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# Lutheran Synod Quarterly

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# LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY

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## Foreword

In this Christmastide we are filled with joy and gladness as we behold the great mystery of the holy incarnation, a great and mighty wonder. The Child in the manger is the almighty God. He united Himself with our flesh so that we might partake of His divine glory. All that the first Adam lost in the fall, the second Adam, great David's greater Son, restored at Bethlehem— and more, eternal life in heaven. This is the point of the sermon on II Samuel 7:12-16 which has this theme: *Praise be to David's Son*.

The Synodical Conference was a bulwark of orthodoxy in this country and throughout the world. Its demise was a very sad event for confessional Lutheranism. It is interesting to note that twice in its history the Norwegian Synod joined the Synodical Conference. It was a charter member of the organization at its founding in 1872. This history can be found in the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* Vol. 39, No. 4, pp. 339-354. The second time the Norwegian Synod joined the conference was in 1920. This is the subject matter of the essay by Rev. Craig Ferkenstad which is entitled *The Continuation of the Synodical Conference 1918-1955*. Rev. Ferkenstad is pastor of Norseland Lutheran Church, St. Peter, and Norwegian Grove Lutheran Church, Gaylord, Minnesota.

Many questions have been raised concerning the anointing with oil in James 5:13-18. On the basis of this text the Roman Catholic Church has developed a special sacrament called the Sacrament of Anointing or Extreme Unction. Also many Pentecostals anoint the sick in their midst. The essay entitled *An Exegetical and Historical Study of Anointing with Oil* is a study of this scriptural text. The author of the essay is Rev. Mark Rogers, who is pastor of Pinehurst Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Johann Gerhard was one of the important seventeenth century theologians. In fact he was the greatest of these

dogmaticians. It is said that Gerhard was third (Luther, Chemnitz, and Gerhard) in the series of Lutheran theologians and after him there was no fourth. The paper *Johann Gerhard, Theologian and Pastor* outlines his life and gives an overview of his important writings, many of which have been recently published or republished in English.

This *Quarterly* also includes a book review.

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## Sermon on II Samuel 7:12-16

by Gaylin R. Schmeling

Prayer: O Father, we thank You for the mystery of mysteries, the wonder of wonders, the miracle of the incarnation. Your Son became poor and lowly to raise us to His divine glory, eternal life in heaven. Through Him we are Your sons and daughters. Give us the strength to live as Your children and finally be with You forever in paradise. We ask it in the name of the Christ Child. Amen.

*Text: When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever. (II Samuel 7:12-16)*

During the early part of his reign, King David had to defeat many enemies. After the Lord gave him rest from all his foes, as he stood at the peak of his power he conceived a plan to build a temple for the ark of the Lord. Yet God prevented him from carrying out his plan and, through Nathan the Prophet, told David that His tent or tabernacle had been good enough all these years and would be good enough now too. Part of the reason David was not allowed to build the temple, as his son Solomon later did, was that David wanted to build the temple to repay God for His grace. This idea was wrong. Neither David nor anyone of us can

repay God for our salvation. God then speaks the words of our text to show that David's salvation, and ours, too, does not depend on anything in us, but rather on the Lord's Messiah. Let us then consider this theme: **Praise Be To David's Son.**

**I. He has united Himself with flesh.** God said to David, *"When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and He will be my son."* (II Samuel 7:12-14) This Son was not Solomon even though he built a temple, for God was not his father. Rather, this prophecy refers to that Son of David who was also God's Son, namely, Jesus Christ Our Lord.

This is one of the Old Testament prophecies which clearly reveal the person of the Messiah, whose birth we will celebrate in just a few days. Other prophecies speak of Him as the Seed of the woman, as One from Abraham's offspring, and as the Root of David. This He indeed was. He was born of a human mother as are all men. He was born a Jew, a descendant of Abraham, and He was born in Bethlehem, David's city. He became hungry and tired as any mortal human child. He grew up like any other individual. He was truly human like you and me.

At the same time this text says, *"I (God) will be his father, and he will be my son."* (II Samuel 7:14) Not only would the Messiah be of David's descent but the Almighty God would be His Father. Paul explains that from the Israelites *"are the patriarchs and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised."* (Romans 9:5) The child born in the stall wasn't only a man, but also true God. The one who pushed forth from the blessed Virgin's womb was the Almighty. This is the great mystery of the incarnation. God became man. The second person of the Holy Trinity inseparably united Himself with flesh in the Virgin's womb. When the Babe

was born, the Almighty God was born. Therefore we may indeed declare with the whole Ancient Church that the humble Virgin is the mother of God because from her womb God was born.

Who then is this baby in the manger? He is Jesus Christ, both true God and man in one person. As God He is from everlasting to everlasting. He created the world. He guided the Old Testament prophets. He spoke to Moses from the burning bush. There never was when He was not, contrary to the Arian heresy and that of the Jehovah's Witnesses today who say that He had a beginning. As true man, He is of the flesh of Mary, our human brother. This unity between God and man in Him will always continue. He will never lay down the humanity.

Now we may be thinking, I knew all that before, why do we have to hear it again? Why? So that we can differentiate between what the Bible says about Jesus and all the sentimental nostalgia we are hearing this Christmas season. At this time of the year everyone has something nice to say about the Christ Child, especially when His birthday makes possible a social excuse for drunken parties, gluttony, vacations, and just plain sinful self-indulgence, all in the name of the Messiah's birth. The less crass and more dignified will admit that He was a great teacher, like Mohammed, and maybe even the greatest moral teacher that ever lived. But that is as far as they will go. He was a man and no more! When Jesus' person is so understood, then all the meaning in Christmas is lost. Then it is no more important than celebrating Lincoln's or Washington's birthday. It is no wonder that the average American is more concerned about Santa Claus than the Christ Child. We aren't, however, celebrating the birth of a mere man, but the birth of the Almighty. Christmas, indeed, has real meaning for us.

## **II. He became flesh so that we might partake of the divine.**

The ancient fathers said that He became man so that we might become as God. (*Deus facturus qui homines erant, homo factus est qui Deus erat.* [Sermon 191.1 Augustin]) St. Peter said,



*“He (Christ) has given us His very great and precious promises so that through them we may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”* (II Peter 1:4)

In Adam’s fall all was lost. We became wicked and sinful. This body made to live forever was doomed to rot in the grave, and our soul was sentenced to the eternal fires of hell. Thus in the mystery of the incarnation the second Adam came, the Seed of the woman, who through His divinity brought new life for man. He took upon Himself our flesh made from dust, so that through unity with His divinity we might be as He is, enjoying everlasting life. He became poor and lowly to raise us to His divine glory, eternal life in heaven. All that the first Adam lost in the fall, the second Adam restored in Himself. For us he lived a perfect and harmonious life with God and man, and He took upon Himself our sin and corruption to restore all men to the innocence and holiness of the first Adam at the creation. Our text says, *“When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men.”* (II Samuel 7:14) Christ never committed a sin, but He took our sin upon Himself. On the cross, the Father saw Him covered with all the filth and mess of human iniquity. Thus He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities and by His stripes we are healed.

As the representative man, He broke the chains of death and came forth triumphant from the grave with a glorious heavenly body, showing that this is how we will be because He became like us. His resurrection prefigures the restoration of all on the Last Day. Now in Him all is made new. In Baptism this renewal, recreation, or rebirth was brought to us. We were born in Adam’s sin, but in Baptism we were united with Christ’s death and resurrection and we arose from the grave, or were born again, because faith in the Savior was worked in our hearts. Baptism assured us that we are now partakers of the divine, for this very body which I now possess will live on forever with God. He became as we are in the incarnation so that we might become as

He is in the resurrection.

Our Lutheran forefathers called the Lord's Supper the food of immortality. He gave us His body and blood so that within us we have the living hope of the resurrection of our bodies and eternal glory. He, who took upon Himself our flesh and blood in the incarnation, has instituted a Supper in which we receive His own flesh and blood that we may be conformed to His divine nature. Then think of the wonderful message of Christmas. He became poor and lowly, born in a manger, so that we could share in His divine life and glory.

One final thing the Father tells us about the Messiah, "*He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever.*" (II Samuel 7:13) Solomon built a great temple to God in Jerusalem, but his was only a type of God's true temple, for that first temple was destroyed when Jerusalem fell. The true temple is one not made with hands, but built by the Messiah Himself. St. Paul explains, "*For we are the temple of the living God.*" (II Corinthians 6:16) All who have been united with Christ by faith and keep that faith alive through Word and Sacrament are part of the true living temple of God. Concerning us God says, "*I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God and they will be My people.*" (II Corinthians 6:16)

Then as we await the feast of the Nativity, just think of the honor and glory that God, through the mystery of the incarnation, has heaped upon us creatures of dust. He became as we are, enduring poverty, shame, and death so that we might become as He is enjoying resurrection and everlasting joy and glory. Yes, He made us partakers of the divine so that God calls us His people. In fact, He says to us, "*I will be a father to you and you will be My sons and daughters.*" (II Corinthians 6:18) May we always remain His children by receiving Him in Holy Word and Blessed Sacrament. Amen.

# The Continuation of the Synodical Conference 1918-1955

*by Craig A. Ferkenstad*

In 1920, for the second time in forty-eight years, the Norwegian Synod joined the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America.

The Synodical Conference had been organized by the Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin, Norwegian, Illinois, and Minnesota synods.

In 1883 the old Norwegian Synod had withdrawn its membership from the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America, of which it had been a charter member since 1872, in order to try to put its own house in order in the turmoil of the great controversy over the doctrine of divine election which wracked the Lutheran world in the 1880s. Though the withdrawal of membership had not meant cessation of fellowship, a return to the Synodical Conference was never effected ...<sup>1</sup>

In 1917 the Norwegian Synod entered into the merger which formed The Norwegian Lutheran Church of America (after 1946, The Evangelical Lutheran Church—ELC). The minority of the Norwegian Synod, considering themselves the rightful spiritual successors of the Norwegian Synod, reorganized in 1918 as The Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church (since 1958 the Evangelical Lutheran Synod—ELS). In 1919 the synod applied for membership in the Synodical Conference, and the next year the following resolution was adopted unanimously by that federation:

- Resolved, That the Norwegian Synod of the Ameri-

can Evangelical Lutheran Church [ELS] be accepted as a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America.

- That we welcome these brethren with great joy, encourage them in their fight for the truth, and wish them God's richest blessings for the future.
- To our great sorrow we are compelled to state that "The Synod for the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of America" [old Norwegian Synod], by holding fast to the *Opgjøer* [sic] and its union with the other two Norwegian synods in "The Norwegian Lutheran Church of America," has severed its bond of faith and church-fellowship with the Synodical Conference."<sup>2</sup>

The existence of the Norwegian Synod (Evangelical Lutheran Synod) today is in large part due to the assistance of the Synodical Conference. In those final days leading to the Norwegian "Merger of 1917," the Synodical Conference elected a committee to meet with the leaders of the old Norwegian Synod, but were denied a hearing. Dr. Franz Pieper said that the mandate from the Synodical Conference was to meet with anyone from the Norwegian Synod who wished to meet with it. As a result, a meeting was held with the "minority" at the Hotel Aberdeen in St. Paul. Rev. J. Moldstad writes: "The Synodical Conference committee was constantly with us and advised us." One important question was whether to continue as a separate synod or to join the Missouri Synod as a district. Rev. Moldstad says: "The committee advised us to rebuild the Norwegian Synod on the old foundation."<sup>3</sup>

No doubt it was a joyful day when the Norwegian Synod again was received into the Synodical Conference. Throughout the years prior to the Norwegian "merger," it was especially the Missouri Synod which had stood beside the "minority" and encouraged them in their defense of the truth. Several years later, Rev. Justin Petersen would write:

How great indeed is our debt to our Missouri brethren, not only with respect to the enlightenment and strengthening given us in the afore-mentioned doctrines, but also in other matters both of doctrine and practice ... How often have not our Missouri Synod brethren befriended us of the Norwegian Synod both in word and deed! How loyally they stood by us in the early eighties and later during the union movement which culminated in the Merger of 1917. How often have not our Missouri brethren opened their schools and churches, their homes and their hearts, to us of the Norwegian Synod. How great is our accumulated debt, our personal debt, our debt as pastors, teachers, and lay-people, our debt as congregations, and as a Synod to our dear brethren of the Missouri Synod! <sup>4</sup>

In 1918 the Synodical Conference consisted of four synods who were strongly united in fellowship on the basis of confession and faith. Here was the pinnacle of confessional Lutheranism.

During the ensuing years, the Synodical Conference sought to continue to achieve its aim and purpose which was stated in its constitution:

The external expression of the spiritual unity of the respective synods; mutual strengthening in belief and confession; furtherance of unity in teaching and practice, and the elimination of potential or threatening disturbance thereof; common activity for mutual aims; the endeavor to fix the limits of the synods according to territorial boundaries, provided that language does not separate them; the consolidation of all Lutheran synods of America into a single, faithful, devout American Lutheran Church. <sup>5</sup>

### *I. Common activity for mutual aims*

Common activity for mutual aims consisted especially of mission work. Already in 1877 mission work had been started

by the Synodical Conference among African-Americans in the United States. This work was prospering in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Congregations eventually were formed in Arkansas, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia; along with additional black congregations in Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. In 1946 the Synodical Conference resolved that synodical districts should receive into membership such Negro congregations as are in their territorial areas.

In 1903 two colleges were opened with the purpose of training black pastors. Immanuel College was opened in Greensboro, North Carolina. The Rev. Nils Bakke (of the Norwegian Synod) was the professor of Immanuel College. He continued to serve in this mission field until his death in 1921. Luther College was also opened in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1903. The Synodical Conference was soon convinced, however, that two such theological schools were too many. The seminary department of Luther College was closed in 1910 and the school continued as a preparatory and teacher training school. The school was finally closed at the end of the 1931-32 school year.

In 1935 the Synodical Conference considered closing also Immanuel College and transferring the training of black pastors to Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Illinois. The president and workers of Immanuel college rallied to the support of the school. In 1937 the Missouri Synod Board of Directors replied:

The questions submitted by the Executive Secretary of the Mission Board of the Synodical Conference at the last meeting ... were again taken up and it was declared as our opinion that we would advise against the arrangement of opening our colleges to colored students and therefore the closing of the Greensboro college would be out of the question as long as no other provisions are made for the training of colored workers. <sup>6</sup>

Immanuel college continued its existence, but died a lingering death

and finally closed in 1961.

In 1916 the Synodical Conference began work in Alabama, and by 1922 Alabama Lutheran Academy was opened in Selma, Alabama. This school grew rapidly. A teachers' training department was added in 1947, for a report had been given to the Synodical Conference Convention which pointed out that in Alabama over forty percent of the day school teachers in the Black mission had received no training beyond their four years of high school at the academy.

The Negro mission grew slowly, but it served a great purpose in the spread of the Kingdom. "When Rosa Young (1890-1971), the daughter of a Methodist minister, needed support for the school she had opened, she was advised by the great Black educator, Booker T. Washington, to contact the Board of Colored Missions of the Synodical Conference. According to Young, Washington said that these Lutherans 'were doing more for the colored race than any other denomination he knew of.'"

As a portion of the joint work of the Synodical Conference there were two periodicals which furthered the work of black missions in the United States. *Die Missionstaube* ("The Mission Dove") began to appear in 1879 and was read by white readers until 1933. Black readers read the *Lutheran Pioneer*, which also was published from 1879 until 1933, when it was replaced by the *Missionary Lutheran*.

Foreign mission work by the synods constituting the Synodical Conference was very limited. Mission work in the nineteenth century was basically limited to reaching individuals from one's homeland who had immigrated to the United States. Prior to 1936 the only foreign mission work done by the synods of the Synodical Conference was in India (1895) and Brazil (1901) by the Missouri Synod, which also took over a field in China (1917); the "old" Norwegian Synod had conducted mission work in China (1890) and among the Eskimos in Alaska (1894); the Wisconsin Synod had supported mission work among the Apaches in Arizona (1893).

A "convention resolution from Negroes assembled at Concord, North Carolina, in 1925" suggested the idea of carrying the Gospel to Africa.<sup>8</sup> The Mission Board of the Synodical Conference resolved to begin work in Africa. Places considered were French Equatorial Africa, Liberia, Belgian Congo, and Angola. In 1930 an African Missions Committee was appointed.

Meanwhile, in 1928 a young man by the name of Jonathan Udo Ekong was sent by his people in Ibesikpo (Calabar Province, Nigeria, Africa) to study for the ministry. He eventually enrolled at Immanuel Lutheran College (Greensboro, North Carolina). Through him the people in Nigeria established contact with the Synodical Conference. Pleas came to the Synodical Conference asking for work to be started among the Ibibios. In 1934 they wrote:

We have informed the government officials in Nigeria about your coming into Ibesikpo as missionaries of the Gospel of Christ. They have given their approval, and no objection is offered by them. We hope that when the Lutheran Synodical Conference will hold its convention in 1934, they will give earnest consideration to the Ibesikpo appeal, and be ready to bring the Good News into our land. We have waited and waited patiently to see you coming to us. Do not despise our tears. We have waited so many years to have you come.<sup>9</sup>

A survey team of three men was sent to Nigeria; it made its report to the four synods the following year. Since the Norwegian Synod had already met, the president of the Synodical Conference "consulted with our synod president [C.A. Moldstad], who assured him that he was in favor of going ahead with the mission."<sup>10</sup> Dr. and Mrs. Heinrich Nau were sent to Africa, and final approval was given by the Norwegian Synod in 1936 with the words: "Resolved, that we lend our whole-hearted support to the Nigeria Mission."<sup>11</sup> We can note that Rev. & Mrs. Carl Rusch entered the field in 1945 and Rev. & Mrs. Paul Anderson arrived



in Africa in 1946. Financial support was given to these mission endeavors according to the proportionate communicant membership of the synods in the Synodical Conference.

As was noted above, mission publications had been distributed by the Synodical Conference. A major undertaking was started in 1929 when the Missouri Synod asked her sister synods of the Synodical Conference to cooperate in the publication of a "common English hymnal." An Intersynodical Committee on Hymnology and Liturgics was organized in 1930. Serving as representatives of the Norwegian Synod were Rev. N.A. Madson and Rev. C. Anderson and later Rev. A. Harstad. Previously, the synods had used separate English hymnbooks. The Norwegian Synod used the *Lutheran Hymnary* (1913). The Wisconsin Synod used the *Book of Hymns* (1920). The Missouri and Slovak synods used the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-book* (1889). The result of this work was the 1941 publication, by "the Synods constituting The Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America," of *The Lutheran Hymnal*. This was followed by *The Lutheran Liturgy* (1943), *Music for the Liturgies of The Lutheran Hymnal* (1944), *The Lutheran Lectionary* (1945), *The Lutheran Agenda* (1948), and *The Pastor's Companion* (1950).

It is interesting to note that whereas a report about the hymnbook was made to the synods in 1938, and a final report in 1939, not a word about either of these appears in the synod reports of the Norwegian Synod. The only reference to the new hymnbook comes in 1941 when the Norwegian Synod president (H. Ingebritson) disappointedly reports:

The new Synodical Conference Hymnbook is finished and on the market. We miss many of our favorite hymns in the new book. It has been suggested that the members of our hymn book committee confer with the publishers, asking for an edition for our Synod with an appendix containing some of our hymns. <sup>12</sup>

Several joint activities by congregations of the Synodical Conference were also conducted at the regional and local levels: elementary and high schools, hospitals, homes for the aged, mission projects, and radio programs. Bethesda Lutheran Home (Watertown, Wisconsin) is one example of such joint ventures.

There also was an early call to unite the seminaries of the various synods. From 1870 to 1878 students of the Wisconsin Synod were trained in St. Louis. The Slovak Synod and the (reorganized) Norwegian Synod made use of the Missouri Synod seminaries for the training of their pastors; but in 1945, no doubt because of theological concerns, the Norwegian Synod declared "that its theological students shall attend the theological seminary of the Wisconsin Synod at Thiensville."<sup>13</sup> Bethany Lutheran Seminary was opened the following year.

## ***II. The endeavor to fix the limits of the synods according to territorial boundaries, provided that language does not separate them; [and] the consolidation of all Lutheran synods of America into a single, faithful, devout American Lutheran Church***

In 1932 a call for union among the synods of the Synodical Conference was issued by the Missouri Synod. In earlier years the Synodical Conference had seen other efforts at organic unity:

In 1876, a recommendation was made to unite all congregations within a given state into one organization (state synods); and the Illinois Synod merged with the Illinois District of Missouri Synod in 1880.

In 1882 the Concordia Synod of Pennsylvania and Other States

joined the Synodical Conference and merged with the Missouri Synod in 1886 (This synod was formed by a minority of the Ohio Synod when it withdrew from the Synodical Conference).

The Michigan Synod joined the Synodical Conference in 1892 when it united with the Wisconsin and Minnesota synods to form the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and Other States.

The English Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri and Other States (English Synod) joined the Synodical Conference in 1890 and became a district of the Missouri Synod in 1911.

The Evangelical Lutheran District Synod of Nebraska and Other States joined the Synodical Conference in 1906 and became a district of the Wisconsin Synod in 1917.

The Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized in 1902 and joined the Synodical Conference in 1908.

A call for organic union was made in 1914. This proposal did not meet with the approval of the Wisconsin Synod because of the pending amalgamation of the Wisconsin Synod itself.

By the time of the dissolution of the Synodical Conference there also were numerous “overseas brethren” who constituted comparatively small church bodies in foreign countries. While they were not formally members of the Synodical Conference, they shared a common confession of faith. They were found in Germany, Australia, Brazil, Argentina, England, Canada, India, Japan, and other places (a few of these probably districts of the Missouri Synod). During meetings of the Synodical Conference during 1955-63, it became apparent “how much the stalwart confession of the Synodical Conference meant to others throughout the world.”<sup>14</sup>

When the 1932 call for union was issued by the Missouri Synod, only the Norwegian Synod furnished names of the members of its committee. Disapproval of the 1932 proposal for union came from the Slovak and Norwegian synods because they felt "the present language conditions did not permit organic union on their part."<sup>15</sup> But one must wonder if the actual concern had to do with something far greater.

***III. The external expression of the spiritual unity of the respective synods; mutual strengthening in belief and confession; furtherance of unity in teaching and practice; and the elimination of potential or threatening disturbance thereof***

The Synodical Conference had been a staunch upholder of the truth of Scripture. The mutual strengthening in the faith was one of the reasons for the existence of the organization. It was as St. Paul wrote: "If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:1-4). The members of the Synodical Conference had agreed, in their constitution, that members could be admitted to the conference only by unanimous resolution; and none of the synods could enter into official church relations with other church bodies without the agreement of all the represented synods. These concerns dominated matters in the years following 1935.

In that year the United Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church each extended invitations for discussions which would lead to closer relations. Of the four Syn-

odical Conference synods only the Missouri Synod accepted these invitations. The Norwegian Synod declined and responded the next year with the synodical essay and pamphlet *Unity, Union and Unionism*. The Synodical Conference approved the essay in 1938.

The Missouri Synod had adopted the *Brief Statement* in 1932. Six years later they reaffirmed their *Brief Statement* along with the ALC's doctrinal *Declaration*. The ALC, however, accepted the Missouri Synod's *Brief Statement* in light of their own *Declaration* and felt that it was not necessary to agree on "non-fundamental" doctrines. The Missouri Synod, however, further expressed a desire to work for full agreement and required that "this whole matter, including the *Declaration*, . . . must be submitted for approval to other synods constituting the Synodical Conference."<sup>16</sup>

The other synods of the Synodical Conference objected. The *Declaration* was a flawed document concerning the doctrine of justification which said: "to this end He also purposes to justify those who have come to faith." The Missouri Synod was counseled to seek one single document as the basis for fellowship, and, since there was no genuine agreement between the bodies, to suspend these fellowship discussions. In 1940 the Missouri Synod heeded this call to the point of instructing its committee to formulate one document which would be in doctrinal harmony with the *Brief Statement*. The Synodical Conference appealed to the Missouri Synod not to enter into fellowship with the ALC until the matters objected to by the other members of the Synodical Conference had been clarified and the whole matter presented once more to the Synodical Conference.

An effort to combine the contents of the *Brief Statement* and the *Declaration* was attempted. It was presented to the ALC in 1946 and was declared unsatisfactory. The following year the Missouri Synod made a similar declaration, again reaffirmed the *Brief Statement*, and instructed its committee to continue the discussions with the ALC.

Further negotiations resulted in *The Common Confession*. Part I of *The Common Confession* was adopted by both the Missouri Synod and the ALC in 1950. Part II was adopted by the ALC in 1954; and the Missouri Synod recognized it “as a statement in harmony with the Sacred Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions” but declared it to be no longer a “functioning union document.”<sup>17</sup> By that time the Norwegian Synod was on the verge of suspending fellowship with her older sister.

The Norwegian Synod had a high regard for the brethren in her sister-synod of the Synodical Conference. The 1938 synodical *Address in Commemoration of the Saxon Immigration* expressed the desire to have:

A humble, sympathetic understanding of the position and problems of our brethren. We shall be quick to praise, and slow to find fault. We shall not act like little dogs that constantly bark and rant at every shadow. We shall look for the bright and not the shady side. Our very special position as members of the Synodical Conference and especially of the Norwegian Synod makes it so easy to develop the holier-than-thou attitude. We should shun suspicion and carping criticism as the devil himself and ever be mindful also in synodical relations of the eighth commandment which admonishes us to excuse our neighbor, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything.

This does not mean, of course, that we never must criticize, admonish and, if need be, even rebuke. Such spirit is not evidence of true love. We must not regard the Missouri Synod as an aggregation of saints perfected in themselves—though her doctrine, and our doctrine, is perfect—for wherever you have the human equation, there you have sinners with depraved and deceitful hearts, the fountain-head of all evil, ready to flow over at any time. No, in this sad sense the perfect Church is not here; the perfect Church is yonder,...

God bless the Missouri Synod! May she ever remain faithful to God's Word and Luther's doctrine pure! May

she ever "walk in the old paths"! May she ever hold aloft the banner—the *Word* alone, *Grace* alone, and *Faith* alone! May no strange fires ever burn on her sacred altars! <sup>18</sup>

Several other items, all of which touch upon the doctrine of church fellowship, had transpired in the meantime. In 1935 the Missouri Synod authorized the *Armed Services Commission*. At that time the Missouri Synod stated: "We have been warned, on the one hand, of the difficulties attaching to this service, and, on the other hand, we have been assured by brethren that our principles will be honored by the Government." <sup>19</sup>

The Missouri Synod's position on prayer fellowship began to change from the view always held by the Synodical Conference. This action was protested by the Norwegian Synod when the 1942 convention essay centered on *Christian Prayer*. By 1944 a distinction was being made between "prayer fellowship" and "joint prayer."

The following year, forty-four prominent pastors in the Missouri Synod signed a document (*Chicago Statement*) supporting such a distinction in prayer fellowship. The Norwegian Synod again protested and "repeatedly asked the Missouri Synod in committee meetings either to require the signers of the Statement to retract or to exercise discipline over against them." <sup>20</sup>

In 1944 the Missouri Synod changed its view in regard to the Boy Scouts by permitting its congregations to sponsor troops, saying "there is no Boy Scout authority which supersedes the authority of the local pastor and the congregation in any phase of the program affecting the spiritual welfare of Lutheran men and boys in scouting." <sup>21</sup>

Then there was also the Missouri Synod's *co-operation in externals*, by which the synod worked with other groups, such as the National Lutheran Council, in maintaining service centers for military personnel, welfare agencies, youth and student activities, etc. The Norwegian Synod responded with the 1949 con-

vention essay: *Cooperation in External*s.

Finally, in 1954 “our Norwegian Synod sent an urgent and prayerful plea to [the Synodical Conference], as a court of last appeal, to petition the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to take some action to remedy these many offenses.”<sup>22</sup> Dr. A. Grumm, second Vice President of Missouri Synod, attended our 1955 convention and was given the floor to speak on doctrinal matters and to answer questions. The action of the synod, on the following day, states:

We feel, therefore, that, as matters now stand, further negotiations by committees will be fruitless; that an impasse has been reached in our fraternal relations with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod; and that further negotiations will result in indifferentism and in compromise of Scriptural doctrine and practice. At this point we can only say that we have testified to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as best we know how and have tried in many ways for many years to preserve the unity in confession and practice which we enjoyed with it for so many years....

Since the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has shown us in its official proceedings that it no longer walks in the old ways with us, we must declare that the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has broken the bond that has bound us together for 100 years. The time has come when we must testify by action against the unionism which has become so common in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in recent years...<sup>23</sup>

Then follow the resolutions of the suspension of fellowship. On Friday, June 23, 1955 this action was declared unanimous after a rising vote of 65 to 10.

In 1955 the Synodical Conference was now in a sad state. It consisted of four synods: three in mutual fellowship with each other and a fourth having suspended fellowship with one of the others. There was joint work being conducted in mission fields



both in the United States and in Africa; yet doctrinal concerns were plaguing the constituent bodies. The ELS was soon to say: “the thing that in the past set [the Synodical Conference] apart from all other Lutheran groups, a genuine one-ness [sic] in conservative Lutheran theology, has long departed.”<sup>24</sup>

#### *IV. Postscript*

As a result of the Norwegian Synod action, the following year the Synodical Conference formed a Joint Committee to draw up a common doctrinal statement in an effort to restore unity. Although some progress was made, an impasse arose in the discussion of the doctrine of fellowship. Within the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (the Norwegian Synod had changed its name in 1958) there were calls for resignation from the Joint Committee and also from the Synodical Conference.

Finally, in 1961 the ELS memorialized the Synodical Conference to dissolve itself. When this did not occur, the ELS in 1963 resolved to withdraw from membership in the Synodical Conference. The Wisconsin Synod, having terminated fellowship with the Missouri Synod in 1961, did likewise the same year. Immanuel Lutheran College and Seminary was closed and its work assumed by other Missouri Synod schools. Alabama Lutheran Academy has become known as Concordia College and is administered by the Missouri Synod. The remaining black congregations were absorbed by the Southern District of the Missouri Synod; and the Missouri Synod assumed full responsibility for the mission field in Nigeria. The Slovak Synod was to merge with the Missouri Synod in 1971. In 1967 the Synodical Conference was dissolved, as it served “no useful purpose.”

The Synodical Conference served a great purpose in the work of our Redeemer’s kingdom. Here, for many years, the Means of Grace were preserved and the Word was preached in its purity. Through its earthly efforts, souls were won for the king-

dom. Even though the days of the Synodical Conference have ended, we yet strive for the furtherance of that same kingdom of the same Savior. The words which Rev. Joseph Petersen spoke upon the occasion of the centennial of the Synodical Conference yet hold true:

For our abiding comfort we know from Scripture that the Church of Christ will survive. God will execute His plans in the world and in His Church despite the machinations of sinful men. So we march forward in the Lord with trust and confidence. He has armed us with the weapons to combat the evil and preserve the message of salvation. As we endeavor, by the grace of God, to teach and to proclaim the word faithfully in these latter days, let us turn from all reliance on our own strength and look to that Word, which is the theme of our Convention: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Zech 4:6).<sup>25</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> *Built on the Rock*, Mankato, Minnesota: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1992, page 71.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings of the Synodical Conference, 1920*, page 23; quoted in Theodore Aaberg, *A City Set on a Hill*, Mankato, Minnesota: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1968, page 135.

<sup>3</sup> John A. Moldstad, *Lest We Forget*, in *Lutheran Sentinel*, 26 (April 27, 1943) 8, page 115.

<sup>4</sup> Justin Petersen, *Address in Commemoration of the Saxon Immigration*, The Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, Synod Report, 1938, page 55.

<sup>5</sup> Richard C. Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966, page 196.

<sup>6</sup> Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Board of Directors Minutes, December 20, 1937; quoted in *Training of African-American Church Workers in the LCMS/Synodical Conference*, by George J. Gude in *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, 68 (Fall 1999) 3, page 109.

<sup>7</sup> *Twelve Key Events of WELS History*, in *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, 97 (Spring 2000) 2, page 91.

<sup>8</sup> Duane K. Tomhave, *Synods of Mission-Minded Confessional Lutherans*, in *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, 86 (Spring 1989) 2, page 111.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted by John T. Mueller in *A Brief History of the Origin, Development, and Work of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference in North America*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947, p. 53.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Anderson, *Mission Work in Nigeria Through the Synodical Conference*, in *Oak Leaves: Newsletter of the ELS Historical Society*, Volume 2, Special Annual Meeting Issue, page 3.

<sup>11</sup> The Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, Synod Report 1936, page 59.

<sup>12</sup> The Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, Synod Report 1941, page 13.

<sup>13</sup> The Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, Synod Report, 1945, page 51.

<sup>14</sup> Mark Marozick, *The Dissolution of the Synodical Conference Revisited: An ELS Perspective 1957-1962*, ELS General Pastoral Conference, January 5-7, 1993, page 15.

<sup>15</sup> Richard C. Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966, page 393.

<sup>16</sup> Theodore Aaberg, *A City Set on a Hill*, Mankato, Minnesota: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1968, page 141.

<sup>17</sup> *Lutheran Witness*, 80 (March 7, 1961) 5, pages 14-15.

<sup>18</sup> Justin Petersen, *Address in Commemoration of the Saxon Immigration*, The Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, Synod Report 1938, page 57.

<sup>19</sup> Dale E. Griffin, *A History of Missouri Synod's Participation in the Military Chaplaincy, Part I*, in *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, 72 (Winter 1999) 4, page 256.

<sup>20</sup> The Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, Synod Report 1955, page 44.

<sup>21</sup> *Lutheran Witness*, 80 (March 7, 1961) 5, page 15.

<sup>22</sup> The Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, Synod Report 1955, page 45.

<sup>23</sup> The Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, Synod Report 1955, page 46.

<sup>24</sup> *Retrospect and Prospect*, in *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, 3 (December 1962) 2, page 3.

<sup>25</sup> Joseph Petersen, *The Synodical Conference-A Champion of True Lutheranism*, Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Synod Report 1972, page 41

# An Exegetical and Historical Study of Anointing With Oil

by Rev. Mark K. Rogers

*Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops. (James 5:13-18)*

## ***Introduction***

A few years ago when I was serving Trinity Lutheran Church (LC-MS) in Bend, Oregon, a woman called me and asked what my views were on anointing with oil. She attended a local Pentecostal church in Bend. Her mother, who lived somewhere in Idaho, had fallen ill, so the daughter called up her mother's Missouri Synod church and requested that she be anointed with oil. The pastor refused to do it. The daughter's question to me was "Why don't you do what the Bible says?" At the time I consulted the Lenski commentary on *James* and told the woman that James 5:13-18 speaks of applying oil in a medicinal sense.

Since that time I have wanted to look at the topic more closely both from an exegetical and a historical perspective. In

this paper we will briefly review some background on the book of *James*. Then we will look at the history of the practice of anointing with oil in the Roman Catholic, Orthodox Catholic and Pentecostal Churches. Finally we will examine James 5:13-18.

Through my research I have concluded that the anointing practice of James 5 has both a symbolic and medicinal meaning. I have also concluded that the practice should not be observed in the Church today because: 1) There is no specific institution by the Lord Jesus of the practice of Anointing as an ongoing observance. 2) There is no evidence for the regular use of oil in the healing ministry of the early Church. 3) The gift of miraculous healing is not a current gift in the Church.

I hope that what follows will be of use to you in your understanding of the practice of anointing with oil and perhaps give you a better answer for those who question the absence of this practice in the Lutheran Church.

### ***Background***

The author of this Epistle was James, the “brother” of Jesus (Matthew 13:55) and leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13; Galatians 2:9). At first James did not believe in the Lord and even considered Him insane (Mark 3:21). The Lord appeared to him following His resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:7), and from this time on he is presented in Scripture as a believer and leader in the Church.

ALC commentator R.C.H. Lenski dates the writing of the Epistle between 40 and 50 A.D., sometime after the persecution that began at the time of Stephen’s martyrdom in 35 A.D. but before the Apostolic Council in 52 A.D.<sup>1</sup> James’ introductory greeting supports the view that it was written to predominantly Jewish Christians. He says, “To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations.” (James 1:1)

The topics he touches on include the believers’ attitude to

wealth, the control of the tongue, patience in suffering, the approach to oaths and prayer. James 5 takes up this latter point.

James urges his readers to be patient in affliction (James 5:7-11). He reminds them of the example of the prophets and Job. Then verse 12 brings an injunction regarding oaths. “Above all, my brothers, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your ‘Yes’ be yes, and ‘No,’ no, or you will be condemned.” It has been suggested that James is alluding to the Zealot faction of the Jews who often took oaths before carrying out their political objectives.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps there were still some Christians who, in light of the persecution that had arisen following Stephen’s execution, believed they should take matters into their own hands as the Zealots did. Similarly in our country we have Christians who want to Christianize our government.

Thus in verses 13-18 James contrasts what was previously said about the inappropriate use of God’s Name for oath taking with its appropriate use in prayer. Rev. Jeske, author of the new *Catholic Epistles Commentary* for the WELS Peoples’ Bible Commentary Series, reminds us, “Praying is a much better way to use God’s name than swearing. The Name of God is not a cheap exclamation point for weak and unpersuasive speech, but a powerful form of address to our powerful Father, Savior, and Comforter.”<sup>3</sup>

James reminds us that prayer should be our recourse whether we enjoy good times or bad. He says, “Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise” (v. 13). The verbs *κακοπαθεῖ* (suffering) and *εὐθυμεῖ* (happy) are both present tense. The word for suffering is a compound from the words *κακός* (inferior, base or evil) and *πάθος* (experience). It describes any situation in which we experience what is less than the “good life.” *Εὐθυμεῖ* comes from the words *εὖ* (well) and *θύω* (to move quickly, roar, rage, i.e. express emotion) and hence points to experiencing good things in life. Verse 14 refers to a specific type of suffering, namely *ἀσθενεία* (weakness, sickness), indicating that James has physi-

cal illness in mind.<sup>4</sup> What is the Christian response to both suffering and happiness? In both cases we are to call upon the Lord. James says if we are suffering we should pray. If we are happy we should sing (ψαλλέτω) God's praises.

Verse 14 takes us to the focal point of our discussion, anointing of the sick with oil. James says, "Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord." This passage serves as a *sedes doctrinae* for the Sacrament of Holy Anointing in both the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. It also serves as the basis for the Pentecostal practice of anointing with oil.

### *Anointing in the Roman Catholic Church*

As we look at the history of anointing with oil we must also look at the history of the sacramental system in the Roman Catholic Church. The Biblical term from which we get our word sacrament is the word μυστήριον. In prechristian thought it was a pledge of money or property which was deposited in a temple by parties to a lawsuit or contract, and which was forfeited by the one who lost the suit or broke the contract. Later it came to refer to the oath of allegiance made by soldiers to their commander and the gods of Rome. In both cases it indicated a religious ceremony at a sacred place. The early Christians adopted this pagan term first by applying it to Baptism. The *Vulgate* sometimes translates the term μυστήριον as *mysterium* or *sacramentum*. The reason for the choice of one word over the other is not clear.<sup>5</sup> Due to the use of Greek in the Eastern Churches the term μυστήριον is commonly used to refer to the sacraments.

The African Church Father Tertullian (160-220 A.D.) first used *sacramentum* in a Christian sense. He compared Holy Baptism to the *sacramentum* administered to Roman recruits when they entered the army. A contemporary Catholic theologian, Joseph Martos, says, "The *sacramentum* was a religious



initiation; so was baptism. It marked the beginning of a new way of life; so did baptism. It was an oath of allegiance to the emperor; baptism was a promise of fidelity to Christ.”<sup>6</sup> It was quite common for the Church in the patristic period to refer to Baptism and the Lord’s Supper as sacraments.

The church fathers, however, did use the term “sacrament” in a broad sense. Clement of Alexandria (150-215 A.D.), theologian and head of the catechetical school at Alexandria, spoke of the mysteries as “representations of sacred realities in signs and symbols, metaphors and allegories which only the initiated could understand.”<sup>7</sup> Consequently unbelievers were barred from being present at the celebration of the Eucharist. In his commentary on 1 Corinthians, Patriarch of Constantinople John Chrysostom (347-407 A.D.) said, “A mystery is present when we realize that something exists beyond the things that we are looking at.”<sup>8</sup> Bishop Augustine of Hippo Regius (354-430 A.D.) called a sacrament a “sign of a sacred reality”<sup>9</sup> and most generally used the term sacrament in a precise sense to refer to Holy Baptism and the Eucharist. But he still used it at times to refer to a variety of other rites and practices.<sup>10</sup>

Roman Catholic historians trace the practice of anointing with oil back to the sending out of the Apostles as recorded in Mark 6:13: “They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.” The Council of Trent (1545-1563 A.D.) declared, “Now this sacred anointing of the sick was instituted to be truly and properly a sacrament of the New Testament by Christ our Lord, alluded to indeed in the Gospel of Mark, but commended to the faithful and promulgated through James, an apostle and brother of our Lord.”<sup>11</sup> The thesis that Christ instituted anointing with oil and that James then proclaims how the practice is done is still held today by the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>12</sup>

Outside of Scripture little evidence of the practice can be found in the early church period. *The Apostolic Tradition* by Hippolytus (170-236 A.D.), ecclesiastical writer and doctor of the church from Rome, contains a prayer for the blessing of oil by

a bishop during the Eucharistic Liturgy. It says, "If someone offers oil, let the bishop give thanks in the same manner as for the offering of bread and wine. If he does not use the same words, let him give thanks in his own words, and say in other words: O God, just as in sanctifying this oil, you give holiness to those who are anointed and who receive it (priests, kings, and prophets), so also may it bring comfort to those who taste of it and health to those who make use of it."<sup>13</sup> This prayer was later included in the *Gelasian Sacramentary* (7th Century) for use in the Frankish kingdoms.

Chemnitz traces the beginning of the Roman Catholic practice of anointing those who were near death to the Valentinians. This second century gnostic sect poured oil and water on those who were dying, in the belief that they were redeemed through the anointing. Chemnitz cites this as evidence that the roots of this practice go back to heretics.<sup>14</sup>

Origen (185-254 A.D.) of Alexandria and John Chrysostom, who studied theology at Antioch, took the reference in James not to physical but to spiritual sickness. Martos comments: "In their day penitents were often anointed when they were given exorcisms, and since the passage ends with a statement about forgiveness of sins, they interpreted it as a reference to the process of public penitence. But the fact that they did not see it as a reference to a priestly anointing of the sick is indirect evidence that at least in Alexandria and Antioch there was no established ecclesiastical rite connected with physical illness."<sup>15</sup> Just as we noted that the practice of anointing the sick was not a universal one in the New Testament period so we see that in the patristic period there was likewise no consistent practice of anointing the sick.

The practice of post baptismal anointing and laying on of hands began to be commonly observed in the third century. The Orthodox Church, following Canon LVIII of the regional Council of Laodicea (ca. 365 A.D.) enjoins the anointing of the newly baptized so that they might be "partakers of the kingdom of Christ."

This anointing is the Orthodox sacrament of Confirmation or Holy Myron.<sup>16</sup>

In fourth century Egypt Serapion, Bishop of Thumis (d. after 360 A.D.), wrote a prayer for the blessing of oil that it might become “a means of removing every sickness and disease, of warding off every evil spirit, of banishing every fever, chill and fatigue . . . a medicine of life and salvation bringing health and soundness of soul and body and spirit, leading to perfect well being.”<sup>17</sup> Records of miraculous cures through the anointing with oil are found at this time.<sup>18</sup>

The first official pronouncement on anointing with oil comes from Pope Innocent I (402-417 A.D.). Bishop Decentius of Gubbio had written to the Pope concerning James 5. Innocent responded, “There is no doubt that the passage speaks about the faithful who are sick and who can be anointed with the oil of Chrism that is prepared by the bishop. Not only priests but all Christians may use this oil for anointing, when either they or members of their household have need of it.”<sup>19</sup> At this time it seems that bishops alone had the right to consecrate holy oil but it could be applied by a bishop, priest or any Christian. Innocent even alludes to the practice of self-anointing at this time.

In 428 A.D. Alexander of Antioch adopted the practice of anointing the sick in his see. Patriarch Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444 A.D.) berated Christians in his day for calling in pagan magicians to treat their sick and urged them to call in the priests of the church. In 450 A.D. Victor of Antioch, a presbyter of the church and author of a commentary on *Mark*, commented on James 5. He supported praying over and anointing the sick but viewed prayer as the effective element in the practice while oil served as a symbol.<sup>20</sup>

In the sixth century the practice of anointing with oil became customary in France. Bishop Caesarius of Arles (470-542 A.D.), who had been instrumental in condemning Semi-Pelagianism at the Council of Orange (529 A.D.), preached sermons encouraging people to use the rite of anointing with oil. Apparently he,

like Cyril of Alexandria, had to battle pagan practices of healing that incorporated magic trees, amulets, fortunetellers and sorcerers. Hence one reason why the practice of anointing came to be a common observance might be the fact that the Church sought to offer something to combat the pagan practices around them. Bishop Caesarius admonished, "How much better and more helpful it would be if they ran to the church and received the body and blood of Christ, and reverently anointed themselves and their family with holy oil! According to the words of the Apostle James they would receive not only health of body but also pardon of sins."<sup>21</sup> Note that Caesarius speaks of the lay people giving the anointing to their families. He also connects the forgiveness of sins with the oil.

As in earlier centuries, the anointing of the sixth century was said to bring miraculous healing at times.<sup>22</sup> Chemnitz asserts that in 528 A.D. Pope Felix IV ordered anointing the sick with oil before they died in order to perpetuate the practice since, according to Chemnitz, miraculous healings no longer were happening following the use of hallowed oil.<sup>23</sup>

The Venerable Bede (673-735 A.D.) referred to anointing with oil in England during this period. It appears that the practice was identical with that done in mainland Europe. Common practice called for anointing people suffering from all sorts of illnesses. Those in danger of death requested Confession and the Eucharist (Viaticum—final food for the way or last communion).<sup>24</sup>

It wasn't until the ninth century that the first ecclesiastical rite for anointing the sick was written down. Alcuin (735-804 A.D.), Master of the Cathedral School at York and religious advisor to Emperor Charlemagne, included a supplement in the Gregorian Sacramentary that had a rite for priestly anointing of the sick along with prayers for the dying and a rite of final reconciliation. Before this there had been no official liturgy for applying blessed oil. The Church of Rome adopted the Frankish revision of the Sacramentary. Lay people could still anoint those who were sick. The Council of Chalons (813 A.D.) declared that the

anointing of the sick by a priest with oil blessed by a bishop was to be taken more seriously. The Council encouraged priests to carry oil with them at all times. The ritual for anointing began to be more elaborate. Several priests would be involved. The signing of the person with ashes, sprinkling with holy water and reading of the penitential psalms were done. The priests were expected to be paid for this service, and because several priests were usually involved, anointing became cost prohibitive for the average person.<sup>25</sup>

In the medieval period literacy declined. Many of the scribes in the monasteries were illiterate. They copied manuscripts by recognition of the shape of the letters. By the twelfth century the barbarians were converted in Europe. A time of relative peace and economic prosperity resulted in an increase in theological study. Thus the medieval scholastic scholars arose who took the writings of the Fathers and the pronouncements of the Councils and Popes and systematized them into books of sentences or collections of opinions on every major theological topic including the sacraments.<sup>26</sup>

Monk Hugh of the Abbey of St. Victor in Paris (1096-1141) proposed a new definition for sacrament. He said, "Sacraments are material elements that by similitude represent, by institution signify, and by sanctification contain, a certain invisible and spiritual grace."<sup>27</sup> He was the first to write a formal treatise on the sacraments, *On the Sacraments of the Christian Faith*. Though Hugh used the term sacrament loosely for various rites and formulas, he centers on Baptism, Confirmation, Communion, Penance, Anointing with oil, Marriage and Ordination.

Pope Alexander III (Roland Bandinelli, d. 1181 A.D.) also listed these seven sacraments as did Bishop Otto of Bamberg (1062-1139 A.D.) in a sermon preached in 1158 A.D. Bishop Otto of Bamberg said, "The number seven corresponds with the seven virtues and the seven deadly sins, and also unites the number of the Deity (three) and of creation (four), thus illustrating the union of God and man."<sup>28</sup>

Peter Lombard (1100-1160) played a key role in the development of the doctrine of the sacraments. Peter taught at the Cathedral School in Paris and later became Bishop of Paris. His *Sententiarum Libri Quatuor* (*Four Books of Sentences*) contains sections on The Holy Trinity, Creation and Sin, the Incarnation and the Virtues and the Sacraments and Four Last Things.<sup>29</sup> Lombard was the Francis Pieper of his day. He defined a sacrament as “a sign of a sacred thing.” He said, “For that is properly called a sacrament which is a sign of the grace of God and a form of invisible grace, so that it bears its image and exists as its cause.”<sup>30</sup> Lombard named seven sacraments: Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Penance, Marriage, Holy Orders, and Extreme Unction. This became the standard numbering of the sacraments. Lombard ascribed the institution of Extreme Unction to the apostles, while Alexander of Hales and later Thomas Aquinas ascribed its institution to Christ.<sup>31</sup>

The scholastic theologians also recognized other rites and formulas as sacred (i.e. prayer, alms given in the name of the church, holy water, blessed candles...). These came to be called sacramentals. Sacramentals are defined as merely a sign of grace while sacraments serve not only as signs but as means of conveying that grace.<sup>32</sup>

By the thirteenth century the rite for anointing with oil was simplified. Only one priest was required for its administration. Prayers for healing came to be omitted and the view prevailed that it should be administered only to those near death. Archbishop Cousins cites two key reasons for this. First there had developed a general restriction of the giving of sacramental care to the dying. Constantine, for instance, had waited till death to be baptized. Penance in the early days was administered only once, and penitential restrictions remained with the individual from then till death. Secondly, the Carolingian reform of the Gregorian Sacramentary in the Ninth Century placed the order of Anointing and Viaticum after Penance in the liturgical books. Cousins concludes, “The strong preoccupation with death in the Middle Ages

together with changes in the Sacrament of Penance caused the anointing of the sick to be associated with the time of death.”<sup>33</sup>

In 1439 the Council of Florence put the Church’s imprimatur on the scholastic teaching of seven sacraments. Rapprochement attempts were made with the Orthodox during the meeting. In this regard the council issued a *Decree for the Armenians* which stated that anointing with oil was to be given to those near death.<sup>34</sup> The restriction of anointing to those near death resulted in the name of the sacrament being changed to Extreme Unction (Last Anointing).

At the time of the Reformation the reformers questioned the church’s teaching that there are seven sacraments. Martin Luther, speaking in a broad sense like the Church Fathers, said that one might call prayer, the Word of God and the cross sacraments but added, “Nevertheless, it has seemed proper to restrict the name of sacrament to those promises which have signs attached to them. The remainder, not being bound to signs, are bare promises. Hence there are strictly speaking, but two sacraments in the church of God—Baptism and the Bread. For only in these two do we find the divinely instituted sign and the promise of forgiveness of sins. The Sacrament of Penance, which I added to these two, lacks the divinely instituted visible sign, and is, as I have said, nothing but a way and a return to Baptism.”<sup>35</sup>

In the *Large Catechism* Luther, writing on Baptism, says, “From the Word it derives its nature as a sacrament, as St. Augustine taught, ‘*Accedat verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum.*’ This means that when the Word is added to the element or the natural substance, it becomes a sacrament, that is, a holy, divine thing and sign.”<sup>36</sup>

Luther of course had his doubts about the canonicity of *James*. Even going on the assumption that James instituted a sacrament, Luther said, “No apostle has the right on his own authority to institute a sacrament, that is, to give a divine promise with a sign attached. For this belongs to Christ alone.”<sup>37</sup> In addition to this, Luther points out that limiting anointing to the

dying does not correspond to the scriptural practice of anointing the sick. Luther viewed the anointing referred to by James as connected with the gift of miraculous healing which the Lord gave the early church. He did not consider the oil, but faith, to be the key to healing.<sup>38</sup>

*The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XIII*, says, "If we define sacraments as 'rites which have the command of God and to which the promise of grace has been added,' we can easily determine which are sacraments in the strict sense. By this definition, rites instituted by men are not sacraments in the strict sense since men do not have the authority to promise grace . . . The genuine sacraments, therefore, are Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and Absolution (which is the Sacrament of Penitence), for these rites have the commandment of God and the promise of grace, which is the heart of the New Testament."<sup>39</sup> *The Apology* goes on to conclude that even the Roman Church has not required Confirmation or Extreme Unction as necessary for salvation and quotes Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica, Vol. III, Ques. 72*, "Confirmation is necessary for salvation, although one can be saved without it."<sup>40</sup>

Thus we see that in the Lutheran Church the sacraments were restricted to two in number if one follows the strict definition of a sacrament as 1) instituted by God, 2) having a visible element, 3) conveying the forgiveness of sins. *The Apology* allows us to call Confession a sacrament in that it meets the first and third criteria although it fails to meet the second.

Calvin and Zwingli differed with the Lutherans. Calvin saw the sacraments as reminders of the grace that God was always bestowing on those who are being saved. Zwingli saw the sacraments purely as signs without any spiritual efficacy.<sup>41</sup> Martos, a Catholic theologian, succinctly sums up the difference between the Catholic and Protestant views this way: "For the Catholics, however, the ultimate authority was God as He spoke through the Church; for the Protestants it was God as He spoke through the Scriptures."<sup>42</sup>



The Council of Trent (1545-1563 A.D.) became the defining voice of the Roman Catholic Church concerning the Church's doctrine until modern times. The goals of the Council were to combat the Protestant heresies and to reform the Church. The Council upheld the belief that there are seven sacraments. It also upheld the view that Christ instituted the sacraments and that the sacraments work *ex opere operato*. The Council's emphasis on this contrasted with the scholastic view of the importance of faith and came as a reaction against Luther's emphasis on the key role of faith.<sup>43</sup>

The Council of Trent wrote four canons concerning the practice of extreme unction:

Canon I - If anyone says that extreme unction is not truly and properly a sacrament, instituted by Christ our Lord and promulgated by the blessed apostle James, but only a rite received from the fathers, or a human fiction, let him be anathema.

Canon II - If anyone says that the sacred anointing of the sick does not confer grace nor remit sins nor relieve the sick, but that it has now ceased, as if it had formerly been only a grace of healing, let him be anathema.

Canon III - If anyone says that the rite and use of extreme unction which the holy Roman Church observes militates against the statement of the blessed apostle James and that it should therefore be changed, and that it may without sin be spurned by Christians, let him be anathema.

Canon IV - If anyone says that the elders of the Church whom blessed James urges to be brought for anointing the sick are not priests, ordained by a bishop, but the men in each community who are older in years, and that for this reason the priest is not the sole minister of extreme unction, let him be anathema.<sup>44</sup>

These canons remained normative for the church until modern times.

Theologian and Pastor Martin Chemnitz (1522-1586 A.D.) offered the Lutheran response to the Council in his book *Examination of the Council of Trent*. He agreed with regard to two of the Council's points, namely, that the devil seeks to pull us from Christ at the end of our life and that Jesus has given us the remedies to stand firm in faith to the end. Chemnitz disagreed with the Council's view that Christ gave one set of remedies for the living and another for those who are dying. The custom of the ancient church, Chemnitz said, was to comfort the sick, to apply law and gospel and to give them Holy Communion.<sup>45</sup>

Chemnitz, like Luther and Calvin, saw the healing referred to in James as one of the miraculous charismatic gifts which the Lord gave the early church. He even goes so far as to say, "And if the gift of healing were still found in the church today, this teaching and rule of James would be useful and altogether necessary to observe."<sup>46</sup> Chemnitz contended that the purpose of the charismatic gifts, like miracles, was to confirm the teaching of the Gospel and to point people to it. He lists three purposes for the oil itself: 1) a reminder that the healing was from the power and working of God; 2) a reminder of the spiritual benefits which God offers; 3) for medicinal purposes.<sup>47</sup>

Chemnitz concludes that the Sacrament of Extreme Unction as practiced by the Roman Catholic Church does not coincide with the practice in Mark 6 or James 5 with regard to its material, form, action or efficacy. The material which the church insisted on using was olive oil blessed by a bishop on Maundy Thursday. There is no command for such consecration in Scripture. Secondly the form of the words used in applying the sacrament was not even commonly agreed upon by the Church, let alone was there any Scriptural mandate for it. Thirdly, the action of applying the oil to the five senses has no scriptural basis. Finally, the concept that the Sacrament of Unction brings the forgiveness of sins has no foundation in the Word of God.<sup>48</sup>

From Trent until the twentieth century the Roman Missal of 1570 served as the standard for the liturgical and sacramental practice of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1747 Pope Benedict XIV issued a plenary indulgence so that those who were anointed would be fully absolved from their sin and any punishment due for them.<sup>49</sup>

In the nineteenth century there arose a renewed interest in studying medieval theologians, the church fathers and Scripture. In 1879 Pope Leo XIII called for a restoration of Christian philosophy on the basis of Thomas Aquinas. Pius X ordered that Aquinas' *Summa* be the major source book for theological study. Renewed interest in the historical development of church doctrine and practice led to a reexamination of the practice of Extreme Unction. In the 1950s Catholic theologian Charles Davies called for a return to the Viaticum as the final sacrament and the use of anointing for the sick, not just those near death.<sup>50</sup>

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) has influenced doctrine and practice in the Roman Catholic Church more than any other conclave or Pope since Trent. In regard to the sacraments the Council said, "The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the body of Christ, and to finally give worship to God. Because they are signs, they also instruct . . . With the passage of time, however, there have crept into the rites of the sacraments and sacramentals certain features which have rendered their nature and purpose less clear to the people of today; and hence to that extent the need arises to adjust certain aspects of these rites to the requirements of our times."<sup>51</sup> *An American Catholic Catechism* (1975) sets forth the Vatican II perspective on Extreme Unction: "This notion of the Sacrament of the dying, for which there was scant if any Biblical or patristic evidence, was countered by historical theologians in the mid-twentieth century. The Sacrament is now officially called 'Anointing of the Sick,' and can be administered to those suffering from any serious sickness or injury, or simply from the general debilities of old age. Death need not be imminent and certain, for the Sacrament re-

lates to the cramping effects of illness on one's spiritual vigor in living in union with Christ."<sup>52</sup>

Two documents came out in 1972 which changed the Roman Catholic Church's practice of anointing, namely *Sacram Unctionem Infirmorum* and *Infirmis Cum Ecclesia*. These documents emphasized more involvement of the sick person in the anointing ceremony along with pastoral counseling from the priest. Priests were also given authority to consecrate the oil in emergencies. The oil could now be oil from any plant, not just olive oil. The oil may also be scented. Instead of anointing all five senses, only the forehead and hands need be anointed. The revised rite for anointing from 1974 contains various forms for anointing on different occasions.<sup>53</sup>

Emphasis on the bestowal of the forgiveness of sins has shifted to a restorative and healing function for anointing. Archbishop Cousins writes, "Accordingly, the forgiveness of sin, which was especially evident in the previous sacramental form, is now perceived as a secondary effect of the Sacrament. Forgiveness of sin is more properly assigned to the Sacrament of Penance which is usually administered before anointing." Cousins adds, "Viaticum is rightfully restored to its proper place as the Sacrament of the dying and should normally be celebrated in a rite separate from the anointing of the sick."<sup>54</sup>

*The Question and Answer Catholic Catechism* describes the effects of anointing this way: "The Sacrament of Anointing is a Sacrament of the New Law instituted by Christ to give the sick spiritual assistance, strengthen their supernatural life, and, if need be, forgive their sins. Moreover, if God wills it, anointing restores physical health to the body of the Christian who is seriously ill." The sick are said to be given the spiritual blessings consisting of forgiveness of the guilt of unremitted sin, remission of the temporal punishment due for sin, patience, confidence in God's mercy and moral courage. Physically they may receive healing if God deems it of benefit for the person's spiritual well being.<sup>55</sup>

The Catholic Church also believes that the suffering of the

believer is united with the sufferings of Christ through the Sacrament. Colossians 1:24 is cited to substantiate this view. Paul says, "Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of His body, which is the church." Father Miksch, a Roman Catholic priest, tells those he anoints to offer up their suffering for someone who needs conversion. He cites an example in which a man, terminally ill with cancer, did so and in less than 24 hours a wayward soul came to Father Miksch's doorstep for confession who had been away from the church for 32 years.<sup>56</sup> *The Question and Answer Catholic Catechism* refers to this as the "Apostolate of suffering."<sup>57</sup>

The present rite for anointing consists of three sections, the Introductory Rite, the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of Anointing. The sacramental application of oil is still the purview of bishops or priests. Ordinarily those who receive anointing will be of the Roman Catholic faith. At a minimum the person must believe what the Church teaches concerning the Sacrament. In giving Unction to a non-Catholic, priests are to beware of giving offense to the faithful. Infants or young children who are not old enough to understand what is being done are not to be anointed. The sacrament may be given to those who are unconscious but is not to be given to the dead.<sup>58</sup>

### *Anointing in the Orthodox Catholic Church*

The Orthodox Catholic Church has remained more rooted in patristic practice than the Roman Catholic Church. Attempts by Protestant reformers were made during the Reformation period to discuss doctrine with the Orthodox. In 1575 the Tübingen theologians asked Patriarch Jeremiah II to give an official opinion on the Lutheran Confessions. Jeremiah rejected all the "distinctive doctrines" of *The Augsburg Confession*. Patriarch Cyril Lucar (1568-1638) corresponded with leading Calvinist theo-

gians and was leaning towards Calvinism. Using their influence, the Jesuits helped to prevent the introduction of Calvinist views by Lucar and also had some connection with his untimely death.<sup>59</sup> Local councils in Constantinople and Romania in 1643 and in Jerusalem in 1662 ultimately defined the Orthodox position relative to Protestantism.<sup>60</sup>

Anointing of children in connection with their Confirmation following Baptism is practiced by the Orthodox. They cite Canon LVIII of the Council of Laodicea. This anointing is also called Holy Myron or Chrism.<sup>61</sup> It is said to complete the baptism of the child.<sup>62</sup>

The anointing of the sick has never been known as Extreme Unction but rather as Holy Unction in the Orthodox Church since it has never been limited to those near death. The service for anointing revolves around the number seven. Ideally seven priests should participate in the service. There are seven prayers for blessing the oil. The person is anointed at seven points on his body: the forehead, nostrils, temples, mouth, chest, back, and hands. Seven passages are read from both the Epistles and the Gospels. *The Living God: A Catechism for the Christian Faith, Vol. 2*, says, "The seven Epistles, seven Gospels, seven priests, and seven anointings by the seven priests, indicate to us that the Sacrament of Holy Unction involves the whole Church, the entire body of Christ. It is not simply the individual prayer of a particular healer."<sup>63</sup> A general service of anointing is conducted in Orthodox Churches on Wednesday of Holy Week.

### *Anointing in the Pentecostal Churches*

Scant written information is available on the subject of anointing with oil in Pentecostal Churches, yet many of their churches do practice anointing. I phoned Harvest Time Church in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, a member of the Assemblies of God, and spoke with Pastor Bart Scharrer. He said that Pentecostal

Churches consider James 5:14 to be their *sedes doctrinae* for Anointing with Oil. They do not believe the oil to have any miraculous properties but rather to be symbolic of healing and the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Pentecostal Churches believe that the gift of miraculous healing is current in the church. In the book *The Charismatic Movement* Father Dennis Bennet says, "There are fully attested healings on the files of doctors and hospitals; in fact many doctors are quicker to acknowledge the reality of Christian healing than are some clergy."<sup>64</sup> The *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* reviews the practice of anointing in the Roman Catholic Church but offers no description of its use in Pentecostal Churches other than to say, "Anointing with oil is used predominately in the modern church in conjunction with physical healing."<sup>65</sup>

Pastor John Osteen of the Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas was formerly a Southern Baptist minister but became a Pentecostal in 1958. In his booklet *How to Minister Healing to the Sick* he cites Mark 16:17-18, "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My Name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (KJV). Osteen believes, of course, that the promise of the gift of healing is still current in the Church.<sup>66</sup> In fact he cites a healing ministry as the foundation of effective evangelism. He concludes, "It is the man or woman who will get out among the people, and bring healing, and deliverance to them, who will get the attention of the world. People want to belong to a Jesus that can help them."<sup>67</sup> The pattern for the ministry of healing, says Osteen, is supplied by our Lord. He taught, preached and then healed. The reason people are not healed is usually due to their lack of faith. Preaching and teaching are needed to stimulate faith.<sup>68</sup>

The doctrine of the gift of healing for Pentecostals has its basis in the doctrine of the atonement. Isaiah 53:5 is a founda-

tional passage for Osteen and many Pentecostals with regard to their healing ministry. Isaiah writes, "But he was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed." Osteen quotes Matthew 8:17, which refers to Isaiah 53:5 following the healing of Peter's mother-in-law and many others who were sick and demon-possessed in Capernaum.<sup>69</sup> Benny Hinn, televangelist and faith healer, in the book *Lord, I Need A Miracle*, writes, "Sickness may be all around us, but it is not God's will for His people to live in sickness. The cross made provision for both our salvation and our healing. Jesus shed His blood for our sin, but His body was broken for our sicknesses."<sup>70</sup>

Osteen speaks of an occasion when he anointed a person with oil who suffered from arthritis. He used to carry a little bottle of oil with him all the time for this purpose. He anointed the woman and prayed for her but she was not healed. It was only the teaching that Osteen brought the woman from Matthew 8:17 that opened her up finally to receive healing.<sup>71</sup> Benny Hinn offers two keys to receiving miracles. "First: Turn away from those who reject God's power;" "Second: When you seek for a miracle, ask in faith."<sup>72</sup> Hinn believes it is always God's will to heal us of physical diseases. He says, "You will never hear me pray such faith-destroying words as 'If it be Your will, Lord, heal them.' God intends for you to rise and be healed. Today. Tomorrow. Always!"<sup>73</sup>

Benny Hinn cites James 5 as evidence that God always desires to bring physical healing along with the spiritual healing that He gives us. He says, "Again, when the Lord forgives sin, He always includes healing. That is why James said, 'Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.'" (James 5:14-15)<sup>74</sup>

The term "anointing" is often used by Pentecostals to refer to the bestowal of the Holy Spirit's gifts. Baptism in the Spirit



is the key gift for Pentecostals, with the gift of tongues as the key sign of that Baptism.<sup>75</sup> Pentecostals use the term “anointing” to refer to occasions when the Holy Spirit bestows His gifts. Benny Hinn speaks of three anointings.<sup>76</sup>

Conservative Reformed commentator Simon Kistemaker offers a response that we Lutherans might well agree with regarding the Pentecostal view of healing. He says, “Many people have claimed the so-called gifts of healing (1 Corinthians 12:9, 28, 30) and therefore offer prayer in faith to make sick people well. They claim that the verses in the Epistle of James clearly state that ‘the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well’ (5:15). No one denies that God works healing miracles in the Christian community today in answer to the prayers of the saints. But what happens when God does not heal the sick? Is there a lack of faith? Is there unconfessed sin? Yes, but not always. Consider Paul, who had been given the gift of healing. He seems to have been unable to deliver his friend Epaphroditus from a lingering illness that almost caused his death (Philippians 2:27). Moreover, Paul writes, ‘I left Trophimus sick in Miletus’ (2 Timothy 4:20). Why did Paul not pray in faith so that his friends were healed instantaneously? Undoubtedly Paul prayed, but he learned from his own experience, when he pleaded for the removal of the thorn in his flesh, that God does not always heal us as we wish. He heard God say, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).’”<sup>77</sup>

I believe Rev. Paul Haugen sums up the truth of Scripture best in the matter of healing. He quotes Isaiah 53:5 and 2 Peter 2:24 and says, “It is true—God doesn’t want us to be sick and He is bringing the day when we shall be healed (saved). The remission of some sickness in this life—the fact that all sickness is not always fatal—is also a blessing of that redemption. The prayer of faith shall save the sick. God has promised us healing through Christ. And when we believe in that promise we have that healing. We may not enjoy it in its totality now, but it is ours.”<sup>78</sup>

### *Exegetical Look at James 5:13-18*

In verse 14 James writes, “Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.” *The Expositor’s Greek New Testament* says that ἀσθενεῖ (is sick, infirm) refers to a “specific bodily ailment.”<sup>79</sup> Haugen calls it a “species or kind of κακοπαθῆω.”<sup>80</sup> James then gives instructions as to the procedure to follow when a person is sick.

First they are to summon (προσκαλεσασθῶ) the elders (πρεσβυτέρους). The use of the aorist imperative suggests urgency and the fact that the elders are summoned to come to the sick person indicates he is confined to the sick bed and too ill to go to the elders.<sup>81</sup>

Who were these elders (πρεσβυτέρους)? Lenski says, “From its earliest days each congregation had several elders to manage its affairs, to teach and to see to the teaching” and he says that the use of elders in the Christian congregation was taken over from the Jewish practice in the synagogues.<sup>82</sup> Martin likewise surmises that the office of elder may have been taken over from the synagogue. He concludes from Acts 20:17 and 28 that the terms “elder” and “bishop” are synonymous terms and adds that we should not conclude that an “elder” was necessarily an older person but one with “spiritual competence.”<sup>83</sup> In *The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* Melanchthon cites Jerome, who relates that in Alexandria the group of presbyters would choose one among them to be bishop just as “an army might select a commander for itself” and so Melanchthon concludes: “Jerome therefore teaches that the distinction between the grades of bishop and presbyter (or pastor) is by human authority.”<sup>84</sup> While the *Treatise* considered pastor, elder and bishop as synonymous terms for the same office, Luther speaks against the idea that the presbyters referred to in James 5 were necessarily pastors. He says, “For one who is an elder is not necessarily a

priest or minister... Yet, it cannot be denied that the churches were once ruled by older persons, chosen for this purpose without these ordinations and consecrations, solely on account of their age and long experience.”<sup>85</sup>

The elders are to anoint (ἀλείψαντες) the person with oil and pray for him. Note that the main verb in that sentence is προσευξάσθωσαν. The elders are to pray for the sick person. Kistemaker says that the aorist participle ἀλείψαντες may either denote time (while anointing) or manner (by anointing) relative to the main verb.<sup>86</sup> Martin says that the aorist tense of the participle may suggest that oil was placed on the person before praying or during the prayer.<sup>87</sup> Lenski says that the participle is antecedent to the main verb, hence “first having oiled with oil, then let them pray.”<sup>88</sup> The term for oil used here (ἐλαίω) denotes olive oil.<sup>89</sup>

What is the purpose and effect of this anointing? The context shows us that the oil itself bears no miraculous healing power. James tells us in verse 15, “And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well...” Matthew Henry observes, “There is one thing carefully to be observed here, that the saving of the sick is not ascribed to the anointing with oil, but to prayer.”<sup>90</sup> Martin, Lenski, Kistemaker, Chemnitz and Luther all agree that prayer is the key to the healing, not the anointing with oil.<sup>91</sup>

Two Greek terms for anointing are ordinarily used in the New Testament, namely ἀλείφω and χρίω. We also find the verbs καταχέω, μυριζω, ἐπιχέω, ἐπιχρίω, and ἐγχρίω used in the New Testament for applying oil.<sup>92</sup> Those verbs correspond in usage with the verb ἀλείφω, which is used by James.

The verb ἀλείφω is used in the *LXX* to translate the Hebrew words מָשַׁח and מָשַׁח and generally refers to cosmetic, preservative and medicinal uses of oil (Ruth 3:3—cosmetic on Ruth; 2 Chronicles 28:15—medicinal for prisoners taken by King Pekah from Judah). In the New Testament the verb ἀλείφω occurs 8 times (Matthew 6:17; Mark 6:13; Mark 16:1; Luke 7:38; Luke 7:46; John 11:2; John 12:3; James 5:14) and is used with refer-

ence to personal hygiene, as a sign of honor at burial, or for healing.<sup>93</sup>

The use of ἀλείφω in reference to hygiene can be seen in Matthew 6:17, where Jesus tells the disciples that when they fast they are to put oil on their heads and wash their faces so as not to appear bedraggled from the effects of fasting. Mark 16:1 uses the term for the spices and oil brought by the women to anoint Jesus' body on Easter Sunday. Mark 6:6b-13 tells of the apostles being sent out two by two to preach the Gospel, and like James 5:14, connects the application of oil with healing. Verse 13 says, "They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them." ἀλείφω is also used of the anointing of Jesus by the sinful woman at Simon the Pharisee's house (Luke 7:38, 46) and of Mary anointing Jesus on the Sabbath before Palm Sunday (John 12:3).

The verb χρίω is used five times in the New Testament (i.e. Luke 4:18; Acts 4:27; Acts 10:38; 2 Corinthians 1:21; Hebrews 1:9). The *LXX* commonly translates מָשַׁח (from which we get Messiah) with χρίω.<sup>94</sup>

Bromily cites its use for the anointing of Kings Saul, David, Solomon, Joash, Jehohaz and Jehu. The term is likewise used for the anointing of priests and prophets (e.g. Aaron and sons, Elijah anointing Elisha). Finally the term is also used of the anointing of the furnishings of the Tabernacle (the tent, ark, altar of burnt offering and utensils, Exodus 30:22-33). As a noun it occurs 38 times in the Old Testament, always with reference to persons such as the high priests, kings of Israel, even Cyrus of Persia, and, of course, the Lord Jesus (Psalm 2:2; Daniel 9:25).<sup>95</sup>

In the New Testament χρίω and its related nouns are used with reference to Jesus as the Christ or Messiah. In Luke 4:18 Jesus quotes Isaiah 61:1-2 of Himself: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor..." Peter confessed Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Following their release from prison, Peter and John prayed at a gathering of the believers

in Jerusalem and quoted the messianic prophecy of Psalm 2 commenting, “Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed” (Acts 4:27).

The New Testament also uses *χρίω* and its related nouns with regard to believers. Acts 11:26 tells us, “The disciples were called Christians (*χριστιάνους*) first at Antioch.” Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, “Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed (*χρίσας*) us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.” 1 John 2:20 says of believers, “But you have an anointing (*χρίσμα*) from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.” Verse 27 adds, “As for you, the anointing (*χρίσμα*) you received from Him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But His anointing (*χρίσμα*) teaches you about all things and as that anointing (*χρίσμα*) is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.”

Lenski, quoting from *The Biblical Theological Word-book of the New Testament* by Hermann Cremer, says of the use of *χρίω* in the New Testament, “In the New Testament it is used only in the sense, following the Old Testament anointing, of consecration and equipping for holy service,” to which Lenski adds, “A sense that is never connected with *ἀλείφω*.”<sup>96</sup> Because James uses the verb *ἀλείφω*, Lenski sees the application of oil as medicinal. He says, “The participle which James uses means that the sick person’s body is to be rubbed with oil just as the nurse now rubs a patient’s body with alcohol. The ancients used olive oil in this way.”<sup>97</sup>

In conclusion the word *ἀλείφω* normally refers to the application of oil for more mundane earthly purposes while *χρίω* is used for sacred anointing. The use of *ἀλείφω* by James certainly does not exclude the spiritual (see also Mark 6:13). The person is to be anointed “in the name of the Lord.” Thus any healing which takes place, whether it be “naturally” or miraculously, ultimately must be acknowledged as coming from the Lord.<sup>98</sup>

Also the anointing is done by the pastors of the church.

Martin posits two main views of the purpose of anointing with oil, namely medicinal or practical and symbolic.<sup>99</sup> To this we add a third, the sacramental, to incorporate the Roman Catholic view that through the oil sins are forgiven and/or the person is healed.

The medicinal or practical view is upheld by Lenski. As we mentioned before, he compares the anointing with oil to the nurse rubbing a patient's body with alcohol today. He says of the elders applying the oil, "When James directs the elders to do it when they visit a patient, this means that the church, for which the elders act, is concerned about the body as well as the soul."<sup>100</sup> This harmonizes with James 2:15-16, which says, "Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?" Chemnitz agrees that there is a medicinal aspect to the use of oil.<sup>101</sup> Jeske indicates the possibility also that the oil has a medicinal use here and cites Isaiah 1:6, which describes the spiritual sickness of Judah in physical terms indicating that their wounds were "not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with oil." He also cites Luke 10:34 (the Good Samaritan). Jeske notes that ancient writers like Pliny, Philo and Galen praised the medicinal use of olive oil.<sup>102</sup>

The symbolic view sees the oil as a symbol or an aid to faith. Kistemaker says, "oil symbolizes the healing power of the Lord Jesus."<sup>103</sup> Martin says that  $\chi\rho\acute{\iota}\omega$  would have been a better choice to show that the anointing is for religious reasons but the use of  $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\phi\omega$  does not preclude this idea. He also cites the *LXX* use of both  $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\phi\omega$  and  $\chi\rho\acute{\iota}\omega$  for the consecration of priests (Exodus 40:15 and 40:13) to indicate that the application of oil here can be viewed as symbolic.<sup>104</sup> Chemnitz also views the anointing as an "outward sign."<sup>105</sup> Although Lenski holds the medicinal view of the oil spoken of by James he does consider the use of oil spoken of by the apostles in Mark 6:13 as being "for psychological purposes only, as an aid in inducing faith in the pa-

tients.”<sup>106</sup> Jeske also presents the possibility that the oil may have a symbolic purpose. Like Lenski he cites Mark 6:13, where the apostles used oil on their missionary journey. He says, “James may be referring to the use of oil as an attention-getting device in such miraculous healings, performed by leaders in the church.”<sup>107</sup>

The third view is that the oil is sacramental. By medieval times theologians commonly believed that the oil produced the forgiveness of sins although there were differences of opinion as to how this worked. The Franciscans followed Alexander of Hales, Franciscan theologian and teacher at Paris (1170-1245 A.D.), who claimed that Extreme Unction forgave venial sins (less serious sins, which are pardonable without public penance, in contrast to mortal sins—serious sins which if unconfessed cause the loss of eternal salvation). The Dominicans, following Albert the Great, Dominican teacher in Germany and Paris (1200-1280 A.D.), believed that it eliminated the remnants of sin, that is, sinful habits which linger in a person’s soul after sins are committed and which prevent a person from entering heaven.<sup>108</sup> The Council of Trent (1545-1563) did not affirm the Dominican or Franciscan position as binding but did conclude that the power to forgive sin was connected to the Sacrament.<sup>109</sup> The medieval view of anointing held sway until the 20th century. The Sacrament of Anointing with Oil came to be called Extreme Unction (Last Anointing) because it was used as the final sacrament for departing this life. Archbishop Cousins of the Milwaukee Archdiocese asserts that the post-Vatican II view sees the primary purpose of anointing as physical healing rather than forgiveness. He writes, “Accordingly, the forgiveness of sin, which was especially evident in the previous sacramental form, is now perceived as a secondary effect of the Sacrament. Forgiveness of sin is more properly assigned to the Sacrament of Penance which is usually administered before Anointing.”<sup>110</sup> This is obviously a change toward a more Biblical view.

The sacramental view of the oil does not agree with Scripture. James expressly says that the “prayer offered in faith will

make the sick person well” (v. 15). The purely medicinal view seems to be contradicted by the fact that the presbyters are to apply the oil, not just the family or other Christians. A combination of the symbolic and medicinal views seem to fit the best. The oil served as an aid to the faith of the sick person and a reminder of the Lord’s healing power. It was also an opportunity for the Church to minister to the physical needs of the person.

Following the medicinal view of Lenski, we can conclude that the practice of anointing still goes on whenever we provide physical help to those who are ill. Many churches have the practice of bringing dinners over to the home of a person who is recovering from major surgery. Pastors or laymen sometimes minister to the physical needs of the sick.

The medicinal value of oil still has its place in treating the sick today (e.g. Saratoga Ointment). The personal contact brought about between the pastor and parishioner through anointing perhaps has some benefit psychologically for the person. The possibility that the sick person might be misled into believing that the oil possesses magical or miraculous power can be cited as a reason for precluding its use. In any case the important aspect of the ministry to the sick here enjoined is prayer. Martin says,

In a different culture and at a time when medical and clinical practice was different from what we know today, the principles of prayer to God for healing and recovery are illustrated and may still hold a place for the faithful Christian. At the same time the manipulative or therapeutic uses of oil—if that is how we are to understand v. 14—may be said to belong to the outer shell, along with the ministry of the elders who bring the goodwill of the church’s fellowship, while the power of corporate intercession is still a valuable aid to healing, as most Christian groups will readily acknowledge.<sup>111</sup>

Luther, Calvin, Chemnitz and Henry view the anointing with oil as a defunct practice for the contemporary church be-



cause they see the healing referred to in James 5 as miraculous healing. Luther connects it to the miraculous healings done by the apostles in Mark 6 and concludes, "It was a rite of the early church by which they worked miracles on the sick, and which has long since ceased. In the same way Christ, in the last chapter of Mark (16:18), gave to believers the power to pick up serpents, lay hands on the sick, etc."<sup>112</sup> Calvin likewise held that James referred to a special type of charismatic, miraculous healing which God granted to the early church. He also did not view the oil as the mode of healing but as a sign of Christ's work.<sup>113</sup> In describing both the application of oil in Mark 6 by the apostles and that commanded by James Chemnitz says, "Much less does he (Mark) prescribe that this anointing with oil should be performed and preserved in the whole church of the New Testament at all times until the end of the world, but he is describing the gift of healing; it is plain that this, even as other gifts of performing miracles, was temporary and that it ceased after the Gospel had been proclaimed throughout the world."<sup>114</sup> Matthew Henry says, "The sick were to be anointed with oil in the name of the Lord. When miracles ceased, this institution ceased also."<sup>115</sup>

Whether the healing referred to in James is natural or miraculous is not specified, although the healing in Mark 6 certainly was miraculous. The gift of healing which Jesus gave to the apostles and the early church did not in all cases include the application of oil. Mark 16:18 says of the signs accompanying the spread of the gospel that "they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." Acts 19:11-12 tells us that handkerchiefs and aprons that Paul touched were used as vehicles for healing the sick of physical illness and demonic possession. So we see that application of oil to the sick was not a practice observed in every case when people were healed in the New Testament. Anointing was evidently not universally practiced nor required in the early church.

Scripture, as previously mentioned, also reveals that immediate physical healing is not always the Lord's will. Take the Apostle Paul's life, for example. Paul healed a crippled man in

Lystra (Acts 14:8-10). In Philippi he cast out a demon from a fortune-telling slave girl (Acts 16:16-18). He raised a young man named Eutychus from the dead at Troas (Acts 20:7-12). While enroute to Rome to appear before Nero, Paul was bitten by a viper on the island of Malta without any ill effect (Acts 28:1-6). Yet we learn that Paul suffered from a "thorn in the flesh" given him to keep him from being conceited because of the revelations the Lord had given to him. Three times he asked the Lord to remove it, but the Lord refused. (2 Corinthians 12:1-10)

Ultimately we will be healed of all the effects of sickness. Haugen, as we mentioned previously, offers an insightful comment in this regard. Referring to the use of the future (σώσει - will save) in verse 15 he says, "James uses the future tense with no accusative or dative of time to limit the time element. From the words themselves, this time could extend to eternity or it could happen right now . . . God has promised us healing through Christ. And when we believe in that promise we have that healing. We may not enjoy it in its totality now, but it is ours. The prayer of faith shall save us because it is faith in the promise of God given in Christ."<sup>116</sup>

Before concluding this paper we should look briefly at the verses following verse 14. After discussing the physical healing of the sick individual through the prayer of faith James concludes, "If he has sinned, he will be forgiven." Then in verse 16 he adds, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." This connection between sin and sickness is perhaps what prompted the Roman Catholic scholastic theologians and other earlier bishops and theologians to connect the anointing oil with the forgiveness of sins. Certainly we must say that all sickness is the result of sin. God told Adam, "You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

In Jewish literature we find specific ailments connected to specific sins.<sup>117</sup> Undoubtedly specific sins can lead to specific consequences. An alcoholic may suffer liver damage and death

due to alcoholism. A fornicator or adulterer may contract a sexually transmitted disease. In such cases we see a direct connection between specific sin and specific sickness.

This is not always the case. In John 9 the disciples asked Jesus of the man born blind, “Rabbi, who sinned; this man or his parents, that he was born blind.” Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned...but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life” (John 9:1-3). We can also point to the situation Job faced. He lost children, wealth and health not because of a specific sin but because of spiritual warfare in the heavenly places.

Though we must hesitate to connect a specific sin to a specific ailment we should not lose sight of the plain fact that sin and physical illness are connected. If we were not sinners we would not suffer from sickness. If we were not sinners we would not die. Therefore James calls on us to practice confession. He gives two present imperatives, ἐξομολογεῖσθε and εὐχεσθε to indicate that we are to make it a regular practice of confessing our sins and praying for one another. Thus we see the value and necessity of the Office of the Keys.

In 16b James says, “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. ἐνεργουμένη is usually translated as a present middle participle meaning “the prayer is very powerful in its working” but it can be translated as a passive, meaning “the prayer is very powerful when it is energized by the Spirit.”<sup>118</sup>

The effective prayer is that offered by a “righteous man” (δικαίου). Who are “righteous men”? Martin says they are “community member(s) who exhibit the behavior of exemplars committed to doing God’s will.”<sup>119</sup> Both Lenski and Haugen hold to our Lutheran and Scriptural understanding that a “righteous man” is one who is righteous by faith.<sup>120</sup>

Verses 17-18 cite Elijah as an example for us. James says that he was “a man just like (ὁμοιοπάθης) us.” ὁμοιοπάθης means “of like passions.” Lenski asserts that this “refers to suffering and vicissitudes that are incidental to human existence.”<sup>121</sup>

Elijah had the same limitations that you and I do, yet he was a man of faith. He prayed and the heavens withheld their rain for three and one half years. He prayed again and the rain fell. What an encouragement to us to go to God in prayer!

### *Conclusions*

Anointing of the sick with oil as enjoined by James 5 has both a symbolic and medicinal purpose. It represents the healing hand of God and directs the eye of faith to His power. It shows the concern of the Church through its pastors for the physical well being of the afflicted brother or sister. Olive oil was a common medicine in New Testament times. The prayer of God's people for the sick person remains the focal point of the Church's ministry to them. Spiritual healing comes to the person immediately through the forgiveness of sins. Physical healing, though it may not be granted to the person in this life, ultimately will be given as well.

Historically the adoption of anointing as a common practice in the Church may be traced back to the desire of the bishops to offer an orthodox counterpart to the anointing practiced by the Valentinians (ca. 150 A.D) and as a replacement for other pagan healing practices. Efforts of those like Bishop Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444 A.D.) and Bishop Caesarius of Arles (470-542 A.D.) to steer Christians from pagan practices offer historical evidence for this thesis. Innocent I's letter to Bishop Decentius shows us that by the early fifth century the practice of anointing was fairly common. The fact that Decentius questions it may indicate that it had not received universal support in the Church at that time.

By the Middle Ages anointing became firmly entrenched as a sacrament of the Church. The Council of Trent (1545-1563 A.D.) merely affirmed the doctrine that the Church had already held concerning unction. Today the Roman Catholic Church has returned to a more Biblical practice of anointing but has not re-

nounced the doctrine of Trent.

The doctrine and practice of the Orthodox Church, while corresponding more closely to that of the Church Fathers, has been influenced by developments within the Roman Catholic Church. Following Trent, the Orthodox ultimately aligned themselves with the Roman Catholics in the majority of their doctrinal views. Yet their view of holy unction largely escaped the influence of Trent.

The Pentecostal belief that God continues to bless the Church with the charisma of healing has kept the practice of anointing alive in their circles. One wonders what the typical layman's view of the oil is? My conversation with the woman in Bend, Oregon led me to believe that if she didn't believe that miraculous power resided in the oil she at least believed that the whole process of prayer with the application of oil would bring God's miraculous healing power.

Medicinally anointing is still practiced by the Church when we show physical concern for a brother or sister. The symbolic use of oil in the church today has two inherent dangers. The first danger is that the recipient might view the application of oil in a sacramental way and believe that through it he receives spiritual blessing. Secondly, the recipient might have the mistaken idea that the oil conveys miraculous power to heal him.

Three reasons make it clear that anointing with oil should not be a part of the Church's ministry to the sick today. 1) There is no specific institution of the practice of anointing by the Lord Jesus as an ongoing observance. 2) There is no evidence for the regular use of oil in the healing ministry of the early Church. 3) The gift of miraculous healing is not a current gift in the Church today.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of Hebrews and James*, p. 503.

<sup>2</sup> Ralph P. Martin, editor, *Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 48. James*, p. 199. Martin says, "Given our hypothesis of anti-Zealot or anti-nationalist polemic in v. 12, James now sets in direct antithesis to the activism of those who wished to bring about God's kingdom by violent means the teaching on submission (4:7-10). Opposed to the author's 'better way' of acquiescence with the divine will. That will embraces the whole of life, with its extremes of pleasure and pain (v. 13), and all its facets are set in a corporate context. Suffering and sinning form the major pastoral themes, and the antidote to both distressing conditions lies in the practice of prayer to God."

<sup>3</sup> Rev. Mark Jeske, *Commentary on the Catholic Epistles*, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. Paul Haugen, *Show Your Faith by Persevering in Prayer*, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Martos, *Doors to the Sacred: A Historical Introduction to Sacraments in the Catholic Church*, pp. 11 and 36.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 41.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p. 41.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p. 36.

<sup>10</sup> Justo L. Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought, Vol. I & II*, p. 53.

<sup>11</sup> Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent, Part II*, Fred Kramer, trans., p. 653.

<sup>12</sup> Rev. Archbishop William E. Cousins, *Anointing & Pastoral Care of the Sick*, p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 17.

<sup>14</sup> Chemnitz, *Examination*, p. 672.

<sup>15</sup> Martos, *Doors to the Sacred*, p. 373.

- <sup>16</sup> Raymond Etteldorf, *The Soul of Greece*, p. 105.
- <sup>17</sup> Martos, *Doors to the Sacred*, p. 372.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 372, 374, 375. A certain Macarius (300-390 A.D.), who was a monk in Egypt, is said to have cured a paralyzed woman by anointing her and praying over her continuously for twenty days. The monk Pachomius supposedly healed a demon-possessed girl through anointing. John of Lycopolis in Egypt is alleged to have cured people of blindness and fever through anointing. Bishop Martin of Tours (335-397 A.D.) is credited with healing people through the use of prayer and anointing with blessed oil. Rufinus (345-410 A.D.), Presbyter of Aquileia in northern Italy, came to visit hermits living in the desert near Alexandria and witnessed five of them heal the withered body of a man by anointing him all over with oil in the Name of Christ.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 373.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 373-374.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 374.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 375-376. Abbess Monegunde of Tours (d. 570 A.D.) is credited with the gift of healing. Before she died the nuns of her abbey persuaded her to bless oil which they subsequently used to heal people. Miraculous healings were also attributed to Abbot Laumer of Corion and Abbess Austreberta of Pavilly.
- <sup>23</sup> Chemnitz, *Examination*, p. 673.
- <sup>24</sup> Martos, *Doors to the Sacred*, pp. 375-376.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 377-378.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.
- <sup>27</sup> Gonzalez, *Christian Thought, Vol. II*, p. 176.
- <sup>28</sup> Samuel M. Jackson, editor, *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. X*, p. 142.
- <sup>29</sup> F.L. Cross, editor, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 1054.
- <sup>30</sup> Eugene R. Fairweather, editor, *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham*, p. 338.
- <sup>31</sup> Kevin O. Johnson, *Why Do Catholics Do That?*, p. 143.
- <sup>32</sup> Martos, *Doors to the Sacred*, p. 67.

- <sup>33</sup> Cousins, *Anointing & Pastoral Care*, p. 17.
- <sup>34</sup> Martos, *Doors to the Sacred*, p. 384.
- <sup>35</sup> Helmut T. Lehmann, gen. editor and Ross, Abdel, editor, *Luther's Works, Vol. 36, Word and Sacrament II*, p. 123.
- <sup>36</sup> Theodore G. Tappert, trans. & editor, *The Book of Concord*, p. 438.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 118.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 119.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. 211.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 212.
- <sup>41</sup> Martos, *Doors to the Sacred*, p. 110.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid, p. 108.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid, pp. 114, 118, 128.
- <sup>44</sup> Chemnitz, *Examination*, p. 654.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 657. He quotes the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.): "With respect to those who are departing from their bodies, the rule of the ancient law shall be observed that, if someone is by chance departing from his body, he shall not be defrauded of the Viaticum, which he needs for his journey."
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid, p. 665.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid, p. 668.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid, p. 659.
- <sup>49</sup> Martos, *Doors to the Sacred*, pp. 122, 389.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid, pp. 135-138, 390.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid, p. 131.
- <sup>52</sup> George J. Dyer, editor, *An American Catholic Catechism*, p. 131.
- <sup>53</sup> Thomas Bokenkotter, *Essential Catholicism: Dynamics of Faith and Belief*, p. 244.
- <sup>54</sup> Cousins, *Anointing & Pastoral Care*, pp. 3-4.
- <sup>55</sup> John A. Hardon, S.J., *The Question and Answer Catholic Catechism*, pp. 297, 300.
- <sup>56</sup> Rev. Joseph A. Miksch, *Anointing the Sick: Experiencing the Healing Power of Jesus Today*, p. 39.
- <sup>57</sup> Hardon, *The Ques. & Ans. Catholic Catechism*, p. 303.

<sup>58</sup> Cousins, *Anointing & Pastoral Care*, pp. 7-8, 22ff. In the Introductory Rite there is a greeting that includes the sprinkling of the individual with holy water in recognition of his Baptism. The reading of James 5:13-18 and the Sacrament of Penance are also a part of the Introductory Rite. The Liturgy of the Word includes Scripture readings, a brief homily and prayers. The Liturgy of Anointing begins with the laying on of hands in silence. Following a prayer of thanksgiving the oil is applied. As the priest applies oil to the forehead he says, "Through the Holy Anointing may the Lord in His love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit." Likewise in anointing the person's hands the priest prays, "May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up." Either the back of the hands or the palms may be anointed. The concluding liturgy includes the Lord's Prayer and a benediction. Holy Communion may also be celebrated.

<sup>59</sup> F.E. Mayer and Arthur Carl Piepkorn, rev., *The Religious Bodies of America*, p. 17.

<sup>60</sup> Olga Dunlop, trans., *The Living God: A Catechism for the Christian Faith*, Vol. 2, p. 307.

<sup>61</sup> Etteldorf, *The Soul of Greece*, p. 105.

<sup>62</sup> Mayer, *Religious Bodies*, p. 17.

<sup>63</sup> Dunlop, *The Living God*, p. 328.

<sup>64</sup> Michael P. Hamilton, editor, *The Charismatic Movement*, p. 17.

<sup>65</sup> Stanley Burgess and Gary B. McGee, editors, *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, p. 11.

<sup>66</sup> John Osteen, *How to Minister Healing to the Sick*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, p. 12.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>70</sup> Benny Hinn, *Lord, I Need a Miracle*, p. 55.

<sup>71</sup> John Osteen, *How to Minister Healing*, pp. 24-27.

<sup>72</sup> Hinn, *Lord, I Need a Miracle*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, p. 63.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, p. 68.

<sup>75</sup> Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 57, 61. The Assemblies of God, largest of the Pentecostal denominations, defines Baptism in the Spirit this way: "All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the Baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian Church. With it comes the enduement of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of ministry. Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31. This wonderful experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth. Acts 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9." The evidence of this Baptism is defined thusly: "The Baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance. Acts 2:4. The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:4-10, 28), but different in purpose and use."

<sup>76</sup> Benny Hinn, *The Anointing*, pp. 100-105. The three anointings according to Hinn are: the leper's anointing, the priestly anointing and the kingly anointing. The leper's anointing is our coming to faith. Leprosy symbolizes sin from which we are cleansed at conversion. The priestly anointing is the anointing for service which is renewed daily through fellowship with the Lord. Finally the kingly anointing, the most powerful of all, comes through our obedience to the Lord. This anointing gives a believer "high authority" in the Lord such as power over demons. Reception of these anointings is tied to our work of accepting, maintaining fellowship with and obeying Jesus.

<sup>77</sup> Simon J. Kistemaker, editor, *New Testament Commentary, Vol. 15: James and I-III John*, p. 177.

<sup>78</sup> Haugen, *Show Your Faith*, p. 7.

<sup>79</sup> W. Robertson Nicoll and W.E. Oesterley, *The Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. 4*, p. 473.

<sup>80</sup> Haugen, *Show Your Faith*, p. 4.

- <sup>81</sup> Martin, *Word Commentary Vol. 48, James*, p. 206.
- <sup>82</sup> Lenski, *Hebrews and James*, p. 503.
- <sup>83</sup> Martin, *Word Commentary, Vol. 48, James*, p. 206.
- <sup>84</sup> Tappert, *Book of Concord*, p. 331.
- <sup>85</sup> Lehmann, *Luther's Works, Vol. 36*, p. 120.
- <sup>86</sup> Kistemaker, *N.T. Commentary, Vol. 15, James*, p. 177.
- <sup>87</sup> Martin, *Word Commentary, Vol. 48, James*, p. 207
- <sup>88</sup> Lenski, *Hebrews and James*, p. 503.
- <sup>89</sup> Geoffrey W. Bromily, ed., Gerhard Friedrich and Gerhard Kittel, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged*, p. 221.
- <sup>90</sup> Matthew Henry and Rev. Leslie F. Church, editors, *Commentary on the Whole Bible in One Volume by Matthew Henry*, p. 1938.
- <sup>91</sup> Chemnitz, *Examination*, p. 665; Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary*, p. 176; Lenski, *Hebrews and James*, p. 661; Lehmann, *Luther's Works, Vol. 36*, p. 121; Martin, *Word Commentary, Vol. 48*, p. 20.
- <sup>92</sup> In Mark 14:3 and Matthew 26:7 we are told that Mary “poured (κατέχεεν) the perfume on His head.” In Mark 14:8 Jesus says that Mary “poured perfume (μυρίσαι from μυρίζω) on My body beforehand to prepare for My burial.” The related noun μύρον (ointment) is used of the Orthodox Confirmation, Holy Myron. Luke 10:34 speaks of the Good Samaritan using oil for the purpose of soothing the man’s wounds and wine as an antiseptic. The verb ἐπιχέω (pour over or on) is used there. John 9:6, 11 uses the verb ἐπιχρίω where Jesus makes spit and mud to apply to the eyes of the man born blind. Revelation 3:18 uses the verb ἐγχριώ where Jesus counsels the Laodiceans to purchase “salve to put on (ἐγχρισαι) your eyes that you may see.”
- <sup>93</sup> Burgess, *Dictionary of Pentecostal*, p. 11.
- <sup>94</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>95</sup> Bromily, *Theological Dictionary of the NT*, p. 1323.
- <sup>96</sup> Lenski, *Hebrews and James*, p. 663.
- <sup>97</sup> Ibid.

- <sup>98</sup> Martin, *Word Commentary*, Vol. 48, p. 207.
- <sup>99</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>100</sup> Lenski, *Hebrews and James*, p. 503.
- <sup>101</sup> Chemnitz, *Examination*, p. 668.
- <sup>102</sup> Jeske, *Catholic Epistles*, p. 23.
- <sup>103</sup> Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary*, Vol. 15, p. 177.
- <sup>104</sup> Martin, *Word Commentary*, Vol. 48, p. 206.
- <sup>105</sup> Chemnitz, *Examination*, p. 661.
- <sup>106</sup> R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel*, p. 244.
- <sup>107</sup> Jeske, *Catholic Epistles*, p. 23.
- <sup>108</sup> Martos, *Doors to the Sacred*, pp. 381-382.
- <sup>109</sup> Ibid, p. 387.
- <sup>110</sup> Cousins, *Anointing & Pastoral Care*, p. 3.
- <sup>111</sup> Martin, *Word Commentary*, Vol. 48, p. 215.
- <sup>112</sup> Lehmann, *Luther's Works*, Vol. 36, p. 120.
- <sup>113</sup> Martos, *Doors to the Sacred*, p. 385.
- <sup>114</sup> Chemnitz, *Examination*, pp. 661-662.
- <sup>115</sup> Henry, *Matthew Henry Commentary*, p. 1938.
- <sup>116</sup> Haugen, *Show Your Faith*, pp. 6-7.
- <sup>117</sup> Nicoll, *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, p. 475. Nicoll writes, "According to the Rabbinical teaching there are four signs by means of which it is possible to recognize the sin of which a man has been guilty: dropsy is the sign that the sin of fornication has been committed, jaundice that of unquenchable hatred, poverty and humiliation that of pride, liver complaint that of backbiting...Leprosy may be due to one of eleven sins, but most probably to that of an evil tongue."
- <sup>118</sup> Martin, *Word Commentary*, Vol. 48, p. 211.
- <sup>119</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>120</sup> Lenski, *Hebrews and James*, p. 667; Haugen, *Show Me Your Faith*, p. 8.
- <sup>121</sup> Lenski, *Hebrews and James*, p. 669.



# Johann Gerhard, Theologian and Pastor

by Gaylin R. Schmeling

## *The Life of Gerhard*

Johann Gerhard (1582-1637) was one of the important seventeenth century dogmaticians. In fact he was the greatest of the dogmaticians. It is said that Gerhard was third (Luther, Chemnitz, and Gerhard) in the series of Lutheran theologians and after him there was no fourth.

Gerhard was born October 17, 1582, in Quedlinburg, Germany. At the age of fifteen he became very sick and vowed to enter the public ministry if he recovered. In this affliction he found comfort and counsel in his pastor Johann Arndt, who exerted a deep and lasting influence on him. This is seen in his excellent devotional material, much of which has again been made available in English. These writings touch the heart and are filled with pastoral concern. His most important devotional work is *Meditationes Sacrae*. His *Postille* written between 1613 and 1616 is a treasury of sermons which show a true pastor's heart. (Carl Meusel, *Kirchliches Handlexikon*, Vol. II, pp. 740-742)

In 1599 he entered the University of Wittenberg, where he had Leonard Hutter as a teacher. In spite of his original intention he spent two years studying medicine, but in 1603 he resumed his study of theology at Jena. Here he spent a considerable amount of time in the private study of the Holy Scriptures and the church fathers. In December of 1603 he became extremely ill and he believed that he had come to his end. He prepared his final testament which included a detailed confession of faith. This testament in many ways anticipated both his *Loci* and his devotional writings. (Johann Anselm Steiger, "Das Testament and das

Glaubensbekenntnis des todkranken 21-jährigen Johann Gerhard (1603): Kritische Edition und Kommentar," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, Vol. 87, pp. 201-254) After he received his master's degree he moved to Marburg, where he was influenced by Balthasar Mentzer. When Landgrave Maurice of Hesse-Cassel accepted the Reformed faith, Gerhard left Marburg and went back to Jena. He spent a number of years in administrative ecclesiastical work; he was superintendent in Heldburg and later at Coburg. Finally in 1616 at the urging of Elector Johann Georg I of Saxony he became a professor at the University of Jena, where he continued as professor until his death. Here together with Johann Major and Johann Himmel he formed the so-called Johannine Triad of Lutheran orthodoxy at Jena.

On September 19, 1608, he married Barbara Neumeyer who died on May 30, 1611 before they had any children. After a period of mourning he married Mary Mattenberg. She was to be his wife for the next twenty-three years, living until March 30, 1660. Ten children were born to this union, six of whom outlived their father. His son, Johann Ernst Gerhard (1621-1668), became a professor at Jena, following in his father's footsteps.

At a relatively young age Gerhard came to be regarded as the greatest living theologian in Protestant Germany. He was the chief representative of the period of high orthodoxy (1610-1648) in contradistinction to the golden age of Lutheran orthodoxy (1580-1610) and to the silver age of Lutheran orthodoxy (1648-1675). He was called by virtually every university in Germany but he remained at Jena. Gerhard was a prolific writer. With the theological faculty at Jena, he issued countless theological *Gutachten* on diverse matters. His voluminous exegetical, polemical, dogmatic, and practical writings deal with virtually every theological topic. His writings are a true heritage for our generation.

Gerhard was frequently asked to advise the dukes in matters concerning the Thirty Years' War which occurred during his lifetime. With his associate, Johann Major, he met Tilly at the

city gate of Jena and so impressed the general who was about to plunder the city that the general left the city with only a token plunder. Thus he was credited with saving the city. (Robert Scharlemann, *Thomas Aquinas and John Gerhard*, p. 42)

Gerhard, together with Aegidius Hunnius, is remembered for using the terminology “in view of faith” (*intuitu fidei*) in the doctrine of election. This was the terminology that caused such havoc for the Norwegian Synod in the Election Controversy of the nineteenth century. However, it should be noted, as Professor Aaberg indicates, that Gerhard did not teach by this terminology that faith was the cause of one’s election, nor did he ascribe to natural man any responsibility for coming to faith, thus steering clear of synergism. (Theodore Aaberg, *A City Set on a Hill*, p. 17) Also Gerhard is remembered for his implementation of Aristotelian terminology and distinctions in the study of Lutheran dogmatics. He makes use of Aristotelian causation (*causa efficiens, causa formalis, causa materialis, and causa finalis*) in his systematic theology.

In May of 1637 Gerhard fell victim to a high fever. Although he recovered at the time, in August the fever returned. On August 17, 1637, he left this world, trusting in the Savior in whose blood he had been washed through Holy Baptism. (See Cotta’s *Vita of Gerhard in the Preuss Edition of Gerhard’s Loci.*)

### *The Dogmatic Writings of Gerhard*

In dogmatic theology his most significant work was his *Loci Theologici* (1610-1625), whose vast nine volumes—a later edition was published in twenty-three volumes (Cotta Edition)—became the great systematic theology of Lutheran orthodoxy. Here he made use of the synthetic method in his material, proceeding from cause to effect or from principles to conclusions. The articles of faith are dealt with according to order: God, man, sin, redemption, etc. His *Loci* are a comprehensive treatment of the evangelical doctrinal position, based on a particularly wide range

His four-volume *Confessio Catholica* appeared in 1633-1637. In it he sought to refute the objections of contemporary Roman Catholic theology with quotations taken from the Church of Rome's own traditions. The work is similar to the *Catalogus* of Flacius and appears to be based on it. The *Confessio Catholica* inspired a number of similar writings by other authors such as Johann Georg Dorsch. (See also Bengt Hägglund, "Polemics and Dialogue in John Gerhard's *Confessio Catholica*," *Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, pp. 159-172)

His major exegetical work was *Harmony of the Gospels* (*Harmoniae evangelicae Chemnitio-Lyserianae continuatio* [1626-1627]). Here he completed a commentary on the Gospels begun by Martin Chemnitz and continued by Polycarp Leyser. Their work was so popular that the Missouri Synod translated portions of it in the last century.

### *The Devotional (Erbauungsliteratur) Writings of Gerhard*

Gerhard is viewed by many today as a hairsplitting, bone dry seventeenth century dogmatican. This is the case especially among those who do not appreciate the intricacies of the theological thought in his *Loci*. His dogmatic orthodoxy is thought to have taken all the life out of the Lutheran Reformation. However, in this evaluation Gerhard the practical theologian is forgotten. His activity as a pastor and author of devotional literature is overlooked. (See also Johann Anselm Steiger, "Pastoral Care according to John Gerhard," *Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. X, No. 3, pp. 319-339) The devotional (Erbauungsliteratur) writings of Gerhard touch the heart of the reader with the saving Gospel of Christ. The Christian needs an intimate relation with the Savior through the means of grace. One of his predominant themes is **union and communion with God through the life-giving Word and the blessed Sacraments**, as can be seen in his Christmas sermons.

Into His assumed human nature, Christ at the same time placed the fullness of divine grace and truth. If it is to benefit us, then we must partake of the self-same fullness; that takes place through faith (Joh. 1:16). The Lord Christ became man in order that we men might become partakers of the divine nature; if that is to occur, then we must believe, as it is once more stated in Joh. 1:12: **He did give power to become God's children to such as who believe on His Name.** . . . And, the human nature of Christ thus becomes for us a door to deity, just as faith is a door for us to Christ's humanity. (Johann Gerhard, *Seven Christmas Sermons*, pp. 24-25)

Some would see the devotional writings of Arndt, Gerhard, Philipp Nicolai, and Martin Moller as the beginnings of pietism. This can hardly be the case when Gerhard's *Loci* was the standard of Lutheran orthodoxy for generations. Rather, in these writings Gerhard strives to touch the hearts and lives of believers with the objective truths of orthodoxy. As Luther and Arndt before him, he combines theological orthodoxy with what is good in Christian mysticism. In this literature Gerhard makes considerable use of the Lutheran doctrine of the mystical union of the believer with Christ.

Gerhard's most popular devotional work is *Sacred Meditations* (*Meditationes Sacrae*) which he wrote as a student and published in 1607. It consists of fifty-one devotional meditations and has passed through innumerable editions in many languages. It is an excellent volume for personal devotions. The same is true of his *Manual of Comfort*. In still another of his devotional writings, *The Daily Exercise of Piety* (*Exercitium Pietatis*), he connects Song of Solomon 2:14 with the wounded side of the Lord, as did much of the Ancient Church. The dove in the cleft of the rock is the believer who finds refuge in the bloody wounds of the Savior. This connection is quite appropriate when one realizes that the Song of Solomon speaks of the relationship between Christ and His bride the church.

A refuge has been prepared for me in the satisfaction You (Christ) made for my sins. I have a refuge in Your intercession for me at the right hand of the Father. Take flight, O my soul, to the morning light, and as a dove, hide in the clefts of the rock (Sg. Sol. 2:14), that is, take refuge in the wounds of Christ your Savior! Hide in this rock until the wrath of the Lord passes by. And you will find rest in this refuge. You will find protection. You will find acquittal, Amen. (Johann Gerhard, *The Daily Exercise of Piety*, p. 31)

### *The Christmas Sermons of Gerhard*

These sermons are valuable resources for any pastor preaching in the Christmas season. They cut through the fluff and nostalgia of the holiday season and present the real reason for the season, the incarnate God who came for our salvation. An example of this is found in the following quote where Gerhard explains why Jesus was born at night.

Relevant here also is [the point] that Christ was born in the winter time in the darkness of night. [The choice of time] indicates that the entire world was in total darkness and that the people were at the same time in darkness and in the shadow of death; but by this birth a light arose for them from the Lord, as Isaiah testifies in ch. 9, v. 2: **The people who were wandering in darkness see a great Light, and upon those who live in a dark land shines daylight.** Joh. 1:5 – **The Light shines in the darkness.** Before Christ becomes born within us in a spiritual manner, there is nothing but complete darkness in our reason and heart. Also, love is actually grown cold in the same [i.e., in us, our reason and heart]; but when Christ is born therein in a spiritual manner, a light goes on within [us], which simultaneously enlightens [us] to confess God and inflames [us] to love God—as is written in Eph. 5:14 – **Wake up, you who sleep; thus Christ will enlighten you.** (Johann Gerhard, *Seven Christmas Sermons*, p. 7)

*The Passion, Easter, and Pentecost  
Sermons of Gerhard*

In his passion sermons Gerhard shows that the Old Testament is indeed the book of Christ by his voluminous use of Old Testament prophecies and types.

Also appropriate to the historical contemplation of Christ's suffering is the diligent examination of the prophecies and types of the Old Testament which point, in general, to the history of the sufferings, or point especially to specific portions of it, and then compare them with the [passion] history. For since St. Paul testifies in 1 Corinthians 15 that Christ died "according to the Scriptures," it undeniably follows that in the Scriptures of the Old Testament there had to have been a prior proclamation of the suffering and death of Christ. St. Peter even more clearly verifies this in the first chapter of his first epistle: the Spirit of Christ, which was in the prophets, had previously testified to the sufferings which Christ went through. Thus, in the first Gospel promise about the woman's Seed in Gen. 3, it is announced that the hellish snake would sting Him in the heel. This heel-prick is none other than the sufferings of Christ. Psalm 16 says of the Messiah: I must suffer on behalf of you. This Psalm is applied to Christ. In Acts 2 and 13 [and] in Psa. 22 are described the abusive words which the Jews poured out against Christ. Judas' betrayal is prophesied in Psa. 41 and 55, and in Psa. 69 it is announced how Christ was given to drink of gall and vinegar in His great thirst. In Isa. 50 are prophesied the beating and insulting of Christ with which He was blasphemed. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah looks at the whole passion of Christ. In Zec. 11 are mentioned the 30 pieces of silver for which Christ was sold; in Zec. 12, the opening [piercing] of His side. There are similar glorious types of the suffering of Christ in the Old Testament, as, for example, in Joseph, who was sold by his own brothers (Gen. 37); in the fetters of Samson (Jdg. 16); in the offering up of Isaac, who himself carried the

wood (Gen. 22); in the previous lifting up of the serpent (Num. 21); in the Levitical sacrifices; in Jonah, who was in the belly of the whale-fish for three days and three nights (Jonah 2); in the opening of Adam's side as he slept (Gen. 2); in the Passover lamb (Exo. 12)—even as the Scriptures of the New Testament refer to certain of these same prophecies and types with clear words, [cf.] Mat. 12, John 3 and 19, Heb. 9. (Johann Gerhard, *An Explanation of the History of the Suffering and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ*, pp. 7-8)

As he expounds the second Adam theme Gerhard connects the creation, John 19:34, the Sacraments, and the bride of Christ, the church. As Adam's bride was taken out of his side while he slept (Genesis 2:21), so the second Adam's bride, the bride of Christ, is cleansed and formed through the waters of Baptism, the blood of the Lord's Supper, and His Word which is spirit and life. (I John 5:8) This corresponds to what issued from the Savior's wounded side during His three-day sleep in death. (John 19:34) Therefore, Jesus can say of His bride, the church, as Adam said of Eve, the mother of our race: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." (Genesis 2:23) The church is so intimately united with Christ through the means of grace that she is one flesh with Him. (Ephesians 5:32) Eve was the mother of the race, but the church is the real mother of the living (Genesis 3:20), those who have life in Christ. Baptism is the watery womb of the mother church where we were born as the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. She continually gives birth to new children of God. Gerhard states it this way:

You have a type of how the Lord Christ was to have His side opened up by a spear in Adam, who had his side opened by God, and from the rib which was taken from him was crafted a woman. Thus, as Christ fell into death's sleep on the cross, from His opened side flowed blood and water—the two Holy Sacraments—from which the Church, Christ's Bride, was built up. (Johann Gerhard, *An Explanation of the History of the Suffering and*



*Death of our Lord Jesus Christ*, p. 30)

### ***Baptism and the Lord's Supper in the Writings of Gerhard***

Gerhard's book on Baptism and the Lord's Supper is an excellent overview of the scriptural and confessional doctrine of the Sacraments. In volume I concerning Baptism he clearly teaches that Baptism works faith in Jesus as the Savior in the hearts of infants. (Johann Gerhard, *A Comprehensive Explanation of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper* (1610), p. 3) The connection is made between Christ's Baptism and our Baptism:

Christ, with the touching of his most holy body in the water of holy Baptism, sanctified water for this Sacrament. He also came to Baptism as the Lamb of God on whom was laid the sins of the entire world. As our stand-in, He let Himself be washed from sin and [He] placed into the water of holy Baptism all of His merits and righteousness so that we might thereby become clothed as with a garment of salvation. (*Baptism and Lord's Supper*, p. 43)

Throughout his book on Baptism Gerhard explains the great blessings of this Sacrament.

For since Baptism is (as previously stated) a bath of regeneration and is (as will follow later) an effectual means for the forgiveness of sin, [that is] for sonship with God and for eternal life, so also must faith be ignited and awakened through holy Baptism (understand that this refers to the hearts of those who do not stubbornly resist the working of the Holy Spirit), since the entire Scripture testifies that no one can be regenerated or receive forgiveness of sins nor become a child of God or inherit eternal salvation without faith. On account of that, Baptism is not ordinary water, but the Word of God is also there, making it the means through

which people are regenerated. (*Baptism and Lord's Supper*, p. 76)

Gerhard enumerates many Old Testament pictures of the Lord's Supper. Melchizedek's offering of bread and wine to Abraham, the father of believers, points to the meal of salvation of our great High Priest Jesus Christ. Pictures of the Supper are seen in the Passover lamb, the manna in the wilderness, the tree of life in the Garden of Eden, and in Elijah's food of I Kings 19:6-8. (*Baptism and Lord's Supper*, pp. 212-218)

Gerhard assumes that the earthly elements in the Supper will be bread and wine and no substitute. He argues, for example, that one is not at liberty to use dried fish in Norway for the Sacrament because bread was not available. This is contrary to God's command and institution of the Supper. (*Baptism and Lord's Supper*, p. 229)

According to Gerhard the Words of Institution should not be omitted in the Lord's Supper celebration. It is through these words that the presence of Christ's body and blood are effected in the Supper.

Yet it is necessary in the administration of the holy Supper that the Words of Institution be repeated . . . Accordingly, when the preacher [pastor] who administers the holy Supper speaks the Words of Institution over the bread and wine in public assembly, it is not a mere historical recitation of what Christ did. Rather, he shows thereby . . . that . . . he therewith sets aside the bread and wine that is present for this holy Sacrament, so that it no longer shall be simple [plain] bread and wine, but the means through which Christ's body and blood are distributed. (*Baptism and Lord's Supper*, pp. 224-225)

Gerhard never tires of pointing out the great blessings of the Holy Supper. This makes his study of the Supper truly devotional and a benefit for all who read it.

Accordingly, we say that by virtue of the institution, the holy Supper was established by Christ and was used by the believers chiefly to this end: that the promise of the gracious forgiveness of sins should be sealed and our faith should thus be strengthened. Then, too, we are incorporated into Christ and are thus sustained to eternal life; in addition, subsequently, other end results and benefits of the holy Supper come to pass. (*Baptism and Lord's Supper*, p. 369)

### *Conclusion*

We are very grateful for the new publication of these major works of Gerhard. These publications are a truly Lutheran source of devotional literature for our people. They are the spiritual nourishment that our church needs as we enter the twenty-first century. These may be obtained from the Bethany College Bookstore at 1-800-944-1722.

Johann Gerhard, *A Comprehensive Explanation of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper (1610)*, Translated by Elmer M. Hohle, Malone, Texas: Repristination Press, 2000, 499 pages, \$33.50.

Johann Gerhard, *An Explanation of the History of the Suffering and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Translated by Elmer M. Hohle, Malone, Texas: Repristination Press, 1999, 329 pages, \$19.99.

Johann Gerhard, *Eleven Easter and Pentecost Sermons*, Translated by Elmer M. Hohle, Decatur, Illinois: Repristination Press, 1997, 144 pages, \$18.00.

Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, Translated by C.W. Heisler, Decatur, Illinois: Repristination Press, 1998, 302 pages, \$12.95.

Johann Gerhard, *Seven Christmas Sermons*, Translated by Elmer M. Hohle, Decatur, Illinois: The Johann Gerhard Institute, 1996, 99 pages, \$11.00.

Johann Gerhard, *The Daily Exercise of Piety*, Translated by M.C. Harrison, Fort Wayne, Indiana: Repristination Press, 1994, 98 pages, \$20.00.

*John Gerhard's Manual of Comfort, Especially for the Severely Ill*, Translated by John Drickamer, New Haven, Missouri: Christian News, 1997, \$6.50.

## Book Review: Justification – Am I Good Enough for God?

by John A. Moldstad, Jr.

Rolf Preus, *Justification – Am I Good Enough for God?* Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000, Pamphlet. 27 pp.

Order from our Bethany College Bookstore  
at 1-800-944-1722. Price: \$2.75

ELS Pastor Rolf Preus has written an excellent pamphlet on the *Hauptartikel* of Holy Scripture. All of the chapters, except for number 6, have appeared earlier in print in the *Lutheran Sentinel*, January–June of 1999. Throughout the pamphlet Preus sets forth the biblical doctrine of justification, both objective and subjective, and shows how the true Lutheran church has acknowledged its preeminence in its confessional writings. The pamphlet also exposes the fallacies of the alleged 1999 agreement between the Lutheran World Federation and the Vatican, “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification” (JDDJ). In chapter 6, “Justification and Rome,” Preus especially asserts that “a confessional Lutheran may not in good conscience subscribe to the JDDJ. It does not even attempt to prove that its doctrine is the doctrine of Holy Scriptures” (p. 23).

Are you looking for meaty material for your Bible class? This new NPH booklet will serve well as a handy seven week Bible class series on the crucial doctrine which drives all other scriptural doctrines and shapes all aspects of the Christian life. Your congregation truly will be edified by purchasing copies in bulk form and then distributing a pamphlet to every parishioner! Please contact our bookstore at the number above.

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