 2:19–20, human passivity and activity appear here not as coordinate realities, but in an ordered paradox. The human being is fundamentally passive: the Spirit is the agent who produces fruit (Gal 5:22). The human being is nevertheless active: we are to sow to the Spirit, as to the "good earth" which produces fruit (Gal 6:8–10). If one instead "sows to the flesh" one will inherit corruption. Our fundamental passivity in this final return to God is established in the gift of the Spirit, who is nothing other than the age to come that has broken into the present evil age in Christ (Gal 1:4; 3:14; 4:5–7). The image of harvest, which appears elsewhere at decisive points in the Scriptures, makes it clear that God not only expects and seeks and requires a return of his grace from the human being, but that we are finally accountable for it.

In goodness and grace to human beings, God creates "the fruit of the lips" that give him thanks.

The question of "return" cannot be separated from the final judgment. It thus transcends human community within the present world.

As we have noted above, the questions with which Barclay wrestles are not new.[8] Already Luther, in his 1520 tractate, "The Freedom of a Christian," recognizes that from the very beginning of creation the human being was given the task of tilling and keeping the garden in service to the Creator. The works of the believer in Christ, Luther comments, are the same: through our faith, we have been restored to paradise. We do works, not to obtain our salvation, but to please our Creator, who has ordered our tasks. Out of love for God, says Luther, "I give myself as Christ to my neighbor." This service in obedience to God comes to expression in Luther's second, paradoxical proposition concerning freedom: "A Christian is a dutiful servant of all, subject to all." In support of this thesis, Luther points to Paul's instruction in Romans 13:8: "be *indebted* to no one, except to love one another." A return is required of us![9] And it is love of the neighbor that constitutes that return. In view of Barclay's concern for community, we might add that it is Christ who establishes our community. When and where this community is present, it is nothing other than the reception of Christ

as God's grace and gift. Through him we have become indebted to love one another.

Barclay's questions often turn out to be old questions in new forms. That does not mean they are not worth asking! Barclay has thought long and hard about the nature and working of God's grace, as Paul understood it. We are indebted to him for his reflections, which themselves provoke reflection on the grace about which we shall wonder into all eternity.

Endnotes

1 John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Power of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020). This work follows Barclay's *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015).

2 Cf. Ernst Käsemann, "Justification and Salvation History," in *Perspectives on Paul*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 70.

3 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, trans. John W. Doberstein (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), 25–26.

4 Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 159–160.

5 Israel's sacrifices to God, or at least some of them, may be understood under this rubric.

6 Cf. Gustav Wingren, *Luther on Vocation*, trans. Carl Rasmussen (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2004), 10.

7 Cf. Is 57:18; Hos 14:2; Heb 13:15.

8 Luther's reformational turn itself entailed a new understanding of Christian living. Cf. Andreas Stegmann, *Luthers Auffassung vom christlichen Leben* BHTh 175. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014).

9 Lutheran theologians continued to wrestle with the question of the return of grace, which they, too, regarded as required by God. Not too much later, in 1536, this question was at the center of the controversy between Conrad Cordatus and Caspar Cruciger (along with Philipp Melanchthon) as to whether good works were necessary to salvation. It reemerged in 1552 when Georg Major was accused by Nikolaus von Amsdorf of a denial of the doctrine of justification because of his insistence on the necessity of good works for salvation. The matter was settled in FC IV, which in its affirmative theses draws on Luther's use of Mt 7:17: "good works follow from true faith as certainly and without doubt as fruit from a good tree." Again the imagery of divine agriculture! This creational imagery is not accidental. It informs the question of grace and giving more fully than Barclay recognizes and deserves further exploration.

Homiletical Helps

Anatomy of a Sermon
The Love Will Have Been Enough by Dean Nadasdy

Glenn A. Nielsen

Anticipation and excitement reign on Call Day on the campus of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Each academic year builds to a crescendo for that day when vicars and interns find out their assignments. Candidates wait both eagerly and with anxiety for that announcement of their first call. The candidate call service particularly reaches a climax with its triumphant and praise-filled music and a box with the envelopes sitting on a table for everyone to see. Soon everyone will experience the culmination of all those years of formation at the Seminary.

But the wait continues as first a sermon is given. The opening hymn has been sung, a Scripture has been read, and portions of the liturgy spoken and responded to. Everyone sits down, and Dean Nadasdy steps into the pulpit to deliver a message that will somehow speak to the occasion, keep people's attention, and bring God's word to all, but especially to the candidates sitting before him.

What results is a beautiful sermon. Now usually you don't hear the word "beautiful" to describe the preaching moment. But for this anatomy, the word applies in a twofold manner. First, Dr. Nadasdy preaches a sermon about the beauty of the pastoral office, particularly the relationship of a pastor or deaconess with the people in the church. Second, he has recently written a book, *The Beautiful Sermon*, on what makes for a beautiful sermon.[1] Bringing these two together—the content of this sermon

Editor's note

The following sermon was preached in the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, on Call Day, 2016. A recording of the sermon can be found at https://scholar.csl.edu/callday/19. The sermon is represented in italic type below which can be read all at once by following the gray bars in the margin. Go to Lectionary@Lunch+ and Preacher's Studio at concordiatheology.org for additional preaching resources.

and the book about crafting a beautiful sermon—will form the basis of this anatomy.

In the book, Dr. Nadasdy writes:

> As soon as we seek to interpret a text, however, as soon as we work to interest and engage the hearer, at the point where we engage the listener's imagination to "see" a biblical text, just then our preaching becomes art. So, call us artists. In the telling of a story, in the unfolding of an idea, in the economic use of language, in plotting our sermonic moves, we are artists. Making and presenting a sermon is a work of art and, at its best, can be described as beautiful. (18)

While this article will use the transcribed version of the sermon, the sermon delivered becomes beauty embodied. I would encourage the reader to watch the service and sermon to see both its worship and occasion context along with the sermon proclaimed through Dr. Nadasdy's voice, stance, eye contact, gestures, facial expressions, and the like to fully "see" the beautiful content and sermon craftsmanship.

The sermon begins with a bit of humor, that a congregation wants these candidates even though they are sinners. It then announces that the relationship between a pastor or deaconess and the congregation is beautiful, and to get to the beauty of that relationship we need to listen to Jesus's words, words of his love for us and our love for one another. While many others will want to bend these candidates' ears, for this sermon, Jesus will speak of the beauty of that relationship.

In his book, Dr. Nadasdy gives seven different qualities that lead to beauty in a sermon. One of them is the word of God. He writes:

> We who preach and listen to sermons vouch together for these words—they are God's words. That makes them beautiful as does the genius of the stories they weave, the histories, the parables and metaphors, the songs, the gospels, the letters, and the visions. Whatever the form God has used to speak to us in the word, it moves us to imagine, pray, wonder, and love. (55)

As he introduces the sermon, notice how he seamlessly weaves the text (John 13:31–33) into the sermon, and then lets that text propel us into a sermon that will imagine, tell powerful stories, make us wonder, and, especially, love. He will bring us a sermon that does not merely point out the beauty of the text but shows "hearers what it actually looks like—the Bible in its beautiful unity of promise and fulfillment" (56).

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Beloved in Christ, friends, candidates for call, pastoral candidates, deaconess candidates, many blessings to you as we gather around this word. You are on the edge of something great. There is a church that wants you, sinner that you are.

I have to tell you that looking back now near the end of a time as a pastor, I believe the experience of a pastor and his congregation, that relationship, the deaconess and a congregation, is one of the most beautiful experiences ever. And we don't talk much about its beauty, but it is beautiful.

Because this is such a significant moment in your life, everybody here wants to say something to you. Have you noticed that? I mean, everybody has their little bit. There are pastors here who would love to talk to each of you and make sure you know their nugget of truth. The faculty over there, they want you to know as much of their wisdom as they can possibly get to you before you're out of here. And you're not out of here yet. You have a little more to do. And they'll each want you to know that their discipline is the most significant and important for your life as a pastor.

And then there are the district presidents who want to get a whack at you, and they will a little bit later tonight. And there are parents here, if they can get by all the emotion that's tied to them, you notice that? It's hard not to get all pent up with emotion. They want to talk to you. And if you happen to be married, that spouse really wants to talk to you tonight, and you better be listening really carefully.

But what if for just a few moments, we let Jesus do the talking, and we just listen to him. Not in some formal way, but as if he was here just to bend your ear. And he would say "a new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Just as I loved you, so you must love one another. By this all people will know that you're my disciples, that you have love for one another."

Following the introduction, the sermon moves to a short proclamation of gospel flowing from the John 13 text. Dr. Nadasdy avoids the formulaic first law/then gospel structure of so many Lutheran sermons to let the text speak its gospel word to us and what flows from that gospel. But it is not left merely explained. He also visualizes it in a way that captures another one of the qualities of a beautiful sermon from his book—worship. He says, "Beautiful sermons now and again point to these visual references [table, font, Book], marking the locality of God's grace among those who worship (56)." While this sermon does not point to objects in the sacred space or the Ordo or the music of the worship that night, he does visualize the text in the worship life of the aged Apostle John. The result? We are focused on the theme of the sermon: Love one another as we have been loved by Jesus.

It should not be lost on you that when Jesus first said those words, he said them on the night before he went to the cross. Good shepherds do that. They lay down their life for the sheep. And it should not be lost on us that the one who records these words of Jesus is John, whom we like to say is the disciple whom Jesus loved. He just loved being loved by Jesus.

There's an old legend in the church, and maybe some of the faculty know how far back this goes. I could trace it at least back to the time of Eusebius. That when John was in his very last years, his disciples would carry him to the worship gathering place in Ephesus, and then he would sit there and then someone would say, "Master, do you have a word for us?" And he would say, "Little children love one another."

And he kept doing that over and over again. And then the legend goes that finally one of the disciples said to John, "Why do you keep saying the same thing?" He said, "Because it is the Lord's command. And if we just love one another that will be enough."

Another element of a sermon's beauty, according to the book, is the relationship of the pastor to his people, which this sermon highlights. Here the book and sermon converge. In the proclamation during the call service, Dr. Nadasdy's voice is filled with deep conviction for the need of this special relationship of love to be present in the ministry. Look at his book's explanation and then read the next few paragraphs of the sermon (or better, watch it on the video).

> The sermon is preached in a relationship where mutual trust has been earned over time. The pastor is not just the listeners' preacher but their shepherd. Preaching may be the most public of a pastor's acts of service, but it may not be the most treasured. As the pastor preaches, the voice heard is the same voice which has spoken prayers and encouragement in the pastor's office, the listener's home, or in the hospital. It is also the same public voice of the Bible study teacher, the voice at the communion rail and the font, the voice prompting the wedding vows and bringing peace at the time of death. (58)

This gets terribly simple, excruciatingly obvious, but in parish ministry, if we can just love one another, it is enough to get us through. On the other end of all of this, trust me, it will matter that you kept up with your Greek and maybe even your Hebrew. It will matter that you can recite from memory some of the great passages in our confessions. It will matter that you keep up with the disciplines of study throughout your life as a pastor and as a deaconess. It will matter that you got your name in the Lutheran Witness *for a really good reason.*

But trust me, and the pastors here know this, what will matter most, what lingers to the end of your days, are the relationships you have with God's people and with brother pastors and with sister deaconesses. That's what matters. That's what lasts. I don't remember a single voters' meeting conflict, and they used to keep me up in the middle of the night. I don't remember what I would even stay up for. But I do remember the relationships and how precious they are.

However, the sermon will not just assert this relational beauty. It will picture it in moments when it is most difficult, but also most memorable. Each paragraph will push forward the purpose of the sermon, but it still lingers in the concrete moments of the relationship. At the same time, this picturing of relational love, beautiful as it is, must answer a challenging question. How is this possible? The challenge is too great. It seems impossible. And it is, except for the unconditional, sacrificial, and extravagant love of Jesus for us.

While I would have hoped for a clearer proclamation of Christ's love, the sermon does move back and forth beautifully between Christ's love and what that love looks like in the ministry. The artistry of that both/and is certainly present. Yet more of Jesus here would seem to have been called for. Indeed, one of Dr. Nadasdy's seven qualities of a beautiful sermon is proclaiming the gospel. "Nothing contributes more to the beauty of a sermon than the Gospel of Jesus Christ appropriately applied to real questions and needs" (46). So, I wish I had heard a more robust proclamation of Christ crucified and risen to answer the question "How is this possible?" But the gospel is sprinkled generously throughout the sermon, and it is applied specifically to the lives of the candidates. Indeed, listen to the examples of unconditional, sacrificial, and extravagant love in the ministry that flow from such a love given by Jesus.

Jesus says, "Just as I've loved, you love one another." He sets an impossible standard for you. Impossible. His love is unconditional. Jesus sought the highest good of every person he met and was willing to pay the cost, the price, to pursue that. That's love. It's unconditional.

So, what do you do with the member who doesn't buy into your leadership? You love him. What do you do with a pastor who's appointed himself your local ecclesiastical supervisor, your neighboring pastor? You love him. What do you do with the woman who says you're no pastor and she mentions a previous pastor's name? You love her.

Seriously. It seems so simple, but it isn't. But it's possible. As the Spirit grows that fruit of love within us, and as Christ lives within us, it's possible. His love is unconditional. Even your commitment to purity of doctrine and practice is empowered by love. Luther writes in a sermon on John 15, "Where there is no love, their doctrine cannot remain pure."

Jesus's love is sacrificial. And I have to tell you that I sense, and a lot of us do I think— President Meyer, this is so different from 1973 when we were classmates—[that] your generation of pastors, I expect that you'll be facing decisions on sacrifice. I expect that as some of our African brothers and sisters are telling us, you're going to be having to embrace suffering and sacrifice for the sake of your faith and for the sake of your mission.

It's awesome to be in the presence of someone where you know that's out there for you, but it's true. His love, Christ's love within us, as pastors, as deaconesses, is unconditional. It's sacrificial. But it is also extravagant. It gives more than is expected of it. It doesn't just make one hospital call. It makes two if there's an opportunity, and there are follow-up phone calls, because grace is always extravagant. It's a pastor on Easter Sunday morning flipping pancakes at the youth breakfast. It's a DCE, it's a deaconess, it's a church worker driving 140 miles to visit someone in a nursing home who isn't a member of their church.

Yet a relationship is not one way—a pastor for his people. It is also the people for their pastor. Dr. Nadasdy captures that reciprocal nature of the relationship in the next couple paragraphs of the sermon. Notice the deep warmth and care of the congregation and the individual members for the pastor in the stories told. In his book, he writes,

> The beauty of these pastoral moments, accompanied by every pastor's experience of boredom, loneliness, turmoil, and conflict, leave pastor and people with a deep appreciation of their life together. It is best said by the words of Bernanos's young priest on his deathbed: "Grace is everywhere." (60)

Now listen to the sermon give real moments of ministry to the people caring for their pastor, followed by a reaffirmation of the gospel needed for this relational beauty.

And Jesus says, "Love one another." That means a mutual kind of love, that the pastor has to be vulnerable enough and humble enough to receive the love of his people. That'll take some work for some of us. But I've seen it. I've seen a pastor publicly say that he struggles with clinical depression, and I've watched a congregation gather around him to support him and love him in wonderful, wonderful ways.

"Love one another" says I'm open to being loved by those I serve. There was a very old film, really old, 1941, titled One Foot in Heaven. *You have to be my age to have ever seen it. But it had a huge impact on me because it traces a pastor's life through his whole career. And there comes a point when everything's*

caving in on him, his family's falling apart, there are conflicts in the church, he's not making enough money. Everything's going wrong in ministry. There are people gossiping rumors about him. And he visits an old gent that he hasn't seen for some time, and so stops by his home. And he is lavished with kindness by this member. And he finally in tears says, "Why all this kindness?" And the man says simply, "You're my pastor."

That's the currency of love in ministry, the practice of unconditional, sacrificial, extravagant love and an openness to receive love from another. Loving this way is beyond our capacity. And the only way it's possible for us to get a smidgen of that love at work in our ministry is for each of us to spend significant time connecting with Jesus and his love in the scriptures, knowing his presence on a daily, sometimes even hourly basis. Connecting with his love is all that makes it possible. His forgiveness, his strength.

Another one of Dr. Nadasdy's qualities of a beautiful sermon is titled "God." Listeners are to be "brought into a real-time, present-tense moment of communion with God. . . . the presence and purposes of God will determine the beauty of a sermon" (43). One way that is accomplished is when the preacher has spent time with God in the working out of the text.

> The beauty of God is seen most clearly in one who has been with God. This aspect of the preacher's ethos unveils a reverent excitement over the message to be proclaimed and over the one who has placed that message in the preacher's mind and heart. To the listener the beautiful sermon comes from one who has been to the beauty of God and is still alive and eager to witness to it. (44)

In the next section of the sermon (and the sermon as a whole) Dr. Nadasdy unveils his relationship with God, but also reveals the need for that intimacy between these candidates and God. Yet he does so by fleshing out what that relationship with God looks like with storied moments of sacred intimacy between the pastor and his people.

People will see it in you. That's what they want to know about you as their pastor, that this guy actually knows, loves, and serves Jesus Christ as his savior.

More than anything else I think that's what they want to know. And some children will look at you, some of you, and say, "Are you Jesus?" Some of you, not so much. But they do that because they know this is a man, this is a deaconess, close to the Lord and comes fresh from the Lord when they minister among us. What a beautiful thing that is.

A pastor recently described to me just last week, standing between a young

mother and father, each holding on to each of his arms on either side of him as they watched their child die in the hospital of leukemia. And he said they yanked on my arms so hard, they clung to me so hard that it hurt. Do you get the privilege of that? It was like they were holding on to Christ. Oh, he's not Christ, I know. But that's how deep that relationship can be. And you, you're on the edge of all of this. You're just getting going with it. That Jesus-style love says we need one another.

The next paragraph of the sermon speaks a word of law to the candidates. It is not so much an accusation as a depiction of what breaks the relationship between people and pastor, between people and deaconess. Loneliness easily awaits in the ministry, and that is "tragic." That touch of damage to these relationships, however, is quickly followed up by a reaffirmation of how all ministry is a "team" ministry.

We just keep reading it over and over again, that isolation is the number one issue with pastors as they struggle in ministry. We have more means today of connecting with people than we've ever had before. For some reason, pastors have a difficult time connecting with people. How tragic that is. And a part of it is we, as pastors, have to understand we need people to join us in ministry. This is not a lone ranger deal. This is team ministry. Even if you don't have a staff team, you have a team of lay leaders that you work with.

The time has come to bring the various strands of the sermon together, and Dr. Nadasdy does so with a powerful personal story from his own ministry. When used well, stories make the sermon memorable. They teach in ways an explanation cannot. Near the end of his book, he writes: "We tell stories centered in Christ. These stories give us pictures in our minds and have yielded a treasure lode of immeasurable beauty in the arts" (117). Then, after telling a story from Elie Wiesel, he summarizes the power and purpose of the use of stories in a sermon.

> Elie Wiesel closed this story with, "God created man because He loves stories." In preaching we present a storied Christ to a storied listener, connecting those stories through language rich with image. Each story has its own beauty, but when connected with the stories of Christ, preachers find the sweet spot for which they work, for which they live. (118)

It is in his use of stories in this sermon, but particularly this story of the wayward sheep, that Dr. Nadasdy captures the beauty of a sermon rich in

reaching both head and heart, another one of his stated qualities of the beautiful sermon.

> The beauty of a sermon is a matter of head and heart. The preacher as artist appeals to the intellect and the emotions of the listener. (62)
> How each part moves the sermon along in a logical and persuasive way, contributing to an organic whole, engages the hearers' cognitive tools. In other words, a sermon's beauty is enhanced when it makes sense. (63)
> We preach cognitive truth and understanding but we also preach to the heart, experience, and attitudes of our listeners. We strive not just for belief but for life based on the belief. (64)

The personal story has humor, action, emotions, characters, plot, dialogue, and other narrative components. It is wonderfully well told. Yet it is more than an engaging story with a laugh or two. It ends with a clear purpose—to show how the ministry happens in relationship with the people of the church and the need for the pastor or deaconess to love the community as Christ has loved the world.

Some of the DPs know this story that I told from my experience as a young pastor in Edina, Minnesota. We had a living nativity scene where we put up a stable. We had kind of a corral. We had live animals. And this first time we did this, the lead sheep jumped over the fence that was too short. So, one lead sheep takes off and three others are sure to follow. So, I take the lead sheep, and I shout out to several youth, "You get that one. You get that one." And I'm running down the frontage road to the crosstown highway in Edina, Minnesota, chasing the sheep.

And I tackle that sheep in a snow mound; the best tackle I ever made in my life. And I've got that sheep down in the snow. And I get this sudden flash in my mind, the Richard Hook painting of the sheep on the shoulders. So, I grabbed that sheep, and this is the fattest sheep in the universe. And I try to lift that sheep up and put it on my shoulders. And I think good shepherds kneel down first. But I get it close to my shoulders, about to here, and then I wrench my back really bad. Now I'm lying down with the sheep in the snow mound.

And I'm shouting, "I have fallen, and I can't get up. Can somebody get over here and get me up?" And two youth came, and together those two youth and I, together, we carried that lost sheep back to the fold. God made that happen in my life to teach me this is not solo work what you do. You need others to carry on your ministry. And then when he says, "By this all people will know that you're my disciples," that takes in everybody.

That means the love that we experience within a congregation is meant to be a love that's noticed and that's carried into the world. The mission of a pastor will

never be complete until he loves the world the way Jesus loved the world, until that pastor is willing to say, "I love my community so much I am will willing to give my community my time, my effort, and my love."

The sermon now heads home with an excerpt from a novel by Thornton Wilder in which five people die when a bridge collapses. It is not just a tragedy, but a recognition that while people may be forgotten, the love they have shown will not return void. Again, the love within relationships comes to the fore for a final viewing.

But even more striking is the final scene where Christ comes into the midst of the people in all his beauty. Indeed, one more quality of a beautiful sermon, the seventh one, is Christ. The Scriptures always point to Jesus and so the sermon will always bring Christ. Every sermon finally needs to ask, "Why is Jesus necessary here?" (51). So, the underlying goal of every sermon is succinctly stated.

> We help people imagine the Christ, to see him with the eyes of faith. The result is Newton's assurance of "an enlarged heart." Again, it is not talking about Christ being present; it is "seeing" his presence in real time, in the moment of a sermon. (53)

Once Jesus has been placed into the eyes of faith, the sermon ends with a powerful statement of how the candidates are on the edge of "something beautiful." If possible, watch the video of this moment in the sermon. It embodies an emotional vocal tone, caring face, extended pauses, and a personal conviction that pushes deep within your soul Jesus's very words of "love one another as I have loved you."

I want to close with the strange thing that happened to me. I was rereading Thornton Wilder's little novel titled The Bridge of San Luis Rey *that was written before he wrote Our Town. But this wonderful story talks about a monk named Brother Juniper who watched five people die as they were crossing a bridge in Peru and the bridge collapses. He spends the next years of his life trying to figure out, "Why these five people?" And he can't answer the question.*

But as we meet each of these five people, kind of converging on that bridge, we find out their lives were rich with love. And that even after their death, those close to them were touched by their love. There's a moment near the end of the novel, where he has the abbess say this, listen, "But soon we shall die and all memory of those five will have left the earth and we ourselves shall be loved for a while and forgotten. But the love will have been enough. All those impulses of love return to the love that made them."

Let me put an image in your mind. That coming down that center aisle is Jesus, your savior, your great shepherd. And once we're all up off our knees, he looks at each one of you and those great carpenter hands marked with wounds are

before you. Hear the rustle of his robe. He says, "Just as I have loved you, so love one another."

You are on the edge of something beautiful. Amen.

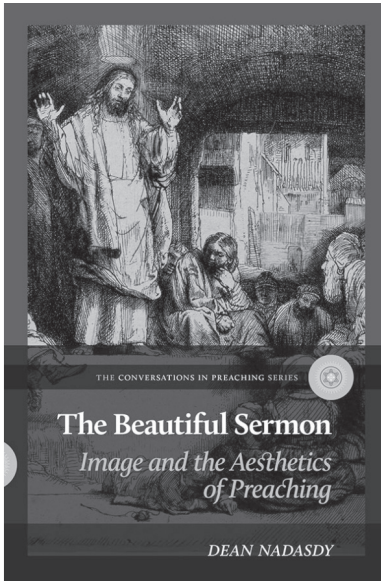
What the candidates and all who were in attendance heard that Call Day evening was a beautiful sermon. Yes, it was well crafted, using the very qualities of a beautiful sermon that Dr. Nadasdy brought before us in his book. But even more it brought a text of Scripture to the people there in such a way that the beauty of the relationship a pastor or deaconess has with the people they will serve is one of love, mutual love, love brought about because of Jesus's love. Very simply, he turned the excitement, anxiety, and anticipation of Call Day into something beautiful.

Endnotes

1 Dean Nadasdy, *The Beautiful Sermon: Image and the Aesthetics of Preaching* (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Press, 2021).

Reviews

THE BEAUTIFUL SERMON: Image and The Aesthetics of Preaching.
By Dean Nadasdy. Conversations in Preaching Series. Concordia Seminary Press, 2021. Paper. 147 pages. $19.95.



The first volume in "The Conversations in Preaching Series" is an exquisite beginning. In the promising foreword, David Schmitt, introduces the series as "an opportunity for Lutheran preachers to reflect on the heart and the art of preaching. Unfortunately, one of the difficulties of being a preacher is that one rarely has time to read and reflect on the practice. After all, one is too busy preaching. This series has been written for such active preachers" (9).

Nadasdy's crisp writing packs these pages with helpful insights and probing questions on the role of beauty, images, story, and imagination in faithful Lutheran preaching. Nadasdy draws from the new homiletic and redirects it to greater depth. Beautiful sermons are those that proclaim Christ with clarity and cogent arguments having grown from biblical texts. Preachers are motivated to think intentionally and creatively in their sermon writing and delivery, recognizing the vital work of applying the word of God to burdened souls.

There are seven chapters. In the first, "preaching is art," the author explains, "To call a preacher an artist is simply to say that preaching is a creative task" (19). Preaching is innovatively compared to Monet's multiple paintings of the same stack of wheat on different days and in different light; the pastor expounds the same word of God, often to largely the same congregation, but in unique times with distinct challenges. Such varied proclamation of God's unchanging truth is the heart of pastoral care, which requires careful listening to the text, to the congregation, and to the preacher himself.

In the second chapter Nadasdy takes us on a quick tour of the history of aesthetic theology. He converses with Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, and Jonathan Edwards. He especially draws on Mark Mattes's work on Luther's theology of beauty in confessing: "It is rather the theology of the cross which takes us to beauty. In the ugly cross, a hidden God reveals divine beauty in Christ to an ugly sinner, who in turn is made beautiful by God's love received in faith" (34). We're also invited to see

through Edwards's work how God's beauty draws souls in. Nadasdy is clear: "To present the beauty of God in preaching is to present Jesus Christ" (40).

The third chapter freshly unpacks a six-part answer to the question, "what makes preaching beautiful?" God, the gospel, the word of God, worship, relationship, and head and heart are all part of the art of preaching. Especially helpful here is his insight into the preacher's relationship with God, the pastor's listening ear for the souls he shepherds, and his list of six things that sap the gospel of its beauty.

The fourth chapter, the use of image in preaching, both explains *ekphrasis*, words that come from an image, and then beautifully enacts it. Indeed, throughout the book Nadasdy adeptly uses paintings and his rich explanation of them to draw in the reader.

In the fifth chapter, preaching the beautiful Christ, Nadasdy employs representations of our Lord throughout history to see afresh the beauty of Jesus's sacrificial work to deliver sinners. Roger Scruton, the late art critic turned Christian, observed that sacrifice for others is beautiful. In this chapter we are invited to explore this magnificent self-giving love of our Savior through perceptive art. "Helping people see Jesus is what preachers do" (79).

The last two chapters give concrete guidance on building image-based sermons and deliver to us three sermons by the author with helpful commentary. It is enlivening for pastors to receive good preaching.

Any preacher and seminary student would benefit from joining in this conversation on preaching with Dean Nadasdy, a seasoned pastor, seminary professor, district president, and wordsmith. Indeed, in our chaotic and often ugly time, true beauty attracts especially our younger hearers. This book has and will continue to help preachers be refreshed and encouraged by use of art, story, and imaginative use of the scriptures to convey the beautiful Christ. As Nadasdy writes, "Christ we proclaim. Not the Christ of our own imagination, but the Christ of the gospels, the Christ of the Scriptures!" (133).

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DOXOLOGY

FIGURING RESURRECTION: Joseph as a Death and Resurrection Figure in the Old Testament and Second Temple Judaism. *By Jeffrey Pulse. Lexham, 2021. Paper. 309 pages. $29.99*

In *Figuring Resurrection*, Jeffrey Pulse gives a refreshing reading and exploration of the unified theological narrative that relates the story of Joseph (and Judah). Pulse identifies "a 'dying and rising' theme in Genesis 37-50" and contends that this heretofore neglected theme "plays a prominent part in the Hebrew text" (1). After exploring the biblical materials and those of Second

Temple Judaism, he concludes that Joseph is a death and resurrection figure in both.

Part 1 is introductory and consists of two chapters. Chapter 1 briefly surveys ways interpreters have handled the Joseph materials, "focus[ing] on the various trends from the 1980s onward" that lead to his preferred approach—"reading Scripture as a unified theological narrative" (4). In chapter 2, Pulse advocates for this approach, noting that it is neither literalistic and wooden nor atomistic. Each of the words—unified theological narrative—is important. It is a narrative approach, with all that entails, but not only that. Since these writings were held to be unified and theological by those who passed them on, Pulse advocates reading the Scriptures as unified and theological. It is in the motifs that are woven throughout the Scriptures that this unity and theology are most readily seen.

Part 2 is the longest, consisting of chapters 3 through 5 in which Pulse masterfully treats the biblical text of Genesis 37–50, the character of Joseph, and the death and resurrection motif. For pastors and interested lay readers, this section is the most beneficial. Chapter 3 does an excellent job of walking through the Joseph narratives in chapter-by-chapter fashion. While Pulse observes the data to make his case, his close reading of the text is of great value. As he observes the motifs and sub-motifs, he pays careful attention to word usage and to indicators in the text of character flaws in Joseph, his brothers, and Jacob. Pulse expertly leads the reader to see the reversal of Joseph and Judah, putting paid to the critical question of Genesis 38 in the midst of the Joseph materials. The reader is treated to a skillful example of close reading and the beginnings of a reading as a unified theological narrative.

In chapter 4, Pulse demonstrates Joseph's character as portrayed by the narrator. It is less flattering than many readers would like to believe, giving discomfort as one's hero is shown in reality's light. Our eyes are opened to an arrogant, spoiled spy with an undisciplined tongue with which he gives bad reports and recounts dreams that might better be considered carefully alone. Pulse also raises the possibility that Joseph is somewhat clueless as a youth and then less virtuous than we might like in Potiphar's house. In the face of all of God's blessings, Joseph may be accused of self-reliance in seeking release from prison. Worst of all is Joseph's unresisting "transformation into in Egyptian" evidenced by, among other things, his marrying a foreign wife and getting comfortable in Egypt (156).

While chapter 3 leads the reader through a close reading of the narrative text and chapter 4 helps one pay attention to details that might make us uncomfortable with Joseph's character, chapter 5 assumes the unified nature of Scripture and explores the theology of this narrative in relation to the whole of Scripture by observing the death and resurrection motif. While many have questioned or even denied an

Old Testament conception of life after death, let alone resurrection, Pulse argues "that no other figure in the Old Testament canon provides as strong a case for the complexity of the Hebrew understanding of, and belief in, the idea of resurrection from the dead" (163). He builds on his observations from the previous two chapters. Having observed the downward and upward movements that help structure the narrative while also pointing to the death and resurrection motif, Pulse now explores twelve sub-motifs found in the Joseph narrative that "dovetail" with the "downward/upward movement" (164) and "intersect and build on one another" (165). He notes that "there is no other character and no other narrative in the Old Testament that brings together so many of the themes of [the death and resurrection] motif" (195). He then concludes, "It was Genesis, and especially Joseph and his life, that provided the foundation on which the rest of the Scriptures build and were used to elucidate this theological teaching" (195). Thus, Pulse sees Joseph as a death and resurrection figure in the Old Testament.

Part 3 examines how Joseph and his narrative were received and built upon in Second Temple Judaism. This section is more technical and will likely be of more interest to the academic than to the average reader, though all can benefit. In chapters 6 and 7, Pulse concludes that the Septuagint and the Aramaic Targum Onqelos both modify the Joseph narratives to meet their own objectives, yet neither contradicts the motif of Joseph as a death and resurrection figure. In chapter 8 Pulse demonstrates that Joseph emerged again as an important figure in both biblical and extra-biblical works after being relatively absent from the biblical literature relating the exodus through the exile. He avers that this is due to a focus on resurrection in this time period, a focus with which "the structure of his narratives and the life of his character" easily connect (261). Chapter 9 briefly treats how Philo and Josephus adopted and adapted Joseph and his narratives to their purposes, ultimately obscuring the original theological purpose, as do the many dramatic presentations of the text. Lastly, because Second Temple Judaism puts great emphasis on the bones of Joseph, Pulse explores this topic, concluding that when Joseph requests that his bones be taken to Canaan he is acting as a prophet, signaling that the Lord will resurrect the people, giving them new life in the land.

Throughout sixteen years at Concordia University, Ann Arbor I emphasized reading the text as a unified theological narrative. My students explored the Joseph narratives, comparing and contrasting them with a modern motion picture. This exercise challenged us all to read ever more carefully. I wish I could contact every former student to encourage them to read this excellent treatment by Jeffrey Pulse. I hope some will read this review, read the book, and pass on the benefit in their preaching, teaching, or other

types of ministry. I heartily encourage all readers of this journal to do the same.

Philip Werth Penhallegon

FAITH ALONE: The Heart of Everything. *By Bo Giertz. Translated by Bror Erickson. 1517 Publishing, 2020. Paper. 286 pages. $19.99.*

Faith Alone: The Heart of Everything is a historical novel written by Swedish churchman and theologian Bo Giertz (1905–1998) and translated by Bror Erickson, a Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod pastor serving in Farmington, New Mexico. Not intended to be a comprehensive history of the origin, progress, and outcome of the Lutheran Reformation in Sweden, the novel is rather the story of the impact of that Reformation on the Swedish church and government and, more specifically, on two Swedish brothers, the protagonists, Andreas (a priest) and Martin (a royal scrivener), during the first half of the sixteenth century. The book concentrates on the confusion, ambiguities, struggles, heartaches, and triumphs experienced by the personae of the novel during that revolution. In his introduction to *Faith Alone*, Mark Granquist emphasizes "how personally and socially wrenching these changes were for so many people" (ix).

Early in the novel Andreas, a kind and faithful priest, provides overnight lodging during a blizzard to an exhausted and ailing fellow priest, Herr Peder, even though Andreas regards him as a heretic because of his increasing sympathy toward the Lutheran Reformation. It is this Herr Peder who turns out to be a key character in the plot of the novel, for it is through his pastoral guidance that Andreas reluctantly but ultimately (shortly before his execution) accepts the cardinal doctrine of the Reformation, salvation by God's grace through faith in Jesus's atoning work. Though not labeled as such, Herr Peder serves as a sort of "chorus" in the novel by steering the action in the right direction and by explicating and exemplifying the gospel as well as many other biblical truths advanced by the Reformation. As the title of the novel suggests, the doctrine of justification by faith, not by works, is the focus of the book.

The strength of the novel, however, lies not merely in the clear explication of biblical doctrine, but, above all, in the *dramatization* of that doctrine. The gospel, of course, is effective when we encounter it in worship, lecture, or leisure. But it seems even more effective when we see it confronting us, or others, in real life situations: in the context of tension, doubt, and confusion (for example in suffering, in sickness and death, in battle, in hardship, in everyday difficulties, etc.). The reader of a novel portraying such issues identifies with the characters' experiences; there may be overlap with one's own experiences. In this identification biblical doctrines become more vivid, more relevant, more personal, and more "real." God's saving truths slip by those "watchful dragons" and "stained-glass window associations"

described by C. S. Lewis that so often impede our acceptance of God's gospel. *Doctrine dramatized*—that is the outstanding virtue of Bo Giertz's novel.

I turn now to the author's dramatization of the doctrine of justification by grace through faith. As was true of the initial Lutheran Reformation in Germany, the same movement in Sweden is embroiled in politics: King Gustavus and the nobility in conflict with the peasants, state versus church, even certain peasants against other peasants. Loyal and affectionate as the brothers Andreas and Martin are toward each other, they disagree politically and theologically. Martin is more receptive toward the Reformation than his brother, Andreas. Andreas's spiritual crisis is initiated in the battle of Shrukeby between King Gustavus (supported by the nobility) and some peasants. In this battle Andreas functions as a sort of "chaplain" to the peasants, giving absolution to the wounded and last rites to the dying. One of the latter is a delinquent member of Andreas's parish named Staffan. When Andreas ministers to him, Staffan reveals that among all his other sins he has also murdered his own mother and feels that this horrid crime is incapable of absolution unless he can personally appeal to the Pope, an action present circumstances prevent. Andreas's well-intentioned but erroneous and weak response to Staffan's plight is interrupted by the increasing dangers of the battle.

Unknown to Andreas, his brother, Martin, allied with the king's forces, encounters the same dying man some minutes later during the battle and gives better counsel to Staffan, clarifying that God—and God alone—can and will forgive his heinous sin. (Contacting the Pope is not necessary.) Martin reminds Staffan of Jesus's promise of paradise to a thief crucified with Jesus, even sings a gospel hymn to him, and Staffan dies in the assurance of his eternal salvation.

In the meantime, Andreas, threatened with death in the continuing battle, sheds blood and is appalled at what he has done, so appalled that he concludes he can no longer continue his ministry, so appalled that he can no longer dispense absolution to others or receive absolution for his own crime. Despairing, he quits his ministry and resorts to a life of crime, even eventually stealing funds from his own parish under the rationalization that the king's forces will probably beat him to the theft. Ironically, Staffan's situation is a foreshadowing of Andreas's own plight. "Now [Andreas] was just as hopelessly lost as the matricidal Staffan" (126).

Literarily, Staffan's fate is a microcosm of Andreas's future. Eventually, Andreas is imprisoned as a thief and a traitor to king and country and sentenced to death. In prison he agonizes over his plight. How can he atone for his crime? How can anyone else (even a pope) forgive his misdeeds? He fears damnation. Martin, further along in the true faith than his brother, renders him some consolation. But it is Herr Peder who completes God's conversion of Andreas with his personal counsel and with a public sermon

on the day of Andreas's execution—a conversion that is not facile since Andreas keeps clinging to his false doctrines until moments before his beheading.

Martin, too, despite his increasing acceptance of the Lutheran Reformation, needs spiritual enlightenment. When Martin begins to rebel against the Swedish government because of its many misdeeds, it is Herr Peder (again) who advances his understanding of scriptural doctrine. Citizens owe obedience even to bad rulers and faulty leaders because not only is their authority of God but also God works his good even through sinful rulers. "For . . . it is enough to know that God still allows King Gustavus to rule and that it pleases God to govern his sinful Swedish people through a great sinner" (198). Of course, there are occasions when in the Bible's words, "We must obey God rather than men." We do not remain passive or tolerant. It is then that we pray for the wicked rulers and combat their error with God's word. But in Herr Peder's words, "One should not try to escape the cross with *violence*" (199, my emphasis).

One of Herr Peder's most insightful statements in his enlightenment of Martin is his contention that works-righteousness can permeate even religious groups opposed to works-righteousness.

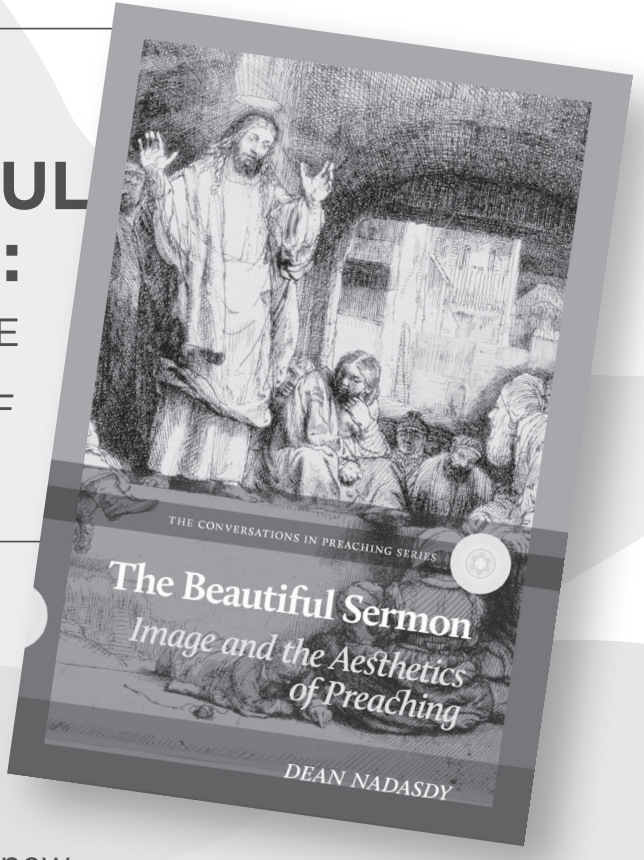
> We never say that any works of any type are conditions for salvation. It is the pope and you schwarmerei that say so. In essence, you are of the same mettle. The Pope says: shave your head and fast on Wednesday and Friday and pray the whole psalter every week, and then you will be holy and pious.
>
> And you say: comb your hair flat and wear gray clothing and pray with your own words, and you will be holy and pleasing to God. But we say with the gospel: Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved. It is the difference between faith in grace and faith in works-righteousness. (176)

Scripture only, grace only, faith only, Jesus only—these cardinal biblical truths are made clear, vivid, and attractive in Bo Giertz's novel. We are grateful to Pastor Erickson for translating the book into English.

Francis C. Rossow

THE BEAUTIFUL SERMON:

IMAGE AND THE AESTHETICS OF PREACHING



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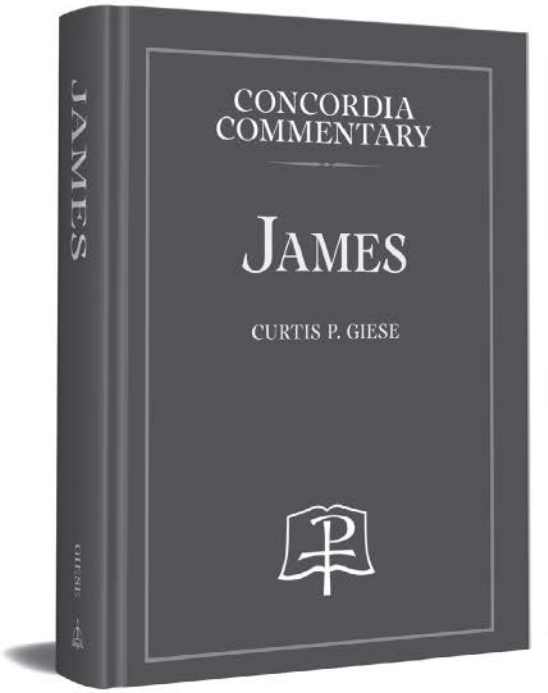

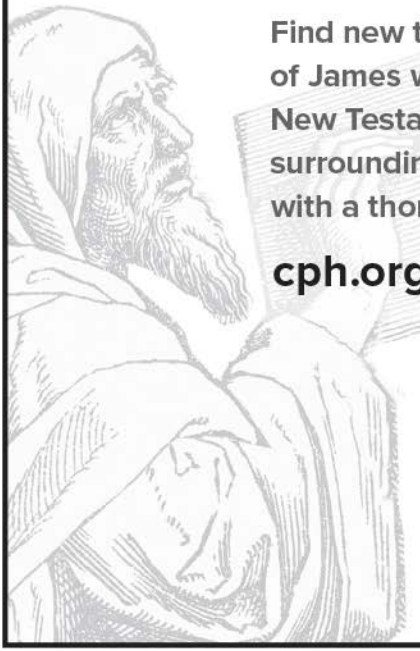

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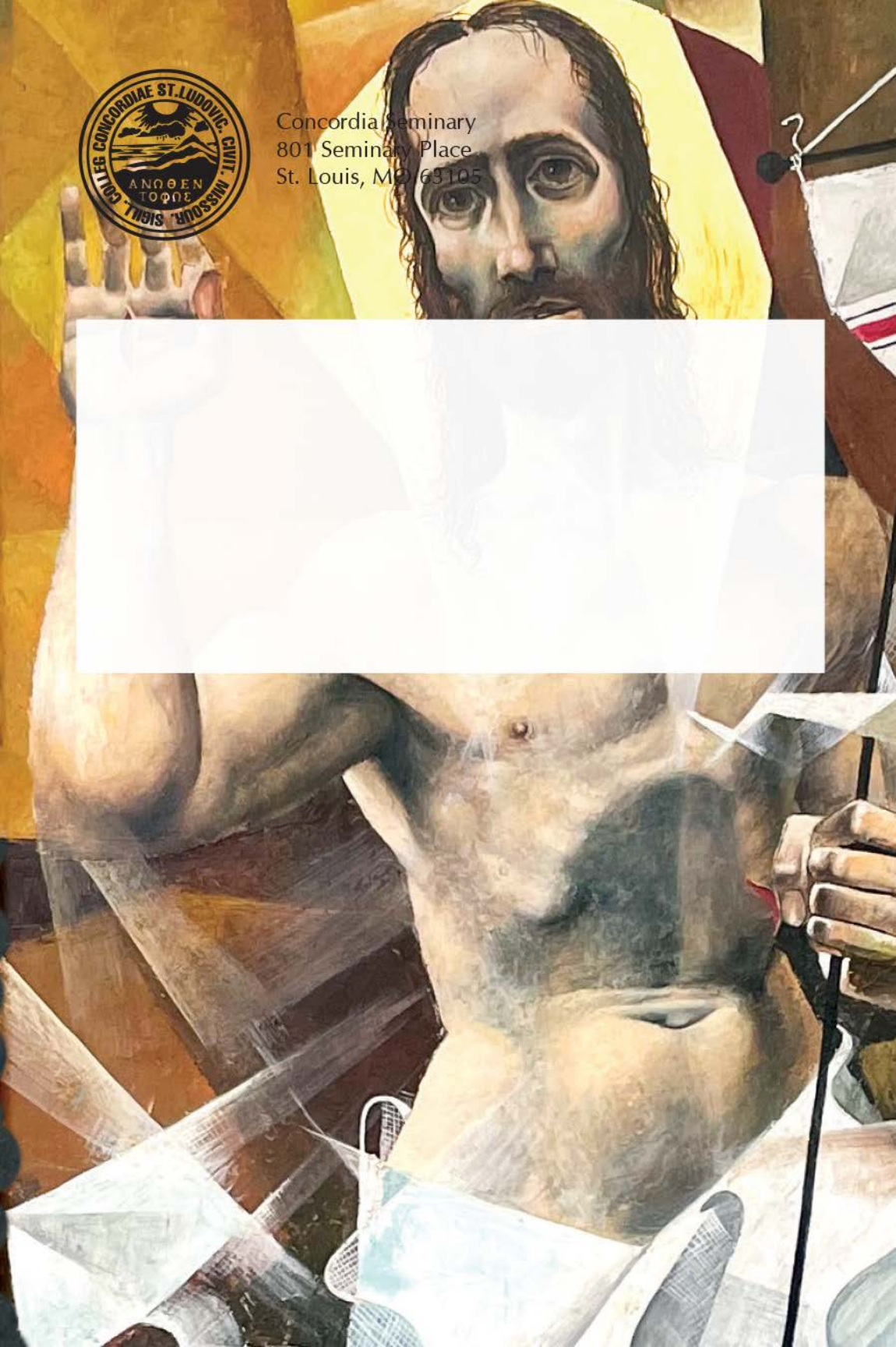

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