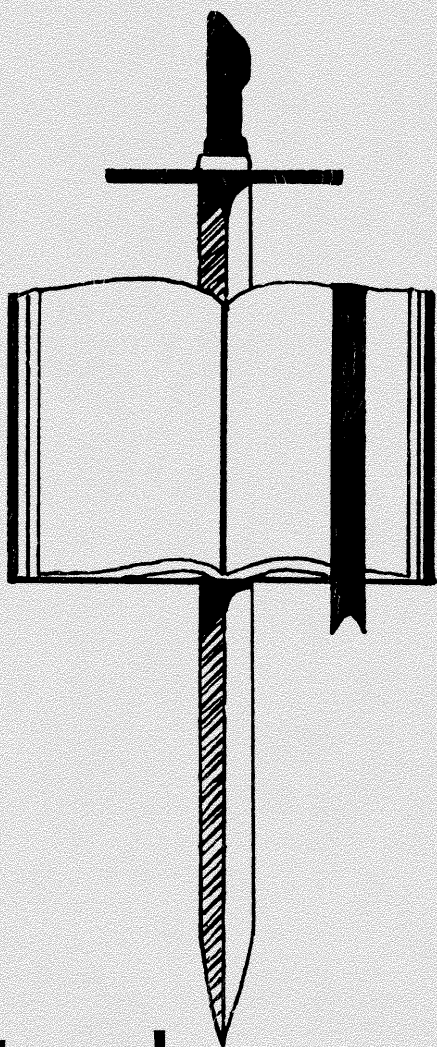


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# Lutheran Synod Quarterly

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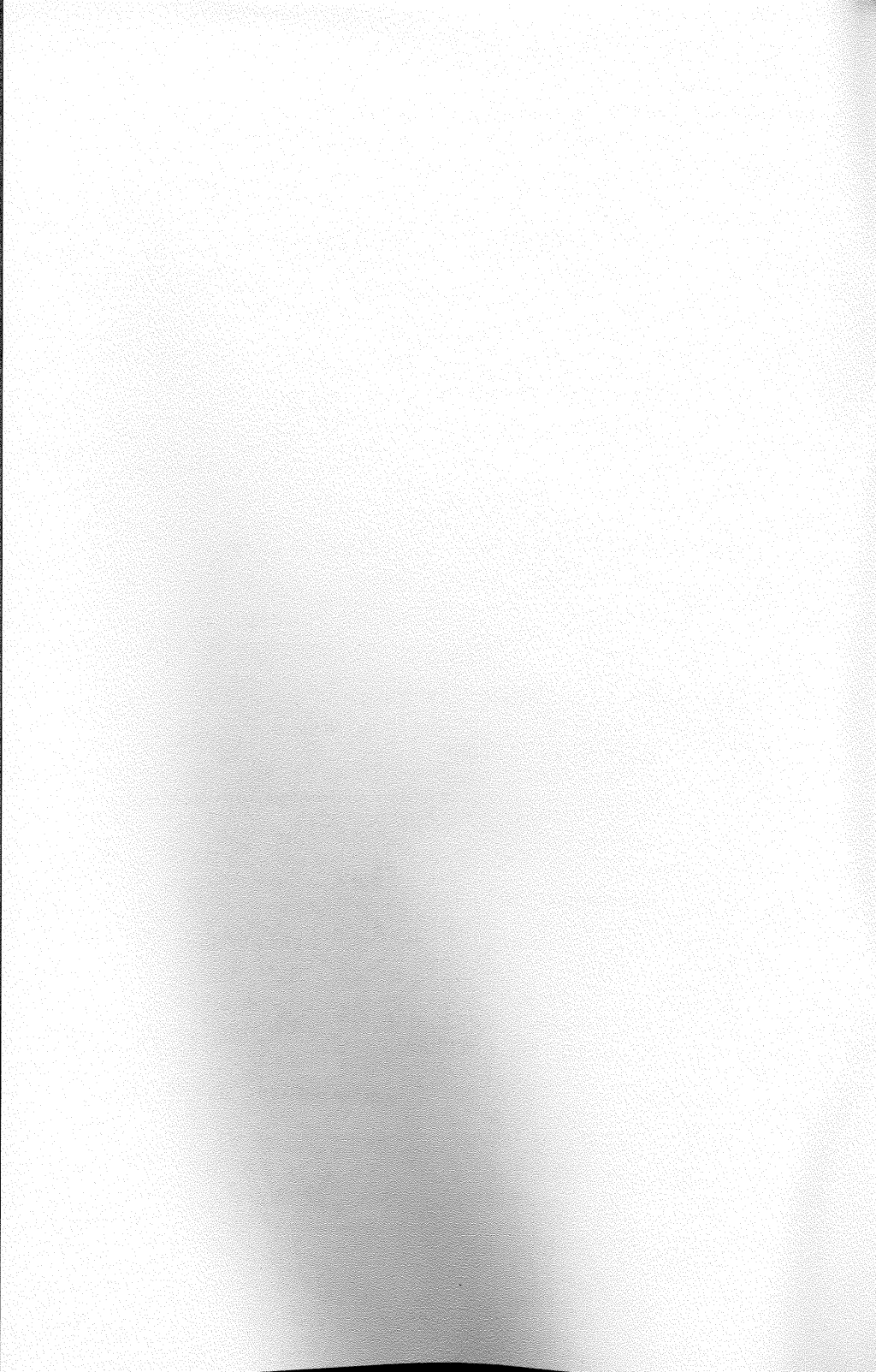
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BETHANY SEMINARY GRADUATION SERVICE

June 16, 1991

John 1:29

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "BEHOLD! THE LAMB OF GOD, WHO TAKES AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD."

Prayer: Dear Father in heaven, we thank you for having graciously granted us a necessary Savior in the person of your own beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. We are also especially grateful for the means of grace by which alone you distribute to us the blessings of your Son. In this hour we implore you to bless the graduates of our seminary who desire to be your humble servants in the office of the public ministry. Let them find direction for their life of service in your word of truth, and uphold and comfort them by means of the same Gospel they are privileged to proclaim to others. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen

Fellow redeemed candidates of theology from Bethany Lutheran Seminary, together with assembled friends, grace is yours, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Today we again offer thanksgiving to our Lord that we are able to send forth into the world additional workers approved for a ministry that is to be characterized by Biblical, confessional Lutheranism. The number is not impressive by worldly standards, but we know that the Lord has His own way of counting, and that isn't always in big numbers.

Because the fields are ready for harvest, the Lord has instructed us to pray Him to send forth

laborers into the harvest. As surely as we have done that, we have also sought to maintain Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary as a school of the prophets to equip men for a ministry in conformity with Biblical directives.

If you present candidates of theology are to enter this field of labor with confidence, you must not fall victim to the identity crisis that has plagued so many men of the cloth. On the basis of our brief text--and its context--we shall speak of

A THREEFOLD IDENTIFICATION THAT IS NECESSARY  
FOR A BLESSED MINISTRY

You must identify

- 1) yourselves
- 2) your people
- 3) your primary message

I. John the Bpatist was the remarkable son granted to Zacharias and Elizabeth in their advanced years. He had gained considerable notoriety from the circumstances surrounding his birth as well as from his life style. As his public life developed, it appeared that he might have been able to select for himself a role quite different from the one for which he had been prepared.

But not only had the Lord given John the Baptist a special assignment, He had also provided him the grace to find his personal satisfaction in the role of service to which he had been called. There is no hesitation on his part, then, in passing up the personal plaudits of men, for in the face of great acclaim that was being urged on his person he did not hesitate to respond: "I am not the Christ--nor Elias--nor that prophet." He was content to be "the voice of one crying in the

wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord."  
(John 1:19-23)

John knew that he was but a representative of and for one whose shoelaces he was not worthy to untie. And this was not said in false modesty but in full awareness that, despite the significance of his role, he was (in the words of the Psalmist) "not able to redeem his brother nor give to God a ransom for him." (Ps. 49:7)

The Apostle John in the prologue of his Gospel likewise identifies the Baptist properly when he writes: "He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light." To understand the limitations of one's role is often an important ingredient of true success.

On the one hand, people may think so poorly of the incumbent of the office of the public ministry that by casting aspersions at his person they demean the office. On the other hand, they at times may think so highly of the office that they tend to give false adulation to the incumbent of the office. The Apostle Paul experienced the false enthusiasm that gripped the people of Lystra and moved them to say of Paul and Barnabas, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men." (Acts 14:11) Paul also experienced and deplored the party spirit which arose in the church at Corinth. He knew the folly of pointing people to himself, and therefore he asks almost mockingly: "Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (I Cor. 1:13) And in his second epistle to the same church he declares: "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." (II Cor. 4:5) He doesn't change his tune when writing to the Ephesian Christians, for to

them he says: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." (Eph. 3:8)

And should you or your family or your friends think that you are not receiving your just dues in the office of the public ministry and that you should expect to play a greater role, remember how the Forerunner of Christ responded when his own disciples grew jealous of Christ's growing popularity. John the Baptist replied: "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice; this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease." When the best man at a wedding thinks he is the bridegroom -- well, look for trouble, even tragedy.

You can therefore do nothing better than to accept your humble--and yet exalted--role as a messenger of the Lord of hosts, and that is "to speak as the oracles of God." (I Peter 4:11) You will often have reason to be reminded that we frail mortals have this great treasure in vessels of clay, but that is so in order that the power may be of God and not of us. For if the people to whom you minister are to be benefited, it is not you who are to be glorified, but your Father in heaven. And if you in faith willingly and gladly accept this identification, you can expect to hear someday from your Lord and Master: "Well done, good and faithful servant...enter into the joy of your Lord." (Mt. 25:21)

II. But because your task is to proclaim a message to others, you must have a necessary identification also of these people.



At the very end of our brief verse it is revealed of what sort the people are among whom you will labor. There John speaks of "the sin of the world." No matter what the difference in earthly status or fortune of the people to whom you will minister, you are to remember that the law of God has "concluded all under sin." (Gal. 3:22) When our text speaks of this human corruption it employs the singular form of the noun--sin, "the sin of the world."

We are more accustomed, perhaps, to speaking of sin in the plural--SINS--and this, too, is very Scriptural, for we in our natural state of spiritual corruption do commit many sins day in and day out, sins that are a violation of God's will for us, sins that need to be atoned for. But we commit these acts of sin (in thought, word, and deed) because we are sinful, and they are therefore but a manifestation of our sinfulness.

When the poet Isaac Watts says, "One common sin infects us all," he is but repeating what the Apostle Paul asserts when he says that "in Adam all die." (I Cor. 15:22) The sin of Adam has been imputed to the whole human race. That is why we have been led to confess in our liturgy: "We are by nature sinful and unclean." That sinfulness, that sin is enough to condemn us.

Some of those to whom you minister will already have recognized the fact of their sinfulness and will come readily confessing their sins, as some of the people came to John the Baptist. To all he preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And he asked especially the self-righteous fault finders, "Who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance." (Mt. 3:7,8)

In an age when people are quite easily led to think that they may establish their own moral code, there is again need for you, in the spirit of John the Baptist, to confront the present-day Herods and firmly assert: "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." (Mt. 14:4) With John the Baptist you are to proclaim that "the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." (Mt. 3:10)

But even though your assignment includes the ongoing need so to preach the law "that every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty before God," (Rom. 3:19) you are to understand that this kind of preaching is an alien work which you are to perform only that you might better exalt Him at whose bidding you have come. For the final identification of our text concerns

III. The ultimate message you are to bring to a sinful world. Despite John the Baptist's classic preaching of the law, he is better known for the picture painted by our text, the portrait of a messenger pointing to the Christ as the Agnus Dei tollit peccatum mundi, "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." This brief utterance sums up the whole purpose of John the Baptist's mission, and it identifies for you the ultimate word that you are called to proclaim, the Gospel of free forgiveness of sins of the grace of Christ.

With the introductory word "Behold," John intends this to be a dramatic proclamation: "Take note, you who must of necessity despair in your sins; just see what God has provided!" Dr. Martin Luther, who in the days of the Reformation arose in the spirit of John the Baptist, once said:

"Sin has two places to be, either upon you or upon Christ, the Lamb of God."

This is the one and only Agnus Dei, the Lamb of God, of whom the prophet Isaiah foretold, "Surely, he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." Is. 53:4) Of this Lamb of God the Apostle St. John has written in his first epistle: "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.: (I John 2:2)

This was the message of all the prophets and apostles, a message that moved St. Peter to exclaim "You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (I Peter 1:18,19)

This is the truth that moved the Apostle Paul to declare to the Corinthians: "I determined not to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." (I Cor. 2:2) This is the alone-saving Gospel of which you through your call into the public ministry are made stewards.

When we now send you forth, it is in confidence that your years of preparation for the office of the public ministry have by the grace of God led you to the necessary identification of yourselves, your people, and your message. If you prove faithful in this kind of ministry, your people will join in blessing you as well as in praising the God of their salvation. To Him alone be glory!

Amen

-- J. B. Madson

## ANTHROPOLOGY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF JOHANN MICHAEL REU

The nature and end of man--what are they? One of America's foremost Lutheran theologians of the 20th century, Johann Michael Reu, dealt with this question throughout his life as scholar, teacher, Sunday school curriculum writer, and church historian. Some of Reu's insights into what human nature is and how it develops reflect an awareness of the developmental psychology of J. F. Herbart and G. Stanley Hall, whose ideas were current in educational circles of Reu's day. Others reflect his peculiarly German post-World War I orientation to history and social upheaval, most remarkably reflected in Reu's repeated writings (oft forgotten today) against the Jews. Taken together with Reu's commitment to Holy Scripture as normative for the teaching and life of the church, an examination of his anthropology reveals both faithfulness to the Word as well as a number of areas where Reu ventured outside the Scriptures to define and explain human nature. The purpose of this study is to detail Reu's anthropology from his classroom notes and texts and also from the pages of the Kirchliche Zeitschrift, the official theological periodical of the Iowa Synod which Reu edited from 1904-43.

A survey of Reu's dogmatics lectures reveals that he holds what could be termed a traditional Christian anthropology.<sup>1</sup> As such, the term "anthropology" denotes not so much the study of human origins and human cultures to understand the nature of man, as it does in the common secular use of the term, but rather it indicates a focus on the nature of man as revealed by God in

nature and in the Scriptures. Reu declares a decided opposition to the notion that humankind evolved from some sort of primordial mixture of natural forces and elements. Man is a creature of God, Reu says, and as such he is finite and limited as compared to his Creator, even before the fall into sin. He believes man to be bipartite (body-soul) rather than tripartite (body-soul-spirit), possessing a physical material component of his nature identical with the dust of the ground, and an immaterial soul or spirit which transcends any "physiological function" that may be ascribed to unseen forces of the person's consciousness.<sup>2</sup> The imago Dei Reu understands to consist in two things: a real self-determining personality that mirrors (Reu: "is similar to") God's personhood, and the perfect willing and carrying out of that which pleases God. He notes:

...we may say that the image of God in man consists in his personality, that is, in the fact that, like God, man is a being having cognition and will. As a person, man is able to know himself, the world, and God. He is capable of self-determination with reference to his environment. Consequently, there exists for him no external, inevitable compulsion, so far as his person is concerned. The nature-side of his being is indeed subject to external force (*violentum*), but never his personality. He is capable of self-determination also with reference to his own nature. He cannot speak of a necessity (*necessarium*) being forced upon him by his own natural impulses and desires; they merely present the material in reference to which he must exercise his self-determination, and because of his freedom he is also accountable for his actions. He is capable of self-

determination, finally, also in his relation to God. He is able to decide against God, and in the state of innocence he was able also to decide for Him. As unfree, therefore, as man is in the nature-side of his being, so free is he in his personality.<sup>3</sup>

It is man's creation by God as a personal being, Reu believes, which gives him the capacity to know himself, to enter into relationship with the Creator, and also to know the status and content of the world that surrounds him.<sup>4</sup> Reu is a realist at times in his ontological assumptions, and his comments in his "Dogmatics" and elsewhere bear out the truth of this statement.

Through the sin of Adam--whom Reu believes was an actual historical event--both man's earthy and his spiritual components were affected, he holds. It was the communion of creature with Creator that was disrupted by man's disobedience, and that is properly termed the death of both his body and soul.<sup>5</sup> Humankind in the state of sin is totally cut off from knowing God, Reu believes, although he does see God active and present in the world to sustain it despite its sinfulness. Communion between God and man has been restored only through Jesus Christ and his active and passive obedience to the will of God in offering Himself in man's place to pay for the sinfulness of all people. Only the Holy Spirit can bring this message of reconciliation with God into the human heart by His creation of saving faith, Reu maintains.<sup>6</sup> Faith is in no part a work of man to him.<sup>7</sup> Of the object of such saving faith Reu writes:

The things upon which faith relies, then, do not belong to the sphere of his visible world with its laws of cause and effect, they are not things which can be investigated, seen, understood, and known after

such investigation, but they belong to the world of invisible things that cannot be apprehended with our natural senses. Faith is the eye with which we see the things of that invisible world, placed before us by means of the Word, it is a conviction concerning the things held forth by Scripture not to be shaken, even where the evidences of the world and of natural experience seem to contradict.<sup>8</sup>

Such faith can be viewed from the standpoint either of God's gift to man, or as a special capacity or organ of man created by the Holy Spirit with which he appropriates the proffered forgiveness of sins.<sup>9</sup> Reu consistently affirms the inability of humankind to approach God, to know God, or to please God outside of a miraculous divine revelation of God's personality in Jesus Christ. His anthropology leaves no place for the will or efforts of man in even the slightest degree in the process of conversion.<sup>10</sup> For example, Reu in his "The Course of Theology Itself" describes the object of Christian theology as "beyond human reason, [one that] cannot be found nor appropriated by it....it is religion based upon supernatural revelation and aiming at a supernatural goal, the communion with God."<sup>11</sup> And in his explanation of Romans 1:17 he remarks:

Paul implies hereby not only that [righteousness] is something having existence outside of man but also that it is previously unknown to him, something for which he naturally has no perspective sense and which he cannot therefore know or grasp. The Gospel must unveil it for him, spread it out before him in all its wonder and glory.<sup>12</sup>

But likewise it is true that Reu explains the presence of a natural law among the Gentiles who do not know God (Rom. 2:14-15) by saying that "We need only remember that the Spirit of God, as the Scriptures attest, dwells in all men. The result of this Spirit's activity is the natural moral law. Since this Spirit of God dwells in the heart of all Gentiles, it is their own fault if they are not led thereby to higher moral levels, for it simply means that they have not permitted the Spirit to work its will in them."<sup>13</sup> This statement is best understood in light of Reu's assertion in the "Dogmatics" that he understands the fall into sin to have destroyed humankind's "moral content of the image of God," but that the human personality, as the "substantial form of the image of God" remains as man's possession even in the fallen state.<sup>14</sup> It also can be understood through an examination of Reu's doctrine of the conscience, in which he unifies the three aspects of intellect, will, and feelings found in his educational anthropology into a single entity. Reu defines the human conscience as

...the consciousness of one's own moral action in relation to God. But experience teaches us that we must supplement this definition by adding that this consciousness is an immediate one. It does not result by way of reflection; it does not arise from other thoughts; its appearance is sudden and spontaneous. The prevailing contents of the mind are only reflected by it....all living creatures, man in particular, live only by the Spirit of God that is in them, and...man, on the other hand, is not simply driven by this immanent Spirit of God but reacts to it in a way that preserves his self-determination. The resultant of these two forces, the immanence



of the divine Spirit and the personal reaction to it, is what we call conscience, the self-consciousness of man concerning his relation to the Spirit of God dwelling in him since his creation. It is the reflection or precipitation of this interaction in our consciousness.<sup>15</sup>

Reu postulates three functions of the conscience--obligatory, judicial, and executive. The first of these, the obligatory, comprises the element of recognized justness of the moral demand that Reu believes is inherent in the working of the conscience. By this function Reu means that whereby the conscience witnesses to a norm and requires obedience to it. "This sense of the inevitability of the demand of conscience as one of objective, unqualified authority is also a direct and immediate one," he points out.<sup>16</sup> The judicial function of the conscience consists in its vigorously carrying out the decision of the will in a contemplated moral action. It is this consciousness of one's personal responsibility for a deed or thought and the determination of guilt which goes along with this consciousness that Reu believes engages the person's intellect for the first time. "While the obligatory function of consciences makes [sic] use of the will, the judicial employs the intellect," Reu notes.<sup>17</sup> And the third function of conscience, the executive, engages the human feelings to produce either peace or unrest concerning the judgment which has been made. As Reu explains it,

The execution becomes evident in the fact that the judgment of conscience is always accompanied either by a sense of duty well done, which in turn brings peace and happy contentment..., or by a consciousness of duty left undone, and this in turn causes unrest and painful uneasiness.<sup>18</sup>

Because the universal testimony of human experience shows the absolute authority which the conscience exercises in the realm of moral obligation, Reu is of the opinion that it is neither the product of a long period of social evolution, nor that it is merely the result of custom or convention. He understands it to be the subjective consciousness and reaction to the universal divine norm of what is good or bad.<sup>19</sup>

It is Reu's contention that the creation of saving faith in Christ is not an idealistic transformation or simply an alteration of consciousness. He distinguishes between faith and knowledge, not according to the means of their entrance into the soul (i.e., through regular earthly means apprehended by the five senses), nor according to their propositionality, but rather by means of their essence. Reu writes:

For faith is not like knowledge, which once we have it is retained by the memory whether we desire it or not, whether we make an effort to retain it or not, so long as the powers of memory and reason function normally. Faith is not something we possess once and for all time, so that we can draw upon it and use it any time we desire. Faith is the application of a power which God must always first give to man anew before he can use it, and which ceases to exist in the very moment when man refuses to let God bestow it upon him.<sup>20</sup>

Much more than other conservative Lutheran dogmatists, Reu stresses the continuity of the human personality and being through the change wrought in the soul by conversion. He writes:

However, although an actual generation takes place, it appears in the form of a

re-generation, that is, the present substance of man is not destroyed, the result of the first creation is not annihilated, but man as he is is reborn, in which act that part of him which is of God is preserved and merely purified thoroughly of the depravity which had permeated it entirely....Even in his sinful state man retains his personality, which includes a *capacitas passiva* for regeneration. There remains in the natural man a point of contact for the Holy Spirit working through Word and sacrament since he, though despoiled of his capacity of knowing and willing what is good in God's sight, still retains his capacity to know and to will as such.<sup>21</sup>

Despite these generic claims for the divine image inhering in all persons, it should be noted that a measure of anthropological and cultural superiority manages to creep into Reu's description of the linguistic capabilities of the New Guinea islanders and into his explanation of why, "probably wisely," church authorities there had not yet published an edition of the Augsburg Confession in their language. "The Confession after all presupposes a higher culture and a better developed language than found there," Reu remarks.<sup>22</sup> It is interesting to note in contrast to this position that the "rude vessel" of the German language is not similarly held to be incapable of expressing difficult spiritual truths.<sup>23</sup> Reu holds that each of the various racial and ethnic groups of humanity can be distinguished by different traits which its character and language manifests.<sup>24</sup> He endorses white-black racial equality, however, and is pleased to point out the gains made by blacks in entering educational institutions and the professions.<sup>25</sup>

Suggested Elements of Reu's Anthropology  
and Developmental Theory

The ubiquitous term "gradual unfolding" appears in Reu's account of human anthropology, as he uses it to explain the three different developmental periods he hypothesizes for all people. Each of these stages--infancy, childhood, and adolescence--Reu divides into an early and a late period, each of which has definite behavioral characteristics that display themselves in the person's capacities for thinking, feeling, and willing. Although acknowledging that the time limits he points for each stage may vary in any individual case, Reu sets the limits of infancy at six years of age; childhood from six to twelve or thirteen years; and of adolescence from thirteen to eighteen or twenty-one years. It is important for understanding Reu's anthropology and his educational theory to survey the most important characteristics he assigns to each of these stages.

Believing that "the infant becomes a subject of instruction only to a very limited degree," Reu's theoretical treatment of this time of life is the least encountered among his various educational writings.<sup>26</sup> The most important development in the child during this time is the emotionally based impulse to imitate others. Reu believes--so much so that he observes that "There is hardly anything that compares in importance with the formation of good habits in early childhood."<sup>27</sup> While the very young child is able to manifest only the most rudimentary sense perception, emotions which are purely sensuous, and mere directionless impulses in the area of volition, Reu holds that the development of the child's motor skills during the second year of life gives impetus to the enlargement of all three types of

mental capacities. He compares the brain of the infant to "delicate clay,"<sup>28</sup> and ventures to say that the child's store of sense perceptions and concepts with which he will enter the next stage of childhood will be as rich or as impoverished as the quality and quantity of sense impressions which enter the soul at this stage from the outside world. Reu is impressed with the marked development of the memory during infancy, and he urges educators to combine stories of explanation with pictorial representations--as well as with stanzas of poetry or song--to more firmly esconce the information in the child's world of concept masses.<sup>29</sup>

Another trait of the infancy period which Reu believes is especially fertile for the future educational development of the child is his proclivity for fantasy and for the construction of make-believe worlds. Here is where Reu sees a particular advantage to narration and visual presentations<sup>30</sup> in furnishing new concepts to the intellectual store of the soul--even more when one considers that the child's liking of stories at this age is the vehicle through which his interest can be apprehended and the gateway through which his fund of concepts can be apperceived by the soul.<sup>31</sup> Reu believes the period of infancy is predominantly characterized by merely sensuous expressions of the child's volitional life, but he does see the initial manifestations of such intellect-influenced motivations as the social sense and moral feelings occurring during infancy. Their development through formal education, however, he understands to be reserved mainly for the following stage of development, that of childhood.<sup>32</sup> The key volitional educational tool Reu recommends be employed in infancy is good habit development. This is to make use of

the child's innate interest in imitation that Reu believes is especially strong during the first years of life. External rules of conduct or maxims of thought are not effective educators during infancy. Reu states, "At this early stage, the chief factor of training is the moral and religious environment, the moral and religious atmosphere in which the child grows up."<sup>33</sup> It is Reu's belief that the tenor of the home's moral atmosphere and the parents' attitudes toward moral good and evil are the primary influence on all aspects of the child's character during infancy--the intellectual and volitional as well as the moral.

Reu prefers to divide the period of childhood into two distinct phases in his discussions of the physical and mental changes associated with human development in each. For the initial stage of childhood (ages six to nine), Reu sees the arrival of the first ability of the child to benefit from formal education. It is his belief that during this initial stage the brain reaches nearly its full size, and that the incomplete development of the child's muscles and nerves must be taken into account in planning its formal education. Here Reu recommends short periods of instruction interspersed with numerous recess periods, with instruction alternating between intellectual subjects such as counting and reading with the more technical or manual subjects like singing or drawing. The goal of religious instruction during this initial period should be to train children in worship (prayer and offering), to train them in instruction (using Bible stories, stories from nature, stories from child life, and short verses and Bible passages), and to train them in discipline.<sup>34</sup> The young child's overwhelming desire is to see objects or ideas or

relationships in a concrete manner, Reu believes --hence the extraordinarily important pedagogical device to be employed during childhood is narration. Teaching in story format allows the teacher to paint vivid word pictures--Reu often uses the expression "miniature-painting" to describe this paramount feature inherent in narration--which satisfy as nothing else can the youngster's hunger for concrete description.<sup>35</sup> When such concrete images are offered to children in conceptual dress with which they are familiar, despite their limited vocabulary and their incomplete concept masses, the teacher skilled in narrative can count on positive educative results, Reu believes.<sup>36</sup> Narration is also called for as the premier method of instruction at the level of early childhood because of the continuing activity and growth of the children's capacity to construct new realities through fantasy. It is Reu's understanding that in early childhood the child's capacity to fantasize is closely combined with his power and desire to imitate people in his immediate environment. He says that

As a matter of fact, the impulse of imitation is at this stage of development very closely linked with the pronounced play of the child's phantasy--another instance corroborating the demand to influence the soul of the child chiefly by narratives. Living persons, repeatedly presented to the phantasy, leave their traces in the soul; matters which ever and again have delighted the phantasy, are engraved upon the soul....The feelings being pleasurably excited, the will is aroused to imitation: the child would become similar to the person causing such pleasurable experiences.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, Reu is of the opinion that the child's

emotional life can also be developed by attention to a careful cultivation of the capacity of fantasy in the first stage of childhood.<sup>38</sup> The most important of the emotions to be cultivated during this period is the feeling of sympathy, according to Reu, as does the use of ancillary verbal passages and songs for memorization to support the sense impressions cultivated through narration and demonstration.<sup>39</sup> Such cultivation is especially important to Reu at the early childhood stage. Even though he seldom uses the term "circle of thought," Reu nevertheless believes that the sum of the young child's concepts, and the arrangements of these concepts, are organized into a unity which is often incomplete as well as incorrect.<sup>40</sup>

The second phase of the childhood period Reu characterizes as consisting of rapid growth of the nervous tissues and the soul's greatly enhanced capabilities for absorbing and classifying information.<sup>41</sup> The period of abstract concept formation has not yet arrived, so Reu believes that ideas still need to be presented to the learner in as concrete a manner as possible. During the Primary stage (ages 6-8) Reu recommends a four-part program in religious instruction that includes laying a foundation of religious terminology and behavior, telling the Bible story, discussion of the story, and discipline.<sup>42</sup>

The period of late childhood sees the first drawing of conclusions by the learner, Reu believes, although this is done in a fragmentary way. This is the time of "initial critical activity" of the intellect, during which a logical attempt is made to connect cause with effect in the perception of the young.<sup>43</sup> It is thus the time when discussion of the Bible story must be cultivated to the fullest, Reu believes.<sup>44</sup>



The real pedagogical strength the older child has during this period is the ability to memorize, as Reu sees it. "His brain cells are still soft so that the impressions are deeper than those of the adult, whose brain cells permit only feeble impressions."<sup>45</sup> From the ages of eleven to fourteen, Reu believes the soul's capacity for retaining information in the memory is at its height.<sup>46</sup> This is the period during which the most important concepts in life should be taught, Reu asserts, and the only time when mastery of a foreign language is initiated. Memory work is important to Reu only to the degree its meaning has been explained to the learners beforehand.<sup>47</sup> If properly introduced and explained before it is assigned, Reu believes the material to be memorized is made easier to learn because pupil interest in it has been stimulated, and because allied concepts already in the soul rise to the threshold of consciousness to assist in its assimilation. The realities of world geography and history, as these are propounded by means of heroic biographical accounts of specific individuals rather than of whole nations, are the realities which absorb and fascinate the fantasy of the young at this stage, Reu believes. This period is also the time of formation of the first real friendships of life, as well as the time of the intensification of the emotions--the ethical emotions in particular. Late childhood in addition is the time most opportune for the formation of good habits, according to Reu.<sup>48</sup> He makes much of the effects of the child's developing sexuality upon his character in general and on his emotions in particular, with girls at this age in his view more talented than boys at coordination of bodily movements, hand-writings, and recitation, while boys he sees as stronger, more stubborn, and more inclined than girls to physical activity.<sup>49</sup> This second stage

of the childhood period is the time when Reu believes that each person's sense of individuality becomes fixed to the point of being an indispensable educational factor the teacher has to take into consideration at all times in planning curriculum or in teaching lessons.

The final stage of the child's development is the period of adolescence, which Reu says extends from age thirteen to the twenty-first or twenty-second year for the female, and from age fourteen to twenty-three or twenty-four for the male.<sup>50</sup> It is only during this period that certain parts of the brain begin to function, according to Reu, and the brain tissue "becomes denser and promotes a slow growth of the cranium."<sup>51</sup> This growth of the brain tissue Reu believes is responsible for the greater and developing ability in youth to think logically. The need for educators to tap this capacity for logical thinking is the chief educational feature of the intellectual life of the adolescent, Reu holds. But this need is coupled with the need for sympathetic understanding of the unpredictable emotional states of youth which cause them at times to demonstrate extreme idealism and to believe themselves capable of reforming the whole world, and which cause them to criticize authority mercilessly; and which at times cause them to despair at their lack of knowledge and power over even their own lives. The emotions in both sexes are characterized at this stage by a penchant for dreams and for the mysterious, Reu says, with the boys continuing to enjoy most the accounts of heroes who demonstrate their strength. Late adolescence is the time of life when the most profound development of the religious life is possible, according to Reu.<sup>52</sup> Beyond counseling a general awareness of the intellectual capacity of adolescents to think

logically, and an awareness of their special emotional need to trust authorities while at the same time trying them and reaching beyond their direct supervision to freedom of thought and action, Reu does not elaborate any additional ways in which the intellectual, emotional, or volitional lives of young people either can or should be influenced. He does recommend that both early and late adolescent periods be characterized by membership in groups of young peoples' societies so as to provide a constructive outlet for a social impulse and emotional responsiveness which Reu believes to be extraordinarily developed during this phase of life.

The topic of how Reu evaluated the Nazis is a whole subcategory of his thinking, and cannot be probed in an adequate manner here. However, it is worth noting how German church/state issues during the 1930s provide a background against which to view one aspect of his anthropological thinking. Although theoretically Reu viewed the Jewish people as equal in every respect to anyone else in mental capacity and cultural heritage, in his treatment of the situation of Germany Reu reveals a decided prejudice against the Jews.<sup>53</sup> For instance, Reu's much-criticized article published in 1937 in the national weekly mass-circulation periodical The Lutheran lists as one of the ignominious features of the pre-1933 Social-Democrat party in Germany the fact that it was "so much under the influence of the Jews."<sup>54</sup> Here is the way Reu links Jewish and Communist influence in the same article:

The Communists--governed by Jewish leaders and assisted by Jewish money, who had become more and more dominating and before 1933 were at the point where they could dare to rule the country, to sell it to

Russia and to destroy what was left of good order, schools and churches and religion--they were gone [by 1935].<sup>55</sup>

A rather candid and even remarkable assessment of the National Socialist miscegenation laws also appears in this article. Any attempt to describe Reu's position would not do justice to his own prose, so it is reproduced here:

The new marriage laws are stricter than before, but many insane asylums would have fewer patients and the number of unhappy men and women would be smaller if they had been introduced and enforced long ago all over the world. Including the prohibitions concerning the marriage between Jews and non-Jews? Not in all their severity, although I personally believe that as a rule it is better for every family not to be mixed up with the Jews. Traits fostered for centuries are not removed by the turn of the hand, and the Jews with whom we have to deal are, as a nation, still under the divine curse. Our press, mainly under Jewish influence, has created in our country a hostile attitude against Germany, and what is termed 'persecution of the Jews' has been one of its most successful means of rousing the passions. Now I admit from the start, in many individual cases the laws against the Jews have been carried out in a cruel way that can never be justified, and the laws themselves go too far. But if you were acquainted with some indisputable facts and would keep them in mind, you would be slower and more just in your judgment.<sup>56</sup>

The memory of these "indisputable facts," many based upon Reu's own firsthand observations while he was in Germany in the early 1920s to do research work

on the Quellen,<sup>57</sup> then causes Reu to continue his article in this fashion:

The Jews in Germany in 1925 were numbered at 565,000 over against 62,410,619 non-Jews. Nevertheless they dominated the press and the output of books. The number of Jewish lawyers, doctors, and teachers was in no proportion to the number of Jewish people; they really flooded all higher callings. The banks were entirely in Jewish hands; in the country, especially in South Germany, they were feared by the peasants as a pest because in the most scrupulous way they knew how to get hold of the peasants' property. During the years of inflation they poured in masses from all countries, America included, and like vampires they sucked the life blood out of the German people, bought up block after block of the large cities for almost nothing--I was over there in those years and know whereof I am speaking--the whole country seemed to be given over forever to the Jews. A Judaization set in as never before in any other country. Add to this, that by press, literature, theatre and other means of seduction the Jews were the principal promoters of all forms of immorality, that they were the power behind the reigning Social-Democrats, and some of them even the leaders in the Communist party ready to overthrow all in order to build upon the ruins of the remains of an organized nation the reign of the bolshevism of Soviet Russia. These facts explain, and in a measure even justify, the laws against the Jews. There are still thousands of Jews in Berlin alone, who will not be molested as long as they live according to the laws of the state.<sup>58</sup>

These extraordinary characterizations of Jewish people as pests, bloodsucking vampires, and libertines is hard to square with Reu's stated view in other parts of his literary corpus that all men continue to bear the stamp of God's image by virtue of their inherent rational powers and in their consciences.<sup>59</sup> Even more remarkable is the fact that such words would have been published--and without editorial comment at that--in a Christian periodical.<sup>60</sup> Perhaps a part of the reason for their publication is the fact that Reu in the late 1930s was at the height of his career, had published all of his major works, and was commonly acknowledged as one of the leading spokesmen for American Lutheranism at home and abroad. Without doubt he was the one American closest to the German church situation before and during the National Socialist takeover, so his opinions and information sources were looked upon as credible for that reason alone.

Richard R. Salzman offers additional clarification of Reu's anti-Semitism in his 1965 critique of his grandfather's editorial position.<sup>61</sup> He notes that the article published in 1937 was actually a revision of one which had appeared a full two years earlier in the Kirchliche Zeitschrift following Reu's return from Europe and the last meeting of the Lutheran World Convention. Hitler's public opposition to the Jews eighteen to twenty months after his assumption of power was not the pogrom which followed the Kristallnacht assault of 1938. And of course Reu never knew about the death camps because he died before their existence became public knowledge in the United States. Salzman also shows in his article that Reu totally rejected the "nation and race" anthropology and ecclesiology of National Socialism from the very beginning.<sup>62</sup>

Reu had a special dislike of the motion picture industry, as is evidenced from his comments in the Kirchliche Zeitschrift which see it primarily as a corrupting influence in the hands of the immoral Jewish moguls who own or manage it.<sup>63</sup> But his prejudice against the Jewish people is present in other places too, making it a virtually certain conclusion that the words expressed above were not written in an isolated moment of vituperation.<sup>64</sup> Reu's article "Luther and the Jews," which was published in the Kirchliche Zeitschrift, a detailed historical treatment of the meaning of Luther's position expressed in his 1543 treatise "Von den Juden und ihren Lügen," is a dispassionate analysis conducted in accordance with canons of historical scholarship.<sup>65</sup> However, the published version as well as the original manuscript of this article which is preserved in the Wartburg Seminary Archives clearly demonstrate that Reu regarded the Jews in a different light than any other racial or ethnic group. The article's final paragraph is given here just as it appears in the manuscript, with the original concluding sentence italicized for emphasis:

It is an entirely different question whether the antisemitism of our day can rightly appeal to Luther. This is impossible because the antisemitism of today is not moved by the difference in religion which was decisive for Luther nor is there today anywhere a country in which the Christian religion is the only one recognized by the law. He who wants to apply Luther's advice [to burn the Jews' books and synagogues and demolish their homes] today must first of all recognize that there is no bridge between the religion of our present Jewry and Christendom; furthermore, he must be filled with that energy and depth of faith which lived in Luther; and he would have to drive

out many not belonging to the Jews; all others can only wonder how Luther, this man of God, could write as he did, and place him into the darkness of past centuries. *Whether there is room in the Christian Church for an antisemitism based on sociological facts we don't need to decide here.*<sup>66</sup>

A clear and definite statement of Reu's attitude of anti-Semitic prejudice is found in his editorial comments from February 1937.

Wir Weisen an unserem Teil diese Erklärung zurück, nicht nur, weil sie unhaltbare historische Urteile enthält, sondern vor allen Dingen weil sie jede Form des Antisemitismus als unvereinbar 'mit den Lohren der Bibel und den Lehren der protestantischen Kirchen und auch als unvereinbar mit unseren Ueberlieferungen von Freiheit und Gerechtigkeit' hinstellt und ihn einfach mit 'Judenhass' identifiziert. Wir haben mit jenen 'fremden Vereinigungen' nie Berührung gehabt, wissen auch dass die gegenwärtige antisemitische Bewegung in Deutschland im Einzelfall vielfach grausam wirkt und auf einem verkehrten Rassenurteil ruht, und sind stets ein Freund der Judenmission gewesen. Aber jede Form von Antisemitismus für unbiblisch und für unvereinbar mit unseren amerikanischen Ueberlieferungen zu erklären, ist Torheit. Man kann Antisemit sein und zue selben Zeit die Christenpflicht, die wir den Juden gegenüber haben (einschliesslich der Missionspflicht), voll und ganz anerkennen und zu üben versuchen. Ist es Judenhass, was jene 'fremden Vereinigungen' pflegen und schüren, so wissen wir uns davon natürlich völlig geschieden.<sup>67</sup>

The fact that Reu considers discrimination against



the Jews even in the realm of the church to be a debatable issue indicates that his theological anthropology is not self-consistent. The present research did not reveal any other racial or cultural group which Reu singles out for similar treatment, although his special hatred and loathing of professing atheists is apparent throughout the decades he writes the "Kirchliche Chronik" column.<sup>68</sup>

### Summary

For the most part, Reu's anthropology rests upon the Scripture base he so much prized as a Lutheran theologian of the first rank who taught and defended the doctrine of verbal inspiration. And yet it is easy to discern the influence of the Erlangen school in Reu's anthropology in his ideas concerning development stages of the human soul and ability of the unregenerate soul to reflect the image of God. For example, F. H. R. von Frank, the great Erlangen systematician whom Reu admired, maintained the existence of a moral will and also a quality of "homogeneousness" between knower and known in every human being which in their essence are the same in the regenerate and the unregenerate. Reu does not go this far in his own anthropology, though his still speaking of a remnant of the divine image in man in terms of the latent potential he has to receive and understand the Word of God seems like a daring assertion to some conservative exegetes. Reu always tempered his imago Dei doctrine with anti-Pelagian guarantees, however, and he never maintains that the revelation God provides for Himself to those outside of Christ is anything close to what is required for a true knowledge of God. Although Frank goes beyond Reu in his understanding of concept formation in that he

recognizes the difference inherent in a perception which is produced in the consciousness depending on its position in space and in time-- i.e., that the person as subject and as object of the same perception cannot render an identical experience of that perception--Reu is not concerned with the existential question of fusing subjective with objective knowledge. Reu's basis for guaranteeing both concepts formed from mundane and from religious experience is not the regenerate ego in its various manifestations and functions, but rather the enscripturated word external to the ego. This different basis is why all dogmatical constructs and meanings are merely tentative to Frank, and why they are firmly established and have their own necessity as truth to Reu.

Reu's literary calumnies against the Jews are a blot on what otherwise is an exemplary career of scholarship and service to the church. From the deferences quoted above, it appears that Reu did not consider the Jews or certain other races capable of designation of human beings--at least not in their capacity to become fully human through the regenerating power of God the Holy Spirit. We may shake our heads at this failure of character and confession, but Reu's position gives us cause to reexamine our own prejudices and misbelief in a new light of humility. If one of the most influential figures in American Lutheranism had an inconsistent anthropology, so may we. And against the forces of theological modernism and denial, one today would do well to take up Reu's confession of the imago Dei restored in Jesus Christ--a point on which Reu is uncompromising. Anything less than the indwelling Spirit of God to forgive sin and life to heaven is for him an inadequate, incomplete view of man.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>The points given here are based on the discussion given in J. M. Reu, "Dogmatics," pp. 81-90, J. M. Reu Collection, Dubuque.

<sup>2</sup>"Holy Writ raises man absolutely above the level of the animal, placing him in close proximity to God. It names man's specific distinction and his really essential mark when declaring that his body was formed by God's own hand and that God breathed the breath of life into him in such unparalleled manner that man became the image of God." Reu, "Dogmatics," p. 85. Cf. also J. M. Reu and Paul H. Buehring, Christian Ethics (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1935) 66, where Reu comments: "Man was created as a *dual* being having both a natural and a personal side, and it is this fact that makes him capable of moral action."

<sup>3</sup>Reu and Buehring, Ethics, 65.

<sup>4</sup>"This, then, was man's twofold moral task: the one, to gain an ever increasing knowledge of nature within and around him and by such knowledge an increasing dominion over it; the second, an ever deeper penetration into the mysteries of God's infinite being together with a continued voluntary subjection under God's will as a means of attaining supreme happiness; and both of these simultaneously, neither of them excluding the other." *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>5</sup>The essence of sin Reu understands not as act but as attitude of will and heart. He remarks that "...the essence of sin is selfishness, or more exactly, the desire of the human will to seek satisfaction in something besides and outside of

God, the highest good, and therefore in opposition to the norm of God.... We define sin, then, as the lust for self-satisfaction in opposition to God as the highest good and the absolute norm, whether this lust crops out externally in words and deeds, or gains merely the inner consent of the will, or remains dormant and latent in the depth of the heart." Ibid., 93, 95. The "immediate and unavoidable consequence" of sin is guilt, Reu believes. Cf. *ibid.*, 109.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Reu, "Dogmatics," p. 123.

<sup>7</sup>As an example of Reu's teaching on the qualities and incommensurability of the Christian pistis, see his "Exegetische Studie zu 1. Joh. 5, 4-10," *Kirchliche Zeitschrift* 65 "In regeneration man remains entirely passive. This excludes every kind of semipelagianism and synergism...."

<sup>8</sup>Reu and Buehring, Ethics, 137.

<sup>9</sup>Reu speaks of faith as a created organ of mankind in the Ethics, 131.

<sup>10</sup>"According to the Scriptures it is God only and alone who leads to the faith--not merely a head faith, but the faith of the heart, the saving faith--in which the heart despairs of its own powers, and trusts only in the grace of God in Christ Jesus." J. R. Reu, How to Teach in the Sunday School, A Teacher Training Course (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1939), 157.

<sup>11</sup>J. M. Reu, "The Course of Theology Itself," p. 64; part 2 of "Introduction to Theology," "Johann Michael Reu Collection, Wartburg Seminary Archives, Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa.

<sup>12</sup>J. M. Reu, "The Epistle of Paul to the

Romans," p. 18, J. M. Reu Collection, Dubuque. How absolute a discrepancy there is in Reu's thinking between the divine and human knowledge of righteousness can be seen from his criticism of Luther at this point: "Luther's translation 'Aus Glauben in Glauben' is based on the idea that different stages of Christian faith are involved here and can be reconciled neither with the context nor with the prepositions used here." Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Reu, "Romans," pp. 32-33.

<sup>14</sup>Reu, "Dogmatics," p. 139. Cf. p. 141, where Reu writes: "The real nature of God remains totally unknown to natural man." And in describing Luther's sanctification experience, Reu writes in this way of the complete disparity of natural and spiritual capacity to know divine things which exists even in the life of the regenerate: "His own experience, that had been brought about by the Holy Ghost, and the ever new apprehension of divine truth, which is something entirely different from a mere psychological intuition, leads on from light to new light and becomes a precious guide to the correct understanding of Scripture." J. M. Reu, Luther's German Bible: An Historical Presentation Together with a Collection of Sources (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1934), 259. In commenting on the doctrine of original sin at the 1923 Lutheran World Convention, Reu said that in his understanding an "absolute recognition" of this doctrine is needed in the contemporary church which would teach "the complete inability of the natural man to accomplish anything that is truly good, of his inclination to all that is evil, of his being subject to divine wrath and judgment, even from birth." Reu also comments that he believes the doctrine of original sin to be "a basic fact of

Scripture and of our own experience, the denial or modification of which makes impossible the understanding of the Gospel and of the Reformation." J. M. Reu, discussion of "The Confessions --The Indispensable Foundations of the Lutheran Church," by A. Joergensen, and of "The Confessions as the Indispensable Foundations of the Lutheran Church," by S. J. Sebelius, in The Lutheran World Convention: The Minutes, Addresses and Discussions of the Conference at Eisenach, Germany, August 19th to 26th, 1923 (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publication House, 1925), 88. Reu's position on the variegated nature of the circumstances surrounding conversion are also shown in his opinion that "God works in many ways on the souls of men," that people possess "varied kinds of temperaments," and that they have a "totally dissimilar capacity for self-examination" --all of which may help or hinder the "gradual unfolding of the inner life" which Reu took to be the norm for Christian experience. Cf. J. M. Reu, "Die Zersetzung des Bekenntnisses durch den Pietismus," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 60 (November 1936):646. Cf. in addition Reu and Beuhring, Ethics, 34, 82, and especially Reu's description of the imago Dei on p. 114: "[Man] is in a state of complete spiritual death. However, one comforting fact remains: depraved and corrupted as his nature is, man has not lost the capacity of being renewed to a moral life. In accordance with the divine plan of salvation even his sinful depravation could not rob him of his personality, that formal capacity to know and to will, that remnant of the image of God in him, which includes also the fact of his conscience, and thus man still retains the capacity of being redeemed and sanctified (*capacitas passiva*)."

<sup>15</sup>Reu and Buehring, Ethics, 75, 79.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 76.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 76-77.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 77. But that this judgment of conscience is totally inadequate for embodying or replacing the terrores conscientia required in genuine repentance, Reu notes by saying that the conscience "does not save natural man from his state of corruption, especially since it is itself depraved and since it may err or sleep." Rather, for Reu the conscience is a positive benefit toward the engendering of spiritual life because it "never permits man to escape from God completely however greatly he may desire to flee from him. It keeps on witnessing that he has been created for God and that he will find rest only in God." Reu, "Dogmatics," pp. 143-144.

<sup>19</sup>Reu and Buehring, Ethics, 78-79.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 161.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 126-127.

<sup>22</sup>J. M. Reu, The Augsburg Confession: A Collection of Sources with An Historical Introduction (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1930), 213. Except for this single case, Reu commends the confession's translation into such diverse dialects as Tamil and Swahili and Japanese without making any such disparaging remarks about ethnic cultural or intellectual capabilities.

<sup>23</sup>Reu remarks in his treatment of Luther's publication of the book *Ein deutsch Theologia* written by a German mystic that "Here were religious thoughts, full of exalted inwardness, clothed in German speech. It had often been said

(p. 70) that the German language was too rude a vessel to contain the full treasures of religious feeling, but here we encounter a theology addressed to the inner life clothed in the most alluring and winning German. It can easily be shown that these writings enriched and deepened Luther's German." Reu, Luther's German Bible, 142-143. But in fairness to Reu, his description of the Germanic race as a whole should be given here as well. He speaks in one place of the German people in this way: "...the hunger for honor and influence and the curse of aping all things foreign...clings to the average German more than to any other race...." J. M. Reu, "Warum gehen der lutherischen Kirche so viele Glieder verloren?" Kirchliche Zeitschrift 46 (April 1922): 233.

24"The Romantic races, e.g., want to see and visualize, while the Germanic wish to understand and to find ultimate causes. The language of the Oriental is figurative and abounds in imagination, while that of the Occidental is comparatively dry and cold. The warmth and depth of soul in the German people finds expression in the German language as adequately as the commercial spirit of the Anglo-Saxon does in his terse and concise English." Reu and Buehring, Ethics, 63.

25"Es ist erfreulich zu sehen, dass die Gleichberechtigung der Neger unseres Landes allmählich aufhört, eine blosse Phrase zu sein, und anfängt, eine Realität zu werden," J.M. Reu, "Die Negerfrage," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 60 (July 1936): 416-417. Reu also points out that "Man darf aber auch...nicht vergessen, dass die Negerrasse einige sehr tüchtige Gelehrte hervorgebracht hat." J. M. Reu, "Negerbevölkerung unseres



Landes," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 65 (May 1941): 310-311.

<sup>26</sup>J. M. Reu, Catechetics, or Theory and Practise of Religious Instruction, 3d ed. (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1931), 242; id., How to Teach in the Sunday School, 331-340.

<sup>27</sup>Reu, Catechetics, 249. Reu also sounds this very modern note concerning in utero education: "As far as we are concerned, we are certain--and modern psychology corroborates rather than invalidates this view--that the mother may exert prenatal influence upon her child, that the mental and spiritual atmosphere in which the mother moves during the period of gestation does not leave the child without a trace." Ibid., 245-246.

<sup>28</sup>Reu, Catechetics, 244. This same image in expanded form also appears in Reu's article "How to Teach Beginners" from 1929. Here Reu says that "The brain cells are exceedingly receptive, more than at any later period in life, they are impressionable like soft clay, and when the same impression is made again and again, day by day, or at least Sunday after Sunday, the brain and through the brain, in a mysterious way, the soul receives a lasting impression, not seldom indelible for a whole life-time." J. M. Reu, "How to Teach Beginners," Lutheran Herald, 12 January 1929, 21.

<sup>29</sup>As Reu explains it, "The more frequently the ideas are brought into the light of consciousness, the quicker they will from then on be in a state of readiness; the more securely the soul possesses them, the more easily it can make use of them." J. M. Reu "Grundsätze zur Herstellung von Sonntags-schul-Literatur," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 35 (April-May 1911): 188-189.

30,"As early as the third year the child may be impressed by the aid of pictures, with the permanent presence of God than which there is no stronger foundation for the moral and religious life." Reu, Catechetics, 246. Reu also points out that among the 117 pictures Luther included in the 1534 edition of his Bible translation were those of the tabernacle and of Solomon's buildings. Reu, Luther's German Bible, 224. Cf. in addition Reu's discussion of phantasy or imagination in Reu, How to Teach in the Sunday School, 91-93.

31It would appear that Reu has what could be termed a naive overconfidence in the ability of children to construct accurate mental pictures of scenes and events they have never experienced except through narration. As just one example of this view, Reu remarks that "But wherever realities are placed before it, especially in geography and history, the phantasy, wherever the aid of charts and pictures is afforded, builds for itself a rather correct image of distant scenes and times, especially if it be stirred by vivid descriptions. The child at this stage [i.e., ages 9-12] also requires concrete descriptions; but these should tally with reality, time, place, and sequents [sic] of events being accurately given." J. M. Reu, "The Place of Biblical History in the Curriculum of Lutheran Schools," p. 42, J. M. Reu Collection, Dubuque. Cf. Reu, How to Teach in the Sunday School, 215.

32Reu does mention the educational possibilities of "infant schools" conducted by deaconesses, and differentiates them from the same type of schools proposed by Froebel, in Catechetics, 391.

33Ibid., 246. Compare also his comments on

the Christian home as an agency of religious instruction on pp. 389-391 and 405-406 of this volume.

<sup>34</sup>As given by Reu in How to Teach in the Sunday School, 341,348. Reu suggested a four-part Sunday morning program of religious instruction for Beginners: opening exercises, circle talk, telling of the new story, and closing exercises. *Ibid.*, 354.

<sup>35</sup>"Following the example of the miniature painter, he will limn most carefully individual features, thus securing life-likeness for the whole: this is what the child craves; and only thus clear [in]tuition becomes possible." Reu, "The Place of Biblical History in the Curriculum of Lutheran Schools," p. 39. And in the manuscript of a talk on Luther's Small Catechism, Reu defines the concept in this manner: "Observe what we in German call the 'Kleinmalerei,' that is, the vivid miniature wordpainting in the explanation of the First Article: mir Leib und Seele, Augen, Ohren und alle Glieder, Vernunft und alle Sinne gegeben hat und noch erhält,' and again 'dazu Kleider und Schuh, Essen und Trinken, Haus und Hof, Weib und Kind, Acker, Vieh und alle Gueter.' Each stroke of the brush in the hand of this masterpainter makes God greater before the eye of the child." J. M. Reu, "Why Luther's Catechism Is So Dear to My Heart," pp. 8-9. J. M. Reu Collection, Dubuque. See also Reu's reference to "word-painting" in J. M. Reu, "The Peculiar Characteristic of Luther's Catechism," Lutheran Church Review 24 (July 1905): 438. This article also appeared in German under the title "Die Eigenart des Katechismus Luthers und was sich daraus für seine schulmässige Behandlung ergibt," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 30 (Number 5, 1906): 208-223. Cf. J. M. Reu, Homiletics:

A Manual of The Theory and Practice of Preaching, trans. Albert Steinhäuser, 4th ed. (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1934), 194; id., Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism: A History of Its Origin, Its Distribution and Its Use, A jubilee offering, with eighteen plates (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1929) 148; id., Catechetics, 479.

<sup>36</sup> Reu finds that narration also plays an important part in Luther's translation of the Bible into German, as the sound of the words demonstrates to him that Luther judged the correctness of a translation "rather from its effect on the hearer than on the reader..." Reu, Luther's German Bible, 262.

<sup>37</sup> Reu, Catechetics, 251.

<sup>38</sup> Reu distinguishes between "constructing" fantasy operative in the years of early childhood, and "abstracting" fantasy which comes to the fore in the adolescent years. Cf. Reu, How to Teach in the Sunday School, 378.

<sup>39</sup> Reu is careful to limit the amount of memory material given to children younger than age six. He believes anything assigned to be memorized during this period must at any rate be illustrated and explained before it is assigned. Reu, Catechetics, 252. But it is also worth noting that Reu believes it entirely possible and to be recommended as the standard practice that children between the ages of eight and ten memorize as part of their Sunday School work the full Biblical texts of the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the words of institution of the Lord's Supper and baptism, as well as Luther's explanations in the Small Catechism for all the commandments and for the

creed. See J. M. Reu, "Preface to the First German Edition of the Wartburg Lesson Helps," Wartburg Lesson Helps for Lutheran Sunday Schools, Junior Department, vol. 2 (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1918), vi. Important here also is Reu's view that Luther's explanations are not difficult to memorize because of their "artful alliterations" and their rhythm. He says in this regard that: "Besides these phrases with their artful alliterations, so well adapted for memorizing, we have expressions [in the catechism] which gather into striking combinations that which is related in thought, as 'love and trust,' 'love and esteem,' 'help and befriend,' 'improve and protect,' 'property and living,' heaven and earth,' 'life and death,' 'liveth and reigneth,' 'thank and praise,' goodness and mercy, teach and live, forgive and do good, prevail and gain the victory. Wherever he can he uses the verb instead of the noun, because it is easier to be understood. Above all recall the hymnlike rhythm, this foremost musical element in speech that helps to fasten the precious contents in memory and heart." Reu, "Why Luther's Catechism Is So Dear to My Heart," pp. 9-10. Additional information on Reu's understanding of Luther's sensitivity to the limited vocabulary of the common man shown in his use of verbs instead of nouns and his practice of placing the verb so close as possible to its subject to facilitate the grasping of the main idea of the sentence are found in Reu, Luther's German Bible, 262, 277-283.

<sup>40</sup>As shown by Reu's cautionary word to teachers about student lying during the ages previous to age nine: "Against mendacity he will proceed with great earnestness, but because of the presence in these years of many incorrect concepts of the imagination, he must be warned

that not every objective untruth is necessarily a lie and deserving to be treated as such." Reu, Catechetics, 254.

<sup>41</sup>Reu provides detailed data on the physiological changes which take place in children at this stage of development in Reu, How to Teach in the Sunday School, 376-377, 412-413.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 381-391. Reu provides the specific parts of a weekly program of religious education in the Sunday School for these pupils on pp. 391-394.

<sup>43</sup>Reu, Catechetics, 257. Reu terms the first part of this last period of childhood the Junior phase, and gives its physiological manifestations and a proposed outline of instructional procedure for this age group in Reu, How to Teach in the Sunday School, 411, 418-430.

<sup>44</sup>Reu, How to Teach in the Sunday School, 486-487.

<sup>45</sup>Reu, Catechetics, 255. Reu also refers to the later stage of childhood as "the great period of learning." Ibid., 259. Cf. Reu, How to Teach in the Sunday School, 355.

<sup>46</sup>In his book for Sunday School teachers Reu states that the capacity for memorization reaches its zenith between the years of nine to twelve; cf. Reu, How to Teach in the Sunday School, 87, 414. Regardless of the pupil's age, however, Reu cautions about overburdening children with memory work, and himself chooses to have it learned thoroughly rather than to increase its extent. For example, Reu believed an expounded catechism should contain no more than 300 Bible passages which students would commit to memory.

Reu, "Grundsätze für die Ausarbeitung eines ausgelegten Katechismus," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 26 (Number 1, 1902): 35. Reu selected fewer than 250 Bible memory verses in the Wartburg Lesson Helps. Cf. Reu, How to Teach in the Sunday School, 88.

<sup>47</sup>Reu offers his own childhood experience as proof of the validity of this principle. He says of the pastor who gave him confirmation instruction that "He always assigned two pages of Buchrucker's catechism for memorization; it made no difference whether the oral explanation had already progressed that far or whether it had perhaps led to far other results. That is of course acting senselessly," Reu, "Grundsätze für die Ausarbeitung eines ausgelegten Katechismus," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 26 (Number 1, 1902): 34. He believes that even the long periods in some of Luther's explanations can be memorized without special difficulty if their memorization is not insisted upon at too young an age, and if the teacher gives an adequate introduction to the class about their "architectural and conspicuous construction." Cf. J. M. Reu, "The Significance of Luther's Small Catechism," Lutheran Church Review 33 (April 1914): 319; id., Luther's German Bible, 280. In this last reference Reu remarks: "When Luther has to deal with long, occasionally very long, periods, especially in the Epistles of St. Paul, he seldom divides them into a number of independent sentences, but he uses all sorts of aids to make them clear."

<sup>48</sup>Reu in the Catechetics uses a physical image to describe his conception of what habits are for the soul. He remarks that "Thoughts that are repeatedly entertained, frequently recurrent emotions, decisions of the will formed time

and again, the moral acts thus resulting--all these leave in the soul impressions or grooves, as it were, along which the subsequent activities of the soul run almost automatically; and it becomes increasingly difficult for the child to think, feel, and will in any other direction." Reu, Catechetics, 258.

<sup>49</sup>Gender difficulties and their effects on the personality are specific and clear-cut for Reu: "the difference between the young man and the young woman is found principally in this that in the latter the emotions rather than reason will develop into the dominant force, a difference which is bound to remain despite some foolish tendencies in the 'woman movement' which appear to set in the opposite direction." Ibid., 268.

<sup>50</sup>Reu Believes a "gap" occurs in adolescent development at the age of sixteen in girls, and at age seventeen or eighteen in boys, after which persons need to be given more social and academic freedom to make their own decisions. Ibid., 270. Reu gives physiological characteristics of this age group on pp. 263-270 of the Catechetics, and also in How to Teach in the Sunday School, 457-475, 525-531. He also divides it into two distinct periods: early adolescence (ages 13-16) and later adolescence (ages 17-21 or 24). Cf. Reu, How to Teach in the Sunday School, 524.

<sup>51</sup>Reu, Catechetics, 263.

<sup>52</sup>Reu, How to Teach in the Sunday School, 474. He recommends a four-part curriculum for younger adolescents consisting of history of salvation, Biblical isogogics, worship and liturgical forms, and church history, while for



the older group he proposes a more thorough introduction to the Bible and the study of whole Biblical books, as well as topics of current interest from church/world affairs. *Ibid.*, 484, 531-532.

<sup>53</sup>Nelson mentions that Reu professed an admiration for Hitler and his program through his editorial comments in the Kirchliche Zeitschrift up until 1939, when "Reu was finally disillusioned with Nazism." E. Clifford Nelson, Lutheranism in North America 1914-1970 (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1972), 123. Reu initially favored the National Socialist program during the early years of Hitler's rule because he believed it unified the German people and gave them a national consciousness and purpose to a degree they had never before known, and also because the Nazis moved to suppress some of the aberrant social and moral excrescences which characterized the life of the intelligentsia during the waning days of the Weimar Republic. However, Reu never approved of the Nazi "soil and blood" arguments, nor of their handling of the German church situation.

<sup>54</sup>J. M. Reu, "The Present Church Situation in Germany," The Lutheran, 1 September 1937, 4.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>57</sup>J. M. Reu, Quellen zue Geschichte des kirchlichen Unterrichts in der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands zwischen 1530 und 1600. Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1904-35. According to a newspaper account written from a manuscript provided by Reu himself, he spent the summers of 1903, 1904, 1906, 1907, 1922, 1923, and 1929

doing research in Germany and surrounding countries. "Dubuque Educator Outlines Conditions in Germany," Dubuque (Iowa) Telegraph Herald, 8 December 1935, n.p.; J. M. Reu Collection, Dubuque.

<sup>58</sup>Reu, "The Present Church Situation in Germany," 5. On another occasion Reu remarks that among the good things the National Socialists have accomplished for Germany is the fact that "a distribution of opportunity and influence in keeping with the percentage of population, namely the relocation of the non-German elements, especially the Jews, was realized." J. M. Reu, "The Place of the Lutheran Church in the Third Reich," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 58 (May 1934): 275.

<sup>59</sup>"Again, the consequence of brotherly love is charity in general (II Pet. 1:7) including the whole wide circle of those not yet members of the Kingdom. To be sure, he who believes in God (Ps. 139:21, 22); but since he is also aware that they have been created in God's image, that they are lost without Christ, that Christ has redeemed them, and that it is the Father's will that they should become God's children and the Christian's brethren in the faith, he is constrained to include them also in his love." Reu and Beuhring, Ethics, 150. Cf. also Reu's comment on p. 230 of this volume that the Christian's love "makes no distinctions between individuals, it does not stop with nationality or any external differences, but it recognizes in every member of the human race a being like himself created by God and still bearing a remnant of God's image."

<sup>60</sup>Wentz documents other such lapses in regard to editorial treatment of both Nazi theology

and Nazi anti-Semitism by other authors published in The Lutheran, the Lutheran Witness, and the Lutheran Companion in this same time period. Cf. Frederick K. Wentz, "From Luther to Hitler'???: A look at American Lutheranism of the 1930's suggests a link between Theological Fault-- Political Failure," The National Lutheran, February 1965, 5-7.

<sup>61</sup>Richard R. Salzmann, "Lutheran Theology and Political Action, Part I--How Reu Viewed the Nazis," The National Lutheran, November 1965, 9-11, 18.

<sup>62</sup>Salzmann offers as evidence Reu's December 1937 editorial comment in the Kirchliche Zeitschrift where Reu writes: "many of the gruesome dealings of the Third Reich over against the Jews have been justified by a false reference to Luther's writing," and another dating from September 1939 in which Reu criticises a Nazi-run "Institute for Research on Jewish Influence in Christian Churches" as "another anti-Christian attack" and as "an unwarranted extension of the miserable Nazi anti-Semitism...." Reu; quoted in Salzmann, *ibid.*, 10. Reu's most extensive article detailing the attempts of the "German Christian" movement to reintroduce the pagan Germanic deities and to destroy all organized forms of genuine Protestant Christianity in the process is "Wer sind die 'Deutschen Christen'?" Kirchliche Zeitschrift 57 (October 1933): 592-602; 57 (December 1933): 720-739. This article is especially valuable because besides Reu's own evaluations of various aspects of the movement it contains numerous quotations from the movement's leaders. Cf. in addition Reu, "Aus dem Kampf um das Bekenntnis in der Kirsch Deutschlands," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 58 (September 1934): 513-533.

63 Reu's view of the movies is an extremely caustic one. For example, he refers to them in his homiletics text as "sumptuous motion pictures with their vivid appeal and questionable motives [which] blunt the power of discrimination in moral and religious matters...." Reu, Homiletics, 123. But he specifically links the moral degradation of the motion picture industry to the Jews. For example, after presenting a reprinted news release from the Editorial Council of the Religious Press detailing how many movies in 1938 depicted such moral aberrations as rape, incest, murder, and adultery in their plots, Reu observes: "Und diese Theater werden wöchentlich von 70 Millionen besucht, worunter 28 Millionen unter 20 Jahren sind! Hat die Kontrolle schon wieder aufgehört? Die Mehrzahl dieser Theater wird von Juden betrieben, die man zu Zeit so sehr liebt und von denen man nicht genug in die höchsten Regierungsstellen bringen kann!" J. M. Reu, "Obszöne Literatur," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 63 (March 1939): 179. And in a 1931 article concerning efforts of the motion picture industry to enlist the help of the public schools in using feature films as educational tools, Reu comments: "Das jüdische und sonstige Kapital, das hinter der ganzen Filmindustrie steht, will unsere Kinder so erziehen, dass ihnen der Besuch dieser Theater eine Gewohnheit und dann ein Bedürfnis wird, ja dass man ihn als ein notwendiges Stück der Erziehung ansieht. Ist das erst erreicht, dann werden sie auch immer weniger empfindlich, wenn Fragwürdiges und direkt Unsittliches dargestellt wird. Wir machen auf diese Bewegung aufmerksam, damit man sich bei Zeiten an seine Schulverwaltung wendet und sich solche Kooperation zwischen Schule and Filmindustrie verbittet." Reu, "A New Plan to Bring Children into Movie Theaters," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 55 (September 1931): 544-545. In a similar vein, Reu speaks of

Jewish control over the picture industry using words such as these: "Die jüdischen und sonst nichtchristlichen und vielleicht 'christlichen' (Mr. Hays!) Geldmagnaten, die hinter dem ganzen Skandalwesen stehen...." Reu, "The Motion Picture Menace," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 58 (July 1934): 444. On Reu's attitude toward films in general, see the articles reprinted by Reu, along with his occasional editorial comments, in J. M. Reu, "Wer erzieht unser heranwachsendes Geschlecht?," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 43 (September 1919): 445-446; id., "Missbrauch des Kino," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 47 (February 1923): 157-158; id., "Moving Picture--the greatest religious menace in America," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 49 (April 1925: 229-233; id., "The Menace of the Movies," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 43 (April 1930): 309-311; id., "Einführung der sprechenden Wandelbilder in die Kirche," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 54 (April 1930): 318-319; id., "Allegemeines," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 54 (May 1930): 370-373.

<sup>64</sup>Cf. in addition Reu's characterization of "the money-mad Jews of our day" in J. M. Reu, review of Russian Events in the Light of Bible Prophecy, by Louis S. Bauman, In Kirchliche Zeitschrift 67 (September 1943): 522-523; id., "Jewish Activities in our Country," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 67 (August 1943): 476-477; id., "Antisemitismus in Amerika," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 62 (May 1938): 310-311; id., review of The Jewish Problem, by Julius Hahn and Henry Mueller, In Kirchliche Zeitschrift 52 (November 1927): 682. Reu was also of the opinion that Jews were behind the printing and sale of salacious literature in the United States. Cf. Reu, "The Motion Picture Menace," 444.

<sup>65</sup>For a treatment of Reu's belief concerning the conversion of the Jews en masse prior to the

end of the world, see his citation of Luther's exposition of Romans 11:25 in J. M. Reu, "Luther und die Frage nach der allgemeinen Judenbekehrung em Ende," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 63 (May 1939): 273-275.

66J. M. Reu, "Luther and the Jews," p. 25, J. M. Reu Collection, Dubuque. Italics do not appear in the original. Cf. Reu "Luther and the Jews," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 61 (October 1941): 610.

67J. M. Reu, "Stellungnahme gegen den Antisemitismus," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 61 (February 1937): 120-121.

68Cf. the reprinted articles, along with Reu's own comments in J. M. Reu, "Angriffe auf die Religion in unseren Schulen," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 47 (August 1923): 522-523; id., "Der Kampf um den christlichen Charakter der Kirche unseres Landes," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 47 (December 1923): 764-767; id., "Die Verheidnischung unser Universitäten und Colleges," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 49 (May 1925): 311-313; id., "Der Atheismus organisiert sich," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 51 (October 1927): 633-636; id., "The Inter-Church Theistic Alliance," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 51 (December 1927): 764-765; id., "Die Propaganda des Atheismus in unserem Land," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 53 (February 1929): 124-126; id., "Strange Bed Fellows," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 56 (February 1932): 119-121; id., "Are College Students Godless?," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 56 (September 1932): 555-556; id., "A Conversation about God," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 56 (October 1932): 630-635; id., "College Students and God," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 57 (October 1933): 623-624; id., "Atheism and the Depression,"

Kirchliche Zeitschrift 57 (October 1933): 625-626; id., "Sie können es nicht lassen!", Kirchliche Zeitschrift 58 (November 1934): 688; id., "Die Vereinigten Staaten eine weithin heidnische Nation," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 60 (February 1936): 115-116; id., "Zur Frage nach der religiösen Stellung unserer College-Jugend," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 62 (February 1938): 115-117; id., "Amerikas Selbstmord," Kirchliche Zeitschrift 65 (September 1941): 576.

Pastor Paul I. Johnson

## COMMUNION FREQUENCY IN THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD: A RE-EVALUATION

For the past several years the pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod have been engaged in a wide-ranging discussion on the topic of the Lord's Supper. Several senior pastors of the synod have told the present writer that during this time their understanding of the Sacrament has been greatly enhanced, and that a careful analysis of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions has led them to re-evaluate their views and correct some previously held misconceptions. The synod has come to a renewed appreciation of the efficacy of Christ's Word in the Supper and of the truly evangelical character of the Sacrament. This renewal of Sacramental theology should not, however, be limited to the "theoretical" realm. A willingness to re-evaluate our doctrine of the Lord's Supper should be accompanied by a willingness to re-evaluate our Sacramental practice. On the question of the frequency of the Lord's Supper in our congregations, such a re-evaluation may once again result in the correction of some previously held misconceptions.

It is probably fair to assume that most congregations in the synod currently celebrate the Sacrament of the Altar either once or twice per month. It must be admitted, however, that this was not the practice of the apostolic church. St. Luke writes in the Acts of the Apostles, "On the first day of the week when we gathered for the breaking of the bread, Paul preached to them."<sup>1</sup> In his First Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul simply assumes that when Christians "come together as a church," they do



so in order "to eat the Lord's Supper."<sup>2</sup> John Gerhard observes that it is "clear from Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:20, 33, that when the Christians did gather at one place, they were accustomed to celebrate the Eucharist," and he concludes that, "Because it has been accepted as a practice in the Christian church that in the public assemblies of the church after the preaching and hearing of the Word this Sacrament is celebrated, therefore, this custom must not be departed from without urgent necessity."<sup>3</sup>

The frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper did indeed continue in the Christian church in the generations that followed the apostles. The testimony of Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis (who died in 403), is cited in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession:

Epiphanius writes that in Asia Minor there were no daily Masses but Communion was celebrated three times a week, and that this practice came from the apostles. He says, "Assemblies for Communion were appointed by the apostles to be held on the fourth day, on Sabbath eve, and on the Lord's Day."<sup>4</sup>

In the western church the Eucharist as instituted by Christ was gradually disfigured during the Middle Ages by the development of the "sacrifice of the Mass." When the true use of the Sacrament became unclear to the people, they became less inclined to partake of the Sacrament and were content instead to "hear" Mass on Sunday mornings and at other times during the week. The problem was acute enough for the Fourth Lateran Council, in 1215, to compel the faithful to receive Communion at least once per year, during Easter. The Lutheran reformers responded to these problems

not by abolishing the weekly Mass, but by restoring it to its proper use.

The Lutherans repudiated all notions of the Mass as a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead, and they rejected private daily Masses as contrary to the institution of Christ. However, they wholeheartedly embraced what they saw as the true Mass, which included both the public proclamation of the Gospel and the public administration of the Supper of the Lord as He ordained it:

We are perfectly willing for the Mass to be understood as a daily sacrifice, provided this means the whole Mass, the ceremony and also the proclamation of the Gospel, faith, prayer, and thanksgiving. Taken together, these are the daily sacrifice of the New Testament; the ceremony was instituted because of them and ought not be separated from them. Therefore Paul says (I Cor.11:26), "As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death."<sup>5</sup>

The reformers clearly believed that the proper celebration of the Sacrament should be a normal and regular component of a congregation's worship life, and that it should be made available to the people, at the very least, on a weekly basis:

....we do not abolish the Mass but religiously keep and defend it. In our churches Mass is celebrated every Sunday and on other festivals, when the sacrament is offered to those who wish for it after they have been examined and absolved. We keep traditional liturgical forms, such as the order of the lessons, prayers, vestments, etc.<sup>6</sup>

Luther D. Reed is undoubtedly correct in his summary of the views of Martin Luther (and the other Lutheran reformers) on this issue:

Believing with all his soul in the "given-ness" of the gospel, Luther attached an almost sacramental authority to the uttered work which proclaimed God's will and mercy. At the same time veneration for the Sacrament as the seal of forgiveness and a means of grace in which "Christ and his saints come unto thee," kept him in accord with the historic church in concluding the chief service of every Lord's Day and festival with the Lord's Supper. The custom which became general in Lutheran churches two centuries later of reducing the Sunday morning service to a preaching service and only infrequently celebrating Holy Communion, as in the Zwinglian and Calvinistic churches, must not be laid at Luther's door. He would be stirred to indignation by the infrequent observance of the Sacrament in many Lutheran churches today.<sup>7</sup>

The weekly observance of the Lord's Supper in the Lutheran congregations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did not mean that every parishioner was automatically expected to commune every Sunday. Reed reminds us that "Luther himself, according to Veit Dietrich's reminiscences, used to receive the Sacrament every fourteen days or at least every three weeks," but not every single Sunday.<sup>8</sup> However, it did mean that those who wished to partake of the Lord's Supper on any given Sunday, and who were properly prepared to do so, were always able to receive the Blessed Sacrament of their

Savior's body and blood.

Many people do hold to the misconception that weekly Communion is a distinctive "Roman Catholic" usage and that monthly Communion or something similar is the Christian norm. The truth of the matter is that a less-than-weekly observance of the Sacrament was an unprecedented Zwinglian innovation in sixteenth-century Switzerland which was then adopted by the Calvinists as well. This ecclesiastical novelty did eventually become entrenched in the institutional Lutheran Church, but long after the Reformation, during a period of theological weakness and confusion that had been brought on by the destructive influences of "Pietism" and "Rationalism." Both of these movements militated against the "means of grace" theology of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, and they accordingly relegated the Lord's Supper to a secondary, supplementary status, as in the Zwinglian model. This was an obvious departure from the historic Lutheran understanding, and from the example of all of Christian antiquity.

Ulrich Zwingli's abandonment of weekly Communion was a logical consequence of his abandonment of Biblical Sacramental theology and his redefinition of the Sacrament as a merely symbolic "memorial." The Lutherans at the time of the Reformation had an entirely different conception of the Sacrament, which led them to follow an entirely different kind of Sacramental piety. Luther writes in the Large Catechism:

While it is true that through Baptism we are first born anew, our human flesh and blood have not lost their old skin.

There are so many hindrances and temptations of the devil and the world that we often grow weary and faint, at times even stumble. The Lord's Supper is given as a daily food and sustenance so that our faith may refresh and strengthen itself and not weaken in the struggle but grow continually stronger. For the new life should be one that continually develops and progresses. Meanwhile, it must suffer much opposition. The devil is a furious enemy; when he sees that we resist him and attack the old man, and when he cannot rout us by force, he sneaks and skulks about everywhere, trying all kinds of tricks, and does not stop until he has finally worn us out so that we either renounce our faith or yield hand and foot and become indifferent or impatient. For such times, when our hearts feel too sorely pressed, this comfort of the Lord's Supper is given to bring us new strength and refreshment.<sup>9</sup>

Luther makes it very clear that "no one should under any circumstances be coerced or compelled" to receive the Sacrament,<sup>10</sup> since this would be the same kind of unevangelical legalism imposed on Christian consciences by the Fourth Lateran Council. However, he also gives this admonition to his fellow pastors:

We should so preach that, of their own accord and without any law, the people will desire the sacrament and, as it were, compel us pastors to administer it to them. This can be done by telling them: It is to be feared that anyone who does not desire to receive the sacrament at least three or four times a year

despises the sacrament and is no Christian, just as he is no Christian who does not hear and believe the Gospel. Christ did not say, "Omit this," or "Despise this," but he said, "Do this, as often as you drink it," etc. Surely he wishes that this be done and not that it be omitted and despised. "Do this," he said.

He who does not highly esteem the sacrament suggests thereby that he has no sin, no flesh, no devil, no world, no death, no hell. This is to say, he believes in none of these, although he is deeply immersed in them and is held captive by the devil. On the other hand, he suggests that he needs no grace, no life, no paradise, no heaven, no Christ, no God, nothing good at all. For if he believed that he was involved in so much that is evil and was in need of so much that is good, he would not neglect the sacrament in which aid is afforded against such evil and in which such good is bestowed. It is not necessary to compel him by any law to receive the sacrament, for he will hasten to it of his own accord, he will feel constrained to receive it, he will insist that you administer it to him.<sup>11</sup>

This kind of preaching, accompanied by sound catechesis and the proper use of confession and absolution, bore positive fruit in the devotional life of the people. The sixteenth-century Lutherans were indeed glad to be able to make the claim that "Every Lord's Day many in our churches use the Lord's Supper..."<sup>12</sup>

The fact that most congregations of the

Evangelical Lutheran Synod do not currently offer the Sacrament "every Lord's Day" is, historically speaking, an indication of the residual effects of "Pietism" and "Rationalism" on our liturgical practice, even though we have rejected the theology of those movements. The Confessional Revival of the nineteenth century (of which we are heirs) truly did return to the forgotten theology of Reformation-era Lutheranism, but it did not return to all of the edifying practices that had been built on that theology and that had been a natural part of the Church's life before its Pietist/Rationalist corruption. This is especially evident in the fact that, with few exceptions, weekly Communion was not restored in the orthodox Lutheran congregations of that time.<sup>13</sup> Kurt E. Marquart is among the conservative Lutherans of today who believe that this was a mistake, and his advice to the theological descendants of Walther, Koren, and Honecke is that this mistake should now be corrected:

...the most urgent liturgical need is not for this or that ceremonial detail; what is needed is the restoration of the Lutheran understanding of the close bond between sermon and sacrament. "The sacrament and the sermon belong together," wrote Sasse, "and it is always a sign of the decay of the church if one is emphasized at the expense of the other." This is clearly not a question of tinkering with fussy bits and pieces of the liturgical machinery, but one of regaining a sense of the organic whole.<sup>14</sup>

...there is a variety-principle built into the liturgy, and that is the rhythm of the church-year. The basic units of this gentle, natural rhythm are the week

and the year. This cycle is...broken by the false off-on or even off-off-off-on staccato of "Communion Sundays" and "non-Communion Sundays." The proper change from Sunday to Sunday should be in the specific meaning and application of the Sacrament, not in having or not having it. The Eucharist is the whole Gospel in action. This one Gospel, like a precious diamond, has many facets or aspects, of which one or two are especially highlighted in each Sunday's or festival's Gospel pericope. And through whatever concrete facet the full Gospel is celebrated on a given day, that is the specific meaning, or the mode of application of the Sacrament on that day. The Sacrament is always the full Gospel-gift, or course. But on Christmas Day we receive it under the aspect of the Lord's Nativity, on Epiphany in celebration of His Baptism, on Laetare Sunday as the Divine Bread of Life revealed in the miraculous feeding of the multitude, and so on. In other words, the Sacrament, like the Gospel itself, must never be seen as some one narrow aspect or some unvarying, "standard ration" in the feast that is Christianity. It is rather the whole reality, under many wonderful aspects, each especially observed and celebrated mercies of God. We have here the Kaleidoscope of God, which, at each weekly or seasonal tilt, exhibits the same generosity of ever new and exciting configurations.<sup>15</sup>

James P. Tiefel, a professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, issues a similar call from within our sister-synod:



Since the time of the Reformation Lutherans have used a liturgical form of worship. We inherited that form from the early church and have continued to use it, with only one notable interruption, ever since. Liturgical worship is built around the liturgy--not a liturgy but the liturgy of the western Christian church. That liturgy includes each worship day two Means of Grace (Word and Sacrament), two functions of faith (receiving from God and giving to God) and two opportunities for review (a weekly review of the Ordinary and an annual review in the Proper).<sup>16</sup>

We dare not fail to notice that Lutheran Pietists disavowed liturgical form precisely because they did not want to emphasize the objective truths of the gospel. For the same reason the Evangelicals have never adopted the liturgy, church year and the regular use of the Sacrament.<sup>17</sup>

The historic custom of celebrating the Lord's Supper each Sunday is, strictly speaking, an "adiaphoron," since Jesus did not specifically command it. The Confessional teaching that God did not ordain Sunday as a new "sabbath" or obligatory day of worship naturally implies that there is no special mandate from God for an every-Sunday observance of the Sacrament.<sup>18</sup> We must nevertheless acknowledge that weekly Communion was the accepted practice of the apostles, the ancient orthodox Fathers, and the Lutheran reformers, and we must also acknowledge that there were, and are, weighty theological and pastoral reasons for this practice.

The author's congregation has adopted what might be called (for lack of a better term)

a "high Mass/low Mass" approach to the weekly administration of the Sacrament of the Altar. On the second and fourth Sundays of the month and on major festivals, we celebrate the Lord's Supper according to the full "Page 15" Communion service in The Lutheran Hymnal. On the first, third, and fifth Sundays of the month, we follow the "Page 5" service, after which those who wish to remain for the Sacrament gather in the sanctuary for a brief, spoken service of Holy Communion. This spoken service follows the basic outline of the traditional Communion rite and is usually attended by about 20 communicants. In this way the Sacrament is made available to those who desire it, regardless of which Sunday of the month it may be. However, this has been done in such a way that the members who may not be "ready" for a thoroughgoing transition to weekly Communion in the main public service are not unnecessarily disturbed by a too-rapid change in their previous custom.

The restoration of weekly Communion has been warmly welcomed by many in our congregation. Those who sense a special need for the Sacrament on what would otherwise have been a "non-Communion" Sunday are now able to receive the comfort of Christ's Supper. Those who desire to commune more often than once or twice per month, and who are "truly worthy and well prepared" through faith in Christ's words of forgiveness,<sup>19</sup> are now given the opportunity to receive the Sacrament every Sunday. The members of our church are continuing to grow in their appreciation of the great blessings which Jesus offers to us when He invites us to this Sacred Meal. As Gaylin R. Schmeling reminds us,

in every difficulty and problem of life  
the Lord Jesus says, "Come to My Table

all you that labor and are heavy laden,  
I will give you rest." Through the  
Sacrament of His body and blood He gives  
us the strength to face all the problems  
and troubles of life and to do all things  
through Him. Come to this refreshing  
repast. Here is the nourishment, the  
heavenly manna we need all the way through  
the journey of life.<sup>20</sup>

Rev. David Jay Webber

### Endnotes

1. Acts 20:7, New American Bible (copyright 1970 by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine).

2. I Corinthians 11:18,20, New King James Version (copyright 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.).

3. Martin Chemnitz, Polycarp Leyser, and John Gerhard, Harmoniae Quatuor Evangelistarum (1652), II, p. 1085; quoted in Kurt Marquart, "Liturgical Commonplaces," Concordia Theological Quarterly 42:4 (October 1978), pp. 336-37.

4. Apology XXIV:8, in The Book of Concord, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Fortress Press, 1959), p. 250. The quotation is from Heresies, III.

5. Apology XXIV:35, Tappert p. 256.

6. Apology XXIV:1, Tappert p. 249.

7. Luther D. Reed, The Lutheran Liturgy (revised edition) (Muhlenberg Press, 1947), pp. 79-80. On p. 244 Reed makes the following observation: "Some orders recognized that on certain days in towns and villages there might

be no communicants. Permission was given in this event to conclude the Service with appropriate prayers and the Benediction. This exceptional provision later became the regular use. In the beginning, however, it was part of a plan to maintain the historic order of the Mass and to encourage the faithful to communicate." See also Michael Krentz, "How Can the Liturgy Aid the Church's Mission?" Lutheran Synod Quarterly XXX:1 (March 1991), pp. 53-54.

8. The Lutheran Liturgy, p. 227.  
See also Apology XI:3-5.

9. Large Catechism V:23-27, Tappert p. 449. Emphasis added.

10. Large Catechism V:42, Tappert p. 451.

11. Small Catechism, Preface: 22-23, Tappert p. 341. Emphasis in original.

12. Apology XV:40, Tappert p. 220.

13. The shortage of Lutheran pastors in nineteenth-century America did, of course, make the restoration of weekly Communion impossible in some congregations since it would have been improper for a lay reader to administer the Sacrament in the absence of a regularly-ordained minister (cf. Augsburg Confession XIV). However, weekly Communion could have been restored in the churches that were regularly served by a called pastor, but there were very few cases in which it was.

14. "Liturgical Commonplaces," pp. 337-38. The Hermann Sasse quotation is from This Is My Body (Augsburg Publishing House, 1959), p. 2.

15. "Liturgical Commonplaces," pp. 343-44.

16. James P. Tiefel, "Fostering the Devotional Life that Leads to Spiritual Renewal"

(unpublished manuscript, 1989), p. 12. Emphases in original.

17. "Fostering the Devotional Life that Leads to Spiritual Renewal," p. 16.

18. Cf. Augsburg Confession XXVIII:53-60.

19. Small Catechism VI:10, Tappert p. 352.

20. Gaylin Schmeling, "The Theology of the Lord's Supper," Lutheran Synod Quarterly XXVIII:4 (December 1988), p. 61.

## FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF ORTHODOX LUTHERANISM

There are three foundational principles on which orthodox Lutheranism is based. These three principles are known as the confessional principle, the formal principle, and the material principle. The confessional principle involves subscription to the doctrinal content of the confessional writings contained in the Book of Concord of 1580. Orthodox Lutherans subscribe to these documents because they believe they are in full agreement with the teachings of the Holy Scripture. The formal principle of Lutheran theology is that the Bible alone is the source of all doctrine in the church. The material principle is the doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Lutherans are bound together by the confessional principle which has to do with the confessional documents of the Lutheran Church in the sixteenth century. These confessions, or symbols, make up the Book of Concord of 1580. All major Lutheran bodies in Lutheranism subscribe, at least partially, to the Lutheran confessions. There is, however, no uniformity among them as to the degree or binding nature of such subscription.<sup>1</sup>

The documents contained in the Book of Concord are the three Ecumenical Creeds of Christendom, the Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the two Catechisms of Luther and the Formula of Concord.

When the Lutheran symbolical writings were brought together into the Book of Concord in 1580,

the signers included the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed. This was public testimony that they believed themselves to be in the continuity of the Christian Church of past ages.<sup>2</sup>

The basic Lutheran confession is the Augsburg Confession of 1530. It was presented by the Elector of Saxony and other German princes to Charles V, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, as a summary of the doctrines being taught in their territories, and to give the reasons why certain rites had been abolished among them. The primary author of the Augsburg Confession was Philip Melancthon. The work is not original with him, but is based largely on earlier Lutheran documents, including some of the writings of Luther. The first twenty-one articles of the confession deal with the doctrines of God, man, redemption, justification, means of grace, new obedience, the church, the sacraments, the public ministry, church rites, the government, the last things, free will, the cause of sin, good works and the worship of saints. The remaining seven articles treat of abuses which had been corrected, including the Lord's Supper under one element, the celibacy of priests, the mass as a sacrifice and monastic views.<sup>3</sup> Regarding the adoption of the Augsburg Confession, Bente wrote, "June 25, 1530, is properly regarded as the birthday of the Lutheran Church. From this day on she stands before all the world as a body united by a public confession and separate from the Roman Church."<sup>4</sup> Luther, who had stood alone at the beginning, now was surrounded by numerous others who were not afraid to place their name on his Confession, although they knew it might cost them goods and blood, life and limb.<sup>5</sup>

The Apology of the Augsburg Confession was

published in April, 1531. This document was also from the pen of Melancton. It was written in response to the Catholic Confutation of the Augsburg Confession. The theological advisors of the Emperor had prepared the Confutation. They claimed it refuted all the major points of the Augsburg Confession. On the basis of the Confutation the Emperor demanded that the Lutherans cease and desist from their preaching and practice. In the Apology Melancton showed that the Catholic Confutation failed to refute the Augsburg Confession. He contended that the Catholics and Lutherans had basically different theologies. According to Melancton, the Catholics had a theology of the Law, teaching that man must seek his salvation by his own good life. On the other hand, the Lutheran theology was that of the Gospel, teaching that a person is justified only by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup>

The Smalcald Articles were written as a result of an announcement by Pope Paul III that he intended to convene a Council in 1537 for the "extirpation of the...Lutheran heresy."<sup>7</sup> The Lutherans met at Smalcald to prepare themselves for the Council. At the request of Elector John, Luther prepared the Smalcald Articles for presentation to the assembled theologians at this meeting.<sup>8</sup> In the first part of these articles, Luther treated the doctrine of the Trinity and the two natures of Christ. In the second part he discussed Christ and faith, the mass and invocation of saints, chapters and monasteries and the papacy. In the third part he dealt with sin, law, repentance, the Gospel, Baptism, the Sacrament of the Altar, the keys, confession, excommunication, ordination and vocation, the marriage of priests, the church, how man is justified before God, good works, monastic vows, and human traditions. Appended to the articles by Luther was the Tract



Concerning the Power and Primacy of the Pope. This was drafted by Melancthon. In this tract Melancthon rejected the theory of the Pope's "divine right" to wield the temporal and spiritual swords.<sup>9</sup>

Also included in the Book of Concord are the two Catechisms by Luther, his Large Catechism and his Small Catechism. Both were published in 1529. Both are expositions of the chief parts of the Christian faith--the Ten Commandments, the Apostles Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Sacrament of Baptism, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The Small Catechism is primarily a book of instruction, while the Large Catechism is chiefly a collection of catechetical sermons preached by Luther at Wittenberg.<sup>10</sup>

The final document in the Book of Concord is the Formula of Concord. It is a doctrinal summary in answer to various controversies with groups and individuals both inside and outside the Lutheran Church. These controversies had disturbed German Lutheranism from 1548 to 1578. Schmauk said concerning the writing of the Formula of Concord, "The Augsburg Confession was but a beginning. Though in it all other Protestants had been excluded from participation, and the Evangelical Church of Luther had given its final answer to the old world-order and to Rome, the Church of the Augsburg Confession had not as yet given any answer to the antithesis in Protestantism itself."<sup>11</sup> In the introduction to the Formula of Concord Scripture is confessed as the only rule of faith and practice, and the Lutheran confessions previously adopted are accepted. The various articles of the Formula reject exaggerations on original sin, reject synergism, and uphold grace alone, emphasize the forensic character of justification, treat of faith producing good

works, distinguish between Law and Gospel, deal with the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, elaborate on the personal union and attributes of Christ, show that the whole Christ descended to hell to proclaim His victory, deal with church ceremonies, reject the doctrine of reprobation, teach an election of grace and reject heresies.<sup>12</sup> Bente says that the promoters and authors of the Formula of Concord had as their declared purpose the restoration of Lutheran doctrine. He states, "And in deciding the controversial questions, they certainly did most faithfully adhere to Luther's teaching. The Formula is an exact, clear, consistent, and guarded statement of original Lutheranism, purified of all foreign elements... Surely Luther would not have hesitated to endorse each and all of its articles or doctrinal statements."<sup>13</sup> On June 24, 1580, the Formula of Concord was published as the last of the Lutheran Symbols in the Book of Concord.<sup>14</sup>

The Book of Concord was signed by three electors, two bishops, eighteen princes, twenty-four counts, four barons, thirty-eight cities, and about eight thousand clergy in 1577 and 1578.<sup>15</sup>

Some Lutherans have subscribed to the entire content of the Book of Concord. Others (e.g., some Lutherans in the Norwegian-Danish tradition) have subscribed to only one or several of the documents contained therein.<sup>16</sup> Historically, this was due to conditions and situations in the various countries in which Lutheranism developed.

There are really two periods reflected in the documents contained in the Book of Concord. The Catechisms, the Augsburg Confession, the Apology

of the Augsburg Confession and the Smalcald Articles are from the early period of the Lutheran Reformation. The lengthy Formula of Concord is the result of a long period of theological controversy in Germany. Because the Lutheran Churches in the Scandinavian countries were not directly involved in the German conflicts they never decided to adopt or reject the Formula of Concord or to bind themselves to the decisions of the German church as to what degree of confessional subscription determines true and orthodox Lutheranism. Ordinarily the churches of Scandinavia accepted formally only the Ecumenical Creeds, the Augsburg Confession, and Luther's Small Catechism.<sup>17</sup>

Lutherans also differ among themselves as to the manner of subscription to the confessions.

Some Lutherans understand their subscription to bind them to the doctrinal content of the confessions because this content is drawn from the Bible.<sup>18</sup> This form of subscription is known as quia subscription.

Others subscribe to the confessions only insofar as they believe them to conform to the Scriptures.<sup>19</sup> This kind of subscription is called quatenus subscription. Quatenus subscribers do not always feel bound by the confessions. Some among them have accepted the confessions as having only historical value. They accept the confessions on valid answers to problems faced when they were written. However, they suggest that the church of today may have to give different answers to contemporary problems.<sup>20</sup> Ralph W. Loew has said, "These confessions, or statements of faith, are historic and unifying but not treated as infallible, binding documents."<sup>21</sup> He goes so far as to say, "If

Lutherans require others to adapt the form of the statements of faith which have been the continuing heritage of the Lutheran group, they are untrue to their own confession of faith."<sup>22</sup>

Orthodox Lutherans have insisted on a quia subscription to all of the confessions in the Book of Concord. J. L. Neve wrote, "A Creed should be subscribed to with a quia."<sup>23</sup> He further remarks, "A congregation has a right to know where its minister stands."<sup>24</sup> A quia subscription does not bind the subscriber to retain all the circumstances, terms, illustrations, and arguments that are used in the Symbols. However, the doctrinal content or the substance of the doctrine must be retained just as it is recorded in Scripture and not insofar as private judgment thinks it may agree with Scripture.<sup>25</sup> Seventeenth century theologian John C. Dannhauer said that in the quatenus sense "any man could subscribe to the Koran also."<sup>26</sup> Neve said much the same thing, stating that with merely a quatenus we could even subscribe to the decrees of the (Catholic) Council of Trent.<sup>27</sup> John P. Meyer writes, "A quatenus subscription is no subscription."<sup>28</sup> He quotes Johann Georg Walch as follows, "whoever has taken an oath with a condition is able to grant himself a license to desert the doctrine presented in the confessions without fear whenever it please him."<sup>29</sup> Pieper states that quatenus subscription annuls the Symbols as a Confession of faith.<sup>30</sup> He writes, "The symbols, or Confessions, of the orthodox Church are simply its affirmation of the Scriptural doctrine...This...truth--that the Lutheran Church does not set up in its Symbols a second norm alongside of Scripture--is evidenced by its insistence on the quia form of subscription. It binds its teachers to the doctrine contained in the Confession not because it is doctrine

contained in the Confessions, but because it is the doctrine of Scripture."<sup>31</sup>

Pieper says that several Latin terms have been used to show the relationship "between Holy Scripture and the Symbols of the orthodox church."<sup>32</sup> These terms are norma and norma normata, norma primaria and secundaria. The terms say that the Confessions are a norm, but not absolutely by themselves. They are a derived norm (*secunda quid*) because the doctrines in the Confession are taken from the Bible. Two other terms describe the purpose of the confessional documenta. Scripture is called the norma decisions, or the deciding norm. The Symbols are referred to as the norma discretionis, or distinguishing norm. The Scriptures also decide which doctrines are true, and which are false.<sup>33</sup> Chemnitz declared that, "The Symbols are not something alongside or contrary to Scripture, but are the very marrow of Scripture."<sup>34</sup>

In early American Lutheranism church conferences and synods did not emphasize confessional loyalty. The confessions were often omitted in constitutions. H. M. Muhlenberg tried to rally Lutherans around the Augsburg Confession and other Lutheran Symbols. After his death a trend away from the confessions was influenced by Rationalism. In the nineteenth century some favored the abandonment of the confessions.<sup>35</sup> This was the prevailing spirit in the General Synod which was organized in 1821. The General Synod became an umbrella body for most of the Lutheran groups in the country at the time.

John Tietjen wrote that the Tennessee Conference of the North Carolina Synod objected to the General Synod on theological grounds. They

claimed "that because of its failure to list the Lutheran confessional writings as norms for teaching, it was not a properly Lutheran body."<sup>36</sup> The Tennessee Synod, which grew out of the Tennessee Conference, became the first American group to insist on a strict confessionalism.<sup>37</sup> Members of the Henkel family, who were prominent in the founding and early days of this synod, translated and published the first English edition of the Book of Concord.<sup>38</sup>

In 1844 C. F. W. Walther of St. Louis began publication of a periodical titled "Der Lutheraner." He was motivated in his efforts by his deep interest in re-establishing Lutheran orthodoxy. His writings prepared the way for the formation of the Missouri Synod in 1847. The confessional section of the constitution of the Missouri Synod reads, in part, "The Synod, and every member of the Synod, accepts without reservation: 1. The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice; 2. All the Symbolical Books of The Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God..."<sup>39</sup> Then the constitution lists the titles of all the documents contained in the Book of Concord. F. E. Mayer says, "Many believed that the strict adherence to all the Lutheran Confessions bordered on symbolatry and a return to the 17th-century dogmaticians could produce only a repristination theology and they predicted the early doom of this new synod."<sup>40</sup> Contrary to such expectations the synod grew and expanded very rapidly. This was largely because the practical seminary at Springfield, Ill., prepared consecrated men quickly to minister to the German Lutheran immigrants on the frontier to supplement the supply of candidates prepared at the theoretical St. Louis, Mo. seminary.<sup>41</sup>

When pastors are ordained into the holy ministry in the orthodox bodies of the now defunct Synodical Conference (Missouri Synod, Wisconsin Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Synod and several smaller related bodies), they accept the three ecumenical creeds as faithful testimonies to the truth of the Holy Scriptures. They subscribe to the unaltered Augsburg Confession as a true exposition of the Word of God and a correct exhibition of the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. They also state their belief that the remaining confessions in the Book of Concord are also in agreement with this one Scriptural faith.<sup>42</sup>

The formal principle of Lutheran theology is that the Scripture alone is the source of all doctrine in the church. The supreme and absolute authority of God's Word is a fundamental principle of the Reformation.<sup>43</sup> The Formula of Concord says, "We believe, teach, and confess that the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachers alike must be appraised and judged" (Ep. 1:1).<sup>44</sup> The writers of the Formula then cite two Scripture verses in support of this position. They quote the Psalmist, "Thy Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps. 119:105). They also adduce the words of St. Paul, "Even if an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8). For orthodox Lutherans the authority of Scripture is sole and absolute.<sup>45</sup>

The Missouri Synod authors of Popular Symbolics say that the theology of the Lutheran Church is "Schрифtheologie." They say that "Her theologians are content to labor exclusively in the Scripture."<sup>46</sup> Adolph Hoenecke of the

Wisconsin Synod wrote, "It is the work of theology to learn, establish, confirm, and vindicate the divine truth from Scripture."<sup>47</sup>

According to Robert Preus, "Lutheran orthodoxy teaches that the authority of Scripture is due to its divine origin."<sup>48</sup> Orthodox Lutherans view the Scripture as the inspired, infallible and inerrant Word of God. This position is in agreement with the view of the Lutheran reformers in the sixteenth century. Pieper remarks that the Symbols of the Lutheran Church presuppose verbal inspiration as an unquestionably established doctrine. He says that this is because they use "Scripture" and "Word of the Holy Ghost" as synonymous terms.<sup>49</sup>

While the formal principle of Lutheran theology is that Scripture alone is the source of all doctrine in the church, the curious fact is that in the confessional documents of the Lutheran Church there is no specific article setting forth the Lutheran attitude toward the Bible.<sup>50</sup> There are plausible reasons for this omission.

The sixteenth century saw no need for such an article because the Catholic Church of their day had never questioned the divine inspiration and authority of the Biblical writings. When they engaged in controversy with their Catholic opponents, they could correctly assume that both they and their opponents accepted the Bible as God's Word. The several documents of the Book of Concord take for granted the absolute authority of Scripture. This thought of Scriptural authority runs like a red thread throughout the confessions of the Lutheran Church.<sup>51</sup>

The early Lutheran writings have no special



article of the divine character of the Bible, because their interest was centered primarily in a Christo-centric approach to the Scriptures. In the Lutheran view the main thought of the entire Scripture is that we should believe that through faith in Jesus Christ we have a gracious God. Mayer writes, "In Lutheran theology the believer does not accept the absolute authority of the Scriptures as an a priori truth, but because he has learned to know Christ as his divine Savior; has experienced the power of His Word in the Scriptures upon their heart; and relies implicitly on Christ's own statement concerning the divine character of the Scriptures. It is, therefore, proper to say that the formal principle of Lutheran theology is entirely Christological."<sup>52</sup> The Lutheran position of Scripture alone implies the divine authority, efficacy, perfection or sufficiency, and perspicuity of the Bible, but above all else Jesus Christ is the center of its message. Spitz wrote, "For Luther there is no sola Scriptura without sola Christus."<sup>53</sup>

The material principle of Lutheranism is the doctrine of justification by grace through Jesus Christ. Lutherans view this doctrine as the most important doctrine of Scripture.<sup>54</sup> In a recent document released by the Missouri Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations the authors say, "Lutherans believe and teach that justification by faith is the central doctrine of the Christian faith, the doctrine on which the church stands or falls and therefore by which the church is built and preserved."<sup>55</sup> When Lutherans speak of justification as the material principle of theology, they are saying that for them all theological thinking must begin at this article, center in it, and culminate in it.<sup>56</sup> The Formula of Concord quotes Luther as saying, "Where this

single article remains pure, Christendom will remain pure, in beautiful harmony, and without any schisms. But where it does not remain pure, it is impossible to repel any error or heretical spirit" (SD 111:6).<sup>57</sup> Again Luther said, "This article is the head and cornerstone of the Church, which alone begets, nourishes, builds, preserves, and protects the Church; without it the Church of God cannot subsist one hour."<sup>58</sup> Mayer made the same point another way saying, "The doctrine of justification is, as it were, the strand on which all the pearls of Christian revelation are strung."<sup>59</sup> The central position given to the doctrine of justification in orthodox Lutheranism has affected their approach to all other doctrines of Scripture. It has enabled the church "to employ all theology in a soteriological and doxological way in the proclamation and service of the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>60</sup>

-- Rev. Ernest Bartels

ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Ralph A. Bohlmann, Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Lutheran Confessions (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 9.

<sup>2</sup>J. L. Neve, Churches and Sects of Christendom rev. ed. (Clair, NE: Lutheran Publishing House, 1952), 132.

<sup>3</sup>F. E. Mayer, The Religious Bodies of America (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954) 135-136.

<sup>4</sup>Bente, 22.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 22-23.

<sup>6</sup>Mayer, 136.

<sup>7</sup>Lueker, orig. ed., 633.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Mayer, 136-137.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Schmauk and Benze, cxv.

<sup>12</sup>Lueker, orig ed., 634.

<sup>13</sup>Bente, 250.

<sup>14</sup>Neve, Churches and Sects, 137.

<sup>15</sup>Lueker, orig. ed., 634.

<sup>16</sup>Bohlmann, 19.

<sup>17</sup>Neve, Churches and Sects, 133-134.

<sup>18</sup>Bohlmann, 9.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Loew, 11.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 153.

<sup>23</sup>Neve, Symbolics, 23.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>C. F. W. Walther, "Why Should Our Pastors, Teachers and Professors Subscribe Unconditionally to the Symbolical Writings of Our Church," trans. Alex. Wm. C. Guebert, Concordia Theological Monthly 18 (April 1947), 242.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Neve, Symbolics, 23.

<sup>28</sup>John P. Meyer, Dogmatics Notes 2 vols., 2nd ref. ed. (Mequon, WI: Seminary Mimeographing Committee, 1985), 1:9.

<sup>29</sup>Middler Dogmatics Aids: A listing of passages and translations of Latin and German quotations in Prof. Meyer's Dogmatics trans. HK, DK and JAW (Mewuon, WI: Seminary Bookstore, 1981), 11.

<sup>30</sup>Pieper, 1:354.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 1:358.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Lueker, orig. ed., 634.

<sup>36</sup>John H. Tietjen, Which Way to Lutheran Unity?: A History of Efforts to Unite the Lutherans of America (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966), 18-19.

<sup>37</sup>Lueker, orig. ed., 634.

<sup>38</sup>J. L. Neve, History of the Lutheran Church in America 3d rept. ed. prepared by Williard D. Allbeck (Burlington, IA: The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, 1986), 9.

<sup>40</sup>Mayer, 182.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>The Lutheran Agenda (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), 106-107

<sup>43</sup>Krauth, 14.

<sup>44</sup>Tappert, 465.

<sup>45</sup>Bohlmann, 44.

<sup>46</sup>Theodore Engelder et al, Popular Symbolics: The Doctrines of the Churches of Christendom and of Other Religious Bodies Examined in the Light of Scripture (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934), 3.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Preus, 1:411.

<sup>49</sup>Pieper, 1:266.

<sup>50</sup>Mayer, 140.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 140-141.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 142.

<sup>53</sup>John Warwick Montgomery, ed., Crisis in Lutheran Theology: The Validity and Relevance of Historic Lutheranism vs. Its Contemporary Rivals 2 vols., 2d ed. rev. (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1973), 2:215.

<sup>54</sup>Theses on Justification (n.p.: Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, 1983), 7.

<sup>55</sup>Evangelism and Church Growth with Special Reference to the Church Growth Movement (n.p.: Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, 1987), 39-40.

<sup>56</sup>Mayer, 142.

<sup>57</sup>Tappert, 540.

<sup>58</sup>Pieper, 2:515.

<sup>59</sup>Mayer, 143.

<sup>60</sup>Preus, Post-Reformation, 1:411.

## THE DOCTRINAL APPROACH OF ORTHODOX LUTHERANS

Orthodox Lutherans approach the doctrines of Holy Scriptures soteriologically. This means that all doctrines are interpreted in their relation to redemption and salvation. It is the concept that all that God has revealed in Scripture pertains either directly or indirectly to man's salvation.<sup>1</sup> The soteriological approach endeavors to establish the meaning of each doctrine for our salvation.<sup>2</sup> Abraham Calov held that all revealed doctrines center in this. He said that "divine revelation always has as its aim the salvation of men."<sup>3</sup> This comment by Calov prompted Preus to say, "All revelation is...evangelical and soteriological in purpose."<sup>4</sup> He further advised, "The theologian must be possessed of a holy purpose (sacra intentio), his eyes fixed always on the soteriological goal of all theology."<sup>5</sup>

Viewed in this way, all other doctrines of the Bible are either antecedent or consequent to the doctrine of justification by faith.<sup>6</sup> J. T. Mueller speaks of this in terms of "cause and effect."<sup>7</sup> Pieper says that viewed soteriologically the teachings of Scripture "form an inner compact unity, each doctrine taking its place with what we might call mathematical precision."<sup>8</sup> In Lutheran dogmatic terms this is the ordo salutis. Doctrines which will be considered in this chapter which are antecedent, or preparatory, for the doctrine of justification are the doctrines of God, of man and of Christ. Consequent doctrines, results of justification by faith, which will be discussed in this chapter are the Christian life, the church and the last things.

The soteriological approach to the doctrine of God emphasizes those things in the relationship between God and man that have to do with redemption and salvation. The starting point is the establishing of the need for such redemption and salvation. In this approach God is the first presented as the holy and righteous giver of Law--Law which the individual person cannot keep. Then God is shown to be the provider of the saving Gospel which removes the curse of the Law, bestows forgiveness of sins and assures eternal redemption and salvation.<sup>9</sup> In the removing of the Law's curse and the conferring of the gift of redemption and salvation, all three members of the Triune Godhead are seen as being involved, each in a special way.<sup>10</sup>

It is significant that in his Small Catechism, in which he treats of the chief parts of Christian doctrine, Luther begins with the Law of God, the holy Ten Commandments.<sup>11</sup> He starts with the Law of God to prepare the learner for the Gospel, by showing the seriousness and gravity of the individual's natural situation before the just, righteous and holy God. In this regard the Apology of the Augsburg Confession states that the Law "shows God's wrath" (IV:79).<sup>12</sup> and "accuses and terrifies the conscience" (XII:34).<sup>13</sup> In his Large Catechism Luther says it shows "how angry God is" (I:32).<sup>14</sup> The Law increases the enmity of man against God. The Apology tells us, "While he terrifies us and seems to be casting us into eternal death, human nature cannot bring itself to love a wrathful judging, punishing God" (IV:36).<sup>15</sup> In His Law God insists on perfect obedience, but the Law provides no help toward achieving such obedience. Only by the revelation of God's Law does man realize the greatness of God's wrath, and the hopelessness of his own dreadful condition.<sup>16</sup>

The reason God shows His wrath and accuses and terrifies sinners is so that He may do His real work in their lives. That work is to come to them as they are troubled in their hearts because of their sin, to create faith in Jesus Christ in their hearts, and to bring them the forgiveness, comfort and hope of the Gospel. Melancthon says in the Apology that to terrify is "God's alien work...because God's own proper work is to quicken and console" (XII:51).<sup>17</sup>

The soteriological emphasis regarding God as Triune is that humanity has been redeemed by the One Eternal God, but that each Person of the Godhead has performed some specific phase of this divine work.<sup>18</sup> God the Father, in his deep love for mankind, gave and sent His only-begotten Son to earth to be the world's Savior. God the Son willingly assumed human flesh, lived a perfect life in the stead of all, and suffered and died for the remission of all human sin. God the Holy Spirit, through the message of the grace and forgiveness of God in Christ Jesus, works saving faith in human hearts. Luther writes in the Large Catechism that God, "created us for this very purpose, to redeem and sanctify us" (Creed:64).<sup>19</sup> He then discusses the salvation role of the several members of the Trinity saying that the Father, "has given us his Son and his Holy Spirit, through whom he brings us to himself" (Creed:64).<sup>20</sup> He then continues, "We could never come to recognize the Father's favor and grace were it not for the Lord Jesus Christ...Apart from him we see nothing but an angry and terrible Judge. But neither could we know anything of Christ, had it not been revealed by the Holy Spirit" (Creed:65).<sup>21</sup>

When the doctrine of man is treat soteriologically, two aspects of man are presented. They are



that man is God's creation, and that he is a sinner. The total man, his body as well as his soul, is God's handiwork. In spite of his sin, man is still God's creation. The presence of sin does not obviate the truth that every man is a creature specially created by God. The Formula of Concord says that, "God does not create and make sin in us. Rather, along with the nature which God still creates and makes at the present time, original sin causes man to commit all manner of actual sins in thoughts, desires, words, and deeds. On the other hand, the total person, in both body and soul, has been redeemed by Christ, and has been sanctified by the Holy Spirit."<sup>23</sup>

The soteriological approach to Christian doctrine requires that the person and work of Jesus Christ be properly understood. No finer and more succinct description of His person can be found in Lutheran writing than that of Luther, himself, in the Small Catechism, "I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord."<sup>24</sup> Orthodox Lutherans do not merely view two natures, divine and human, academically. They hold that it was necessary for Jesus Christ to be a true man so that He might be able to take man's place under the Law, and that He might be able to suffer and die in mankind's stead. To save man it was necessary for Him to do and suffer what man should have done and suffered. Man had deserved death by his sins, and God's justice demanded that this penalty be paid in full. As God He could not die, so He became man that He might be able to die, and through His death destroy the devil, who had the power of death. On the other hand, they teach that it was necessary for Him to be

true God so that His fulfilling of the Law might be sufficient for all people, that His life and death might be a sufficient ransom for the redemption of all, and that He might be able to overcome death and the devil for humanity.<sup>25</sup>

Luther briefly and clearly describes the work of the Savior thus, "Jesus Christ...has redeemed me a lost and condemned creature, delivered me and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with silver and gold but with his holy and precious blood and with his innocent sufferings and death, in order that I may be his, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as he is risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity" (SC, Creed:4).<sup>26</sup> According to the Lutheran Confessions, knowledge of this history of Jesus Christ is meaningless unless the purpose of His life, death and resurrection are immediately added.<sup>27</sup>

When Orthodox Lutherans speak of the saving work of Jesus Christ, they distinguish between objective justification and subjective justification.

Objective justification is sometimes called "general justification"<sup>28</sup> or "universal justification."<sup>29</sup> It is defined by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as "the forgiveness of sins both as it has been acquired for the entire human race by Christ's work of obedience in its stead and declared by His resurrection."<sup>30</sup> Objective justification has its basis in the Scriptural teaching of objective reconciliation. The Lord Jesus Christ effected the reconciliation of all people with God. When Christ died, God became

reconciled. God laid His anger aside, because of the ransom for sin brought by Christ. God, at that time, forgave in His heart the sins of the whole world. When Jesus was raised from the dead, all of humanity was objectively declared free from sin. Edward W. A. Koehler says, "There is not a soul in the world which God has not already absolved from all sin."<sup>31</sup> Pieper in his Dogmatics quotes from the Proceedings of the 1883 convention of the Missouri Synod's Southern District. The convention essayist was commenting on II Corinthians 5:19, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." The essayist said, in part, "God has for Christ's sake dismissed from His heart all wrath against men, with whom He was angry because of their sins. God now feels toward men as though they had never offended Him by sinning, as though never a disagreement between God and man had occurred."<sup>32</sup>

Objective justification does not benefit anyone unless it is followed by personal justification. Personal justification is possible only because of objective, or universal, justification.<sup>33</sup> This personal justification is known as subjective justification.

The Missouri Synod's CTCR states that, "Subjective justification or reconciliation is this same forgiveness as it is received, appropriated by, and applied to the individual sinner through God-given faith alone."<sup>34</sup> Justification by faith without works is based upon the justification of the whole world, which was secured by the vicarious satisfaction of Jesus Christ. Pieper says that "All soteriological teaching must be based upon the historical, accomplished

fact of the objective reconciliation, the justification of all sinful mankind."<sup>35</sup>

This good news of reconciliation and justification is provided for all people in the Gospel. The Gospel offers full pardon for every sinner. If there is no sorrow for sin, there can be no saving faith in the forgiveness. Anyone who does not first repent will not care to have forgiveness.<sup>36</sup> As soon as a contrite sinner accepts the pardon by faith, he is justified subjectively.<sup>37</sup> The Apology of the Augsburg Confession states that, "Faith...reconciles and justifies before God the moment we apprehend the promise by faith" (Art. III:212).<sup>38</sup> Faith is the righteousness which avails before God. This is because it is by faith, not because of faith, that Christ's righteousness is imputed as our own. Mayer says, "Man is justified solely by faith for Christ's sake, not by Christ for faith's sake."<sup>39</sup>

Orthodox Lutherans stress that the justification of the individual is by faith alone (*sola fide*). This term excludes all human works from justification. The justification of the sinner is not affected or effected by the good works of man, either before or subsequent to God's act of justification.<sup>40</sup>

The CTCR document quoted above speaks of this faith as "God-given."<sup>41</sup> Other orthodox Lutherans speak of the "bestowal of faith."<sup>42</sup> The creation of faith is wholly and exclusively a work of God. The person coming to faith is merely the passive subject, the recipient of such faith.<sup>43</sup>

The divine agent in creating faith is God the Holy Spirit. Luther says in his Small Catechism, "I believe that by my own reason or strength

I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Ghost has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith" (Creed 6:345).<sup>44</sup>

While the orthodox Lutheran approach to Scripture is that all doctrines are to be interpreted soteriologically, the purpose of the doctrine of soteriology itself (in the strict or narrow sense) is to show how the Holy Spirit applies the salvation which Christ has secured for all mankind to every sinner.<sup>45</sup> This is referred to in several ways. It is variously called the application of salvation,<sup>46</sup> the appropriation of salvation, the way of salvation, and the order of salvation.<sup>47</sup>

When the Holy Spirit works faith in the forgiveness of sins in the heart of the individual sinner, he works through means. Orthodox Lutherans say that these means are the Gospel and the Sacraments, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. While some Lutherans also consider prayer to be a means of grace,<sup>48</sup> orthodox Lutherans reject this teaching.<sup>49</sup> Mayer writes of the Gospel that it, "is not only a promise of a future blessing, but it actually conveys to us the entire Christ with the totality of His gifts as a present possession."<sup>50</sup> These Lutherans say that the Sacraments are sacred acts, "by which God offers, gives, and seals unto us the forgiveness of sins which Christ has earned for us."<sup>51</sup>

The means have a double function. They offer and confer forgiveness, and they produce faith.<sup>52</sup> By creating faith in the heart of a person, the Holy Spirit converts and justifies him.<sup>53</sup> As soon as the sinner accepts the universal pardon

offered by God as his own, this pardon becomes effective for him, and he is personally justified. When he, by the powers of the Holy Spirit, accepts Christ's righteousness, it becomes his own, and he is regarded as righteous before God. He has entered into a state of grace. He is at peace with God. He is assured of his present and final salvation.<sup>54</sup>

Justification produces sanctification. Sanctification is the effect of justification.<sup>55</sup> Pieper writes, "Faith in the forgiveness of sins...produces the new life and its manifestation by sanctification and good works."<sup>56</sup> He quotes the Apostle Paul who said, "the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). Faith moves Christians to perform good deeds, to avoid sin, to love God and their neighbor, to forgive one another, to remain steadfast and victorious in times of trial and difficulty.<sup>57</sup>

Orthodox Lutherans teach that justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ makes the sinner a member of the Christian Church.<sup>58</sup> Pieper says, "Membership in the Church is in every case the result of faith in Christ."<sup>59</sup> They distinguish between the invisible church and the visible church. They teach that the invisible church is made up of the whole number of believers in Christ, and that all believers, and only believers, are members of this church. A. L. Graebner describes the invisible church as "The community of the regenerate, or of all those who believe in Christ and are justified by faith."<sup>60</sup> These Lutherans teach that the church, in its proper sense, does not consist only of popes, bishops, priests and teaching personnel. All true believers in Christ, men, women, and

children, are constituent members of the church. Orthodox Lutherans understand the visible church to be the whole number of those in all the world who use the Word of God and profess the Christian faith. They recognize that among the true Christians in the visible church, there are also hypocrites.<sup>61</sup>

In keeping with the soteriological emphasis, orthodox Lutherans hold that Christ has entrusted His church on earth with the authority to remit and retain sins. Many orthodox Lutherans call this authority the "office of the keys." They have in their catechisms an addition to Luther's Small Catechism consisting of three paragraphs dealing with the "Office of the Keys" and the "Ministry." These paragraphs were first found in the Nuernberger Kinderpredigen, and were added to the catechism about 1560.<sup>62</sup> This teaching is based on the words of Jesus to His followers, as reported by St. John in his Gospel. John says that the Lord Jesus breathed on His disciples and said to them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 30:22, 23). This authority is exercised in the preaching of the Word of God, the administration of the Sacraments, and in the forgiving and retaining of sins. Congregations choose and call men as ministers. These ministers, both in the name of Christ and in the name of the congregation, publicly perform the functions of the office of the keys.<sup>63</sup>

When orthodox Lutherans speak of ministers publicly performing the functions of the office of the keys, the word "publicly" does not mean openly, before the public. It means "in the name of the public." In this case "the public"

is understood to be the local congregation. They teach the royal priesthood of all believers, holding that each believer in Christ is a royal priest in his own right.<sup>64</sup> David Chytraeus, a sixteenth century orthodox Lutheran, said, "In the New Testament...priesthood is not the prerogative of one particular order of men set apart from layfolk by outward anointing, tonsure, dress, and function, but it belongs equally to all Christians and is the common property to all."<sup>65</sup>

A key Scripture verse in this teaching is I Peter 2:9 in which all Christians are called "a royal priesthood." According to this Scripture passage royal priests should "show forth the praises" of God. One way this is done is by joining together with other Christians in a congregation, so that by joining hands they may do together what the Lord has commanded all of them to do. Since all members of the congregation have the same right and duty, no one person may take it upon himself to act in the name of the others.<sup>66</sup> Chytraeus wrote, "Now although the New Testament priesthood is universal, no one in the public assembly of the church should appropriate or discharge on his own authority this right which is the common property of all."<sup>67</sup> Those who function publicly in the church should be properly called and commissioned by the Christian congregation--set apart for this work by the decision and will of the assembly. Such called ministers of Christ, preach the Word of God and administer the Sacraments. Through these means of grace they offer and convey the forgiveness of sins.<sup>68</sup>

Very little mention of the second coming of Christ is made in the Lutheran Confessions.



A brief example is Article XVII of the Augsburg Confession. The positive statement in this article is, "It is also taught among us that our Lord Jesus Christ will return on the last day for judgment and will raise up all the dead, to give eternal life and everlasting joy to believers and the elect but to condemn ungodly men and the devil to hell and eternal punishment" (XVII:1-3).<sup>69</sup> There is, however, an eschatological overtone throughout the Book of Concord. All doctrines are presented in this eschatological setting. The writers of the various documents make their confessions before the world with the consciousness that they must give an account before the judgment seat of Christ.<sup>70</sup> In the last paragraph of the Formula of Concord the subscribers state, "that the present explanation of all the foregoing controverted articles here explained, and none other, is our teaching, belief, and confession in which by God's grace we shall appear with intrepid hearts before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ and for which we shall give an account" (SD XII: 40).<sup>71</sup>

All Christian doctrine is viewed in light of eternity. At the present time the hypocrites are mingled with the believers in the church. When Christ returns, the true members of the church and the hypocrites will be separated forever.<sup>72</sup>

When Jesus comes again and the believers are received body and soul into the glories of heaven then the entire soteriological purpose of all the doctrines of the Holy Scripture will have been achieved, and the Lord Jesus Himself will gather about Himself His entire church for the endless ages of eternity. Graebner writes that at the

time, "the entire Church will enter into her state of glory as the church triumphant."<sup>73</sup>

Orthodox Lutherans consider that their denomination is the true visible church of Christ on earth. In a paragraph entitled "Orthodox Church" Graebner defines the true visible church thus, "The preaching, teaching, and profession, of divine truth in all its purity, and the administration of the sacraments in full accordance with their divine institution are the criteria of the true or orthodox visible church of Christ on earth."<sup>74</sup> These Lutherans believe that upon examination the teachings of the Lutheran Church, as laid down in the Book of Concord, can be demonstrated to be in agreement with the Word of God in every respect.<sup>75</sup> E. W. A. Koehler says of the doctrine of orthodox Lutherans, "As far as the doctrine is concerned, the Lutheran Church is the old Apostolic Church."<sup>76</sup> He echoes the words of Luther, "By God's grace our church is next to and most like that of the apostles."<sup>77</sup> In his book entitled "The True Visible Church" C. F. W. Walther wrote that, "a true visible church in the real strict sense of the term... is only that in which God's word is proclaimed in its purity and the Sacraments are administered according to the Gospel."<sup>78</sup> He proceeds step by step to show why he believes this to be the case with the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and then says, "In short, the Evangelical Lutheran Church has all the essential marks of the true visible church of God on earth, as they are found in no other denomination of another name, it is therefore in no need of any doctrinal reformation."<sup>79</sup> These words, and others like them, may seem to many to reflect arrogance and conceit. In spite of such possible impression they bespeak the deep conviction that

the Holy Scriptures are the very Word of God, and the full confidence that they interpret these Scriptures in the way in which God would have them interpreted. The masthead of Walther's "Der Lutheraner" carried this line, "God's Word and Luther's doctrine pure shall now and evermore endure."<sup>80</sup>

-- Rev. Ernest Bartels

ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Preus, Post-Reformation, 1:187.
- <sup>2</sup>Mayer, 143.
- <sup>3</sup>Preus, Post Reformation, 1:186.
- <sup>4</sup>Ibid., 1:186-187.
- <sup>5</sup>Ibid., 1:218.                      <sup>6</sup>Pieper, 2:404.
- <sup>7</sup>John T. Mueller, Christian Dogmatics: A Handbook of Doctrinal Theology for Pastors, Teachers, and Laymen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934), 320.
- <sup>8</sup>Pieper, 2:398.                      <sup>9</sup>Mayer, 144.
- <sup>10</sup>Ibid., 145.                      <sup>11</sup>Tappert, 342.
- <sup>12</sup>Ibid., 118.                      <sup>13</sup>Ibid., 186.
- <sup>15</sup>Ibid., 112.                      <sup>16</sup>Mayer, 114.
- <sup>17</sup>Tappert, 510.                      <sup>18</sup>Mayer, 145.

19Tappert, 419.

20Ibid.

21Ibid.

22Ibid., 510

23Mayer, 146.

24Tappert, 345.

25Edward W. A. Koehler, A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism Edited by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States with additional Notes for Students, Teachers, and Pastors (River Forest, IL: Koehler Publishing Co., 1946), 142-144.

26Tappert, 345.

27Mayer, 151.

28A. L. Graebner, Outlines of Doctrinal Theology (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1910), 189.

29Edward W. A. Koehler, Summary of Christian Doctrines: A Popular Presentation of the Teachings of the Bible ed rev. ed. (Oakland, CA: Alfred W. Koehler, 1952), 147.

30Justification CTCR, 8.

31E. W. A. Koehler, Summary, 146-147.

32Pieper, 2:348.

33E. W. A. Koehler, Summary, 149.

34Justification CTCR, 8. 35Pieper, 2:398.

36E. W. A. Koehler, Summary, 151.

37Mueller, 367-368.

38Bente, 213.

39Mayer, 154.

40Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Justification CTCR, 8.

<sup>42</sup>Graebner, 183; Mueller, 336.

<sup>43</sup>Graebner, 183.

<sup>44</sup>Tappert, 345.

<sup>45</sup>Mueller, 319.

<sup>46</sup>Pieper, 2:395ff.

<sup>47</sup>Mueller, 319.

<sup>48</sup>Gustav Aulen, The Faith of the Christian Church trans. Eric H. Wahlstrom (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1962), 318.

<sup>49</sup>Pieper, 3:215-216.

<sup>50</sup>Mayer, 158.

<sup>51</sup>E. W. A. Koehler, Catechism, 254.

<sup>52</sup>Mueller, 319.

<sup>53</sup>Pieper, 2:402.

<sup>54</sup>Mueller, 319-320; Pieper, 2:403, 406.

<sup>55</sup>Mueller, 320.

<sup>56</sup>Pieper, 3:410.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 412.

<sup>58</sup>Mueller, 320.

<sup>59</sup>Pieper, 2:413.

<sup>60</sup>Graebner, 205.

<sup>61</sup>E. W. A. Koehler, Catechism, 194-195, 198.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 275.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 275, 279.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 280.

<sup>65</sup>John Warwick Montgomery, trans. and ed., Chytraeus on Sacrifice: A Reformation Treatise in Biblical Theology (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 89.

<sup>66</sup>E. W. A. Koehler, Catechism, 280.

<sup>67</sup>Montgomery, Chytraeus, 98.

<sup>68</sup>E. W. A. Koehler, Catechism, 280-281.

<sup>69</sup>Tappert, 38.

<sup>70</sup>Mayer, 175.

<sup>71</sup>Tappert, 636.

<sup>72</sup>Mayer, 176.

<sup>73</sup>Graebner, 222.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 210.

<sup>75</sup>E. W. A. Koehler, Catechism, 201.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 202.

<sup>77</sup>C. F. W. Walther, The True Visible Church  
trans J. T. Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia  
Publishing House, 1961), 135.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 134.

<sup>80</sup>W. G. Polack, Fathers and Founders  
(St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938),  
41.