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Editor's Note

Technology is a perennial element of human history. At times, God has commanded man to utilize technology, such as his command to Noah to use ship-building technology to construct the ark. Thus, technology was used for God's purposes of preserving not only life, but also the line that would lead to Christ. Humans used the technology of execution to crucify Christ, little knowing that God was at work to bring about eternal life through Christ's suffering and death. Roman building technology led to a road system that allowed the gospel to move freely about the Roman Empire. The technological revolution of the printing press was instrumental in the spread of the Reformation.

Technology has been a great blessing to the church. It has also created great challenges. All First Article gifts can be used for good or for evil. The printing press was not only key to the dissemination of the Reformation, but it has also been used (and still is) for the spread of heresy. And so it goes. The church is ever seeking to seize upon the God-pleasing use of technology while avoiding technology's abuse.

Current questions over technology often center upon AI (Artificial Intelligence). Yet that is hardly the only matter that deserves attention. Medical technology has been a realm of much needed discussion in recent generations with bioethics as a critical realm of pastoral care. The concern over AI and related technologies grabs attention for two reasons (among others). First, the pace of technological change surrounding AI is breath-taking. What AI can accomplish today is far different than what it could only a year ago. What will AI's capabilities be in another year? Ten years? Second, AI has the capacity to do more than just be a blessing or a challenge. It seems ready to revolutionize who we are as human beings.

Concordia Seminary's 34th Annual Theological Symposium met September 17–18, 2024, under the theme "Technology and the Church: Promise and Peril." Two of the articles in this edition of *Concordia Journal* result from symposium plenaries. C. Ben Mitchell addresses the looming worry about technology's revolutionary potential. "Resisting a Posthuman Future" calls us to be neither techno-utopians nor techno-dystopians, but techno-realists. Joshua Hollmann offers a distillation of the plenary he delivered along with David Maxwell. "The Melanchthon Test: Anthropological and Theological Implications of Artificial Intelligence" draws upon biblical anthropology as taught by Melanchthon, ultimately pointing to trust as the chief characteristic of what it means to be human.

In addition to these two articles, Jeffrey Gibbs delivers a thorough and precise look at Paul's oft-quoted words "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain" in his article "'Gain' and 'Far Better' Than What?: Eschatology and Martyrdom in Philippians." He sets Paul's famous words in their literary and theological context to ensure the reader does not twist the apostle's words. The article is a classic demonstration of reading the text closely and carefully. Such close, careful reading of the text was a hallmark of the instruction delivered by Jim Voelz over fifty years of service within the seminaries of the LCMS. An encomium upon Voelz's retirement is offered by his long-time colleague, Andy Bartelt. Voelz's fifty years of service are nicely presaged by the sermon delivered at his ordination by Martin Scharlemann. Readers are blessed also by a sermon delivered only months ago in daily chapel by Joel Heckmann.

Kevin Golden
Dean of Theological Research and Publications

Encomium for James W. Voelz

James W. Voelz grew up on the south side of Milwaukee, with salt-of-the earth people and with parents who worked hard and loved their Lord and his church. His summer jobs included selling encyclopedias (which he no doubt read along the way) and working in the bottling department of the old Pabst Brewery. That was great formation, and Jim has always had a way of understanding and functioning at both the highest levels of academia and in sports talk at the pub, especially about soccer, golf, and the Green Bay Packers.

Long before I knew James Voelz, I knew of him, as an upper classman at Concordia in Old Milwaukee, known for his prowess at Greek and on the tennis court. Our lives intersected more profoundly during my two years at Westfield House, sitting at the feet of Martin Franzmann at Westfield House, of C. F. D. ("Charlie") Moule at the Cambridge Divinity School, or using our own out on the soccer pitch.

He stayed to do his doctoral work under Geoffery Lampe, a brilliant but notoriously difficult Doktorvater, known for offering little guidance and help. But Jim prevailed, as he is known to do, with a pioneering study of the Greek imperative. When asked about his research methodology, his answer was simple: "I'll just read through the New Testament and analyze every imperative verb in its context (and this was long before computer searches).

He went on to teach first at Concordia Theological Seminary, then at Springfield, and on to Fort Wayne, and since 1989 he has been one of the few professors in this church body to serve on the faculties of both of our seminaries.

I don't need to remind this audience of the impact of now fifty years of teaching, characterized by his care for students, from nascent seminarians in fundamental Greek to the rigors of supervising doctoral candidates. The church has received more than a generation (or two!) of pastors whose seminary formation was shaped by "taking Greek with Dr. Voelz." He holds to the highest academic standards at the same time that he has engaged a teaching style that made even the trials of Greek paradigms compelling, complete with his notorious weasel and other novelties from his bag of tricks. He embodies the key balance between academics and pastoral care, theory and practice, global level scholarship and the care for persons within local communities, all seasoned with good humor and a sense that while we take God's word very seriously, we don't need to take ourselves quite so.

As a faculty colleague, Jim has always been a catalyst for challenging but collegial

conversation. Back in the day, he was a mainstay of what was our Friday group, which always featured better wine when it was Jim's turn in the rota. This was a think tank and incubator for new ideas, where iron was allowed to sharpen iron, and many of us owe much of our own critical thinking, insights, and scholarship to what Jim brought to those sessions.

Students, too, know his readiness to challenge them both intellectually and into the other areas of pastoral, professional, spiritual, and personal life. Often the first to arrive and the last to leave, Dr. Voelz will be there, in the field house, in the commons, on the soccer field, coaching the golf team, asking the penetrating question at the convocation, holding court at the wine tasting. He could grasp the big picture and analyze the breadth and depth of issues but also attend to the nitty-gritty details, where the devil often lurks. He frequently and regularly reminded his colleagues in faculty meetings: "It is all about the students."

Speaking of the field house, few may know how he almost single-handedly saved the best basketball floor in St. Louis from the ravages of a leaky roof. "Who's that custodian in a coat and tie moving the buckets around?" one might have asked. "Oh, that's one of the foremost Greek scholars in the world."

It's also about the faculty, whom he served as dean, encouraging scholarship in the service of pastoral formation, building collegiality, getting us all *ties!* As dean of the graduate school, he revitalized the curriculum, transformed the dated ThD into a more research-focused PhD, established a graduate student lounge, and advocated for advanced study that would also engage the scholarly world outside one's own denominational parochialism. His invitation to teach Greek at Kenrick Seminary led also to a series of faculty dialogues and cordial relationships across such historically fraught boundaries.

In that same vein, I would acknowledge the leadership of Dr. Voelz not just in church but also in the world, especially in the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) and the "invitation only" Society for New Testament Studies (SNTS), most notably in the hermeneutics group and the Mark Seminar, which he has chaired and in which he regularly serves as contributor, presider, respondent. When many of us aspire just to be present in these meetings and listen and learn a thing or two, Dr. Voelz has led in showing that we are not just to be seen but also have something to be heard. While the ground rules are different from ecclesiastical conversations, his undisputable scholarship has strengthened the reputation and witness of our church in ways that few can fully appreciate. The impressive list of contributors to his festschrift, published in 2015 on the fortieth anniversary of his ordination and seventieth year of life, is testimony to his impact in both church and world.

And now we celebrate fifty years of ordained ministry and fifty years on a seminary faculty (two of them!)

On a personal note, Jim married Judy Hayes in 1977, and Judy, you command

our heartfelt thanks and respect. I get to room with Jim at SBL meetings, and it's *exhausting*. We fall asleep reviewing the day's lectures, talking politics both national and synodical, and discussing biblical manuscript traditions and a new lexicon of the Septuagint, and then he wakes me with, "Hey, AB, here's the problem with how the Packers play Cover 2." Seriously, Judy and Jim have modeled the love and care of Christian marriage and faithful service to your church, with wonderful travel and very good wine along the way.

Son Jonathan arrived in 1984 and has taught his dad more than a thing or two on the golf course, bringing a third sport into this scholar's everyday repertoire, along with tennis and soccer. And ping pong. I witnessed his taking down of the cocky Fitzwilliam champion. And bridge, where he reached the rarified status of Life Master already ten years ago.

Jack Kingsbury, in whose name and honor Dr. Voelz has held the "Kingsbury Chair," gave tribute by stating that "Dr James Voelz is one of the finest New Testament scholars whether in this country or abroad." He has had published four major books, and now a fifth, plus a myriad of scholarly articles and essays. (Did you know he contributed the 82-page essay on "The Language of the New Testament" in the highly prestigious, encyclopedic *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*—and this in 1984, when Jim was first getting started, one might say).

Now his career is coming down the back nine, with a few holes left to play, energy to spare, and a few projects left to be done. His weekly schedule includes tennis, golf, and bridge, and he has revived the trombone for the BläserChor at Zion Lutheran Church. Yes, he is still going strong, with insatiable curiosity, penetrating analysis, and always the analogy!

It is an honor for me, very personally—and for all of us—to know him as teacher and author, colleague and churchman, scholar and sportsman, and friend. Thank you, Good Shepherd, for this great teacher of the church with the heart of a pastor.

Andrew H. Bartelt

Guard and Keep It

> "That precious treasure on deposit with you guard and keep by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us" (2 Tm 1:14).

God himself had made a heavy investment in young Timothy. In his grace he had arranged for him to learn from his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice both the manner and content of a great faith. Then, one day, the trumpet call of God's great apostle Paul was heard in the synagogues of Lystra and Derbe, and young Timothy came under the spell of its saving power.

From his mentor, the apostle, the young man acquired a standard for words which are rendered tall enough to carry the prophetic burden of a message from the living God. The gospel came to life in him, offering something better than rabbinic training and even more than he had learned from his mother and grandmother.

A new revelation had come in Jesus Christ. The privilege of teaching and proclaiming the word about him and from him was now entrusted to the young man who diligently listened to the apostle and carried out his instructions. It was a deposit, so to speak, beautiful to behold. The words of our text, therefore, direct Timothy to guard and keep it. That he did so is confirmed by the fact that he later became the bishop of Ephesus.

Today, Jim, you stand in the succession of Timothy. For, in being set apart for the rite of ordination, you are entering upon that office of the church which has the very special responsibility, entrusted also to Timothy, to "hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tm 1:13) that comes down to us from none other than the apostles themselves. In ordaining you into this office we place you into the only kind of apostolic succession that matters.

The text, therefore, calls us to appreciation. God's ways of laying hold on Timothy—and now on you—betoken his condescending grace. He goes about this work in most ordinary ways. You first heard of God's grace at home, just as Timothy had. On this your parents' thirty-fifth wedding anniversary we take note of the fact

Editor's note

This sermon was delivered at the ordination of James Voelz, October 5, 1975, at St. James Lutheran Church, University City, Missouri.[1]

that they stood in the same relationship to you as did Lois and Eunice to their son and grandson. It was from your father and mother that you first learned "the holy scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation" (2 Tm 3:15).

Then you went to school, as did Timothy. You moved from class to class. You read; you listened; you discussed; you reflected and synthesized. In that way the deposit we are talking about today was accumulated. It is a treasure declared to be beautiful and therefore worth guarding. It is something like the temple treasure about which there is a delightful story in 2 Maccabees 3:1–30. God Himself is so involved with the treasure we are discussing that He arranges to defend it even under circumstances different from those of Maccabees. According to that account, a man by the name of Simon had a quarrel with the high priest, Onias. Out of envy he reported to the governor of that region that a vast treasure was on deposit at the temple on Mount Zion. The governor in turn forwarded the information to King Seleucus. The latter ordered his general, Heliodorus, to get his hands on it for the purpose of paying for some military ventures. When Heliodorus and his troops reached the temple, the high priest informed him that the monies on deposit belonged to orphans and widows and to one man of particular prominence in Jerusalem. Heliodorus remained unmoved. The priests pleaded, prostrating themselves before the general. Women of the city put on sackcloth in order to move the monstrous Syrian to pity, all to no avail.

Then, as we read, there appeared a rider on a caparisoned horse, a man "with a fierce mien," accompanied by two young men, in splendid uniforms and ready to do battle. The caparisoned horse struck the general with its front hoofs. He fell prostrate and was deprived of every hope of recovery.

That is an apocryphal story to be sure; but it has a point. God will not be mocked. Any treasure on deposit for him, he will back up in his own way, even though no overwhelming vision may occur.

In the second instance, our text constitutes a call to responsibility. Its challenge insists on the need to make choices between the things that really matter and those that do not. For God has committed to his people, and now to you in a very special way, a shining treasure, the "pearl of great price." It is on deposit for use, as we are reminded by the parables of the talents and the pounds.

That deposit is now being transmitted to you to put to work at the seminary in Springfield. Much of what you will be doing there runs against the grain of most of the values our culture has set up for itself. The temptation will come to you, as it does to the rest of us who teach Scripture, to talk much about the word of God rather than to teach it and proclaim it. We can easily be attracted to move along the same path followed by Christian art as it developed over the centuries.

In its early era, the figure of Christ fixed the worshiper with his eyes as he still does in the churches of the East. But in the twelfth, and then especially in the

thirteenth, century, the eyes moved away from the beholder. Christ appeared in profile; and the worshiper became a spectator. Then it was that doctrine took the shape of drama; theology was turned into a kind of philosophy; and even the Lord's Supper was leveled down to being only the Eucharist.

In recent centuries that process has greatly accelerated. In fact, it has become fashionable to remove Christ entirely from the eyes and ears of the worshiper. Even agnostics and atheists are declared to be exegetes. Adjustment has replaced salvation; self-assertion has taken the place of self-discipline; and psychiatry has become a surrogate for the cure of souls. A service such as today's offers us all the occasion to be recalled to our responsibility of guarding and keeping that splendid trust, once committed to Timothy and now to you.

Our text also calls us to confidence. It speaks of the Holy Spirit, the source of such trust. He still blows as he wills; but he has bound himself to the means of grace for dwelling not only in us but among us. That Spirit will not permit himself to be manipulated for ulterior purposes: whether theological, sociological, or political. His assignment is to enlighten and sanctify us through his power, which comes to us by means of what Zwingli sneeringly called "the wagons of the Spirit," word and sacrament.

To guard and keep the treasure being entrusted to you does not suggest that you fence it in. The word for "keeping" is the same word which occurs in the familiar passage, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Lk 11:28). This is an awesome job. It means carrying as one's burden nothing less than the word of the living God, which has a way of getting up from these pages to walk up and down in men's hearts—unless, of course, men prefer to put it into cold storage as something limp and lifeless, turned away in profile instead of transfixing men head-on with its awesome power.

The Holy Spirit is the gift of the end time. As of today, you are authorized to proclaim his word publicly and to administer the sacraments of the church on his behalf. You will soon discover that a new, strange power is loosed among men as you engage in this activity.

Some decades ago, Stephen Vincent Benet wrote a Christmas play entitled, *A Child is Born*. In the last scene the innkeeper and other citizens of Bethlehem wonder why it was that they missed "the biggy": the birth of the Savior of the world. They come to the following conclusion: "The loves we had were not enough. Something is loosed to change this shaken world and with it we must change." It is that kind of deposit. It will change men, as you will see. So guard it well and keep it strong!

Martin H. Scharlemann

Endnotes

1 *The Making of a Theologian: Selected Works of Martin H. Scharlemann* (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1984), 23–26.

The Wrong Enemy

In the name of Jesus, Amen. God's word feeding us today comes from the eighth commandment: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

It's striking how differently we speak about others when we see them as neighbors instead of enemies, isn't?

A pastor tells the story of a late-night emergency phone call. The phone rang around midnight, and the other end a husband spoke in anger and panic: "Pastor, if you don't get here right now and help, my wife and I are getting a divorce."

When you get that sort of call as a pastor, you don't set up an appointment. You go to the house! The pastor arrived, walked in, and listened as harsh words were thrust about like knives. Words borne from the anger of past grievances, from broken trust, and the need for someone to know how much everything hurt.

Eventually, the pastor had enough and said this: "You know what I think? I think Satan is trying to drive a wedge between the two of you. Once you've destroyed each other, he's going to sit back and laugh at the fallout."

Then they understood. This husband and wife realized they had the enemy all wrong. It was not one another they ought to be fighting. It was their adversary, the devil. This couple began to fight the devil instead of each other, and I'm happy to say they're still married today.

Striking, isn't it, how differently we speak about others when we see them as neighbors instead of enemies? We draw enemy lines so readily. I can just hear the conversations echoing around our Concordia Seminary campus or in our homes as we speak of those we believe to be our enemies:

> At times, a professor or student may say: "That student in my class? He's a fool."
> Or: "I can't believe *that* professor has a job here."
> Fill in the blank: "So and so over in that department across campus is incompetent."

Editor's note

This sermon was preached in the Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus at Concordia Seminary on March 28, 2025.

Sometimes we lament in enrollment: "Such and such applicant is too high-strung. Don't they know getting their Sem Net login credentials is *not* a major emergency?"

In marriages it can sound like this: "You never help with the children. You're always thinking of yourself. Why can't you be as good as that spouse or that parent?"

When you see someone as an enemy, it becomes all too easy to bear false witness against them. To tell lies about them, betray them, slander them, and hurt their reputation. Why do we do this?

Sometimes we're just afraid. What might people think of us if we told the truth to preserve our neighbor's good name and perhaps tarnish ours? Sometimes our lies preserve our good name but hurt others.

Other times we break the eighth commandment simply because we're bored. After all, what fun is life without a little gossip? Defending that person when everyone else is piling on is a buzzkill. It's no fun, and it certainly doesn't give us that sense of superiority we love. As Luther writes while reflecting on the eighth commandment:

> It is a common, pernicious plague that everyone would rather hear evil rather than good about their neighbor. Even though we ourselves are evil, we cannot tolerate it when anyone speaks evil of us; instead, we want to hear the whole world say golden things of us. Yet, we cannot bear when someone says the best things about others. (LC, The Ten Commandments: 264, 421)

So often it's out of anger we bear false witness. The person who hurt us deserves to be hurt in kind, and a word or two or ten spoken to hurt that person is cathartic.

Yes, there are enemies everywhere if you're looking for them. When we see an enemy, our words become weapons of relational and reputational destruction. Isn't this precisely how Satan *wishes* us to see one another? As enemies? As that pastor said, once he's driven a wedge between us and destroyed whatever goodwill and respect there may have been, Satan laughs at the fallout.

Yet, it's striking how differently we speak of one another when we see each other as neighbors instead of enemies.

The eighth commandment, for all the ink spilled on it, rests on one critical word: *neighbor*. "You shall not bear false witness against your *neighbor*." A man once asked a famous question: "Who is my neighbor?" Christ answered, "Everyone." Everyone is your neighbor, and neighbors as Christ shows in that story of the Good Samaritan are to receive mercy and compassion.

Luther puts it this way reflecting further on the eighth commandment: "We should use our tongue to speak only the best about all people, to cover the sins and infirmities of our neighbors, to justify their actions, and to cloak and veil them with our own honor" (LC The Ten Commandments: 285–286, 424).

Should you have any trouble doing what the Lord Jesus or Luther prescribe, as all sinners inevitably do, consider looking first not to the one who frustrates you, but instead to yourself and Christ.

How does Christ speak of you? How does he handle your sins against him? Your foolishness and carelessness? What would he say about you if he were not gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love? What if, upon entering chapel each day, the Lord Jesus posted a list on the bulletin board with your name and all the sins you'd committed the previous day that he might slander your good name and reputation? I doubt many of us would come. We'd be too embarrassed. Too ashamed of what our words have done to hurt others. None of us is innocent of lying, betrayal, slander, and the destruction of people's good name.

Yet, remember the Lord Jesus in John's gospel does not call you and me "enemy." Rather he says, "I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you" [Jn 15:15]. Jesus does not consider you, dear sinner who has hurt him, an enemy. He calls you his friend. His . . . neighbor.

In fact, each day when your list of sins swells and expands and Jesus could betray you and slander you before the Father, he does not. That's what Satan, your actual enemy, is busy doing. While he stokes division and bitterness among us, he turns around and there he is, before the Father in the heavenly courtroom, slandering you. He really does, as 1 Peter 5:8 reminds us, prowl around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

But the Lord Jesus intercedes on your behalf, defending you, speaking well of you, and explaining everything about you in the kindest way.

You can almost hear him: "I know so and so gossiped again. I know they committed adultery. I know they lied and cheated and stole, but Father forgive them for they know not what they do. Forgive them for my sake. They are your precious children for whom I shed my blood and rose from the dead. Your precious children who you, in mercy, gave the gift of my righteousness and salvation from sin and death in holy baptism."

Then, God in his mercy washes away every hurtful, slanderous word you've spoken. He looks at you and sees not a worthless sack of sins, but rather the robe of Jesus's righteousness covering you, his precious child.

Yes, there are enemies everywhere if you're looking for them, but the true enemy is your adversary the devil. We fight him, not our neighbors. Before you open your mouth to utter a word about a frustrating person, think of these three things:

1. God created that person,
2. Christ died and rose for that person and,
3. God does not create, nor does Christ die and rise, for worthless people.

When you begin to see others this way—and, might I add, when you pray for them—it becomes far more difficult to tell lies about them. To betray them, slander them, and hurt their reputation.

Yes, the time does come when we must discuss the sins and shortcomings of others. Yet even in this, if we are speaking of a neighbor and not an enemy, it will always be with the goal to restore and build up that person. To defend them, speak well of them, and explain everything in the kindest way. This is after all how Jesus, the friend of sinners, speaks of you. Amen.

Joel Heckmann

Concordia Seminary PhD Dissertation Synopses, 2025

J. P. Cima (Advisor: Dr. Douglas Rutt)

Seeing Through the Incense Smoke: Understanding the Meanings of Ancestral Rites in Vietnam for the Sake of a Pastoral Approach in Christian Mission. The veneration of ancestors in Vietnam has generated conflicting missionary responses based on oversimplified understandings of the rites' meanings. This study argues for a pastoral approach that listens for and responds to the heart-level meanings of everyday Vietnamese. Luther's writings on the First and Fourth Commandments, the cult of the saints, and vocation provide a foundation for a Christian ancestral practice but also clearly define its boundaries, allowing for a nuanced, compassionate, faithful, and contextual Christian response to ancestor veneration in Vietnam.

Fredric Ryan Laughlin (Advisor: Dr. David Schmitt)

Truth and a Song: The Role of Preaching in the Life and Legacy of Francis A. Schaeffer. Francis Schaeffer is widely considered one of the most influential figures in American Evangelicalism in the 20th century. This dissertation represents the first scholarly assessment of Schaeffer's sermons, especially the definitive collection, No Little People. Schaeffer's sermons reveal his consistent approach to cultural engagement, which includes four emphases: (1) Sound doctrine (2) Honest answers to honest questions (3) True spirituality (4) Beauty in human relationships. This dissertation hopes to both renew interest in Schaeffer's work and inspire pastors to preach creative and compelling sermons, which faithful apply God's unchanging Word to our changing times.

Christian Einertson (Advisor: Dr. Charles Arand)

Hæc est fides catholica: Toward a Tradition-Centered Theology of the Lutheran

Editor's note

These scholars received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Concordia Seminary's commencement exercises on May 17, 2025. Fuller descriptions of their dissertations are available at concordiatheology.org.

Confessional Writings. Since 1933 several monographs have presented theologies of the Lutheran confessional writings. This dissertation examines those theologies and proposes an approach that views the constituent parts of The Book of Concord as expressions of the tradition of the entire Catholic Church. This approach lays the groundwork for a theology of the Lutheran confessional writings that focuses on the historical and theological process of handing down the faith from one generation to the next.

Joshua Lowe (Advisor: Dr. Joel P. Okamoto)

Reason and All My Senses: Surveying the Post-Enlightenment Frame of Reason through Contemporary Theology, Philosophy, Cognitive Psychology, and Cognitive Linguistics with Appropriations for Christian Theology and Practice. This dissertation argues that Christian theology and practice are aided and enriched by a more complete understanding of reason than the Enlightenment advanced. This work analyzes the theological and anthropological implications of recent studies and views in theology, philosophy, cognitive psychology, and cognitive linguistics. It assesses their theological and anthropological implications and impact for selected Christian practices by evaluating them through the rationality and anthropology of the Confessional Lutheran tradition, especially its distinctions of the two kinds of righteousness, and the Word of God.

Nicholas Proksch (Advisor: Dr. Joel Elowsky)

Theodore of Raïthu's Preparation: Biblical Grounding for Metaphysical Terms. In the sixth century, Theodore wrote a treatise to reconcile a church divided by philosophical terms in debates about Christ's divinity and humanity. Yet at a time when theologians were far more reliant on quoting past Christian writers, Theodore tried to unify people around simple expressions, and examples where these terms are found in the Bible. This dissertation provides the first English translation of the Preparation, argues against a longstanding attribution of the work to Theodore of Pharan, and demonstrates Theodore used Scripture to refute philosophical criticisms of two-nature Christology.

Articles

Resisting a Posthuman Future

C. Ben Mitchell

C. Ben Mitchell is a professor of moral philosophy having served at Union University and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Among other works, he is co-author of *Biotechnology and the Human Good* (Georgetown) and author of *Ethics and Moral Reasoning: A Student's Guide* (Crossway) and *Bioethics and Medicine: A Short Companion* (B&H Academic).

Everyone agrees that we are living in a period of revolutionary technological change. From genetic technology like CRISPR to information technology such as artificial intelligence, the world is changing at breathtaking speed. As the late philosopher of technology, Albert Borgmann has said, "The very identity of the human person and the very substance of reality are presumably called into question by developments in artificial intelligence, in genetics, and in virtual reality. Reactions to these prospects are as divided as they are to carnival rides—they produce exhilaration in some people and vertigo in others."

Where is the future headed? Someone has said, "It's difficult to make predictions, especially about the future." True enough. But if we are to make meaningful moral choices about emerging technologies, we must employ our best virtues of analysis, wisdom, and reflection.

Although it may seem contradictory for a historian to write about the future, historian, philosopher, and public intellectual Yuval Noah Harari has done just that in his award-winning volume, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*. Here's how he envisions the future:

Author's note

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> In the early 21st century the train of progress is again pulling out of the station—and this will probably be the last train ever to leave the station called *Homo sapiens*. Those who miss this train will never get a second chance. In order to get a seat on it, you need to understand 21st century technology, and in particular the powers of biotechnology and computer algorithms.
>
> . . . These powers are far more potent than steam and the telegraph, and they will not be used mainly for the production of food, textiles, vehicles and weapons. The main products of the 21st century will be bodies, brains and minds, and the gap between those who know how to engineer bodies and brains and those who do not will be wider than the gap between Dickens's Britain and the Madhi's Sudan. Indeed, it will be bigger than the gap between Sapiens and Neanderthals. In the 21st century, those who ride the train of progress will acquire divine abilities of creation and destruction, while those left behind will face extinction.[1]

Harari predicts a future for humanity that is so radically different from what we know now that it can only be described as post-human. He's not alone. Ray Kurzweil is an inventor, philanthropist, and futurist. In 2005 he followed prophecy of the future, *The Singularity is Near*, with *The Singularity is Nearer: When We Merge with AI.*

> During the coming decade, people will interact with AI that can seem convincingly human, and simple brain-computer interfaces will impact daily life much like smartphones do today. A digital revolution in biotech will cure diseases and meaningfully extend people's healthy lives. At the same time, though, many workers will feel the sting of economic disruption, and all of us will face risks from accidental or deliberate misuse of these new capabilities. During the 2030s, self-improving AI and maturing nanotechnology will unite humans and our machine creations as never before—heightening both the promise and the peril even further. If we can meet the scientific, ethical, social, and political challenges posed by these advances, by 2045 we will transform life on earth profoundly for the better [the singularity]. Yet if we fail, our very survival is in question.[2]

What are we to make of prognostications like these? Are these the futuristic fantasies of fanatics? Ray Kurzweil is indeed a fanatic, but he is a very wealthy, very influential, well-rewarded fanatic who won a National Medal of Technological

Innovation in 1999 for his pioneering development of voice recognition technology. He's the inventor of the Kurzweil digital piano keyboard and other devices. He believes so strongly that he will turn the technological corner that leads to immortality that he takes 250 supplements a day just to ensure that he lives long enough to make that transition to what he calls "the singularity."

The singularity will be achieved by the mid-2000s, he says, when computer speed and memory capacity match the speed and capacity of the human brain. Once that has been achieved, *Homo sapiens* will have the opportunity to merge human consciousness from the biological platform of the human brain to the digital platform of a vast neural network like the internet. Humans can experience exponential change, he believes, as early as 2029. Soon thereafter we can become a newly evolved species. We are transitional humans on our way to being posthuman according to many futurists.

Both Harari and Kurzweil are echoing the vision of a global philosophical/technological movement called transhumanism. Transhumanism is a philosophical-technological movement that aims to help us escape the limitations of our embodied existence. According to The World Transhumanist Society, transhumanism is "the intellectual and cultural movement that affirms the possibility and desirability of fundamentally improving the human condition through applied reason, especially by developing and making widely available technologies to eliminate aging and to greatly enhance human intellectual, physical, and psychological capacities."[3]

A corollary of this definition focuses on the activity rather than the content of transhumanism as "the study of the ramifications, promises, and potential dangers of technologies that will enable us to overcome fundamental human limitations, and the related study of the ethical matters involved in developing and using such technologies."[4] So-called human enhancement promises to eliminate aging, enhance IQ, and eventually enable us to escape the limitations of human embodiment through technology. Whether this is an enhancement or not is open to debate, but many persons seem persuaded. Though many of us may never have heard of transhumanism and would not self-identify as transhumanists, the techno-utopianism of the movement is embedded in contemporary culture.

Again, from Harari:

> *Homo sapiens* is likely to upgrade itself step by step, merging with robots and computers in the process, until our descendants look back and realise that they are no longer the kind of animal that wrote the Bible, built the Great Wall of China and laughed at Charlie Chaplin's antics. This will not happen in a day, or a year. Indeed, it is already happening right now, through innumerable mundane actions. Every day millions of people decide to grant their

> smartphone a bit more control over their lives or try a new and more effective antidepressant drug. In pursuit of health, happiness, and power, humans will gradually change first one of their features and then another, and another, until they will no longer be human.[5]

Symptoms of our cultural malady

Calvin College emeritus professor of communications Quentin Schultze has pointed out that North Americans tend to be "unreflective voracious consumers of cyber-novelty" and have "naively convinced ourselves that cyber-innovations will automatically improve society and make us better people, regardless of how we use them."[6]

I remember my wife and me having an early dinner at one of our favorite mom-and-pop restaurants in a sleepy little southern town just outside where we lived at the time. As we were talking about our day, a lad about ten or twelve years old came through the door with an older woman who appeared to be his grandmother. It was as close to a Norman Rockwell scene as one might imagine. Grandmother and grandson were out for a quiet meal together on a Friday evening. One could even imagine this being a weekly treat for them both, a regular liturgy of life in this tiny community.

Bob, the owner of the restaurant, is also the cook. The owner's wife serves tables, delivering daily specials, superb hamburgers, or house-made pizzas to mostly local customers who sit at Formica-top tables while drinking sweet tea and watching the sparse traffic pass by on the other side of the plate-glass windows of the storefront restaurant. The scene was about as bucolic as it gets these days. It could just as easily have been 1956 as the late 2000s. Except.

As we waited for our burger baskets, I noticed that the young lad was using a smartphone. That's not unusual for someone his age or, for that matter, any age these days. His grandmother quickly surveyed the menu, asked the boy what he wanted to eat, and placed the order. The lad never looked up from his phone. I mean he never looked up from his phone. While he and his grandmother waited for their order, both of his thumbs were busy on the phone. Meanwhile, the grandmother gazed from one direction to another, trying to find something to interest her while the lad played on. He never looked up. When their meals arrived, he switched from two hands on the phone to one hand on the phone and one hand holding his hamburger. He did not look up for the entire twenty minutes it took him to bolt down that sandwich. After they had both eaten their meals, the boy followed his grandmother out of the restaurant, still never looking up from his phone.

What could have been an emotionally bonding experience between a grandmother and her grandson, turned out to be dinner alone, together. Instead of

receiving the wisdom of her years of life experience, the lad spent all his time on a digital device. The most disheartening reality of this picture is that we've all seen or experienced something similar and it's not as disturbing to us as it ought to be. Familiarity has eroded contempt. Or, at the very least, we have no idea what to do about it, so we just move on while the proverbial water boils the frog in the kettle.

The most disheartening reality of this picture is that it's not as disturbing to us as it ought to be.

Evidence is all around us that digital technologies are not value free. They are much more than tools. They are mediators of reality, often standing between us and others. Digital technologies are increasingly blurring the line between the digital and the real. Although I have serious doubts about whether we will achieve the singularity Kurzweil prophesies, I do not doubt that we will continue to try and that we will suffer a host of deleterious consequences along the way.

There isn't space here to identify all the pathologies that result from our unreflective digital consumerism and the ubiquitous use of those devices, but reports from the frontlines are not good. Readers of this journal likely know the work of MIT professor Sherry Turkle and her groundbreaking book, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other.*[7] Based on extensive interviews with people from all walks of life, children and adults, Turkle describes the way technology is negatively impacting human relationships. It is a deeply unsettling picture.

In *i-Minds: How Cell Phones, Computers, Gaming, and Social Media Are Changing Our Brains, Our Behavior, and the Evolution of Our Species*,[8] Canadian neurotherapist, Mari Swingle, explores what we are learning about the way digital technologies form and deform cognitive structures and behavior. Constant connectivity is changing our brains. More recently, Jonathan Haidt's, *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*,[9] tracks empirically the ways the lack of opportunity to develop imagination and the pervasive use of digital technologies are leading to a crisis of anxiety, suicide, and general malaise among our children. Interestingly, none of these authors are Christians, but they are on the side of the angels, as it were.

So, there is abundant evidence to support the case that digital technologies come with a cost. Is there any reason to suspect that the rapidly emerging developments in artificial intelligence are going to mitigate or cure these social pathologies? More troubling, are there good reasons to think that people will be convinced by our technological trajectory and resist the appeal of a technologically "enhanced" posthuman future?

After all, as philosopher of technology Antón Barba-Kay has observed,

> If we are spending most of our waking hours on digital devices, if we reach for them upon waking and only set them down for sleeping, if this technology is our single most important means for connecting to others and understanding what we do, if it is recasting our notions of what human beings are for; then it makes no decisive difference whether the devices are physically implanted in our retina or cortex.[10]

It is not unimaginable that if we would be open to implanted devices we might also be open to becoming devices ourselves in a transhumanist world. After all, as someone has said, "we shape our tools, and thereafter our tools shape us."[11]

The way of resistance

First, we should reject uncritical, consumeristic, adoption of digital technologies. We should not capitulate to a kind of technological determinism. Just because Mark Zuckerberg, Elon Musk, or OpenAI birth a new technology does not mean we are predestined to adopt it, much less become captive to it. Instead, we need to establish thoughtful criteria for adopting and employing new digital technologies.

In a now famous essay, "Why I am Not Going to Buy a Computer," printed in *Harper's Magazine*, Kentucky agrarian poet, novelist, and farmer Wendell Berry offered an argument for why he wasn't going to buy a computer (and, by the way, still hasn't). The short answer is, "I do not see that computers are bringing us one step nearer to anything that does matter to me: peace, economic justice, ecological health, political honesty, family and community stability, good work."[12] In the conclusion of his essay, Berry provided his standards for technological innovation, arguing that any new technological tool should:

- Be cheaper than the one it replaces.
- Be at least as small in scale as the one it replaces.
- Do work that is clearly and demonstrably better than the one it replaces.
- Use less energy than the one it replaces (preferably solar or bodily energy).
- If possible, use some form of solar energy, such as that of the body.
- Be repairable by a person of ordinary intelligence (provided they have the tools).
- Be purchasable/repairable as near to home as possible.
- Come from a small, privately owned shop or store that will take it back for maintenance and repair.
- NOT replace or disrupt anything good that already exists, and this includes family and community relationships.

Whether these criteria are still relevant or might seem overly restrictive is not the point. The point is that Mr. Berry has criteria. What are ours? How should faithful Christians think about technology and what criteria should we use to determine whether a technology is compatible with our discipleship as followers of Jesus?

Note that Berry is no Luddite. The epithet "Luddite" is meant to brand a person as hopelessly anti-technological. But this not who the Luddites were. They were a group of English craftsmen from Yorkshire who fought back against the industrialization of the woolen industry in the early 19th century.[13] They were self-employed families who mainly knitted wool hosiery in their homes. The rise of factories and industrial machinery threatened not only their livelihoods, but their entire way of life. Their leader was Ned Ludd; hence, they were known as Luddites. It's not clear whether Ned Ludd was a real or fictitious character, but for those who called themselves Luddites, it didn't matter. What's important to note is that the "Knitters of Dent" (as some were known) did not reject technology per se. After all, they employed spinning wheels, knitting needles, and hand looms to make woolen goods for sale. What they rebelled against was the mechanization of a process that left some people not only jobless, but radically altered their "form of life," a way of inhabiting the world that involved good people, good work, and a good tradition. Industrialization meant large factories, imported employees, and a lifestyle governed more by efficiency than craftsmanship. They were decidedly not opposed to technology but railed against the disintegration of their vocations and communities.

Second, like the modern-day Luddites, the Amish, we should resist the notion that efficiency is the summum bonum, *the greatest good*. Technology always offers us efficiency: the ability to accomplish more and accomplish it quicker. In our culture, the more efficient the better. But this is patently false in some cases. In some spheres of life inefficiency should be the measure of the good. For instance, if my wife looked across the table during our candlelit fiftieth anniversary dinner and remarked, "You know, you've been the most efficient husband a woman could wish for," how would I take that? Or what if your daughter said one day, "Mom, you are the most efficient mother a child could hope for." What would that mean? Either it is an insult or a category mistake. Relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children, and pastors and church members are not measured by efficiency but by richness, depth, and time spent cultivating meaningful bonds over time.

Most of us let technology drive us and then try to figure out the ethics of its use and wait to see if the technology bites back. In his recent volume, *Digital Minimalism*, Cal Newport recommends that we imitate the Amish by reversing our process of unreflective technological adoptionism:

In some spheres of life inefficiency should be the measure of the good.

> The Amish, it turns out, do something that's both shockingly radical and simple in our age of impulsive and complicated consumerism: they start with the things they value most, then work backward to ask whether a given new technology performs more harm than good with respect to their values . . . At the core of the Amish philosophy regarding technology is the following trade-off: The Amish prioritize the benefits generated by acting intentionally about technology over the benefits lost from the technologies they decide not to use. Their gamble is that intention trumps convenience—and it's a bet that seems to be paying off.[14]

The title of Newport's follow-up to *Digital Minimalism* speaks for itself. He offers a strategy for what he believes is a livable form of life in *Slow Productivity: The Lost Art of Accomplishment Without Burnout.*[15]

Third, we should celebrate our embodied humanity. Readers of the Bible often begin their thinking about what it means to be human from the Genesis account. We learn from Genesis 1 that human beings are made in the image and likeness of God (*imago Dei*), but we are left to infer much of what that might mean. Historically, there are at least eight possible renderings of what constitutes the *imago Dei*: (1) humankind's erect bodily form, (2) human dominion over nature, (3) human reason, (4) human pre-fallen righteousness, (5) human functional capacities, (6) the juxtaposition between man and woman, (7) responsible creaturehood and moral conformity to God, and (8) a variety of composite views.

As helpful as Genesis 1 is, the clearest lens through which to see what it means to be an embodied human being is through Christology. Our Christology informs our anthropology.

One of the great African theologians in the past, Tertullian of Carthage (ca 155-220) wrote a great essay against the Marcionites, *De carne Christi* (On the Flesh of Christ).[16] "Let us examine," requests Tertullian, "our Lord's bodily substance, for about His spiritual nature we are all agreed." Divine embodiment was one of the most important questions the early church faced—what does it mean to confess that God was made human? For us, the question must be, what do we learn from the Incarnation about ourselves?

What shall we say of our Lord's bodily substance? Well, first, that Jesus was embodied from conception in Mary's uterus. We know that fact now more clearly than ever through technology, but they knew it in Jesus's day too. Jesus was born a helpless baby who longed to be held against his mother's body, skin-to-skin. Jesus was limited in time and place—in his earliest days in a cattle stall in Bethlehem. Jesus had human flesh, a vascular system, and cardiac function with a blood pressure and pulse.

Later, Jesus worked with his hands, human hands. Jesus cut himself, got splinters,

and bled human blood. He sweated, human sweat, and got tired over time. He got hungry. He needed sleep. He went fishing. He experienced puberty. He grew facial hair and began to smell like other teenage boys, human teenage boys. He had bad breath, human bad breath.

Surely this is at least part of what St. John means when he exclaims, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us . . ." (Jn 1:14) and why in the same gospel account the people questioned his deity and asked, "is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" (Jn 6:42). They could not question Jesus's humanity because he was limited by his embodiment just like they were. To our own detriment, we treat these limits as if they are either obstacles or are extraneous to our humanity rather than necessary to it.

Lutherans and other Christians affirm the reality and importance of the embodiment of Christ Jesus each time we confess with the Nicene Creed that "We believe . . .

> in one Lord Jesus Christ,
> the only Son of God,
> begotten from the Father before all ages,
> God from God,
> Light from Light,
> true God from true God,
> begotten, not made;
> of the same essence as the Father.
> Through him all things were made.
> For us and for our salvation
> he came down from heaven;
> he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
> and was made human.
> He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;
> he suffered and was buried.
> The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures.
> He ascended to heaven
> and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
> He will come again with glory
> to judge the living and the dead.
> His kingdom will never end.

The perfection of the Son of God includes his humanity and his humanity sacralizes the embodiment of every human being. The only way truly to be human is to be embodied. In his incarnation Jesus limited himself, identifying with us in his full humanity. From conception throughout eternity, like Jesus, the first fruits of the resurrection (1 Cor 15:20ff), we will be embodied.

Just as Jesus's body was not a curse, but a gift, so our bodies are gifts. And with the gift of embodiment comes the gift of certain limits. Our bodies are limited in time, location, and duration. Our bodies are subject to gravity, hunger, and capacities. Yet almost every synonym in the thesaurus casts limitations in a derogatory light. Limitations are "restrictions," "impediments," "obstacles," "deterrents," "imperfections," "flaws," and "short comings."

As Lutheran theologian and ethicist Gilbert Meilaender has put it in the title of his book on human dignity, we are *Neither Beast nor God*.[17] But we want to be God. And we want to live lives without limitations. And we try. Yet, we are finite, particular, and located in time and space. Finitude is not a sin, but a gift.

I am convinced that only when we have grasped the implications of the humanity of Jesus will we be able to accurately assess our own humanity. The doctrine that the Word became flesh means that God himself affirms our flesh as good, and that affirmation liberates us from apologizing for our creaturely limitations. If we believe that Jesus, who was free from all sin, was fully human, then this means that he considered creaturely restrictions to be part of his good creation and not evil. It means that we must not apologize for what the Son of God freely embraces. So, living an excarnate life in a posthuman existence is not a goal Christians should pursue. As Schultze recommends, "We should accept no humanly devised idols as substitutes for God, no Tower of Babel for the heavenly city."[18]

We want to be God. And we want to live lives without limitations.

Finally, we should neither techno-utopians nor techno-dystopians be. Human beings, imagers of the living God, are to be creatives. The Creator placed a man and a woman, made in his image, after God's likeness, who are to "have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth" (Gn 1:28). Now, the idea of dominion "control" can mean taking a feral animal by the tail, wrestling it to the ground, and putting it in a cage in a zoo. It can mean exploiting the natural world to use its resources for self-aggrandizement. Or it can mean the type of mastery a painter cultivates with watercolors to craft a beautiful landscape, or the deft art of a composer with musical notes and instruments, or the way a poet knits words together to touch the soul. Part of this mastery is creativity. Imagers of God are called to be creatives. That is not, of course, to say that imagers of God create *ex nihilo*, but that part of our role is to exercise creative mastery on behalf of God, for the glory of God, and for human flourishing—the very reasons he created the cosmos. So, we are to rule the way God would rule. After all, each day of God's creative activity is a primordial

tableau vivant—a living picture—of the Master's creative artistry, thoughtful reign, and covenantal love.

It is perfectly reasonable and consistent with what we know both from the biblical text and ancient near eastern history that one of the ways humanity's priestly-kingly/mastery-creativity was (and is) performed is through the development and application of technology. Although there isn't space to unpack it here, mathematics, science, and technology are in many ways a unique legacy of the Judeo-Christian tradition. With the conviction that God has made us to be creatives, and with the understanding that in the goodness and mercy of God the world was made rational and knowable, mathematics, science, and technology were not only possible, but are an aspect of Christian discipleship and culture making. As the early chemist Robert Boyle (1627–1691) declared, "Nature is nothing else but God acting according to certain and fixed laws he himself fix'd."[19]

Conclusion

LCMS vicar of All Saints Lutheran Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, Joshua Pauling, has co-authored an extraordinary volume posing the question, *Are We All Cyborgs Now?* In that volume, Pauling's co-author, Robin Phillips, suggests a series of what he calls "elementary questions" to help us assess the benefits and burdens of technology, including the portent of a posthuman future. We should ask:

- How will this technology impact our social relationships?
- In making life easier in one way, will this technology make life more difficult in another?
- What spiritual, emotional, aesthetic, psychological, neurobiological, or metaphysical implications might this technology bring in its wake?
- Does the benefit this technology offers to one segment of our population involve a corresponding cost for another segment?
- Does this technology satisfy felt needs while ignoring objective needs?[20]

The next time a new technology is announced or a techno-utopian goal like "the singularity" is proffered, instead of standing in the long line at the Apple Store to get that cutting-edge shiny device or trying to upload our consciousness into the Matrix to become posthuman, we should ponder these questions in light of the true gift of our incarnate humanity and the embodied future offered to us through the hope of the resurrection. Let us be morally responsible techno-realists.

Endnotes

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3 https://www.humanityplus.org/philsophy-of-transhumanism
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5 Harari, *Homo Deus*, 5.
6 Quentin Schultze, *Habits of the High-Tech Heart: Living Virtually in the Information Age* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 17.
7 Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* (New York: Basic Books, 2012).
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11 This axiom is attributed to several possible individuals including media theorist Marshall McLuhan and UK Prime Minister Winston Churchill.
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13 See Kirkpatrick Sale, Rebels *Against the Future: The Luddites and Their War On The Industrial Revolution: Lessons for the Computer Age* (New York: Basic Books, 1996); Brian Bailey, The Luddite Rebellion (NYU Press, 1998); and Brian Merchant, *Blood in the Machine: The Origins of the Rebellion Against Big Tech* (Boston: Little, Brown, 2023).
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17 Gilbert Meilaender, *Neither Beast nor God: The Dignity of the Human Person* (New York: Encounter, 2009).
18 Quentin J. Schultze, *Habits of the High-tech Heart: Living Virtuously in the Information Age* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 197.
19 For more about the worldview of Robert Boyle, see Peter Harrison, *The Bible, Protestantism, and the Rise of Natural Science* (New York: Cambridge, 1998).
20 Robin Phillips, "When the Machine Breaks," in Robin Phillips and Joshua Pauling, *Are We All Cyborgs Now? Reclaiming Our Humanity from the Machine* (Dallas: Basilian Media, 2024), 40.

The Melanchthon Test
Anthropological and Theological Implications of Artificial Intelligence

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In his first formal address to the College of Cardinals, Pope Leo XIV explained that his papal name was inspired by Pope Leo XIII who responded to the industrial revolution in the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891).[1] Pope Leo XIV emphasized the need for the church to address the challenges of the rapid development of artificial intelligence. The new pope and head of the billion-member strong Roman Catholic church sees AI as one of the greatest challenges facing the world today. He highlights the dire need for Christians to respond to the anthropological and theological implications of artificial intelligence for the future welfare of church and society.

The rapid rise of AI dates back directly to 1950 when the mathematician and computer technologist Alan Turing created the imitation game: the test of a machine's ability to exhibit intelligent behavior, or whether machines can think. The early modern philosopher Rene Descartes—of "I think therefore I am" fame—had centuries prior declared that matter cannot think, and challenged his materialist opponents to construct a machine that could engage in conversation with a human being. AI appears to pass both Descartes's and Turing's test in its imitation of being human and evidencing intelligent behavior. Turing's imitation game has become a pivotal moment in thinking about artificial intelligence and its relation to human intelligence.

AI challenges our notion of what it means to be human. On the one hand, AI is not real, but a simulation that passes Turing's imitation game. On the other hand,

How does AI challenge our notion of what it means to be human?

AI seems real, or at least real enough to answer texts and meet real people's needs. If AI can meet felt needs here and now, is, that, then, all that we are? If AI feels real enough to us, what does this mean about who we are? Is there anything more to us than what AI generates and reflects? Put simply, how does AI challenge our notion of what it means to be human?

For centuries, western philosophical ontology has conceived of the self as body and soul. The rapid progress of AI complicates and calls into question accepted western anthropological interrelated concepts of the self, soul, and body. Following the Christian formulary of faith and reason, we will first consider philosophical concepts of the soul followed by theological considerations of the soul and the image of God as found in Scripture and what this means for our relationship before God and neighbor. We conclude by considering Lutheran theological points on what it means to be human as trusting creatures created by God in body and soul. Our aim is to further theological reflection—especially from a Lutheran perspective—on anthropology in response to the ongoing progress of AI and virtual modes of reality.

AI and the Soul According to Reason

Let's go back four hundred years from Turing's test in 1950 to 1550, and the brilliant humanist and Lutheran reformer Philip Melanchthon. In 1550, Melanchthon wrote a detailed commentary on the soul in which he explored what it means to be human. There's the Turing test in 1950 of what it means to be human; and then there's the Melanchthon test in 1550 of what it means to be human. In his treatise or commentary on the soul, *De Commentarius De Anima* (1550), Melanchthon clearly affirms the ecclesial definition of the soul as found in Scripture: the part of you that cannot be killed (Mt 10:28).[2] Melanchthon observes that "Even though the substance of the soul cannot be sufficiently perceived, its actions reveal the path to understanding it." There exists, for Melanchthon, three kinds of soul: vegetative, sensing, rational. Drawing upon the ancients such as Aristotle, soul here also means life force or to be alive. Hence, vegetables and all living things have souls but in different ways and degrees. Melanchthon confesses the theological definition of the soul: that part of us that cannot die (Mt 10:28, faith), while also exploring the philosophical complexities of human reasoning about the soul (Aristotle, reason).

Melanchthon's treatise invites us to reflect both philosophically and theologically on the soul. The soul's actions, as Melanchthon perceives, reveal the path to understanding it. Here we will first consider the soul by way of reason or philosophy, and overview differing understandings of the soul in philosophy. We will then exegete the soul theologically as found in Scripture and offer some distinctively Lutheran

characteristics. AI's rising challenge calls for sound philosophy, and scriptural and theological clarity on what it means to be human.

When it comes to philosophy and understanding the soul there have traditionally been three philosophical approaches on what it means to be human that may be categorized as separation, dissipation, and participation.

The first philosophical approach, separation, is usually attributed to Descartes and dubbed Cartesian dualism of mind and matter, soul and body. In this philosophical way of thinking there is the soul that animates the body. The body is controlled by the soul, and at death soul and body divide. This view is often critiqued as prioritizing the immaterial over the material and setting the spiritual at odds with the physical. Hence, the tendency to separate soul and body.

The second philosophical approach, dissipation, is an Eastern view that is often called the five aggregates or five skandhas. In this philosophical approach, what we know as existence is five aggregates of matter, feelings, perceptions, volition, and consciousness that form together and dissipate. The five aggregates flow together and give the impression of identity and persistence in time. There are echoes of this impermanence in the denial of the immortal soul in the ancient philosophers Lucretius and Epicurus. The dissipation view challenges any underlying basic reality of existence and tends toward nihilism or infinite regress.

AI's rising challenge calls for sound philosophy, and scriptural and theological clarity on what it means to be human.

The third philosophical approach is participation and found notably in Aristotle and Plotinus and other ancient thinkers. The philosophical way of participation on the soul is more in line with Melanchthon's commentary on the soul. In *On the Soul (De Anima)*, Aristotle contends that potential life belongs to everything that is living, and the soul is a real substance which expresses and ideates. The same differences that are found in nature are also characteristic of the soul.[3] In *Ennead* IV (3), Plotinus describes in detail the relationship of the individual soul to the Soul, or the one and the many, as well as the soul-body relationship. For Plotinus, the soul participates in both dimensions: ideas and forms, and reality and matter.

As Melanchthon's notes when it comes to philosophy or reason, "Even though the substance of the soul cannot be sufficiently perceived, its actions reveal the path to understanding it." In the philosophical approach of participation, one begins to understand and see the soul on the spectrum of life—a soul spectrum of participation—as all life participates in life and soul, but in different degrees. The philosophical approach of participation avoids the dualism of body as opposed to

soul, attests an underlying reality to existence as participation in life, and ascribes to what Aristotle would call a telos or end that all living existence seeks.[4]

AI and the Soul According to Faith

Having considered philosophical approaches to the soul, we turn to theology and Scripture and the biblical commonplaces of the soul as opposed to body, soul as wholistic self, soul as life, and soul and the image of God. Finally, we will look at Luther's understanding of being creatures with bodies and souls who are dependent on the Creator.

First, the soul as opposed to body: "And do not fear those who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul (ψυχή). Rather fear him who can destroy both soul (ψυχή) and body in hell (Mt 10:28)." "When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls (ψυχή) of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne" (Rv 6:9).

Second, the soul as wholistic self: "Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature" (*nephesh* / ψυχή) (Gn 2:7). "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life (ψυχή) as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45). "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul (ψυχή) and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself" (Lk 10:27).

Third, the soul as life: "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life (ψυχή), what you will eat or drink, nor about your body, what you will put on" (Mt 6:25). "A third of the living creatures (τὰ ἔχοντα ψυχὰς) in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed" (Rv 8:9). Note here that ψυχὰς is applied to the creatures of the sea. This use of ψυχὰς appears to be similar with ancient Greek notions of the soul as animating force of all living things.

Finally, the soul and the image of God: Then God said, "Let us make man in our image (בְּצַלְמֵנוּ), after our likeness (כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ). And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So, God created man (הָאָדָם) in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gn 1:26–27).

In Scripture, we also see what the image of God includes dominion over creation, and original righteousness: "[You have] put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator" (Col 3:10).

As the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* summarizes, "And Scripture affirms this when it says [Gn 1:27] that humankind was formed in the image and likeness of God. What else does this mean except that a wisdom and righteousness that would grasp God and reflect God was implanted in humankind, that is, humankind received

gifts like the knowledge of God, fear of God, trust in God, and the like" (Ap 2:18)?[5]

What it means to be human lies in realizing that we live in relation to God and in relation to others and all creation.

The image of God is mentioned in Scripture in Genesis as a pre-and post-lapsarian reality (Gn 1:27 and Gn 9:6), as well as in the New Testament (Jas 3:9). Scriptural meanings of the image of God also includes reason or language, and participation in language by way of reason, the Logos, the Word of God, who speaks forth creation and life and light (Jn 1:1–4).

In addition to the image of God as found in Scripture, we include Luther's wholistic designation of men and women as creatures. In the third article of the creed in the *Large Catechism*, Luther attests: "I hold and believe that I am a creature of God; that is, that he has given and constantly sustains my body, soul, and life, my members great and small, all the faculties of my mind, my reason and understanding, and so forth."[6] For Luther, being human means being a creature who is dependent on God the Creator. In addition, according to Luther, to be human includes body, soul, life, members, mind, reason and understanding. All of which testifies, Luther teaches, to the reality "that none of us has his life of himself."[7] All that makes us human, and creatures of God are completely dependent on God the Father who makes and governs all that is seen and unseen.

AI and the Lutheran Anthropology of Trust

Now that we have seen what Scripture and the Creed teach on the soul and image of God, as well as being creatures of God in body and soul, we also add what Lutherans bring to the theological table. Lutherans focus on the vertical and horizontal relationships of being human. To illustrate the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the Christian life, we see Luther's well-known theses on Christian liberty:

> "A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none;"[8] the vertical dimension. "A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all;"[9] the horizontal dimension. A Christian passively receives God's grace in Christ by the Spirit through faith, and a Christian actively lives out God's grace in Christ by the Spirit for others in love.

There appears an anthropological paradigm shift in the sixteenth century: a move away from anthropology as reason, will, emotion, and body, toward a dynamic anthropology of relationship. Lutheran reformation theology emphasizes anthropology as *coram Deo*, our presence and relationship before God and with

God, and *coram mundo*, our presence and relationship before others and with others. What it means to be human lies in realizing that we live in relation to God (vertical dimension), and in relation to others and all creation (horizontal dimension).

Trust in the Creator holds life together in the vertical and horizontal realms of existence. Indeed, according to Robert Kolb, "Trust in God is not merely one more component part of our humanity. Trust is the relationship that grasps our whole being, body and soul, reason and will, mind and emotions."[10] Trust is central to being human, and for seeing life as from God, and life for God and for others.

In addition to an anthropology of trust, Lutherans have an epistemology of trust in our vertical relationship with God and our horizontal relationship with others. We know God through trusting in the mercy and merits of Christ alone. Justification by faith alone is the grounding of our good works for others and our knowing and relating to them in love as neighbors. We encounter each other through our interdependent vocations in mutual bonds of responsibility and service. God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions are entrusted to us to believe, teach, and confess before God (*coram Deo*) and before the world (*coram mundo*).

Justification by faith alone puts to the test any doomed design to define and save one's self.

There are no easy answers to the theological challenges posed by artificial intelligence on what it means to be human. Following the example of Melanchthon who engages philosophy and theology, reason and faith, the challenge of AI calls for understanding science, philosophy, theology, and remaining faithful to God's Word.

AI and the Melanchthon Test

We have seen the Melanchthon test on the soul in relation to God. Amidst the challenges projected by AI on what it means it be human, we conclude with the Melanchthon test on trust: Article IV of the *Augsburg Confession*. Melanchthon penned the center of the Lutheran confession in Christ. Justification by faith alone puts to the test any doomed design to define and save one's self. As Melanchthon confesses: We only "become righteous before God out of grace for Christ's sake through faith."[11] We are created by God as dependent creatures and recreated through trust in God for Christ's sake as dependable servants. Trust is essential to our relationship with God and with another.

In *Trustworthy AI* (2022), Beena Ammanath posits, "Generations from now, students of history will look back on the early twenty-first century as a moment of transition, much the way we study the world before the invention of computers. When we are judged by history, will we be seen as responsible stewards who guided

the development of AI to its most trustworthy potential?"[12] After all, according to Ammanath's thesis, "the most significant factor that will impact our future with artificial intelligence is trust."[13] If Ammanath is correct, Lutherans, who know a thing or two about trust, are poised to critically and constructively respond to the anthropological and theological implications of artificial intelligence for the wellbeing of creation.

The Lutheran twentieth-century theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer discusses the ethics of trust in terms of responsibility. In *Ethics*, his masterwork, Bonhoeffer focuses on trust. According to Bonhoeffer, the subject matter of ethics is "God's reality revealed in Christ becoming real [*Wirklichwerden*] among God's creatures."[14] Bonhoeffer describes one of the dimensions of God's revealed reality in Christ becoming real as vicarious representative action (*Stellvertretung*). As Christ lived and died vicariously for others, his followers are called to vicarious self-giving love for the other. Bonhoeffer writes, "I simultaneously represent Christ before human beings, and represent human beings before Christ."[15] Bonhoeffer's insights invite further consideration for formulating a robust Lutheran embodied ethic of trust in response to AI. Lutherans point to trust, *credere Deo*, as the heart of what it means to be human. As we contend with AI and complications of understanding and trust, we continue to confess trust in God in Christ as fundamental to what it means to be human in relation to God and others.

Endnotes

1 "Address of his Holiness Pope Leo XIV to The College Cardinals, 10 May 2025": https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/speeches/2025/may/documents/20250510-collegio-cardinalizio.html. An earlier version of this essay was presented at the 2024 Theological Symposium of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 17 September 2024 together with Dr. David Maxwell, and a shorter rendition was published in *Lutheran Forum*, 57:2, 2024.

2 Melanchthon, *Commentarius De Anima* (1550): https://www.digitale sammlungen.de/en/details/bsb00012821.

3 Aristotle, *De Anima*. For a readable translation, see: Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans. C. D. C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2017).

4 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, i, 1–2 in Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934), 3 [Greek-English edition].

5 Ap 2:18 in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 114–115.

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8 Luther, *Freedom of a Christian* (1520) in Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings, ed. Timothy F. Lull (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 393.

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12 Beena Ammanath, *Trustworthy AI: A Business Guide for Navigating Trust and Ethics in AI* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2022), 189.

13 Ammanath, *Trustworthy AI*, 3.

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"Gain" and "Far Better" Than What?
Eschatology and Martyrdom in Philippians

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> For to me to live [will be] Christ, and to die [will be] gain. Now if [it will be] to live in the flesh, this to me [will be] effective fruit, but I am not making known what I would prefer. And I am pressed by the two, even though I have the desire to depart and to be with Christ, for [that will be] rather, by much, better.[1]

This essay aims to understand more fully Paul's well-known words in Philippians 1:21–23. To be more specific, for more than a few years I have puzzled over a question raised by Paul's words: "Gain *in what sense*? Better by far *than what*?" Since the two alternatives in 1:21 are "to live" and "to die," the answer is clear; to die is better than to live. The challenge here is obvious. Taken in isolation as an absolute declaration, this thought cuts across the grain of biblical theology in general, and not least Paul's own teaching. God loves life—he made it, and in Christ's death and resurrection he has redeemed us body and soul, and on the Last Day he will raise us to immortal life forever. How can it be better to die than to live? This is clearly not true in every sense, but what is the best way to nuance Paul's words?

The context provided by Philippians itself can guide the way here, and two aspects of that context will form the two parts of this essay. First, in Philippians as perhaps in no other letter Paul reveals the great goal and desire for all Christians, for

which we are eagerly to long. To state it baldly, that goal is not dying and going to heaven. Rather, the goal is the day of Christ and what that will mean, and it is toward this prize that Paul has been straining and to which he urges his readers to strain. Resurrection on the last day is what Paul longs to grasp. Even if Paul were speaking of "to die" in a general sense in 1:21–23, death cannot be regarded as gain or far better in any way that supplants or detracts from the day.[2]

Second, the immediate context of 1:12–26 makes it clear that Paul is not speaking of his death (or of the death of Christians) in a general sense. Rather, from prison the question in Paul's mind and heart is, "How may I best magnify Christ? (1:20)" Although he eschews any thought that he is in control of these matters, his answer clearly is, "To die as a *martyr* is a better way to magnify Christ than to continue in life as an apostolic witness." To die because of imprisonment and unjust execution for the cause of the Gospel will be gain; that means of glorifying Jesus will be better by far.

So, then, both the larger as well as the nearest context in Philippians combine to answer the question presented by the title of this essay. In that order, I'll proceed by first examining that larger context of 1:21–23, that is, the letter to the Philippians with its powerful eschatological message. A summary of the significance of the day of Christ in Philippians follows.

The Day of Praise to God for His Completed Work Among and In Believers (Phil 1:3–11)

Already the letter's thanksgiving section (1:3–11) offers two explicitly eschatological statements, both firmly focused (as Paul frequently terms it) on "the day of (Jesus) Christ."

> 1:6—because I am confident of this very thing, that the One who began among you a good work will finish [it] until the day of Christ Jesus.
>
> 1:10–11—in order that you may approve the things that matter, in order that you may be pure and blameless unto the day of Christ, filled with the fruit that comes from the righteousness that is through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Paul's thanksgiving for the Philippian believers is rooted in the promise of Christ's return. God began among them a single good work (ἔργον καλόν) when first they were baptized and believed; that work will not be finished until Christ's own day. This means, among other things, that when a believer dies, *God is not done with her yet*. Death is temporary; resurrection and transformation are promised and will come on the day.

The final hope entails full moral transformation. To be sure, at his day Christ will bestow upon his believers physical healing and wholeness. Love, however, is what

will endure when even faith and hope are transcended (1 Cor 13). That day will bring believers into a condition of being utterly pure and blameless. We will be filled with wholeness and godly fruit that comes out of the righteousness that Christ has already given to us through faith in him.[3]

The day of Christ, then, will finish the work God has already begun in believers. That completed work will entail a perfect purity and blamelessness in every way, and a resulting chorus of praise to God. Until that day, the work is not finished, the purity and blameless is partial, and the praise of God is imperfect and incomplete.

The Day that Gives Meaning to Suffering for the Name of Christ (Phil 1:28–30)

At 1:27, Paul for the first time exhorts his readers, calling them to live out their true citizenship (πολιτεύεσθε) in a way that is worthy of the Gospel. In so doing, Paul knows that they will face opponents who hate the Gospel and the Lord it proclaims. When this happens, Paul wants them to take the long view:

> (1:28) . . . while you are not being frightened in any way by those who oppose—which is a sign of destruction to them, but [a sign of] your salvation, and this [is] from God. (29) Because this thing on behalf of Christ was given to you, not only to believe in him but also to suffer on behalf of him (30) because you have the same struggle which you saw in me and now are hearing in me.

The theme of suffering for the sake of the Gospel figures prominently in Philippians. (See the introduction to the exegesis of 1:12–26 below.) The reality of such suffering applies to both Paul and his readers. When the believers face opposition, they are not to fear but rather to take the long view. Their eschatologically based courage itself shows that the day will come when the enemies of the Gospel are destroyed while those who stand together in that faith will finally be saved.[4] Until that day, the call to suffer at the hands of the Gospel's enemies hovers over Christian existence.

The Day on Which a Believer's Work—Empowered by God's Own Working—Becomes Evident to All (Phil 2:12–16)

This discussion will attend briefly to the Christ hymn (2:5–11) below. At this juncture, however, notice that the hymn's indicative-mood proclamation of Christ Jesus produces (2:12, ὥστε, "therefore") an imperative-mood need for Paul's hearers to strive heartily in the present time.

> (2:12) Therefore, my beloved, just as you always have obeyed (not only as in my presence but now by much, rather, in my absence), work out your salvation with fear and trembling, (13) for the One who is working among you both to desire and to work for (His)

> good pleasure is God. (14) Do all things apart from grumblings and disputes, in order that you may be blameless and pure, God's unstained children in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world (16) by holding forth the word of life, for a boast for me at the day of Christ, because I neither ran in vain nor labored in vain. (17) But even if I am being poured out on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and rejoice together with you all; (18) in the same way also, rejoice and rejoice together with me."

The main exhortation is, "Work out (κατεργάζεσθε) your salvation with fear and trembling" (v. 12). Supporting that exhortation, the apostle immediately explains that God's working surrounds and enables the believers' effort: "For the one who is working (ὁ ἐνεργῶν) among you, both to desire and to work (τὸ ἐνεργεῖν) on behalf of his good pleasure is God" (2:13). Note the monergistic emphasis from beginning to middle to end: God began the good work (ἔργον καλόν) among them that will be finished on Christ's day (1:6). God is the one who continues the work as they respond to the Christ who humbled himself, was exalted, and will come again (2:12–13). Final transformation will come as the result of Christ's working (ἡ ἐνεργεία) by which he will subject all things to himself (3:21).

The apostle longs to see the completion of God's work among his beloved fellow-Christians. As they hold fast the word of life, this will result in Paul's boast "until the day of Christ, because [Paul] did not run in vain nor did [he] labor in vain" (2:16). The day of Christ will make evident in clarity and certainty the labor of the apostle Paul and of every believer. Here Paul is heeding his own counsel not to assess the ultimate importance of anyone's efforts until the Lord returns (1 Cor 3:5). That assessment is for God alone to make, and that on Christ's own day. Until that day, we work out our salvation, supported and enabled by God.

The Day on Which the Church's Hope is Fulfilled, and the Prize is Grasped (Phil 3)

Early in this crucial chapter, Paul contrasts his former life with the new reality of being found in Christ, possessing the perfect righteousness that faith in Christ bestows (3:8–9).[5] That former life Paul now regards as "loss," even "dung." The new life and reality are gain. The contrast could hardly be drawn more strongly.[6]

And yet, the goodness of already gaining and being found in Christ is also forward looking; there is more to come. Grammatically and theologically, gaining Christ and being found in him have a purpose,[7] namely:

> (3:10) in order to know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the participation in his sufferings by being conformed to his death (11) if somehow I might attain to the resurrection from the dead.

The tension between "already" and "not yet" is evident here. Christ himself is already risen from the dead, and that resurrection power is presently at work in Paul through the Holy Spirit (see Eph 1:19–23). Until the final day, however, the working out of that power will entail on-going suffering, indeed, participation in Christ's suffering.[8] The imprisoned apostle is calling his readers to embrace these purposes also for themselves (cf. 1:29–30). To be sure, "being conformed to his death" need not refer exclusively to actual martyrdom. It would, however, include that end for some—perhaps including Paul himself, now in chains "for the defense of the Gospel" (1:16). And even if the Christian life leads to "becoming conformed to Christ's death" in that fullest sense, that does not change the object of striving and running. That object is the rising from the dead on the day of Christ, as Paul continues to emphasize in 3:12–16.

> (3:12) Not that already I received [the resurrection] or already have been completed, but I pursue if also I might grasp [it], on the basis of which I was grasped by Christ Jesus. (13) Brothers, I don't reckon that I myself have grasped (and now possess)[9] [it]. But one thing—by forgetting the things that are behind and stretching forward to the things in front, (14) according to the goal I pursue toward the prize of God's above-call in Christ Jesus. (15) Therefore, as many of us as are complete, let us be intent on this. And if you are being intent in a different way God also will reveal [this] to you. (16) But [let us be intent] to follow in the same [thing] toward what we have attained.

Despite several grammatical difficulties in 3:12–16,[10] Paul's language in the main is clear, and his expression is both striking and repetitive. Twice he pursues his goal (διώκω, vv. 12, 14) of grasping because he has been grasped, though he has not already grasped it (vv. 12–13, καταλαμβάνω each time). He seeks a goal, he pursues toward a prize, and that prize is the resurrection on the day of Christ—nothing other and nothing less.

The phrase in v. 14, τὸ βραβεῖον τής ἄνω κλήσεως τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, raises two important questions. First, what is the force of the genitive "the prize of *God's above-call*"? Scholars are divided between (1) an epexegetical genitive, that is, "the prize which is God's above-call"[11] or (2) a genitive of source, "the prize that comes from/arises from God's above-call." Either choice makes sense, but the second is more likely. Elsewhere Paul typically speaks of God's call as the call to become a believer, that is, to conversion.[12] In light of this, the prize results from the prior divine calling.[13] And to repeat myself (because Paul does), in this context that prize (τὸ βραβεῖον) can be nothing other than the resurrection from the dead on the day of Christ.

The second question is reflected in my awkward translation: "God's above-call

in Christ Jesus." The typical translation of ἡ ἄνω κλῆσις τοῦ θεοῦ is "[the prize of] the *upward* call [of God in Christ Jesus]." In what sense could God be calling Paul (and other believers) *upward*? If it is God's call to become a believer, one supposes it could be the call to be seated already with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph 2:6) or, in terms closer to this context, to have one's true commonwealth already in heaven where Christ is (3:20). If the call is the prize itself on the last day, one could suppose that the call brings one upward out from the dead (3:11, ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν). If "upward" is to be the translation for ἄνω in 3:14, the one thing it cannot mean in this context is "dying and going up to heaven."[14]

In fact, "upward" is neither necessary nor likely as a translation for this *adjectival* use of ἄνω. On the one hand, in the NT ἄνω functions twice simply as an adverb, and then it does have a directional nuance of "upward" (Jn 11:41; Heb 12:15). Four other uses, however, seem not to have any sense of "movement upward."[15] Moreover, in the closest parallel to Philippians 3:14's adjectival usage here, Galatians 4:26 speaks of ἡ ἄνω Ἰερουσαλήμ, "the Jerusalem above" (contrasted with ἡ νῦν Ἰερουσαλήμ, "the now/present Jerusalem"). In this Galatians text, the "above Jerusalem" has both a spatial as well as a temporal aspect. It is now in heaven, with God, and believers presently have her as their "mother." At the same time, this heavenly city is a reality that will only be manifested in the world and in history at the coming of Christ.[16] If Galatians 4:26 implies any movement with the phrase "the above Jerusalem," that movement would be downward on the day when ἡ ἄνω Ἰηρουσαλήμ is fully manifested in the new creation.

Paul's phrase here in 3:14, then, likely refers to the divine, above-call that came to Paul (and other believers) at conversion. From that call as from a source, the final prize of resurrection comes. The call is described as "above" because it came from God, or it will come from God.

The final "burst" of eschatological hope in this chapter occurs at 3:20–21. In 3:18–19 Paul sorrowfully refers to people who are "walking as enemies of Christ's cross." Their end (or prize, one might even say) is destruction. Worshipping the belly and glorying in shameful things, they are intent on (οἱ φρονοῦντες) merely earthly things, that is, things other than the present and future gifts of Christ on which believers are intent (3:15, τοῦτο φρονῶμεν).[17]

By contrast, Paul identifies with his readers ("our," "we") and declares a present shared identity as well as God's future promise of transformation on the Day of Christ.

> (20) For our commonwealth is in heaven, from which also we are eagerly awaiting a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, (21) who will transform our humble bodies [to become] similar in very form to his glorious body, according to the working by which[18] he is able also to subdue to himself all things. (4:1) Therefore, my beloved

and longed-for brothers, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, beloved!

The translation of the noun πολίτευμα (v. 20) is important.[19] The idea is that the identity, priorities, and responsibilities of the Philippian believers are found in heaven, with God in Christ. Behind Paul's use of "commonwealth" is the reality that, since the time of Augustus, Philippi was a Roman colony.[20] "The inhabitants were a people proud of their city, proud of their ties to Rome, proud to observe Roman customs and obey Roman laws, proud to be Roman citizens (cf. Acts 16:21). Philippi was a reproduction of Rome."[21] We might say today that they took their identity and their values from Rome; they were an outpost of the reality of Rome *even though they did not have as a goal or a prize to travel to Rome and leave Philippi.*

Believers, on the other hand, do not live primarily as colonists of Rome or of any other earthly power. Christians derive their identity and purpose and conduct from heaven, which is from the right hand of God where the Lord Jesus Christ is reigning.[22] Their commonwealth already now is in heaven. They have gained Christ and are already found in him (3:9). Now, as Paul has already urged, they are to live out their true citizenship (πολιτεύεσθε, 1:27) in a manner worthy of the Gospel.

The future promise follows on the heels of the present reality. From God's presence in heaven[23] the Savior will come, Jesus the Messiah; this is the eagerly expectation of Paul and his hearers. This will be the full fruition of their commonwealth; the transformation of lowly, mortal, sinful bodies into bodies of glory that are in very form[24] like Christ's own glorious, resurrection body. The God who began this good work will complete it (1:6). The God who works in believers so that they can live and grow into their salvation (2:12–13) will send his Son again, and the Son will fully transform them (and us) by the working (3:21) that will subject all things—including death—to his own authority and reign.

Philippians 4:1 stands as a brief concluding (ὥστε) exhortation built on the eschatological hope Paul has just proclaimed: "Therefore, doubly-loved, deeply treasured Christians, in this way stand firm in the Lord!"[25] Paul's Christian existence began with God's above-call on the road to Damascus when Christ Jesus grasped him, and ever since he has pressed on for the final prize when God's work will be completed (1:6; 2:13; 3:21). Considering that prize, he does not labor in vain and on the day of Christ the Philippians will be his boast (2:16). For them, as well, the final hope must the goal; as he specifically says to them (3:15), "As many as are complete, let us be intent on this" (3:15, τοῦτο φρονῶμεν).

The Day when Christ's Lordship is Confessed, and All Glory Goes to God (Phil 2:6–11)

On the one hand, in little Philippians, the *term* "Gospel" (εὐαγγέλιον) occurs with unusual frequency,[26] yet nowhere in the letter does Paul explicitly lay out the Gospel's *content* as he does in 1 Corinthians 15:1–11, or even Romans 1:3–4. On the other hand, Hansen has suggested that the Christ-hymn of 2:6–11 is Paul's contextual articulation of the Gospel, and I think he surely must be correct.[27] The good news of the exalted Christ's astonishing self-humbling and obedience self-emptying is half of the message. The other half is God's exalting and naming of Jesus with the highest name. That exaltation has a double purpose—and this doubled purpose reaches back to the earlier eschatological teaching in the epistle. In 1:10–11, the day of Christ reveals the perfect blamelessness of his followers; then God's praise will resound because of the believers. In the Gospel-Christ-hymn, Paul repeats and expands that central truth about Christ's own day. It is not "about" believers—what they receive or what they have done. It is about the Lord himself, about confessing his Lordship. It is *the day of Christ*. And because he is the only Son of the Father, all glory will go to God.

The Great Hope is the Great Prize—and Nothing is Better!

I can now draw together some aspects of the eschatological teaching in Philippians. Philippians 2:9–11 emphasizes that on the day of Christ, every knee will bow to the risen Jesus, and the confession that Jesus is Lord will result in praise to God the Father. The truth that Christ's day will mean praise and honor to God first occurred in Philippians 1:11.

Philippians 3:20–21 expresses both the "already" of God's work as well as looking forward to the final future hope. Already believers are living under God's commonwealth in heaven, not that of Rome (or America) or any other reign on earth. And to heaven believers look, not desiring to go there but expecting that Jesus will come from there. When he does, his working that began when first God's above-call came will transform bodies that are humble, that is, subject to sin and lovelessness and backbiting and disease and death. Transformed by Christ's power, believers' bodies will be glorious—in love, in obedience, in praise as part of a new creation in which all things have finally and fully been subjected to the Lord Christ. The work of God has begun (1:6). That work goes on, even as believers also work out their salvation (2:12–13). The work will be completed at the day of resurrection, the day of Christ (1:6; 3:21), and it will encompass all things in heaven and on earth and under the earth.

Toward this prize Paul's hands are still stretching out. He does not reckon that he has yet reached or will reach perfection until he gains the prize of the resurrection of the body. On this he is intent, and he calls his hearers to be thus intent as well. In life lived with this focus, participation in Christ's suffering is a normal reality. To turn

now to a close reading of Philippians 1:21–23 in its unit of 1:12–26, it will become evident that Paul's own suffering is a central part of his message in these verses. A quick glance of that theme in Philippians is thus in order to introduce the exegesis of 1:12–26.

Exegesis

Suffering for the Gospel's sake plays a prominent role in Philippians.[28] In the first and most important place, the Gospel proclaims the story of Christ's own willing suffering even to the point of crucifixion. The Lord's self-humbling is all the more marvelous because of the height of glory from which he descended (2:6–8).

The saints also suffer for the Gospel as they await Christ's return. Believers around Paul in prison are threatened in various ways, and yet they are daring to speak without fear because of his chains (1:14). Paul encourages the Philippians themselves not to be frightened by their opponents, reminding them that God has graciously given them both to believe in Christ as well as to suffer for him (1:28–29). In this the Philippians have the same struggle that they've seen and presently see in their apostle's chains (1:30).

Paul's own sufferings for Christ figure prominently in the letter, of course. Four times he references "my chains," that is, his imprisonment because of his defense and confirmation of the Gospel (1:7, 13, 14, 17). Although he does not know for sure, Paul's imprisonment could end in his death for the Gospel (1:20–23); he may be poured out as a drink-offering (2:17). Part of knowing the Christ in whom he has already been found consists in sharing Christ's *suffering by being conformed to the Lord's death* (3:10).

Considering this theme of suffering, it comes as no surprise that a close reading of 1:12–26 will make plain that the possibility of Paul's death *as a martyr* is central to what the apostle says about his own future.

> (1:12) Now I want you to know, brothers, that the things concerning me have gone (and currently are)[29] rather for the advancement of the Gospel, (13) with the result that my chains have become manifest in Christ[30] in the whole praetorium and to all the rest, (14) and that most of the brothers, because[31] they are confident in the Lord because[32] of my chains, more abundantly are daring without fear to speak the word. (15) Some [are speaking] because of envy and strife, but some also are preaching Christ because of good will. (16) The latter [are preaching] out of love because[33] they know that I am appointed for the defense of the Gospel, (17) but the former out of selfishness are announcing Christ, not purely, because[34] they think they are raising[35] hardship

in relation to my chains. (18) What does it matter? [Nothing matters] except that in every way Christ is being announced, whether in pretext or in truth, and in this I am rejoicing!

Indeed, and I will rejoice[36] (19) for I know that with respect to me this will turn out for salvation[37] through your prayer and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, (20) according to my eager expectation and hope that in no way will I be put to shame, but in all boldness, as always also now, Christ will be magnified in my body—whether through life or through death. (21) For to me to live [will be][38] Christ, and to die [will be] gain. (22) If [it will be] to live in the flesh, this for me [will be] effective fruit[39], but[40] I am not making known what I would prefer.[41] (23) I am being hard pressed by the two, even though[42] I have the desire to depart[43] and to be with Christ, for [that will be] rather, by much, better. (24) But to remain in the flesh [will be] more necessary because of you. (25) And because I am confident of this, I know that I will remain and will continue with you all for your advancement and joy of the faith, (26) in order that your boast may abound in Christ Jesus because of me through my coming again to you.

These verses lay out neatly into two sections. The first section (1:12–18e) employs one leading perfect indicative (1:12) and five present indicatives (1:15, 16, 17, 18 [2x]). Paul is bringing his readers up to speed as to how "the things according to me" are as he writes from prison. The section ends with "and in this I am rejoicing" (χαίρω).

The second section (1:18f–26) verbally picks up precisely where the first section ended, but in the future tense, "Indeed, and I will rejoice" (ἀλλὰ καὶ χαρήσομαι). Paul now speaks about the future of his situation and what might happen, explicitly employing 7 future indicatives (v. 19, "will turn out"; v. 20, "will be put to shame," "will be magnified"; v. 22, "will prefer"; v. 25, "will remain," "will continue"). Considering this, the elided verbs in this part of the unit will most naturally be future indicatives (e.g., v. 20, "to live [will be] Christ and to die [will be] gain").

This second section (1:18f–26) itself divides into two sub-sections. Verses 18f–20 comprise a single sentence, in which Paul's future joy is supported by his confidence that his present circumstances will result in salvation, which itself accords with Paul's intense longing to magnify Christ, whether by his life or his death. Verses 21–26 then flesh out what each alternative—life or death--would mean, and how Paul thinks about those two ways of magnifying Christ in his (Paul's) body.

Part One: Paul's perspective up to the present moment (1:12–18e)

Paul brackets this subsection with the progress of the Gospel (1:12), that is, the

proclamation of Christ (1:18). The events leading up to the time of his writing have turned out to further this primary purpose, and he wants his hearers to frame his circumstances in this way. The Gospel's advancing in this way has resulted in many unbelievers learning *why* Paul is suffering imprisonment (1:13) as well as in increased boldness as other Christians proclaim the Gospel of Christ—boldness that has been *caused by Paul's suffering as he does* (1:14).

Verses 15–17 have occasioned abundant study. Who is preaching Christ from wrong motives? Why are they doing that? How are they doing that? Happily, no answers to these questions are necessary at this point. Paul's perspective is itself quite clear, and he states it remarkably in v. 18a-e. At this point he cares only that Christ is being announced. In his chains, *because of his chains*, Christ is being announced. And he rejoices.

After the thanksgiving (1:3–11), then, this letter of friendship begins with this important report to the Philippians of how their apostle is faring at the time of writing. Moreover, after bringing them up to date, Paul continues and prepares them to rejoice into an uncertain future in which Paul himself will rejoice, no matter how the things concerning him may turn out.

Part Two: Paul's perspective on future developments (1:18f–26)

Two reasons for future joy (1:18f–20)—Salvation for Others, and Christ Being Magnified

Boldly declaring that he will keep on rejoicing, Paul reveals that he knows (οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι) what will generate that joy. His future joy will occur because what happens in relation to him (1) will turn out "for salvation" (1:19, εἰς σωτηρίαν) through their prayer and the Spirit's provision, and (2) that this will happen according to his eager expectation and hope (1:20).[44] The second reason is important, but straightforward in terms of what it means; I'll comment briefly below. The first reason, however, has generated discussion.

In v. 19, "For I know that *this*" likely refers to the whole of Paul's present situation: the apostle in chains for the Gospel, caring for nothing save the preaching of Christ (1:18). What, however, does Paul mean when he says that this situation will turn out (literally) *for/unto salvation*? Many conclude that σωτηρία here has a more quotidian meaning of "deliverance" or "rescue from physical danger."[45] A few translations, on the other hand, and not a few commentators take the term with theological freight, and have it refer to Paul's own eschatological salvation.[46] Other suggestions have also been put forward.[47]

G. Walter Hansen offers two reasons to reject the view that σωτηρία means merely "deliverance from danger," and I will add a third.[48] First, Paul employs "salvation" in his letters 17x, and all 16 of the other uses (including two [1:28; 2:12] in Philippians itself) convey a full theological sense. Second, it should not

be overlooked that a careful reading of Philippians shows that Paul is not actually certain whether he will be released from prison or die a martyr's death. Taken in isolation, some statements do seem to indicate that the apostle *is* convinced he will be released.[49] Taken with other comments, however, it becomes clear that the jury is out; Paul does not, in fact, know that "this will turn out for my deliverance." In fact, in this very sentence Paul reveals his deep desire to magnify Christ with his body, *whether through life or through death* (1:20). Third, the prepositional phrase "into/unto salvation" (εἰς σωτηρίαν) occurs in the NT eleven places besides Philippians 1:19.[50] In every instance except Hebrews 11:7, the phrase refers to theological salvation, and all the Pauline uses follow that dominant pattern. Following Hansen, then, I agree that εἰς σωτηρίαν does not mean "for *deliverance*," but literally "for/unto *salvation*."

But whose salvation? Paul could have his own salvation in mind. All around this phrase, however, Paul emphasizes the proclamation of Christ, magnifying Christ by every means possible. In such a context, Paul more likely is thinking of the salvation of others. This is what Paul confidently knows; this is his eager expectation and hope. Although Guthrie understands σωτηρία as "deliverance," he nonetheless expresses marvelously the heart of the apostle:

> The Gospel magnification of Christ before lost people moves forward in a hostile world via vulnerable, "embodied" servants, the "treasure" of the Gospel presented in "terra cotta jars." Thus Paul's chains—his suffering of persecution in the cause of Christ—are not a by-product of the ministry; they are systemic to his ministry. He might serve as a living carrier of the Christ-exalting message, or the *witness may go forward powerfully and poignantly through his death.*[51]

In the first place, then, in 1:19 Paul will rejoice because he knows that the proclaimed Gospel will issue forth in salvation for others. In the second place, in 1:20 the apostle will rejoice as he continues to hold fast to his expectation and hope concerning his own apostolic identity and work. More than anything, he desires to bring no shame on himself by failing to speak openly. That has always (πάντοτε) been his way, and so now in prison he desires that Christ would continue to be magnified in his body, whether by his life or by his death. Here I need to emphasize an obvious point. When Paul says that his earnest desire can be accomplished either through his life or his death, he is not speaking about physical life in general, or about death in general. He is an apostle in chains, and before him lies the uncertainty of continuing his apostolic ministry of magnifying Christ, or of being taken to the ultimate expression of his chains, that is, to die as a martyr for the Gospel. As my wife remarked in a common-sense fashion, Paul is not thinking about dying of old age or from sickness. In this very letter, Paul expresses how he thought about death through sickness in the case of Epaphroditus![52] No. In prison for the sake of the Gospel and facing an uncertain future, the apostle has martyrdom in mind as a way of magnifying Christ.

Two Ways for Paul to Magnify Christ in the Future

Beginning as it does with "for" (γάρ), the rest of this subsection is most naturally understood as an explanation or a grounding of the two options in 1:20, that is, a life that magnifies Christ or a death that does the same.[53] As a way of organizing things, I'll take up first how Paul envisions magnifying Christ through life as an apostle. Then I'll consider what he believes about magnifying Christ through death as a martyr. These two options are not at all a negative- positive pair, a "bad and a good." Rather, no matter which way it turns out, Paul regards it as a pair comprised of "good and better."

If he should continue to live, Paul in the first place simply and strikingly describes that as "Christ": "to live [will be] Christ" (1:21). To be sure, one could guess what that might mean. The apostle, however, fills in the gap; he tells us what he means by "to live [will be] Christ." In 1:22, he continues, "If [it will be] to live in the flesh, this for me [will be] effective fruit" (καρπὸς ἔργου). This is Christ, the One who works through Paul for the salvation and blessing of others: "fruit of work." Then, in 1:24 Paul further amplifies what it would mean for him to continue to live and thus to magnify Christ: "But to remain in the flesh [will be] more necessary because of you. And because I am confident of this, I know that I will remain and will continue with you all for your advancement and joy of the faith, in order that your boast may abound in Christ Jesus because of me through my coming again to you" (1:24–26). Not surprisingly, to encourage the Philippians' faith is central to "to live [will be] Christ," for his earnest desire (to repeat myself deliberately) is to magnify Christ to others—as an apostolic witness and defender of the Gospel.

And what of the second option, that of magnifying Christ through death as a martyr should his chains lead to that end? As with the first option, Paul's first description in 1:21 is remarkably brief: "to die (as a martyr) [will be] gain." Commentators have noted that the pair of options is a little unexpected. On the assumption that "gain" implies something better in some way, how can anything be better than "Christ"? The term "gain" does imply this, however, and sticking close to the context offers clarity. Paul envisions that his death as a martyr would be a gain, that is, *an even better way to magnify Christ.* To the present moment Paul is rejoicing that his very "chains" that have advanced the cause of the Gospel! The good news has spread through the whole praetorium, and fellow believers have been emboldened to speak the word fearlessly (1:13–14). If his chains have produced this fruit, a faithful death as a martyr, in Paul's heart and mind, would surely be gain.[54]

Paul further explains "to die [will be] gain" in 1:23, where he speaks of his desire that flows from his eager expectation and hope (1:20). That desire is "to depart and to be with Christ, for [that will be] rather, by much, better." The euphemism for death ("to depart") is attested elsewhere and is a natural re-articulation of "to die [will be] gain." Let me emphasize, however, two points. First, in this context Paul is not speaking about a Christian's death in general. He is speaking about his death as

a martyr, and how that will magnify Christ to others. It is valid, then, to make that explicit in considering the two infinitives: "although I have the desire *to depart as a martyr* and *to be with Christ*, for [that will be] rather, by much, better." Second, before considering what the two infinitives "to depart" and "to be with Christ" express, keep in mind that the comparison here in 1:23 is the same as that in 1:21. In the latter, it was "Christ" and "gain," and the "gain"—the better alternative for magnifying Christ—would be a martyr's death. Here, "to depart and to be with Christ" would also rather, by much, better *as a way for Paul to magnifying Christ in his body*.

To turn to the two infinitives, there are several ways that "to depart" and "to be with Christ" might relate to each other.[55] This is a legitimate question grammatically. In the NT, once in a construction with εἰς τό and multiple infinitives, the verbal nouns stand in a sequential relationship ("to X first, and then to Y, and then to Z").[56] In addition, multiple infinitives in this construction can refer to separate actions that are distinct but that happen at essentially the same time.[57] Further, two infinitives in an εἰς τό construction can refer to the two sides of the same coin, that is, the same general result or action in two ways ("to X, or in other words, to Y").[58]

I suspect that most readers have understood the two infinitives in a sequential relationship, that is, "to be with Christ" refers to what will be true for Paul *after* he departs (or dies); death will result in a state or condition that can be called "being with Christ" (σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι). First you die, and then you are subsequently with Christ.[59] One thinks quickly of 2 Corinthians 5:8 where Paul speaks of dying as "being away from the body and at home with the Lord" (ἐνδημῆσαι πρὸς τὸν κύριον)—a prospect with which Paul and his co-workers are favorably disposed (εὐδοκοῦμεν) though it is not the final resurrection immortality for which they groan (2 Cor 5:2–4, στενάζω).[60] The concepts in 2 Corinthians 5:8 and Philippians 1:23 easily can be matched up; the difference in preposition (πρός in 2 Cor 5:8, σύν in Phil 1:23) need not be significant.[61] And perhaps this is what Paul is envisioning—a blessed rest in the presence of Christ *after* he departs by dying a martyr's death. In this reading, the two infinitives refer to a sequence of related items: the act of dying, and the condition that begins with death and then continues until the resurrection of the body.

A case can be made, however, that "to be with Christ" is not what happens after Paul dies as a martyr, but in fact is another way of describing such a death: "to depart, that is, to be with Christ." Three observations support such a case. First and most obviously, Paul's "by much, better" is not comparing a lesser experience of Christ with a better, closer one. In this context, the superiority of "to depart and be with Christ" flows out in this world, in the way that a martyr's death would bear fruit and testify to the Gospel. Paul is not focusing on what he will, in fact, receive in the spiritual realm. He is all in for Christ, and he desires nothing other than to glorify the Lord in his body, whether by life or by death.

Second, recall how prominently Philippians displays the theme of "suffering

with Christ" (Paul's "chains" in 1:7, 13, 14, 17; also 1:28–30; 2:17). In particular, Paul's statement in 3:10, "to know Christ, and . . . the fellowship of his sufferings by being conformed to his death" makes explicit the truth that Christ's own obedient suffering even to the death of the cross is the reality to which God conforms believers' sufferings for the Gospel. Considering this it is at least possible that in 1:23, "to depart and be with Christ (σὺν Χριστῷ)" is equivalent to "to know the fellowship of his sufferings by being conformed (συν-μορφιζόμαι) to his death." The apostle is Christ's man. Like his master, he may very well die for the faith he proclaims in the sure hope of receiving the crown of righteousness on the day of Christ (2 Tm 4:8).

Third, Hansen has brought together in a helpful way how Paul speaks about being "with Christ," whether in this present life of faith or at the day of resurrection and new creation. He notes that the precise phrase "to be with Christ" (σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι) occurs only here in Paul's extant letters. The prepositional phrase "with Christ" occurs, however, eleven other times.[62] Five references speak of the last day and the resurrection of the dead, what might be called the fulness of being "with Christ" (Rom 8:32; 2 Cor 4:14; Col 3:4; 1 Thes 4:14, 17). Five times the phrase names some aspect of the present reality of baptismal union with Christ (Rom 6:8; 2 Cor 13:4; Col 2:13, 20; 3:3). One reference may refer to both future and present union (1 Thes 5:10). None of these eleven uses of "with Christ" refer to a condition of "with-Christ-ness" begins when a believer dies.

In addition, Hansen recalls the many σύν-compound verbs in Paul (to die with, to suffer with, to be raised with, etc.), noting that such expressions also refer to the same two realities: aspects of our present being-with-Christ, or of final full eschatological union. He writes,

> Participation *with* Christ in his redemptive events is effected through faith and baptism (Rom 6:4-8). Through baptism the believer in Christ becomes a participant in the story of Christ. The believer already participates in the past redemptive events with Christ (suffered with, crucified with, died with, raised with, live with), and eagerly anticipates participation in the future redemptive events with Christ (raised with, glorified with, heirs with, live with forever).[63]

Hansen summarizes his discussion with these words.

> As [Paul] reflects on the significance of his suffering and death, he realizes that suffering is a grace given to him and all believers (1:29), and he accepts his own death as *gain, better by far* than continuing to live in the flesh "because it is the final, consummate act in which Christ can be glorified in his bodily life." Paul makes a positive evaluation of death as a gain because it is the way to know Christ,

> to share in the sufferings of Christ, and to become like Christ in his death (3:10), and the way for Christ to be glorified in his body (1:20).[64]

In sum, Paul is envisioning the future possibility of martyrdom as glorifying Christ in his body through death (διὰ θανάτου, 1:20). This would be even better than continued life as an apostolic witness; to die (τὸ ἀποθανεῖν, 1:21) would in that sense be "gain." Indeed, to depart as a martyr for the Gospel and thus be conformed to Christ's own death (1:23; 3:10) would be better by far as a way to magnify the Lord Jesus, who himself suffered for all. And even as Christ's suffering gave way to his glory and eventually will result in the full hymn of all creation, so Paul's martyrdom (should it come to that) in time will give way to his grasping of the goal and prize, the resurrection and transformation of the body (3:20–21).

Of these two ways to magnify Christ in his body, which of them does Paul think will actually come about? A careful reading of Philippians must conclude, "He is not sure." It does seem that he is leaning in the direction of being released for further service in encouraging his readers' faith and proclaiming Christ to others. At the same time, the very real possibility does exist that his life will end by being poured out as a drink offering (2:17)—the very description Paul uses in in 2 Timothy 4:6–8, where he is quite certain that the time of his departure has come.

In all of what he says in 1:12–26, Paul is writing to his friends to encourage them, no matter what has happened to him and no matter what will happen to him. Whether in a life of Gospel service or in a death for the same Gospel, Paul knows God will use him to exalt Christ Jesus. Having given them a firm place to stand in their thinking about and concern for him, Paul invites them to that same perspective on their own lives, come what may. Their lives of faith, living, and suffering are also framed in hope, that is, in view of God's final act of salvation on the day of Christ: "Only live out your true citizenship worthily of the Gospel of Christ . . . while you are not being frightened in any way by those who oppose—which is a sign of destruction to them, but [a sign of] your salvation, and this [is] from God" (1:27–28).

Conclusion

My contention is this; careful attention to the context of Philippians 1:21–23 firmly guides the understanding of these verses in a particular (and in what was for me an unexpected) direction. The common view hears Paul's words ("to die will be gain," "to depart and be with Christ which will be rather by much, better") as a general teaching about the death of believers and the soul's subsequent rest and peace in heaven with Christ. At times, people claim that Paul is articulating his deepest longing and hope.

This reading of these verses is mistaken. It fights hard against both far and near context in this letter. From even the brief summary in Part I of this essay, it is abundantly clear that the day of Christ is the great longing of the Apostle, and that

the resurrection prize toward which Paul is reaching should be our hope as we join him in reaching out, looking for the coming of Jesus from heaven.[65]

Moreover, in 1:12–26 Paul is wholly concerned with his desire to preach Christ by any means, and to magnify the Lord with his life as apostle, or with his death as a martyr. He believes that the latter would be gain, far better, in the sense that Christ and his work would be more wonderfully promoted and advanced. Whatever the coming days might bring to Paul, presently in chains for the defense of the Gospel, he knows that it will turn out for his heart's desire to promote the Gospel and advance the faith of fellow believers.

From this understanding, then, a general application of Philippians 1:21–23 for believers of all times and situations emerges, and not only for those facing martyrdom. Our lives at all times, and especially when we struggle or suffer for the sake of Christ, can promote the Gospel, and glorify Jesus. May God the Spirit plant this hope and expectation also in us! May Christ be magnified in our lives, and in our deaths whenever and however death may come. Our eager desire can move us to emulate Paul's own example, so that others might see and hear the Gospel and perhaps believe, and that those who already believe the Gospel might be encouraged and strengthened.

Endnotes

1 All translations in this essay are my own. Below, in the treatment of 1:12–26 as a unit, I offer support for specific translation choices, such as the future indicative verbs offered here.

2 Andrew T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet: Studies in the Role of the Heavenly Dimension in Paul's Thought with Special Reference to His Eschatology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 105–106, would disagree with my reading of 1:23, "to depart and be with Christ" offered below. Yet he does strongly aver, "It is clear from a comparison of Philippians 1:23 with 3:20, 21, that the state into which Paul will enter at death is far better, bringing with it a greater closeness of communion with Christ, and *yet that it is still a state of expectation, less than the fulness of redemption described in 3:20f*" (emphasis added).

3 The righteousness that Paul mentions here is the present gift of perfect standing and innocence before God that believers have through faith in Jesus; see Philippians 3:9. This gift already now begins to produce fruit, and so I take the phrase in 1:11 καρπὸς δικαιοσύνης as a genitive of source, "The fruit that comes from righteousness."

4 The destruction (ἀπώλεια) and salvation (σωτηρία) in 1:29 refer to final destruction and salvation on the day; compare 3:19–21.

5 Readers may be aware that recent decades have produced a mammoth amount of learned and contradictory scholarship on Paul's understanding of justification and related matters. Phrases like "the New Perspective" are no longer helpful because of the complexity and variety of the debates. My recommendation for coming up to speed on some of this scholarship is the large but eminently readable book by Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New in Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004). Though over twenty years old, Westerholm's work nonetheless serves well to lay out the general contours of some of the major questions involved.

6 To anticipate the discussion of 1:21 below, although "gain" (κέρδος, κερδαίνω) occurs both in chapter 3 and in 1:21, the term functions quite differently in each place. In 3:7. "gain" is the sharp antonym to "loss" and "dung"; it is the contrast between damnation and salvation, to put it starkly. In 1:21, the paired items are "to live is Christ" and "to die is gain." This is not a contrast, but a comparison of two goods. See the discussion below.

7 The infinitive τοῦ γνῶναι αὐτόν in 3:10 likely expresses purpose (William Varner, *Philippians: A Handbook on the Greek Text* [Waco: Baylor, 2016], 77). Experientially, "to know him" refers to on-going growth in faith and sanctification after one gains Christ by faith and is found in him.

8 Whatever else "participation in the sufferings of Christ" might mean, the phrase itself evokes the unity of Christ and his body. This truth will have been permanently seared on the heart of the apostle when the living Christ spoke to him on the road to Damascus, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting *me*?" (Acts 9:4–5).

9 The perfect stem verb forms "I have been completed" (v. 11) and "I myself have grasped" (v. 12) emphasize an on-going result of a completed past action. The point is that Paul is *not* in the on-going condition—not yet.

10 The precise force of ἐφ' ᾧ in v. 12 is debated; I have kept it somewhat general with "on the basis of which." In v. 13, the neuter singular ἕν is presumably an adverbial accusative: "But one thing—." The second clause in v. 16 lacks a finite verb. Authorities suggest this is one of the extremely rare NT examples of an imperatival infinitive, exhorting "Let us follow / hold true" (ESV; see BDf 389; Varner, *Philippians* 84). Given the repetition of φρονέω in 15, I chose to supply a form of that verb with the infinitive as its object, "[Let us be intent] to follow/hold true."

11 George H. Guthrie, *Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2023) 252, calls this a "common view."

12 See 1 Corinthians 1:26–30; 7:20; Ephesians 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:9. So Guthrie, *Philippians*, 252; Jac. J. Müller, *The Epistles of Paul to the Philippians and to Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955) 124; contra Lincoln, *Paradise*, 93.

13 The closely parallel expression "hope of your calling" is pertinent (Eph 1:18; 4:4). The calling results in final hope. Here, God's call results in grasping the prize.

14 There is some confusion at times here. Guthrie, *Philippians*, 252, describes God's call in this way: ". . . ultimately calling Paul 'upward' (i.e., heavenward) into his presence *at the end of his life or at the eschaton*" (emphasis added). The death of the believer and the resurrection from the dead are not two ways of talking about the same thing. On the very next page, however, Guthrie, 253, writes decisively, "In short, the prize is the consummative moment of 'knowing Christ' fully *at the resurrection from the dead*, which for the apostle, is an all-consuming hope."

15 In Acts 2:19 it is paired with the adverb κάτω, resulting in "above" as opposed to "below." Governed by an article, ἄνω can act as a noun: "the things above" or "below" (Jn 8:23; Col 3:1, 2). In John 2:7, the prepositional phrase ἕως ἄνω means "until above" or "to the top (of the jars)."

16 See A. Andrew Das, *Galatians* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014) 500; Lincoln, *Paradise*, 29.

17 It might seem natural to specify "the belly" and "shame" as metaphorical references to sensual appetites, especially sexual sin. There is no reason to be so specific. Paul refers negatively to the "belly" only elsewhere at Romans 16:18, where it is a very general thought. As for shame, for Paul the most shameful thing would be to fail to magnify Christ in every way (Phil 1:20). Müller, *Philippians*, 131, sees a possible reference to the Judaizers. Commenting on "earthly things," he writes "by this not necessarily carnal sins are meant, but . . . a life ordered according to worldly measures." I agree. That means that things like pride, strife, greed, gossip, and defamation of our neighbor are certainly ways of living as enemies of the cross of Christ.

18 The infinitive after the genitive article has a flexible range of meaning. With τοῦ γνῶναι, (3:10) the contextually appropriate sense is probably purpose. Here after the verbal noun "working" (ἐνεργεία) the infinitive (τοῦ δύνασθαι) probably explicates the noun; so, Varner, *Philippians*, 89, citing Wallace's category of epexegetical infinitive.

19 Lincoln, *Paradise*, 100, glosses the noun as "our state and constitutive government is in heaven." Similarly, see G. Walter Hansen, *Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) 269.

20 Recall how Paul's *Roman* citizenship plays a major part in the incident of his and Silas' arrest and beating in Philippi, the *Roman* colony (Acts 16:35–40).

21 Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians* (Word Biblical Commentaries, 2004) xxxvi.

22 Lincoln, *Paradise*, 100 explicitly states that "commonwealth" (πολίτευμα) has an *active* force which can be "compared to the significance of the term βασιλεία are reign rather than realm." Compare Colossians 3:3.

23 In the relative clause, "from which (ἐξ οὗ) we eagerly await," the pronoun is singular. Strictly speaking, this means that its antecedent would have to be the singular "commonwealth," which makes less sense that assuming a *constructio ad sensum* in which the plural dative "the heavens" (οὐρανοῖς) is the antecedent; see Peter T. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) 461; Moisés Silva, Philippian (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992) 217.

24 The adjective σύμμορφός in 3:21 means "(of) like form." Here I translate it "in very form." Paul uses related words in Philippians with what might be called *strong* nuances. Jesus was in the very form of God, and he took the very form of a servant (μορφή, 2:6-7). He was in very likeness as a man (σχήμα, 2:7); see also μετασχηματίζω earlier in 3:21.

25 Compare this with the final exhortation in 1 Corinthians 15:58, also based on the final hope of resurrection.

26 Paul employs εὐαγγέλιον 56 times in 13 letters, 8x in Philippians.

27 Hansen, *Philippians*, 31, commenting on the significance of "the Gospel" in this letter, writes, "On the other hand there is very little said in Philippians as to the *content* of the Gospel . . ." He continues, "The content of the Gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ is Lord. Pulsating with praise for the humility and the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Christ hymn (2:6–11) is the heart of the letter. This hymn expresses in lofty, lyrical language the narrative of Christ from his pre-incarnate glory to the universal praise of him as Lord to the glory of God the Father."

28 See L. Gregory Bloomquist, *The Function of Suffering in Philippians* (Salem Lakes, WI: Sheffield, 1993).

29 The perfect indicative ἐλήλυθεν naturally emphasizes the current situation after a completed past action.

Paul is bringing them "up to date" on "the things concerning me" (τὰ κατὰ ἐμέ), before moving to discuss what the future might hold (1:18f–26).

30 The phrase "in Christ" could modify "chains," or it could modify the infinitive "to become" (γενέσθαι). Either way, it is not Paul's imprisonment as such, but his imprisonment *in Christ* that is in view. Others know why he is bound.

31 The predicate position participle πεποιθότας in this context likely has a causal force.

32 The dative τοῖς δέσμοις likely expresses cause. Paul here is insisting that his very *imprisonment as one who testifies to Christ* is resulting in good things; see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996) 168; BDF 196; Varner, *Philippians*, 19. Guthrie, *Philippians*, 98, expressly denies a causal force.

33 Another predicate position participle (εἰδότες) that likely expresses cause; see also in πεποιθότας in v. 14.

34 Predicate position participle (οἰόμενοι) with causal force once again (see vv. 14, 16).

35 The infinitive ἐγείρειν expresses indirect discourse; "they think that they are raising."

36 Paul shifts to future tense verbs in 1:18f–26 (both explicitly and implicitly); see 1:18, 10, 20, 20, 33, 25, 25, 26. This marks the movement from the first part of the unit to the second part. Having informed hearers up to the time of writing, now he encourages them and invites them to know the true meaning of what might lie ahead for him, whether that means life or death.

37 The noun is ἡ σωτηρία. See the discussion below for why the common rendering of "deliverance" (i.e., from prison)" is likely incorrect.

38 Because Paul is envisioning what could happen to him in coming days, the elided verbs should be understood as future indicatives here and in vv. 22, 24. In 1:21 the grammatical subjects of the elided linking verb forms are the articular infinitives ("to live," "to die"); see Varner, *Philippians*, 26.

39 The phrase literally is καρπὸς ἔργου, "fruit of work." The gloss "effective fruit" takes the genitive as attributive or Hebraic (Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 86–88).

40 When καί connects a positive clause with a negative one, as here, an adversative translation ("but") is expected.

41 The translation of 1:22c presents complexities. With O'Brien, *Philippians*, 127-128 and Hansen, *Philippians*, 86, and *pace* Silva, *Philippians*, 83–84, I give γνωρίζω its more natural sense of "to make known, reveal" (see Phil 4:6); the NT employs the verb 25x, and every other use means "make known." The clause τί αἱρήσομαι ("What shall I choose/prefer?") is an indirect question that expresses the content of what Paul is not making known. BDF 368, by contrast, suggests a different punctuation, resulting in "What shall I choose/prefer? I am not making known."

42 A concessive force for the predicate position participle ἔχων works well in this context. Even though Paul admits to desiring one possible option, he is nonetheless hard-pressed by the two alternatives.

43 Normally εἰς τὸ ἀναλῦσαι καὶ σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι would express purpose or result. Here it typically is taken as an explication of the verbal noun "desire," that is, *what* Paul desires; see BDF 402.2, cited in Varner, *Philippians*, 28.

44 These 2 reasons correspond to the prepositional phrases that modify the verb "will turn out." The first phrase is two words; the second phrase entails 30 words because the verbal nouns "eager expectation" and "hope" are fleshed out by the lengthy ὅτι clause that makes up most of v. 20.

45 NIV, ESV, GNT, NASB, NKJV, and RSV all offer this understanding. See Guthrie, *Philippians*, 117. In wider Greek literature, σωτηρία often carries the more mundane meaning.

46 KJV, CSB. See O'Brien, *Philippians*, 112; J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1956), 91; Henry Alford, *Alford's Greek Testament: An Exegetical and Critical Commentary. Vol III Galatians-Philemon* (Guardian Press, 1976) 159; Hansen, *Philippians*, 78-79.

47 R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, and to the Philippians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1937) 736, interestingly suggests that Paul means that he will be "saved" from shame, and will be able to magnify Christ fully, whether by life or by death. O'Brien, *Philippians*, 111, lists five interpretive options, including "the salvation (and conversion) of many people." See also Alford, *Greek Testament*, 159, who lists similar options.

48 Hansen, *Philippians*, 78-79.

49 Philippians 1:25, "And being confident of this, I know that I will remain and will continue with you all"; 2:24, "And I am confident in the Lord that also I myself will come quickly." Philippians 2:17, on the other hand, says, "But if also I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and I rejoice together with you all." Philippians 2:17 almost certainly refers to martyrdom; Silva, *Philippians*, 150, noting the parallels to 2 Timothy 4:6 and Ignatius *Rom*. 2.2; Hansen, *Philippians*, 188; Guthrie, *Philippians*, 192; O'Brien, *Philippians,* 301; contra Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 252–254.

50 Acts 13:47; Romans 1:16; 10:1, 10; 2 Corinthians 7:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 9:28; 11:7; 1 Peter 1:5; 2:2.

51 Guthrie, *Philippians*, 120 (emphasis added). See also John S. Pobee, *Persecution and Martyrdom in the Theology of Paul* (JSOT, 1985). Commenting on the missiological aspects of martyrdom already in the literature of early Judaism prior to Paul's day, Pobee, 33, comments, "We have so far sought to demonstrate that the martyr by his sufferings bears testimony to God. This is more than just demonstrating that the martyr himself is a devotee of God. He is also engaged in a missionary endeavor. By his witness through suffering he seeks to witness to God and to convert others to his God." Pobee references Daniel 3:26–29; 6:25; *Bel and the Dragon*, 41; 1 Maccabees 6:11–24; 2 Maccabees 3:28ff; 3 Maccabees 6:28.

52 Philippians 2:25–30 is more likely to be Paul's general attitude toward death than 1:21-23. Epaphroditus became deathly ill, but he didn't die. Paul's reaction is to say, "God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow." The difference between Paul's situation and Epaphroditus' was that the latter, though engaged in Christian work, was not in the position of being martyred for the Gospel. Paul is precisely in that position.

53 How one understands the function of γάρ at the beginning of 1:21 is both crucial and controverted. Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 498 says there is no agreement. On the one hand are those who see the natural and tight connection, so that 1:21 and following are supporting and/or explaining what has preceded; Lenski, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians,* 739; Bloomquist, *Suffering*, 126; Hansen, *Philippians*, 81. On the other hand, some assert that quite a new topic begins at 1:21; O'Brien, *Philippians*, 87 ("a change in perspective"); Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 55. Significantly, Fee, *Philippians*, 139, asserts that 1:21 begins to offer "a reflection of a different kind *from what one might have expected following vv. 19-20*." (emphasis added) In a footnote, Fee explains further, "That is, following the unmistakable ring of confident expectation about Christ's being glorified, one might have expected this particular theme to be elaborated in some way." I am, of course, arguing precisely that beginning with v. 21 Paul does so elaborate.

54 In the OT and in early Judaism, willingness to be martyred was seen to inspire devotion to God in others, and even at times to challenge one's enemies to convert; see Daniel 3:28–30; 6:25–28; 2 Maccabees 6:24–31; Ignatius of Antioch, *Romans 4–6*. One also readily thinks of the on-going legacy of recent figures such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Bishop Oscar Romero, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. precisely because they are perceived as dying the death of martyrs.

55 Hansen, *Philippians*, 87, has suggested that the single article that governs the two infinitives links them together in a closer way. This is grammatically unlikely. The presence of only one article is explained by the idiomatic structure of εἰς τό plus one or more infinitives. By my count, in the NT there are seven examples of this idiom with more than one infinitive (Mt 20:19; Rom 15:8–9; 1 Cor 11:22; 2 Cor 7:3; Phil 1:23; 1 Thes 3:2, 10). Much more commonly only one infinitive is present.

56 Matthew 20:19 is the one clear NT example of this: "in order to mock and to scourge and to crucify and on the third day to rise."

57 Romans 15:8–9 provides an example of this: "in order to confirm the fathers' promises and for the Gentiles to glorify God because of mercy"; see also 2 Cor 7:3; 1 Thes 3:2.

58 1 Corinthians 11:22 might do this, describing a meal: "in order to eat and to drink." 1 Thessalonians 3:10 says, "desiring to see your face and to establish what things are lacking in your faith."

59 Such a reading is supported by the verbal action in "to depart." It is natural enough to ask, "To depart to where?" The answer could very well be, "to a condition of being with Christ."

60 In Paul the verb εὐδοκέω can have a very strong sense, especially when God is the subject (1 Cor 1:21; 10:5; Gal 1:15; Col 1:19). Human subjects can also be "well-pleased" in a vigorous way; see 1 Thessalonians 2:8; 2 Thessalonians 2:12; perhaps Romans 15:26–27. On the other hand, the verb can mean simply "be willing" or "be content" when consider the options laid out. 1 Thessalonians 3:1 expresses this meaning, as does 2 Corinthians 12:10.

61 Another likely parallel occurs in Luke 23:43, where Jesus says to the believing thief next to him, "Today you will be with me (μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ) in Paradise."

62 Hansen, *Philippians*, 88.

63 Hansen, *Philippians*, 88–89.

64 Hansen, 90. The citation within this quotation is from Karl Barth, *Epistle to the Philippians trans*. James W. Leitch. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 41.

65 Let me clearly affirm that, based on 2 Corinthians 5:6–8 and Luke 23:43, when death comes and breaks our humanity into two pieces (body and soul), the believer's soul does begin a condition of rest and blessedness. The very common expression ("to go to heaven"), although strictly speaking not a biblical expression, gets at this adequately.

Homiletical Helps

Tangible: Theology Learned and Lived
Technology and the Church

Tangible: Theology Learned and Lived is a podcast from the department of Theological Research and Publications at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Each episode explores the ways in which theology permeates all aspects of life. Our host and producer, Jessica Bordeleau, talks with various Concordia Seminary faculty on a variety of topics. Each conversation points to the intersection of faith and daily life. Our goal is to challenge listeners to deepen their theology and live out their faith in Christ. The following is an edited transcript of portions of the September 2024 episode "Technology and the Church: Past, Present, and Future" with guests Dr. Bernard Bull and Dr. David Maxwell.

Jessica Bordeleau:

Today we're talking about technology and the church. Both of our guests today have spent extensive time researching and observing both. I'd like to welcome Dr. Bernard Bull, the president at Concordia University, Nebraska. He's had an ongoing interest and expertise in educational technology and that's the area in which he earned his doctorate. He presented a plenary session on technology and the church at the 2024 Theological Symposium here at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

I'd also like to welcome Dr. David Maxwell. He is a professor of systematic theology here at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. You've heard him on a previous *Tangible* episode titled "Artificial Intelligence and the Church," which was also the subject of his presentation at the 2024 Theological Symposium.

I want to know more about how technology has influenced the church past, present, and future. Here's your opening question, which two forms of technology have had the greatest influence on the church in the past? And you can't say the printing press. That's too easy.

Bernard Bull:

Well, before I answer the question, I should explain how I think of technology, the definition that I use. I talk about applied systematic knowledge, so bodies of knowledge that are used and applied for a variety of purposes. Some talk about technology just in terms of solving problems, but I don't use that definition. A lot of technology today is not necessarily being used to solve a problem as much as to pursue a possibility or to explore something.

The first technology that I think of when I look into the scriptures is a technology that God introduced, which is clothing. That takes us all the way back to the Genesis account of sin entering the world. We have this example of God creating clothing so that they won't be naked. Not that it's necessarily the one that had the biggest impact, but it's the first example of a technology that we have in the scripture, and it shows us how a technology develops over time. When we take our sinful nature and combine it with a technology, even one that was granted by God, we can misuse and abuse that and it takes on many forms.

Bordeleau: Dr. Maxwell, what about you?

David Maxwell:

Well, I would say *writing* would be one. And I don't mean the printing press, I mean writing because you don't have Holy Scriptures if you don't have writing.

Bordeleau: What would they have been written with? What was the technology at that time?

Maxwell: Well, the Old Testament scriptures are written on scrolls. The New Testament represents a technological advance too, because then you get the Codex form. So, Christians don't tend to have scrolls, they have books. And that's a technological change as well, although probably not quite as significant as writing itself. We have an example of God's role in the use of a technology, especially in the Old Testament in terms of

the Ten Commandments being provided. As the scriptures are being recorded, our understanding, our theology is not just some independent human endeavor, but it's God at work through his people to preserve the truth and ensure that it's proclaimed with truth and integrity. I'm intrigued when we start talking about technologies, especially in the church. I'm intrigued with the idea of starting with technologies where we know we have definitive evidence that God was involved in the use of that technology at some point, at some moment in history. I'm drawn to those examples as a starting point.

One thing that fascinates me about it is there are also examples of technology in the Bible that are clearly negative. You have the Tower of Babel. I mean that's obviously a negative use of technology where you're using it to try to kind of replace God. We want to live where God lives up in the sky.

Bull: To your point, there are lots of technologies in the Bible that are used for purposes that are not consistent with God's will and God's work. For example, you invent something like a knife that is going to be used to cut fruit and vegetables to prepare meals for another person out of love for a neighbor, but we also have examples of a knife used to break the fifth commandment and do harm to other people.

Maxwell: The cross is a piece of technology that would be influential to the Christian church. If you are thinking about the Roman period; the road system and ships enabled things like the missionary journeys.

Bordeleau: What about today? Which form of technology has had the greatest impact on today's church?

Maxwell: Well, one technology that we probably ought to mention is radio. It's an interesting case of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod being an early adopter of a new technology and trying to use it in service of the gospel.

Bordeleau: I think a lot of people in the church are afraid of technology because there are ways to use it negatively. Radio as an example; a prevalent view of Christians at that time was that radio itself was evil. The Lutheran Hour was one of the first Christian radio shows that began to use it to spread the gospel, but it was controversial at first.

Bull: Every major technology has an era where there were people that expressed usually legitimate, genuine concerns about the risks and the dangers and how it would change something about their community together and their life. Neil Postman, in the introduction to his book, "Towards Technopoly" wrote about "The Judgment of Thamus." Thamus, the god of invention presents the technology of writing to the king, and the king rejects it because he says it will wreak havoc. He said this is going to do harm, it's going to dull people's minds. Their memories will no longer be as strong as they were before. And he begins to outline all the harm of this technology. He was right, it's true; those things do happen. That is a downside of writing. But there are also some real positives of writing, and we have examples of that in the Old Testament where God's word was lost for a time, and it was discovered in a scroll. We have God recording the Ten Commandments on the tablets. We certainly have examples of where the use of writing can remind us of that which we've forgotten and point us back to the truth.

Bordeleau: Dr. Maxwell, your presentation at the 2024 Theological Symposium was "AI and the Human Soul." There's a lot of fear about Artificial Intelligence. Do you think that will be a technology used by the church for positive ways in the future?

Maxwell: It's too soon to tell what's going to happen. My sense is that this is a turning point in history; we can't really imagine what society's going to be like after this thing fully kicks in. So, I don't really want to make any predictions.

Bordeleau: Which developing technology do you see as a game changer for the future church?

Bull: Well, certainly one of them is AI. No question that what we're experiencing as AI is not a single technology. It's a combination of multiple technologies coming together to make it possible. And even the artificial intelligence model that many of us know, this language linguistic model, that's only one of multiple models that are being experimented with in AI. Most of us, even when we talk about and think about AI, we're referring to maybe one, possibly two of the models that exist. We're not even aware "of the other ways." There's no question though that this one warrants our best thinking and study of God's word. I think we need to put some of our best thinkers together and try to explore implications, possibilities, opportunities, challenges, and theological implications.

I wrote the book *Digitized* based on the research I had done over the prior twenty years. When Google came about, the early search engines on the internet were companies whose primary service was to help you search the internet and find things. Google was not created with that as its primary purpose. Google was and is an advertising company. That's what they do. I've been to Google, I've talked with some of the leaders at Google, and they will tell you; Google is an advertising company. When you search for something, we all know that even first generation of Google, one of the ways that they made their money was that the first things to show up on your search were not necessarily the ones most closely aligned or the best fit for what you were seeking, but they were the people who paid for the premier spots. So essentially you were being sold to the companies, your attention, your eyeballs were being sold to the company, but you got to choose what you would click on or what you wouldn't click on. There was still some freedom for you to vet and decide what you were going to read.

Well, now follow it to modern social media platforms that are primarily short-form videos, video formats like TikTok or Instagram. Now, whenever I want to find something on TikTok or on Instagram, it is not like doing an internet search. I might type a keyword or a phrase but most of what I see is driven by an algorithm; an adaptive algorithm that's based upon my behaviors, my habits, my interests, the data that it's collected about me.

I've experimented with this. I don't have a TikTok account for this reason today. I experimented with different models. I created an account that was very much focused on CrossFit and different fitness things. I was careful to like the things that were in line with what I wanted and not like the others. But what I found to be interesting is that it would occasionally feed me something a bit beyond the scope of what I was interested in, perhaps to feed me more content that would be relevant. It was almost as if it were trying to discover what would best keep me engaged in the platform. It changed over time. No longer was it just giving me the stuff that I consciously decided was best for me, but would start to give me that which it thinks is going to keep my attention. So, suddenly, my account, which was really about exercise, was showing me how to jump off buildings without getting hurt and videos of extreme sports, which are maybe kind of interesting to watch. That was not actually what I was interested in consciously, but it would capture my

attention. So, I'd watch the video for a half second as opposed to a quarter of a second, and the technology has the ability to note something more subtle than I even know about myself. It begins to test that and feed me. It observes that I was on this video for a half second, this only a quarter of a second. Over time it actually reprogrammed itself in a sense to give me that content which is not best for me, but which will best keep my attention. Now we can imagine all sorts of scenarios of how that could be used to lead people in different directions.

Bordeleau: Dr. Maxwell, what about you? What developing technology do you think will be a game changer for the future church?

Maxwell: Well, I suppose artificial intelligence, but I don't know exactly what the change will be. Well, I mean the fundamental question for AI theologically speaking, is what does it mean to be human? So, it would probably be along those lines.

Bordeleau: The final question on the show is always this. What do you want our listeners to remember?

Bull: One is recognition that every generation thought about certain technologies as new and emerging; and they are not values neutral. Each technology has values laden in some way. It's important for us to prayerfully consider with other Christians what the implications are and how we will use them or choose not to use them. Also approach it with a measure of humility and learn and grow together. I think that's something that I would encourage people as they think about this.

Also, I would hope that people would walk away with an understanding that it's not just about learning how to use technology, it's taking time to figure out how it uses and influences us. That's an important lesson to acknowledge; technology is not something kind of distant and separate from the life of believers from every era and age. It's something that even God himself used. We see examples of that throughout. I think that would be good, but I also hope and pray that people would walk away, not with a place of fear or anxiety or anything like that. We have a God who reminds us to come to him when we're weary and burdened; that he will give us rest. We have a God, of what I call, bread and fish and eggs. He promises that when we ask for a loaf of bread, he will not give us a stone.

We have a God who has accomplished what is most important through Christ on the cross, and that is unchanging; even as all this stuff around us is changing. And we have a God who has clear teachings in the scriptures, and incredible, comforting promises that we can lean upon in every age. We can lean upon them now. Even though the future of these technologies may be somewhat uncertain, God has promised us a future that is incredibly certain in Christ.

Bordeleau: Dr. Maxwell, what do you want our listeners to remember?

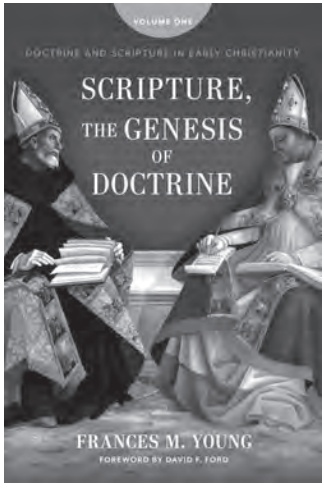
Maxwell: I would point out that the church has been around for 2000 years. It's survived all sorts of shifts of technology, philosophy, worldview, political systems, you name it. The point would be that we have shown the ability to adapt, to change in our history. I don't think we have to take a view that the world is coming to an end.

Bordeleau: That's it for today. You can find more episodes of *Tangible* on all the major hosting apps and on our website, concordiatheology.org. We have a lot more resources there; check it out. I'm your producer and host, Jessica Bordeleau. Join me next time when we talk about the intersection of theology and daily life, because it's tangible: theology learned and lived.

Reviews

SCRIPTURE, THE GENESIS OF DOCTRINE: Doctrine and Scripture in Early Christianity, vol 1. *By Frances M. Young. Eerdmans, 2023. Hardcover. 280 pages. $29.86.*

"How did we get from Scripture to creed?" This provocative question is the catalyst for Frances Young's approach in this volume. In modern circles (sometimes including our own), there is a perceived gap between the reading of Scripture and the formation of doctrine. A classic example and challenge we often encounter concerns the doctrine of the Trinity. The word "Trinity" does not appear in Scripture, therefore it had to be "discovered" later in the church's history and its development of doctrine. Some (like the Jehovah's Witnesses) would go as far as to say it is simply an invention of the fourth-century church (which, of course, the Arianism they follow is as well).



Young seeks to bridge that gap between Scripture and doctrine by examining more closely the relationship between the two in the early church. She begins with the period immediately after the New Testament, the Apostolic Fathers and Apologists of the second century. She then guides the reader through the theological, cultural, and political turmoil of the third century, moving towards the theological stability and resolution of the fourth and fifth centuries. These centuries house the decisive ecumenical councils and the erudite, classically trained, bishops and theologians who make up what is often described as the "golden age" of patristic scholarship.

Young's assessment and recognition of the centrality of Scripture in the writing, preaching, and liturgy of the early church is both refreshing and stimulating. Often one hears the canard that the church fathers were motivated, informed, and shaped primarily by the philosophies and philosophical categories of their day, into which they fitted and adapted the Scriptures. Plato, Aristotle, and Neoplatonism are some of the culprits. Of course, the fathers were shaped and formed by the philosophies and the zeitgeist of their day—just as we are today.

We have finally emerged from the historical-critical cloud that dominated biblical studies for almost two centuries (at least most of us have emerged). That cloud, with its emphasis on criticism, stood as judge over the text of Scripture, whether it was source criticism, form criticism, narrative criticism—or whatever had become the latest or most fashionable criticism of the day. You could only be considered

a true biblical scholar if you were able to demonstrate some dissonance, error, impossibility, or reliance on something outside of the text that influenced Scripture's evolution. God forbid you actually believed the Torah was written by Moses, or the whole of Isaiah written by a historical person named Isaiah, or the Gospels written by their real, historical namesakes!

Postmodernism has challenged many of these assumptions, demonstrating that these scholars themselves and their scholarship are more products of their own time and their own way of looking at the world as "objective" critics. And now comes this tour de force from Professor Young which adds meat to the bones of the postmodern challenge to higher criticism. The volume, the first of two parts, is the culmination of years of scholarship as a leading scholar in patristics, reexamining the evidence with a meticulous study that looks at the evidence with fresh eyes in order to take seriously the writings and the claims of the patristic authors she examines. Drawing on her earlier work that speaks of a "hermeneutical culture" rather than "schools of thought" in helping to explain how patristic writers interpreted Scripture, she provides a fuller picture of just how influential that culture was. An important part of that culture often ignored, however, is the centrality of Scripture for these writers and preachers. They were first and foremost formed and shaped as readers, writers, and proclaimers of Scripture—by the sacred text itself, a text inspired by the Holy Spirit "who spoke by the prophets." For them, the Scriptures were not just divinely inspired. They were the catalyst that shaped and formed personal piety and faith as well as what they referred to as the "canon of truth." This canon was initially the kerygma of the church that then became the overarching narrative (hypothesis) for how to read the Scriptures.

Often one poses the question of the relationship between Scripture and doctrine implicitly, if not explicitly, in a chicken vs. egg conundrum: Which came first, Scripture or doctrine? This is an instance when the answer truly is—both. A classic example Young highlights is Origen. Origen is the poster child for an early Christian writer and preacher shaped by philosophy—in his case, Platonism of some sort or another, that led his theology askew. When you look at the vast majority of his writings that are available to us either in fragmentary form or in translation, you come to realize as Young ably demonstrates, that Origen was above all shaped by the text of Scripture, however, not by philosophy. To be sure, he used the philosophical categories, vocabulary, and thought processes of his day at times to communicate the truths of Scripture.

Another example she highlights is Origen's supposed antipathy to the body and matter due to his Platonic bias. Young demonstrates that this too is too simplistic of an assessment of Origen: "Was Origen interpreting scripture through Platonist doctrine?

No—it is not as simple as that. But Origen did think doctrine was needed to interpret scripture correctly. In his view it is because the meaning of scripture is not always self-evident that doctrine becomes fundamental" (152–153). Scripture and the Apostolic Tradition are Origen's key foundations in the doctrinal formulations that shaped his theology—and his piety—not philosophy.

"Rethinking the context" is the title of one of her chapters that gets to the heart of her scholarly enterprise. Besides Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem comes in for a similar treatment, as does Augustine. Rethinking the context is an exercise in recognizing that the *ipsissima verba* was superior to Plato or Cicero in its ability to shape and form the individual and the church:

> The idea of God's pedagogical purpose shapes the whole of Origen's thinking. Life is a school. . . . The whole point of philosophical teaching in the ancient world was to foster a moral way of life; the persistent proof of Christianity's superiority to other philosophies, offered repeatedly to Celsus, is the fact that it makes people virtuous and brings an end to wickedness . . . (154)

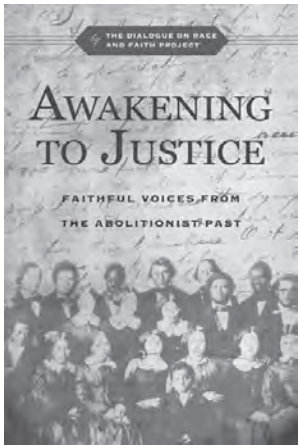
This pedagogy not only informed the fathers' life of sanctification but also motivated their doctrinal formulations. The heretical sects of the day, like the various Gnosticisms of the second and third centuries, quoted scripture but in a way incongruent with the very texts they were using. Contrary to the gnostic *Gospel of Truth*, there emerged among the orthodox a true "canon of truth" or "rule of faith (*regula fidei*) that served as the *norma normata* (my term) for how to read Scripture correctly. This carried on into the fourth and fifth century Trinitarian and christological debates that will be the subject of the forthcoming second volume.

In conclusion, this is a rich text. Francis Young offers a smorgasbord of refreshing insights on the relationship between Scripture and doctrine in the patristic period, with Christ at the center of it all. For those interested in the early church as a way to feed their people and their own ministry centered on Scripture but in conversation with the tradition, I highly recommend this volume. I eagerly await the second volume to see how Young teases out further this relationship between Scripture and Creed, the Word of God and doctrine. The two have always gone hand in hand. Francis Young simply provides further convincing evidence for what we, as Lutherans, have known all along.

Joel C. Elowsky

AWAKENING TO JUSTICE: Faithful Voices from the Abolitionist Past. *By Jemar Tisby, Douglas Strong, Christopher Momany, Sègbégnon Gnonhossou, David Daniels III, R. Matthew Sigler, Dian Leclerc, Esther Chung-Kim, Albert Miller, Estrelda Alexander. Intervarsity Press, 2024. Paper. 227 pages. $28.00.*

In the fall of 2015, the archivist at Adrian College in Michigan was working through a box of various items that were discovered during a remodeling project at the college. While most of the contents were not noteworthy, one item rightly grabbed his attention. The personal journal of David Ingraham dated 1839–1841 gave a fascinating look into life nearly two centuries ago. The journal would give birth to the subject of this book review: *Awakening to Justice: Faithful Voices from the Abolitionist Past.*



The book chronicles the interconnected lives of persons, institutions, and places. Critical to the connection is the tragedy of the slave trade and the response of various Christians to that sinful institution. Three individuals are given particular attention in the book—Ingraham who would die of tuberculosis at a young age cutting short his labors, James Bradley who would befriend Ingraham and labor along with him against slavery, and Nancy Prince who would work with Ingraham especially in Jamaica. Ingraham's life would take him from Lane Theological Seminary to Oberlin College to Jamaica. The varying responses to slavery would lead him from one place to the next both seeking those who would work with him and the setting in which he could make meaningful impact.

The strength of this book is its insight into a sordid part of history. The most gripping section is the second chapter which chronicles the reality of the slave trade. Ingraham's description of the slave ship Ulysses is heart-rending. Even more moving are the accounts of children ripped from their mother's arms as they were enslaved. It is no wonder that Ingraham's poignant words are "How long, O Lord?" While it is not pleasant to encounter the horrors of history, we dare not ignore what has happened.

While the book is worth reading for the sake of chapter two, a significant amount of the rest of the book is not as helpful. The individual authors of each chapter take an aspect of Ingraham's battle against the slave trade and then apply it to the present time. While the lessons of history are to teach us how to view and respond to the present, the book has a persistent one-dimensional view of the present and how the past informs our current actions. The authors regularly use a limited lens of the cultural and political tensions of our time as the point of application. In the process, the power of the words and actions of Ingraham, Bradley, Prince, and others is lessened. That their struggles are unwittingly diminished is a poverty.

The most natural use of this book would be personal reading and reflection.

I do not see a beneficial means by which it could be used for congregational bible study. A congregational book club could take it up but should be prepared to learn from Ingraham, Bradley, and Prince while critically assessing how the authors apply their words and actions to our setting. The book could be used in a university course engaging related topics but again it would need to be read by professor and students with a critical eye.

My enduring response after reading the book is to join with Ingraham in asking, "How long, O Lord?" This fallen age weighs down upon us in many ways. This book captures one of those ways. It rightly leaves me longing for the day when the sinful ways of man give way to the justice of Christ. Until that day, we are called to live (though it be a struggle) in the justice of his ways.

Kevin Golden

MENTIONING THE UNMENTIONABLES: Naming the Corrosive Threat to Our Lives Together and Our Faithful Response in the Body of Christ.

By Chris Heaton. Wipf & Stock, 2023. Hardcover. 164 pages. $39.00.

Chris Heaton's book takes the reader into issues and concerns which are troubling and tragic, but which we have avoided and ignored for too long in the church. He addresses the expanding influence of sexual immorality, especially pornography, in our community. This has been *unmentionable* in the church, not only because of the disgust and revulsion it engenders, but because of the fear, guilt, and shame it brings to Christians who struggle with it in their lives.

It is no surprise to read of the expanding footprint of sexual corruption in our wider community. A brief overview of the current social and psychological research shows that pornography usage is increasingly seen as mainstream, even as something good and helpful for people (Lord, have mercy). Yet it *is* confronting to read about the extent to which even Christians who are active in the church have been deceived into accepting the exploitation and corruption of human sexuality that comes at us all every day, especially online and through social media.

Heaton's book, however, offers more than this alarming yet needed diagnosis. It points to the only infallible cure for human sexual corruption and immorality: Jesus Christ and his gracious and comprehensive healing work in the sinner's life. This review will give a brief description of the journey on which Heaton takes the reader, and some appreciative-critical comments on his proposals and conclusions.

The author takes a very frank yet modest approach to this sensitive and challenging subject. Throughout the book he describes the reality of sexual corruption we face with the acronym PIL—*porneia* (sexual perversion); *immorality* (the more general climate of rebellion against God's created order for human sexuality) and *licentiousness* (the individualistic human will and

desire to be free of constraint and do whatever we please). This helpful triadic structure is set up to intersect later in the book with biblical teaching on sexual immorality, creating an integrating force in Heaton's overall argument. It also serves to address the reader directly. It "situates it [sexual immorality] within a *sphere of activity that every sinner must face*, whether it be cultural or our own personal temptations" (10). Heaton further observes "PIL also shows us that no one is immune, both to the factors that promote wide acceptance and usage of pornography, but also to the danger of simply "going along to get along" (10). Thus, the unmentionable issues of sexual corruption and pornography are brought to the *reader's very door*, as inescapable matters that every Christian must face and deal with.

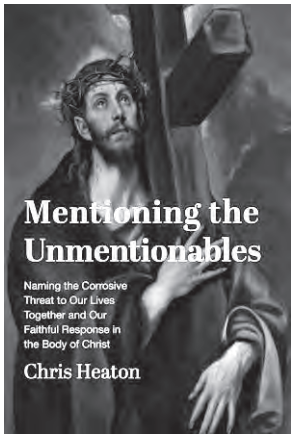
Successive chapters insightfully explore the many dimensions of this: current statistics about porn usage; the false individualistic narrative of self-satisfaction it tells its users; its normalization in mainstream society through the drip-fed sexualization of the media, music, and youth culture; technology and the way the internet has become saturated by sexualized and pornographic material; the abandonment of natural modesty among both men and women. This part of the book is helpful for the reader as a means of understanding the way even Christians are surrounded by and habituated to sexual corruption and indecency. It shows the sobering scale of the problem, and its *unexpected closeness* to us—yes, to *us in the church*.

In the central section, which is in many ways the highlight of the book (chapters 7–11), Heaton meditates at some length on key scriptural passages. A compelling example is his allegory using the story of Lot and his handling of the sodomite men in Genesis 19:4–11. Lot, thinking (as we tend to do today) to accommodate a lesser sexual abomination within the local culture to forestall an even worse one, makes a fatal mistake and is finally rescued by the guests he thinks he is protecting. Heaton also draws out rich material from St. Paul's moral teaching on sexuality, using Colossians 2–3, 1 Corinthians 5–6, Romans 7 and 12, and Ephesians 6 (among other passages). In these chapters he skillfully makes use again of the PIL structure to explain how Paul's teaching addresses the same realities of disordered sexuality today that were present in his own congregations. There is rich catechetical material here for Bible teaching and formation, especially with young people.

Chapter 12 marks the major turn in this study, from diagnosis to cure. The second half of the book (chapters 12–17) explores the powerful means of healing which God has provided for this deep-seated illness, along with all our other sin-sickness. Heaton narrows his focus somewhat in this twelfth chapter, to directly address the solitary victim of PIL who is caught in the compulsive use of pornography: "The cure for PIL and pornography is Christ. This is best applied in private confession and absolution, flowing from a life of worship. It is there that your pastor can

hear your past struggle, your current burden, and pronounce the grace of God to you" (77).

As a countervailing response to PIL, Heaton introduces an equivalent comprehensive approach: "creational rehabituation." Borrowing insights from Pastor Scott Bruzek, the author proposes a "whole person" approach, since "pornography involves the entire body." Just as porn enslaves the whole person's mind, soul, and senses, so its cure must provide something for the whole person: the eyes, the lips, the hands, the heart, and the mind. This means an intentional program of meditation on images of Christ's crucifixion, and on scripture, ongoing prayer, the sign of the cross and regular attendance at the divine service and reception of the Lord's Supper. In this training, the Spirit shapes a new habitus in the person and lays down new spiritual patterns that bring the experience of freedom and joy through repentance, mercy, and renewed discipleship.



Chapters 13–14 broaden the scope again to include other aspects of the Spirit's sexuality-healing and reforming work in the family: the modelling of respect, modesty, and decency, the proper supervision and use of technology, the parental overseeing of dating. The last section of the book addresses the congregational context, and the importance of teaching the catechism clearly and well, working intentionally with singles. A crucial emphasis in this last section of the book is the life of repentance and forgiveness—the life of the "holy hypocrite." We live our lives from our own sin to Christ's forgiveness, and we are frequently caught out between the two. Our lives are all demonstrably imperfect, including in the area of sexuality. Grace enables us to acknowledge this openly and freely, just as we freely receive God's forgiveness in Christ. This is such an important aspect of congregational life because it creates a safe space for repentance, leading to forgiveness and renewal.

This book is a clear and useful resource for pastoral formation and congregational education and Bible study. While it is biblically and theologically strong, it is written at the level of the catechized lay person and is readily accessible to the interested reader.

Heaton, to his credit, does not shy away from his—at times—somewhat controversial moral positions, and makes his case cogently, for instance his contention that, in the interests of sexual integrity, dating needs to be directly supervised by the parents of the young couple. Many would argue that young people whom we expect to behave as responsible adults need to be trusted on

their own. While he puts this view (and one or two others) '"out there," he also acknowledges that others may see and do things differently.

The book does what it calls us all to do—to "call a thing what it is," as Luther says in his 1518 Heidelberg Disputation. The false theologian of glory calls evil good and good evil, but the theologian of the cross calls a thing what it is—even when this is hard to hear and deal with, even when it breaks our addictions and idols in pieces and leaves us broken in pieces too. It is only when this happens that Christ can speak and enact his hope and new future for us.

While this reviewer found *Mentioning the Unmentionables* pertinent and helpful, there are a couple of important points in the current discussion on sexual corruption, pornography in particular, that were not and perhaps should have been addressed.

Heaton makes the very valid point that pornography is a spiritual problem (80). He encompasses in this statement the whole person, body, mind, and spirit. In this case, the reviewer wonders, what about the point (amply attested by research) that pornography is, at least in some cases, also a *psychological issue of addiction*, which may indeed be helpfully addressed by faithful Christian counselling or psychological treatment, as well as primary spiritual responses?

Another question that remains substantially unaddressed is fasting as a spiritual strategy against pornography usage. A growing number of Christians, including Lutherans, are also finding fasting a great help in breaking free of the compulsive use of pornography, often in conjunction with prayer and brotherly/sisterly accountability and support from others? Could this too, as a Spirit-given practice, fit into a Lutheran response to pornography usage?

These points notwithstanding, this book does an excellent job of naming and identifying the individual and systemic PIL illness that is already eating into the Christian church, and of responding soundly to it from a thoroughly scriptural and confessional Lutheran standpoint, placing Christ at the center, as savior and Lord. Heaton does more than mention the unmentionable; he *confronts* it, maturely but uncompromisingly, with law and gospel, and for that service he deserves commendation.

Stephen Pietsch

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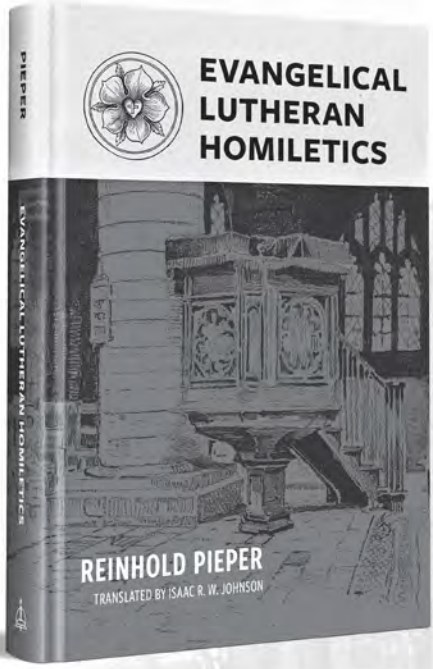

"Rev. Johnson has done a great service to the church in making this translation available in English for the first time. It is my hope and prayer that many will read and learn from this work and help recover some of the vigor and biblical foundation that has been the hallmark of Lutheran preaching since the time of the Reformation."

— **TODD A. PEPERKORN**, STM, DMIN, Assistant Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions, Director of Vicarage, Director of Residential Pastoral Formation Programs, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

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