

Foreword

In the Christmas season, we celebrate the three-fold birth of Christ. The first birth is the fact that He is the only-begotten Son of the Father from all eternity, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father. This is the eternal generation of the Son. His second birth, which we especially consider in the Christmas season, is His birth from the womb of the Virgin Mary, both true God and true man in one person. His third birth is the truth that Christ is born in us by faith through the watery womb of Baptism so that we can receive all the blessings of Christ's incarnation. This is the point of the homily entitled *The Three-fold Birth of Christ*.

According to Colossians 1:15, Jesus Christ is the “firstborn over all creation” (NIV). The proper understanding of this phrase is vital to Christology. Prof. Michael K. Smith of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary addresses this phrase in *Colossians 1:13-20 with Special Emphasis on πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως in 1:15*.

The Rev. Bruce Wilmot Adams of Glengowrie, South Australia, has written an article entitled *Saint Athanasius—His Timeless Testimony*. This article reminds us of the valiant confession of this great hero of faith. He stood against the world, confessing that the second person of the Trinity is of the same substance as the first person of the Trinity.

Sacerdotalism is a viewpoint that has arisen at various times in the life of the church. According to this concept, the laity can establish a proper relationship with God only through priests or the clergy. The Rev. Paul Zager discusses this concept in his essay, *Sacerdotalism: Its Effect on Lutheranism Today*. The Rev. Zager is pastor at Holton Lutheran Church in Holton, Michigan, and is a member of the Doctrine Committee.

Preaching is essential to the Lutheran proclamation of the Gospel. Our Lutheran Confessions remind us that good preaching is essential to the life of the church (Ap XXIV, 50). In his essay *The Use of Emotion in Preaching*, Dr. Steven Reagles considers the place of emotion in Lutheran preaching. Dr. Reagles teaches at Bethany Lutheran College.

There is little information concerning Lutheranism of the

seventeenth century in the English language. *Lutheran Orthodoxy Under Fire: An Exploratory Study of the Syncretistic Controversy and the Consensus Repetitus Fidei Vere Lutheranae* was penned as an exploratory study of the Electoral Saxon *Consensus Repetitus*, a Lutheran confession against Lutheran Syncretism and a reaffirmation of the Augsburg Confession. It is written by Timothy Schmeling, a doctoral candidate in historical theology. He is currently researching the development and propagation of the *Consensus Repetitus* for his doctoral dissertation.

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Homily on the Three-Fold Birth of Christ

by Gaylin R. Schmeling

Prayer: Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child, Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled, Within my heart, that it may be A quiet chamber kept for Thee (ELH 123:13).

Text: *He shall cry to Me, “You are my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.” Also I will make him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. My mercy I will keep for him forever, and My covenant shall stand firm with him. His seed also I will make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven.* (Psalm 89:26–29)

A man who owned a “Rent-a-Santa” business gave his employees strict advice: “When children sit on your lap, you can talk about many things, *but do not ever promise them anything!* You can’t guarantee delivery. This will cause these children to have a disappointing Christmas and holiday season.” Christmas with God, however, is totally opposite. His promises are always fulfilled. God always delivers. Through His prophets, He promised the birth of the Savior and He delivered on the most holy night. Then in this Christmas season we celebrate the **three-fold birth of Christ**.

I. His first birth is His eternal generation from the Father. According to the great Lutheran theologian Johann Gerhard, in the Christmas season the Scripture holds before us a three-fold birth of Christ. “The first is His eternal divine birth from the heavenly Father. The second is the physical birth by which He, in the fullness of time, was born of Mary as true Man. The third is the spiritual birth by which He become born in the hearts of believers. The first takes place from everlasting to everlasting, it has no beginning or ending. The second occurred in the fullness of time. The third happens daily” (J. Gerhard, *Seven Christmas Sermons*, p. 85).

From all eternity before all worlds, the second person of the Holy Trinity was in the relationship of a Son to God the Father, the first person of the Holy Trinity. He is the only-begotten of the Father from all eternity. He was always born of the Father so that He could say in our text, “You are my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.” There never was when He was not, contrary to the heretic Arius who said that the second person had a beginning. Thus we confess in the Nicene Creed that He is “God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, Begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father by Whom all things were made.” He is the only begotten of the Father before all worlds. We refer to this as the **eternal generation of the Son.**

He who was God before all worlds and who will be unto the ages of ages, created the world and all that it contains. This one true God is the triune God. The Father is unbegotten (John 1:1) and is the source of the Godhead. The Son is not created but begotten. He was always born of the Father before all ages (Psalm 2:7; John 1:14). The Holy Spirit is neither created nor begotten, but is spirated or breathed out. He proceeds from the Father and the Son (John 15:26; Romans 8:9; Galatians 4:6). This is the truth that we proclaim in Paul Gerhardt’s hymn:

The Father hath the Son begot,
 Firstborn of ev’ry creature;
 The Son took our weak flesh, but not
 Our sinfulness of nature;
 Both from the Father and the Son
 The Holy Ghost proceedeth
 From all eternity; yet none
 In might and pow’r exceedeth;
 All equal, coeternal.

(ELH 405:3)

II. His second birth is His physical birth from the womb of the blessed Virgin becoming true man. In eternity he was born without a mother and in time He is born without a human father for God was his Father as He says in the text, “You are my Father, My God.” The

second person became a man not by changing into humanity, not by the conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking manhood into God. The second person assumed into Himself a perfect human nature from the flesh of Mary, which never subsisted alone, so that the natures are so intimately united as to form one undivided, indivisible person in Christ. Thus we can say that from the womb of the Virgin God was born. She is indeed the mother of God.

But why did God become man? The whole human race was lost in Adam's fall. We were all in Adam in seed and thus his sins infects us all (Romans 5:12). We were going headlong to eternal destruction.

Even now we feel that corruption in our old sinful flesh, for the good that we want to do we don't do, but the evil that we don't want to do that we do (Romans 7:19). We continue to do evil things, even though we know that these things will hurt ourselves and those around us. We are filled with hatred and jealousy, embittering our lives and others. We ignore our mate and children, indulging our every lust and passion, destroying our happy home. We worship the almighty dollar, wearing out our bodies trying to amass more and more, and still we are never satisfied and work ourselves into an early grave. We spend our leisure time gossiping and ripping apart even those who are to be one with us in the body of Christ. The bread of life, the Word and Sacrament, which alone can save our immortal souls, we tire of and trample underfoot. What a wretched thing our natural sinful condition is.

Yet God became man in the incarnation to raise our lost and fallen race. Let this picture explain: In the Pacific Northwest, there are a large number of slimy beasts, officially known as pulmonate gastropods. But no matter what we call them, a slug is a slug, a disgusting, ugly creature that hangs around in damp, dark places. I can't imagine anyone willing to become a slug. Who would exchange a human body for the banana body of a slug? Who would trade advanced intelligence for a slug brain? Walking for oozing? But what if all slugs were doomed if a human did not become a slug and give his life in their place? Would that make the change more appealing? Would people line up to offer themselves on behalf of slugs? I doubt it very much. But thanks be to God that this is exactly

what happened in the incarnation. He took our slug form, our worm-like being, so that we could live with Him forever in heaven's fair home.

Christ became poor and lowly to raise us to His divine glory, eternal life in heaven. In the incarnation Christ took upon Himself our dying flesh so that, through unity with His divinity, He might conquer sin, death and all our foes in that flesh and make us partakers in His divine nature as the sons of God with an eternal existence (Galatians 4:5; 2 Peter 1:4). He partook in our suffering, death, and hell so that we may partake in His glory, life, and heaven, a wonderful exchange (*Der fröhliche Wechsel*). That heavenly treasure, won for all through His incarnation culminating in His great passion, was announced and offered to all by His glorious resurrection in a forensic act of justification. The whole world was declared the innocent sons of God.

The most dramatic gesture of love began in the womb of the Virgin when the Son of God took the poverty of our humanity and gave us in exchange the riches of His divinity as a share in the divine nature (2 Corinthians 8:9; 2 Peter 1:4). 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]). He was born the son of man that we might be reborn as the sons of God.

III. His third birth is the truth that Christ was born in us by faith through the watery womb of Baptism so that we can receive all the blessings of Christ's incarnation. Johann Gerhard states, "The bodily birth of Christ from Mary took place for the sake of this spiritual birth; that is, God's Son became a Man so that we through faith in Him become children of God. ... By the Spirit's power, Mary conceived Christ and gave birth to Him; by the Spirit's power, we are born again through water and the Word" (J. Gerhard, *Seven Christmas Sermons*, pp. 86,88).

As the babe was born true man from the womb of the Virgin, so He is born in us in the watery womb of Baptism giving us rebirth as the sons of God. Here faith in the Christ-child as the Savior was worked in our hearts, we were born again and the Child made His

manger in us. In fact the entire Trinity made its dwelling within us (John 14:22–24). That manger is daily renewed in our hearts as we make use of the means of His coming, Holy Word and Blessed Sacrament.

There is wonderful comfort in the fact that Christ has been born in us by faith, that He has made His manger in our hearts. Because He has united Himself with us, we too can cry out to God, “You are my Father, my God and the rock of my salvation,” as Jesus says in our text. We have the certainty in this Christmas season, with its fleeting earthly joys, that we have true joy in Him who dwells in us, never leaving us nor forsaking us.

Regardless of your difficulty, don’t despair! This holy night offers hope! Regardless of your burden there is hope. The Child in the manger, the little Lord Jesus, is the Almighty God. He became poor and lowly to raise us to His divine glory. He died to give us life and has made our heart His manger. If He loved us that much, then He will be with us in all the other problems of life, working all for our good. Because He shared this life with its struggles and toils, trials and temptations, He can sympathize with us and strengthen us to be overcomers. That wonderful strength He offers us in His life-giving Word and blessed Sacraments. Here, He gives us the power to face each problem of life and to do all through Him. Thus we pray with the hymnist, Paul Gerhardt:

This only, Lord, I humbly pray,
 O grant it, dearest Savior,
 That Thou wouldst dwell in me this day
 And here abide forever.
 So let me be Thy cradle blest.
 Come! Come, within my heart to rest,
 My precious Joy and Treasure!

(ELH 129:5)

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Colossians 1:13-20 With Special Emphasis on πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως in 1:15

by Michael K. Smith

I. Brief Introduction to Colossians

City of Colossae

Colossae was a small town in the Lycus River valley, approximately 125 miles east of Ephesus. The native population was Phrygian, but included many Greek colonists and also Jews. The Lycus Valley was known for (1) Phrygian wool – the volcanic ground made for very fertile soil and thus excellent meadows for sheep to graze, and (2) dyes – the Lycus River had many chalky deposits. Neighboring towns to Colossae were Hierapolis and Laodicea, both of which also had churches (4:13). Colossae had been the largest of the three cities, but since the Via Sebaste¹ bypassed it, it became the smallest. In fact, this is the smallest place to which Paul addresses any of his letters.

Church of Colossae

The church at Colossae was not founded by Paul (2:1; the other church which he did not found to which he addresses a letter is Romans). There is no mention of the Colossian church in Acts. It is likely that the church was founded by native Colossian Epaphras (1:8; 4:12-13). The church could have been founded during Paul's stay in Ephesus (Ac 19:1, 8-10). The church here would have been predominantly Gentile in origin.

The Occasion for Writing

When Epaphras came to Paul with a report about the work in Colossae (1:4, 7-8), he brought good news and bad news. The good news was that the Gospel was bearing fruit as evidenced by the Colossians' growth in faith and love (1:3-7). The bad news was the appearance of false teaching that had distorted the pure message of the Gospel.

Since Paul does not attack this false teaching as such but rather makes strong assertions which seem designed to counteract it, it is hard to pin down precisely the details of this false teaching (the “Colossian heresy”). However, we can see the following elements of this particular false teaching.

(1) Jewish elements: there was an emphasis on the need to observe particular ceremonial laws (circumcision, dietary laws, and holy days – 2:11-14, 16-17).

(2) Pagan elements: evidently an incipient form of Gnosticism had taken root, including emphasis on: (a) salvation by “knowledge,” not faith, and that this knowledge was open only to a select group of initiates. Martin Franzmann comments,

The new teaching called into question and obscured the unique greatness of the Christ and the complete sufficiency of his atonement...[It] would, so the new teachers claimed, carry the Colossian Christians beyond their rudimentary Christianity to fullness and perfection.²

This new teaching also emphasized (b) that matter is evil and spirit alone is good. This affected the doctrine of creation (eons, emanations, angel worship; 1:16, 2:9, 15, 18), the doctrine of the person of Jesus (denial of his incarnation or of his deity; 1:19, 2:9), and a person’s approach to life (either strict asceticism [2:20-23] or libertinism [3:5ff.]).

(3) “Christian” element: different meanings were given to Christian terminology (2:8), resulting in Christ being dethroned and denied.

Place and date of writing

Most likely Paul wrote this letter while he was imprisoned in Rome, ca. AD 60-62.

Contents

A workable basic outline of Colossians:³

Theme: Christ is Sufficient (1:18; 2:9; 3:11)

I. The supremacy of Christ (ch. 1)

II. Warnings against legalistic and ascetic errors (ch. 2)

III. Put to death the old and put on the new; A table of duties (ch. 3)

IV. Concluding matters (ch. 4)

Paul relates much of the same information in Colossians as he does in Ephesians. Goodspeed states, “Three-fifths of Ephesians is reflected in Colossians.”⁴ In Colossians, Paul emphasizes Christ as the head of the body, while in Ephesians he emphasizes the church as the body of Christ.⁵

II. Translation of vss. 13-20 (All definitions of Greek fr. BDAG)

(13) ὃς ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκοτους καὶ μετέστησεν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ,

(13) who rescued us [out of/from] the domain [sphere in which power is exercised – BDAG 6] of the darkness and transferred [us] into the kingdom of his beloved Son,

- ❖ ἐρρύσατο – aor mid (dep) act 3 sg fr. ῥύομαι; *saved, rescued, delivered, preserved* (to rescue from danger)
- ❖ μετέστησεν – aor act ind 3 sg fr. μεθίστημι; *removed, transferred* (transfer from one place to another)

(14) ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν·

(14) in (connection with?) whom we have (the) redemption, the forgiveness of sins;

(15) ὃς ἐστὶν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως,

(15) who is [the] {living image/icon} of the {unseen/invisible} God, [the] *firstborn* of every creature/created thing

- ❖ εἰκὼν – nom f sg fr. εἰκῶν; *living image* (that which has the same form as something else)
- ❖ ἀοράτου – adj gen m sg fr. ἀόρατος; *unseen, invisible* (pertaining to not being subject to being seen)

(16) ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὰ ὄρατὰ καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα, εἴτε θρόνοι εἴτε κυριότητες εἴτε ἄρχαὶ εἴτε ἐξουσίαι· τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται·

(16) because in (connection with) him all things in heaven and on the earth were created, the {seen/visible} things and the {unseen/invisible} things, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or (transcendent) authorities; all things have been created through him and for him;

- ❖ κυριότητες – nom f sg fr. κυριότης; *dominions, bearers of the ruling power* (a special class of angelic powers; cf. also Ep 1:21)
- ❖ ἔκτισται – pf pass ind 3 sg fr. κτίζω; *have been created* (to bring something into existence)

(17) καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν πρὸ πάντων καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν,

(17) and he is {earlier than/before//above} all things and all things {exist/hold together} in (connection with) him,

- ❖ συνέστηκεν – pf act ind 3 sg fr. συνίστημι; *continue, endure, exist, hold together* (to come to be in a condition of coherence); also poss. *consist*

(18) καὶ αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος τῆς ἐκκλησίας· ὃς ἐστιν ἀρχή, πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, ἵνα γένηται ἐν πᾶσιν αὐτὸς πρωτεύων,

(18) and he is the head of the body, the church (apposition); who is [the] beginning, [the] *firstborn* (out) of the dead, in order that he might {be first/have first place} in (the sphere of) everything,

- ❖ πρωτεύων – pres act ptc nom m sg fr. πρωτεύω; *be first, have first place* (to hold the highest rank in a group)

(19) ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι

(19) because in (the sphere of) him all the fullness resolved to dwell

- ❖ εὐδόκησεν – aor act ind 3 sg fr. εὐδοκέω; *consented, determined, resolved* (to consider something as good and therefore worthy of choice)
- ❖ κατοικῆσαι – aor act inf fr. κατοικέω; *to live, dwell, reside, settle [down]* (to live in a locality for any length of time)

(20) καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν,
εἰρηνοποιήσας διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ, [δι' αὐτοῦ]
εἴτε τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εἴτε τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

(20) and through him to reconcile all things in {himself/his own person}, having made peace through the blood of his cross, [through him] whether the things on [the] earth or the things in heaven.

- ❖ ἀποκαταλλάξαι – aor act inf fr. ἀποκαταλλάσσω; *to reconcile*
- ❖ εἰρηνοποιήσας – aor act ptc nom m sg fr. εἰρηνοποιέω (hapax); *having made peace* (to cause a right or harmonious relationship)

III. Concentration on vss. 15, 18

The context of these verses

These verses, especially vss. 15-20, appear in the section which emphasizes Christ's supremacy over all things. Keep in mind one aspect of the heresy which Paul is addressing: the denial

of Christ's deity (see above). It is imperative that Paul make very clear the ultimate supremacy of Christ Jesus, especially regarding his divine nature (v. 15). Let there be no doubt: Jesus is fully God! The sufficiency of Christ's salvific work is also contingent upon his divinity (v.20).

The structure of vs. 15-20

Co 1:15-20 is generally considered to be in the form of a "hymn."⁶ Paul presents this hymn in two quasi-parallel parts, 15-18a and 18b-20. The general pattern of this parallelism is:

ὅς ἐστιν ...	who is...
πρωτότοκος ...	the firstborn ...
ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ... τὰ πάντα/πάν ...	because in him ... all things/all ...
δι' αὐτοῦ ... εἰς αὐτόν ...	through him ... for/unto him ... ⁷

πρωτότοκος in v. 15

Prior to the writing of the LXX, πρωτότοκος is not used and even then is rare in non-biblical usage.⁸ In such usage πρωτότοκος designated the "firstborn" or "heir apparent" (BDAG). The translators of the LXX generally used πρωτότοκος for the Hebrew בְּכוֹר. However, at times בְּכוֹר could express "the love and regard which God shows a man."⁹

The word πρωτότοκος appears in both the plural and singular in the New Testament. In the singular it always refers to Jesus Christ.¹⁰ At least once it is used to describe Jesus regarding his birth order according to his human nature, in Lk 2:7 (and Mt 1:25 [v.l.]). The other uses "pertain to having special status associated with a firstborn" (BDAG). These uses (other than the two at hand) are:

Ro 8:29 – "Because whom he foreknew, also he predetermined (to be) similar form of the likeness of his Son, in order that he might be *firstborn* in connection with many brothers...."¹¹ Here πρωτότοκος is used "as the firstborn of a new humanity which is to be glorified, as its

exalted Lord is glorified” (BDAG).

He 1:6 – “And again, when he brings the *firstborn* into the world, he says, ‘Let all God’s angels worship him’” (ESV).

Re 1:5a – “...and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the *firstborn* of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth” (ESV).

What are we to make of πρωτότοκος in v. 15? The understanding of the modifier πάσης κτίσεως is imperative to arrive at a proper Christology. Since κτίσεως lacks the article and is singular, we will classify it as a definite noun being used in a distributive manner¹² (thus the translation, “every creature/created thing”). That Christ is not simply one among any of these created things is also evident from vss. 16-17 where Paul differentiates him from what he created.

Πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως, while generally understood in the early church as a reference to the pre-eminence of Christ Jesus,¹³ became the center of controversy beginning in the fourth century AD. Arius’ views made it necessary for the church to consider more closely this phrase and its Christological import. Was Jesus fully God *and* fully man? Was it biblically accurate to say of Christ (specifically, the Logos) as did Arius, “there was a time when he was not”?¹⁴ Arius insisted that Christ was a created being. He and his followers misinterpreted particular passages of Scripture which they believed bolstered their view. Co 1:15 was one of the primary verses used by Arius to show Christ was created.

In the case of 1:15, the Arians construed the phrase πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως as though the genitive πάσης κτίσεως were partitive, interpreting the phrase to mean that Christ was the first (and most eminent) part of everything that was created. Hence, while the heretics would acknowledge Christ as one who was over all other created things, they insisted, in contrast to the orthodox, that Christ was a part of God’s creation, rather than the Creator of it and one who was to be distinguished from it.¹⁵

In the ensuing battle the orthodox realized their former approach to this phrase was not sufficient to combat Arianism. Instead of continuing to use this phrase to emphasize the pre-eminence of Christ, the orthodox began looking to it as substantiation for the incarnation of Christ.¹⁶ The pre-eminence of Christ is already obvious from the context. For example, v. 16 states the reason why Jesus is πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως: “because in him all things in heaven and on the earth were created....”

Paul also stresses the equality of the incarnate Christ with God in the beginning of v. 15: “who is [the] {*living image/icon*} of the {unseen/invisible} God....” This phrase corroborates what the Nicene Creed said of Jesus Christ, that he is “of one substance (ὁμοούσιος) with the Father.” Gregory of Nazianzus stated,

He is called “image” because he is of one substance with the Father; he stems from the Father and not the Father from him, it being the nature of an image to copy the original and to be named after it. But there is more to it than this. The ordinary image is a motionless copy of a moving being. Here we have a living image of a living being, indistinguishable from its original to a higher degree than Seth from Adam [Gen 1:26] and any earthly offspring from its parents. Beings with no complexity to their nature have no points of likeness or unlikeness. They are exact replicas, identical rather than like.¹⁷

Paul also emphasizes that the *incarnate* Christ is also equal to the Father in v. 19 when he states “in him all the fullness resolved to dwell.” Πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα refers to the same “fullness” of 2:9 (“For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily....”).

Keep in mind one aspect of the occasion of Paul’s writing: the “Colossian heresy,” part of which de-emphasized or denied the deity of Christ. Thus Paul believed it necessary to emphasize Christ’s deity early in his letter.

πρωτότοκος in v. 18

A proper understanding of how πρωτότοκος is used in v. 18 also aids in the understanding of its use in v. 15. Paul states, ...ὃς ἐστὶν ἀρχή, πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν... (who is [the] beginning, [the] *firstborn* (out) of the dead). As Christ is the *firstborn* of every

created thing, meaning that he brought every created thing into existence, so also he is the *firstborn* of the dead, meaning that he brought about the resurrection to life (cf. also Ro 8:29).

Athanasius ties these two uses (1:15, 18) of πρωτότοκος together:

Not then because he was from the Father was he called “Firstborn,” but because in him the creation came to be; and as before the creation he was the Son, through whom was the creation, so also before he was called the Firstborn of the whole creation, the Word himself was with God and the Word was God [Jn 1:1]. ...If then the Word also were one of the creatures, Scripture would have said of him also that he was Firstborn of other creatures; but in fact, the saints’ saying that he is “Firstborn of the whole creation” demonstrates that the Son of God is other than the whole creation and not a creature.... He is called “Firstborn among many brothers” because of the relationship of the flesh, and “Firstborn from the dead” because the resurrection of the dead is from him and after him.¹⁸

Such an understanding of πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν parallels that of the description of Jesus in 1 Co 15:20, that he is “the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (ESV).¹⁹ The emphasis of πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν in v. 18 is on the human nature of Christ, since his divine nature would not need to be resurrected.

IV. Application

Obviously the proper understanding of πρωτότοκος in v. 15 (and v. 18) was vital in the Christological controversies of the early church. Had Athanasius and the other orthodox theologians not sufficiently counteracted Arius’ false view of this verse, biblical Christology might have been sacrificed on the altar of Reason. The clear teaching of Scripture always prevails and is revealed when man sets his reason aside (1 Co 1:25).

Are there any modern-day applications we might make of this verse, specifically, of πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως? Christ Jesus remains πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως. Thus he remains fully God, all-powerful and all-protective of his people. His creative power

remains in force as he keeps the universe operating in its present form (Jb 12:10, Ac 17:28). The God proclaimed by Scripture is the one true God (Is 45:6).

Christ Jesus also remains fully human. God considers the salvific work he performed to be sufficient and applicable to us (2 Co 5:21), his brothers (Ro 8:16-17). The assurance of our resurrection from the dead is bolstered to the highest degree knowing that the God-man paved the way himself.

Naturally we still look to v. 15 to fight modern Christological heresies, whether they be more overt (such as those of the Jehovah's Witnesses or Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints) or slightly more subtle (such as those of many mainline Protestant church bodies whose Christology has become abysmally weak). Since there is nothing new under the sun (Ec 1:9), the bold proclamation of Christ Jesus' true identity—the πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως and πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν—will always be necessary in the church militant.

αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα καὶ νῦν καὶ εἰς ἡμέραν αἰῶνος (2 Pe 3:18).

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Endnotes

1. The Via Sebaste was a Roman highway built in 6 BC. It connected the interior of Asia Minor with the coast.

2. *The Word of the Lord Grows*, p. 124.

3. David Valleskey, *Class Notes from Introduction to NT 116 – Letters of Paul*, n.d., p. 44.; cf. also Paul E. Deterding, *Colossians*, p. 15.

4. Quoted in Valleskey, p. 44.

5. Valleskey, p. 44.

6. E.g., cf. Larry R. Helyer, “Arius Revisited: The Firstborn Over All Creation (Col 1:15),” p. 61; and Deterding, pp. 47ff.

7. Deterding, p. 47.

8. Gerhard Friedrich, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* vol. VI, p. 871 (hereafter referred to as TDNT).

9. TDNT VI: 876.

10. *Ibid.*

11. Unless otherwise noted, Scripture translations are the author’s.

12. Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, p. 253.

13. Deterding, p. 52: “...the fathers of the early centuries emphasized more that πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως ... was a reference to the eternal Logos more than to the incarnate Christ.”

14. Athanasius, “The Deposition of Athanasius,” p. 70.

15. Deterding, p. 53.

16. *Ibid.*

17. “Orations,” *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, p. 11 (hereafter referred to as ACCS).

18. “Discourses Against the Arians,” 2.63, ACCS.

19. It is interesting to note that liberation theologians believe that “by this first resurrection, Christ shows believers that the social dimensions of the resurrection—liberation from oppressive structures of secular governments and ecclesiastical hierarchies—are here and now” (Christian Eisenbeis, “The Lutheran Church and the Proper Understanding of the City of God,” p. 19).

Saint Athanasius – His Timeless Testimony: *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei*

by Bruce W. Adams

“These good angels are the holy fathers, such as Spiridion, Athanasius, Hilary, the Council of Nicaea etc.” - Martin Luther¹

“The dangers, labours, and sermons of the apostle Paul, Athanasius, Augustine, and other teachers of the church are holy works, true sacrifices acceptable to God, battles by which Christ restrained the devil and drove him away from the believers.” - The Book of Concord²

For evangelical and confessional Lutherans, it is surely significant that Athanasius should receive this special mention in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article IV: being aligned with the Apostle Paul and Augustine of Hippo. Such should serve as an irrefutable reminder of his pre-eminence as a father and teacher of the Christian Church.

As the distinguished English Christian apologist, C.S. Lewis, perused the pages of *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei* by St. Athanasius (written ca. 318), he deduced, “When I first opened his *De Incarnatione* I soon discovered by a simple test that I was reading a ‘masterpiece.’”³

For faithful Christians living in the twenty-first century, being battered by a secularized society currently engaged in trivializing the sacred, while elevating the profane through the medium of the arts, the press, and television, it would seem imperative to read and absorb the timeless testimony of this “masterpiece.” Such a re-discovery may even serve to counter the horrific evil forces asserting themselves throughout western society during this third millennium.

What is so self-evident and timeless about the writings of Athanasius is the fact that in his person we encounter a pastor who resisted the temptation to permit the world to set the agenda for the church and for himself. Throughout my own life's lengthy pilgrimage, this mid-octogenarian Lutheran pastor has come to realize with what apparent ease can a frenetic and consumer-driven society allure, even envelop, the Christian to conform to its image so clearly forewarned by St. Paul: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2).

The World of Alexandria

The city of Alexandria in Egypt, the birthplace of Athanasius, had been founded by Alexander the Great in 313 B.C. As a city it had been so assiduously planned that its residents gloried in its architectural splendour and physical appeal. Religiously the cult of Plotinus thrived. That sect represented a stew of scriptural and Hindu doctrine, sprinkled with the New Age concept of the self as god. Into this strange amalgam of variable religious options Athanasius was born, circa A.D. 295. His wealthy parents appear to have been pious Christians, who had their son instructed in the basic tenets of the Christian faith. During his youthful years he was privileged to receive a liberal education, absorbing both the Greek poets and philosophers, in particular Plato.

But a counter-cultural influence upon Athanasius during his formative years was that of the preaching and the teaching of the Scriptures by Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria (312-328). One consequence was soon to radiate in the life of Athanasius. He proceeded to initiate himself in a study of the Scriptures and the writings of the church fathers. Before long Bishop Alexander enrolled the promising student in his catechetical class.

The city of Adelaide in which my wife and I presently reside shares a certain affinity with Alexandria. Since Adelaide physically resembles Alexandria, its citizens have reason to be proud of their city, so admirably surveyed and planned by Colonel William

Light in 1837. With its wide and leafy streets Adelaide continues to retain a unique charm. Also comparable with Alexandria, the city of Adelaide is witnessing escalating crime, fragmented family life, with their related incest and child abuse. There is yet another comparison. Offered in Adelaide is a veritable smorgasbord of diverse religions, readily interwoven with the siren voices of the irreligious. Almost daily Lutheran Christians are bombarded by an apparent secular and materialistic culture, documented and displayed through glossy magazines, and too frequently, viewing time, channelled through television.

Despite the sordid pagan lifestyle of Alexandria, the youthful Athanasius progressed toward Christian maturity. Though in the world, the world failed to allure him. Hans Von Campenhausen offers this description of Athanasius throughout these formative years: “As a young man, however, Athanasius grew up within the order of the Imperial Church: This was an accepted institution to which he held fast throughout his life.”⁴

The World Within the Church

The age in which Bishop Alexander was called to serve the church of Alexandria unleashed a deadly heresy, threatening to undermine the very substance of the Christian faith. This age-old satanic assault was directed at the person and nature of the incarnate Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. How? Through the active promotion by a priest within the church, bearing the name of Arius. He popularized his heresy by claiming that Christ was not the eternal Son of God. With a degree of skill Arius capitalized on a phrase of his mentor Lucian of Antioch: “There was a time when Jesus was not.” For Arius, the Son of God was not eternal, as confessed by the apostles (John 20:28; 21:7) and enunciated by St. Paul: “Jesus Christ is Lord” (Phil. 2:11, Rom. 10:9).

It proved fortuitous that within a brief lapse of time Athanasius and Bishop Alexander realized that if Jesus Christ was not the eternal Son of God (John 1:1-5, 14; Col. 1:15-20), then He was not the sole Saviour of the world (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). Subsequent to his ordination to the diaconate, Athanasius put to use his theological

and literary skills finding their expression in *De Incarnatione*. Such will be the focus of this presentation. For confessional Lutherans called by God to live in multi-cultural Australia, this bold profession of the faith by Athanasius will hopefully continue to be consonant with our sharing the Gospel within a comparable cultural and religious milieu. When testifying to God's revealed truth in such an environment, Christology becomes an all-essential priority. It hangs there as the crucial center of which the scriptural revelation is the gospel of God in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The question then arises: How did Athanasius address the issue of the Person of Christ in his age?

First, pivotal for his *apologia*, Athanasius demonstrates the eternal nature of Christ's atoning death on the cross.

The Word, then, visited the earth in which He was yet always present; and saw all these evils. He takes a body of our own Nature, and that of a spotless Virgin, in whose womb He makes it His own, wherein to reveal Himself, conquer death, and restore life...He came among us: to this intent, after proofs of His Godhead from His works. He next offered up His sacrifice also on behalf of all, yielding His Temple to death in the stead of all, in order firstly to make men quit and free of their old trespasses, and further to show Himself more powerful even than death, displaying His own body incorruptible, as firstfruits of the resurrection of all.⁵

Second, this quotation from *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei* undergirds the conclusion of the Swedish scholar, Bengt Hägglund, that "Athanasius was concerned about combining the doctrine of the Trinity with salvation wrought by Christ, which is the center of all theology as he saw it. Because of this, he continued to point out that the Arian heresy did not simply touch upon isolated points of doctrine, it subverted the entire Christian faith."⁶

Third, it becomes apparent that for Athanasius, Holy Scripture was his authority; while the Incarnate Christ and the salvation offered in Him continues to be central to God's eternal plan. Hence, this church father exhorted his readers "to light upon the text of the Scriptures, by genuinely applying your mind to them.... For they were spoken and written by God through men who spoke of

God.”⁷ Such applied reading of the Scriptures becomes the spring of the Christian’s assurance: “For the love of Christ constrains us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died, and He died for all that we should no longer live unto ourselves, but unto Him who for our sakes died and rose again’ our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 5:14).⁸ Though well-versed in the philosophers of his time, Athanasius’ *De Incarnatione* is laced with Scripture, inclusive of 169 biblical references in all.

Again, akin to our modern western societies, Alexandria had its share of sceptics and fatalists. So for this church father it was consequently imperative that he direct believers to the historic facts of the Lord’s death as “the ransom for all,” and to His resurrection, “so also death having been conquered and exposed by the Saviour on the Cross.”⁹ From this emerges a much-needed lesson for the Church today. Witnessing under the pressure of being “politically correct,” we can learn from Athanasius (and Luther) never to compromise the theology of the Cross for a theology of glory. The crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ are literally cemented to history. From such flows the assurance that death has met its conqueror: “So also, death, having been conquered and exposed by the Saviour on the Cross, and bound hand and foot, all they who are in Christ, as they pass by, trample on him, and witnessing to Christ scoff at death..saying what has been written against him of old: ‘O death, where is thy victory? O grave, where is thy sting.’”¹⁰

Athanasius Against the World

Every soldier of the Cross is put to the test on the frontiers of life. Once engaged in spiritual warfare, the faith of the Christian is constantly challenged and placed on trial. Foreseeing this, St. Peter warned suffering Christians to be “always prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15). In the twenty-first century confessors of Christ confront a veritable plethora of gods and religions, when a confession identical to that of St. Peter is demanded as he faced the Jewish Council: “This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the corner-stone. And there is salvation in no

one else, for there no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:11, 12).

In the case of St. Athanasius a supreme trial awaited him during the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325). So prevalent and engaging was the seductive teaching of the apostate Arius, who denied the divinity of Christ’s eternal nature, that Emperor Constantine resolved to call a general council of the church. The city of Nicaea, in the province of Bithynia, was chosen as the site for the council of bishops and clergy. In all, 318 bishops from throughout the empire assembled for the Council. Many of them bore the marks of persecution. Present were Bishop Alexander and his priest Athanasius. What Athanasius had already written in *De Incarnatione* and other writings were now to be attested or denied. The Council of Nicaea proved to be a monumental confrontation between those representing the apostolic and orthodox faith and a minority influenced by Arianism. The issues at stake were obvious: it was either scriptural authority as to the Personhood of Christ (John 1:14, 34; Col. 1:16; Luke 1:35) or man’s word steeped in human invention. Arius remained adamant that Jesus was not the eternal Son of God.

The debate had reached a critical stage when Athanasius arose to respond to the heretical priest. Though small in stature, his voice resounded, “Is the world against Athansius? So be it! Then Athanasius is against the world!” Bjarne W. Teigen, in his study of the Three Ecumenical Creeds, submits that, “The strength of Athanasius’ position lay in his total dependence upon God’s Word as truth. He was indeed, an ‘Athanasius Against the World,’ but he was also an Athanasius who could say, ‘If God be for us, who can be against us?’ (Rom. 8:31).”¹¹

By his sheer weight of argument based on Holy Scripture and the historic teaching of the Church of God, the priest from Alexandria significantly contributed to the victory of orthodoxy during the momentous council. Critical for the resolution of the bishops was the essential truth that if Christ were not the eternal Son of God and Lord of creation, then he could not be the Father’s instrument for the redemption of the world. Thus the Nicene formula declared Christ to be “the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of the Father before all ages, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not

made, of one substance (*homoousios*) with the Father....”¹² The word *homoousios* was critical for the decision of the Nicene fathers. In the formation of this imperishable creed, professed to this day by the Church catholic,¹³ Athanasius served a prominent role.

After the death of Bishop Alexander on June 8, 328, Athanasius was elected bishop of Alexandria by popular consent in that same year. Though a bishop, he was still to suffer persecution at the hands of those who supported Arius. This “Valiant-for-Truth” endured exile on 5 occasions, in all 20 years in exile, along with unspeakable hardships as well as threats to his life. Invariably the self-declared “tolerance” of those opposed to truth inevitably turns to intolerance towards the faithful. Throughout his life Athanasius continued to preach, counsel, write, and engage in correspondence with friends, bishops, and pastors. He died on Wednesday, May 2, 373.

As I often reflect upon my life’s journey during these twilight years, I thank our gracious Lord for that meeting with the venerable Hermann Sasse, whom I still regard as my most influential Lutheran mentor. His writings contributed to the far-reaching decision to become a Confessional Lutheran pastor on the Sunday after Ascension in 1965. With a quotation from Sasse’s Selected Essays, *The Lonely Way*, I close this dissertation upon St. Athanasius.

Without the inflexible determination with which the apostles, with which an Irenaeus and Athanasius, an Augustine or Luther remained steadfast in the church’s dogma, a determination which could only be viewed by the world as stubbornness, the church would have gone under at the hands of paganism.¹⁴

May God grant to faithful Lutheran confessors in this 21st century such faithfulness to God’s revealed truth in Christ, the sole Saviour of the world!

Endnotes

All Scripture quotations are from: “The Holy Bible, English Standard Version,” Concordia Edition, Concordia Publishing House, Saint Louis, Missouri, 2001.

- ¹ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works, Vol. 35: Word and Sacrament* (Concordia Publishing House & Muhlenberg Press, 1969), p. 402.
- ² Theodore G. Tappert, *The Book of Concord*. (Concordia Publishing House & Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 133.
- ³ C.S. Lewis, *God In The Dock* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), p. 206.
- ⁴ Hans Von Campenhausen, *The Fathers Of The Greek Church* (London: Adam & Charles Black, London, Edinburgh: R.R. Clark Ltd. Edinburgh, 1963), p. 69.
- ⁵ *Nicene And Post-Nicene Fathers of The Christian Church, Vol. IV, St. Athanasius, Select Works and Letters* (Grand Rapids: MI Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), pp. 40 & 47.
- ⁶ Bengt Hägglund, *History of Theology*, trans. Gene J. Lund (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), p. 80.
- ⁷ *Nicene And Post-Nicene Fathers*, p. 66.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 51.
- ¹¹ Bjarne W. Teigen, *I Believe – A Study Of The Three Universal Or Ecumenical Creeds* (Mankato, MN: Lutheran Synod Book Company), p. 23.
- ¹² Henry Bettenson, *Documents Of The Christian Church* (London: Oxford University Press, London, 1975), p. 26.
- ¹³ Theodore G. Tappert, ed. *The Book of Concord*, “Articles Of Faith And Doctrine, Article I: GOD.” 27.
- ¹⁴ Hermann Sasse, *The Lonely Way – Selected Essays and Letters, Vol. 2* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002), p. 191.

Sacerdotalism: Its Effect on Lutheranism Today

by Paul R. Zager

Sacerdotalism. View according to which the laity can establish relation with God only through priests.

Lutheran Cyclopedia

Life was simpler thirty years ago. If sacerdotalism was even mentioned in a seminary class, it was assumed that Roman Catholic “priest craft” and the absolute necessity thereof for salvation, was the subject of discussion. While only scant time might have been given to any discussion of the topic, the term was at least identified, and seminarians knew they were expected to be “agin’ it!”

Maybe it’s the effect post-modernism has had on our outlook on vocabulary which has made things more complicated today. But the fact is, that in the eyes of some, even a “bronze-age” Lutheran (as many ELS pastors would probably be labeled by the neo-confessionals today) would be defined as a sacerdotalist today.

Because of this shift in the understanding of terms, it will be necessary first to define what we are talking about with “sacerdotalism.” By some current definitions and usage of the word, we would actually rejoice in being labeled as sacerdotalists. So knowing the intended meaning of a writer is absolutely critical if we are to know whether we should be upset or elated over being called a sacerdotalist. To establish these definitions will necessarily require extensive quoting of those who make and use these “non-classical” understandings.

But while the first part of this paper will explore the range of meanings in use today, the second section will explore the effects of sacerdotalism on Lutheranism today, and evaluate the appropriateness of rejecting or embracing sacerdotal philosophies in our church. Whether we do either will depend entirely on the definition being used.

Sacerdotalism Defined

I. Sacerdotalism Defined Classically

The classical Lutheran understanding of sacerdotalism is put before us clearly in Schwiebert's equally classic volume of Luther history. But even here, Schwiebert starts out on an unexpectedly conciliatory note. The context of some sacerdotally-flavored statements from Augustine, he notes, must be kept against the backdrop of the Donatism which Augustine was fighting with those statements. The claims of the Donatists had evolved by that time to charge that the western church was no longer a true Christian church. Against this, Augustine championed the view that "Outside the church there is no salvation."¹ In this context, it is clear that Augustine's goal was to show with a sort of "marks of the church argument" that it was the power of God working through Word and sacraments which gave efficacy to the means of grace, and therefore, legitimacy to the acts of the church, as opposed to the view of Donatus that the efficacy was dependant on the holiness of the ministrant, and that all efficacy could even be annulled if the ministrant was a traditore.

But whether that was the goal of Augustine or not, the reality is that his position fed a growing sacerdotalism within the Roman church structure.

This new sacerdotalism, the sanctity of the priesthood, gave the Medieval Church a glamour and atmosphere quite foreign to Apostolic days. Thus the ecclesiastical hierarchy, to whom the sacraments had been committed, developed a monopoly on grace.... The Bible was regarded as too obscure for the layman to understand and could be read only in the light of the Fathers and the Schoolmen; interpretation must be reserved for the clergy.²

This classical understanding of sacerdotalism is also what Pieper presents on this topic.

Men are chained to the ordinances of the Papacy, which represents itself with its devices as the one institution dispensing grace. The scandalous crusades, pilgrimages, indulgences,

monasticism, and the like, were devised, and are still serving, to keep men away from the grace provided by Christ and now bestowed through the means of grace.³

Note that the motive adduced by Pieper is the same as that of Schwiebert: establishing and maintaining for the church a monopoly on the dispensing of God's grace.

But such a restriction and control over the use of God's Word and the dispensing of grace is the exact opposite of the ministry of the Word which J. Schaller describes. In Schaller's estimation, this ministry of the Word is not only accessible to the laymen, but also intended to be *utilized* by the laymen. And while Schaller is careful not to confuse the ministry of a royal priest with the public *Amt*, he nonetheless notes that the effect of either of the keys being used is and is meant to be the same whether it is carried out by a layman or by a called servant.

The New Testament ministry [Predigtamt, literally, office of preaching], better termed service [Predigtendienst, literally, service of preaching], began with and through the first preaching of the gospel in Paradise and appears wherever the gospel is in any way communicated. For the gospel is a word which is to be preached, and it immediately through the very process of conversion turns those whom it brings to faith into preachers of it. Thus every believer since the beginning of the world is according to his spiritual nature a preacher of the gospel, not only *de iure* [by right] but also *de facto* [in fact]. There is no one who has this commission *de iure* who does not also carry it out *de facto*. God did not institute a ministry in abstracto [in the abstract], but he continually creates the ministry of preaching [Predigtendienst] through his gospel.

Because of the needs of the church God in the time before Christ raised up the prophets, and later the apostles, by a direct, immediate call and by a special endowment with the Holy Spirit in order that they might perform the service of preaching in a special form. Their activity did not differ essentially from the preaching activity of all Christians. They wanted and were to proclaim nothing but the word of redemption. Their ministry differs from that of other believers only in this that they became such bearers of this word that God gave an ever clearer revelation through them and made their writings for all time

the source of the truth to which all other believers are bound in carrying out their ministry of preaching. Neither the prophets nor the apostles constitute a special order of the beginning or a special order in the church to which the ministry would be given exclusively. This work always remains the duty of all Christians and of every individual Christian until the end of days. Where there is no believing Christian, there is also no commission to preach. But wherever there is a single true Christian, then there is not only a person who is invested with the ministry, that is, one who has the commission to preach, but also one who actually proclaims the praises of him who has called if he finds ears to hear.⁴

This lengthy quote from Schaller is not meant to exacerbate any tensions, real or imagined, concerning the current ministry debate in the ELS. The question for us right now is not whether Schaller makes a clear enough distinction between the royal priesthood and the *Amt*. The purpose here is to show that the classic Lutheran position regarding the use of the keys is to encourage that use among and by the laymen as well as among and by the clergy.⁵ Nor should this be seen as a late addition to Lutheran thinking. In his letter to the congregation at Leisnig written in 1523, Luther himself noted:

First ... where there are no Christians he needs no other call than to be a Christian, called and anointed by God from within. Here it is his duty to preach and to teach the gospel to erring heathen or non-Christians, because of the duty of brotherly love, even though no man calls him to do so. This is what Stephen did, [Acts 6–7](#), even though he had not been ordered into any office by the apostles. Yet he still preached and did great signs among the people. Again, Philip, the deacon and Stephen's comrade, [Acts 8\[:5\]](#), did the same thing even though the office of preaching was not commanded to him either. Again, Apollos did so too, [Acts 18\[:25\]](#). In such a case a Christian looks with brotherly love at the need of the poor and perishing souls and does not wait until he is given a command or letter from a prince or bishop. For need breaks all laws and has none. Thus it is the duty of love to help if there is no one else who could or should help.⁶

By contrast, while Roman Catholic statements see the very term “sacerdotalism” as derogatory and biblically unwarranted, they agree with the concept which classically defines “sacerdotalism”

and uphold that concept as normative truth.

The Sacrament of Holy Orders conveys the graces and powers required for the ministrations of the clergy. Bishops thereby acquire grace to act as trusty guardians of the faith and rulers of the Church, and the power of administering all the sacraments. Priests receive power to consecrate the Eucharist and offer the Holy Sacrifice, and to administer Penance and Extreme Unction. Without sacramental ordination, the sacraments peculiar to each office have no validity, as not proceeding from ministers deputed by Christ.

This idea of a privileged class possessing powers not enjoyed by the laity, is sometimes contemptuously branded with the name of “sacerdotalism.” If it were the usurpation of power by a caste or clique of men claiming for themselves a position of superiority, nothing could be more objectionable. But clergy and laity alike believe that such offices are of Christ’s institution not for the depression but for the service of the laity; offices to be undertaken in the spirit of humble ministers of Christ, rather than that of proud masters of the people; nor is anyone able to assume these offices to himself, but only those who are accepted, ordained, and commissioned by the authority of the Church in the name and person of Christ.⁷

The issue here, however, is not whether the powers of priesthood are usurped by the priests, or humbly used by the priests to serve, or whether those so doing consider themselves to be superior or not, or even whether the laymen give up that privilege to the priests voluntarily. At issue is what is mentioned in the first paragraph. To say that the sacraments carry no validity unless administered by one so ordained, combined with other statements which claim the right of scriptural interpretation only for the clergy, brings us right back to the clergy holding a monopoly on God’s grace in the Roman economy of grace.

It is this definition of sacerdotalism with which we will most often find ourselves dealing. Sometimes we might be charged with practicing it. At other times, we might need to be diligent that it doesn’t happen among us. One good reason why is stated for us—again—from an unlikely source: a reformed apologist.

The older sacerdotalism maintains that the priesthood receives and represents “an attribute of grace distinct from” that received by the church, “by virtue of which grace, men are brought into such relationship with God that through this instrumentality they obtain the promised blessings of the covenant under which they live.” . . . Yet Scripture knows nothing of two separate lines of grace, one from the Head direct to the church and the other from the Head to the ministry.⁸

II. Sacerdotalism Defined Calvinistically

We must be aware that what has been asserted so far is not the only way sacerdotalism is understood. Calvinists, too, talk and write about sacerdotalism. Some seem to write from a viewpoint that requires a defense of a called clergy. If anything, such Reformed writers make it sound as if they are the ones being accused (I suppose, along with Lutherans) of being sacerdotalists for maintaining any kind of a distinction between a called clergy and the royal priesthood of believers.⁹

But while some of these writings might sometimes sound uncannily like they come from a Lutheran theologian, at other times, Reformed writers will refer to the Lutheran concept of the “means of grace” as a form of sacerdotalism. This will be covered in more detail in the third definition for sacerdotalism, later in the paper.

Pieper, however, has little time for such fine distinctions, or even for the camouflage of Lutheran-sounding terms used by Calvin himself, or by other Calvinist writers. Reformed writers might make it sound as if it was originally they, not Lutherans, who first criticized the so-called “priestcraft” of the Roman church. But here Pieper’s reasoning is sound.¹⁰ Even if we try to “put the best construction on everything,” we might veer from Pieper only to the extent of saying that the Reformed writers are demonstrating the so-called “fortunate inconsistency” which allows them to rely on a true grace from God, even though their premises would deny the possibility of such a “pure” grace. As an example of this, substitute the name “Luther” for “Calvin” in the citation below and ask if it doesn’t sound like a quote taken from Luther’s Works.

But while this liberating doctrine was used to subvert Roman

sacerdotalism (or “priestcraft” as the Reformers termed it), it has been distorted to twist the biblical concept of the ministry. We often forget that the Reformation was a conflict with two theaters: Rome and Anabaptism or “sectarianism.” While criticizing notions of a priestly caste with inherently exalted status and powers by virtue of their ordination, the Reformers were just as severe in their criticism of a “free-for-all” in which, as Calvin put it, “everything is in confusion.” Self-appointed circuit-riders and their enthusiasts were “dashing about aimlessly without an assignment, rashly gathering together in one place, and forsaking their churches at pleasure.” Of such “fanatics” Calvin charged, “In their pride, therefore, they despise the ministry of men and even Scripture itself, in order to attain the Spirit. They then proudly try to peddle all the delusions that Satan suggests to them as secret revelations of the Spirit. Such are the Libertines and frenzied individuals like them. The more ignorant a man is, the greater the pride with which he is bloated and puffed up.” Thus, “[people] with absolutely no qualifications, who force themselves upon the Church, are fanatics, driven by an evil spirit. There are many, for instance, who boast that they are moved to action by the Spirit, and pride themselves in a secret call of God, when all the time they are unlearned and totally ignorant.”¹¹

Other Reformed writers, as well, seem to come closer to Lutheran theology than the Calvinism which Pieper described. Not only do they agree with our disagreement with Donatus, but they seem to agree with us also that by reason of his *vocatio*, a Christian minister truly administers God’s grace when he administers Word and Sacraments. By their own admission, they make themselves guilty of sacerdotalism in the eyes of their more radical Reformed brethren.

The distinction rests not because of the minister’s person, but because of his service of Word and Sacrament. Calvin says, “Christ acts by ministers in such a manner that he wishes their mouth to be reckoned as his mouth, and their lips as his lips.” As the Reformed confessions remind us, the ministry does not depend on the integrity of the minister. Even if it is eventually discovered that he was an unbeliever, he was used by Christ as an agent of redemption for his people. Indeed, even Judas exercised an effectual ministry as a disciple of our Lord. It is the Holy Spirit working through Word and Sacrament, not the

minister in his own person, who is responsible for the success of the ministry.

As noted earlier, Calvin and the other Reformers believed that Christ himself spoke through the preached Word and the Sacraments. This is what is meant by our Lord's wonderful promise: "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock [Peter's confession of Christ as God's Son] I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:17-19). "Ministers of the Gospel," Calvin wrote, "are porters of the kingdom of heaven, because they carry its keys. The key is placed in the hands of the ministers of the word." Calvin even recommends private confession of sin to ministers, not because of superstition concerning his person, but because this is part of the ministry of the Word. Any believer can hear his or her fellow-believer's confession and announce divine forgiveness in Christ's name, but the minister is especially singled out by God and his church for this task. While the legalism of auricular confession (the practice of confessing sins privately to a priest as a necessary condition of being absolved) was rejected by Calvin, the custom itself was encouraged as a ministry of the Word in private by which God's grace and gospel would be "confirmed and sealed" (see *Institutes* 3.4.1-23).¹²

But the logic of Pieper's explanation is inescapable. Here recall our working definition of sacerdotalism: "The view according to which the laity can establish a relation with God only through priests." (Clearly, the Reformed would admit here the wider term "clergy," rather than "priest" in a narrow, Roman sense.) If what the Reformed minister administers to people is a grace that is a "particular grace;" if what he administers has an equal chance of causing damnation or causing salvation for the hearer; then it is not really grace that is being administered in the first place, unless one is willing to say that establishing a relationship with the Lord as His enemy is some weird new understanding of "grace." On the other hand, if the Reformed are feeling themselves accused of being sacerdotalists for saying there is a distinction between the called clergy using Word and Sacrament, and anyone else properly using Word (and Sacrament), then they cannot very well accuse Lutherans—as

some do in a negative sense— of being sacerdotalists.

III. Sacerdotalism Defined Radically

But while Pieper adduces a logical chain of argument to show that any such agreement with Lutheran theology is apparent rather than real, subsequent reformers went much farther afield in defining and decrying sacerdotalism, to the point that no one would even dream that these critics were on the same track as Lutherans. In Luther's own time, Kaspar von Schwenckfeld became a champion of this more radical understanding of sacerdotalism. In his estimation, it wasn't just the placement of a person, such as a priest, between man and God, but the placement of anything as a medium to connect man and God which constituted sacerdotalism. In his view, even holding to the notion that the Holy Spirit works through the Word would be considered sacerdotal.

“The spiritual realities of life cannot be settled by laboriously piling up texts of Scripture,” wrote Schwenckfeld, “not by subtle theological dialectic, or by learned exegesis of sacred words. If these spiritual realities are to become real and effective to us, it must be through the direct relation of the human spirit with the divine Spirit—the inward spiritual Word of God. He who will see truth must have God for eyes.” This distinctively inward perception of the Christian faith was the focus of Schwenckfeld's theology. ...Schwenckfeld's theology was based on a revelation from God, not on religious theories based on research of the Bible without Christ. Schwenckfeld's theology went beyond dead, religious concepts and focused on a personal, intimate, workable relationship with the Lord. Such a relationship with God was simply unorthodox because at that point in time, sacerdotalism was the conventional way to establish a relationship with God. Schwenckfeld's theology completely turned away from any form of sacerdotalism and relied on an unconventional, one-to-one relationship between God and man. Luther did not simply reject Schwenckfeld because he thought he was wrong, but because he was afraid of what Schwenckfeld had seen. ...[Schwenckfeld] viewed baptism as a symbol of the actual experience. When a person was baptized they were declaring to the whole universe that they were leaving their old sinful nature behind, and becoming

a new man. Christ's baptism, according to Schwenckfeld is an inner baptism, a baptism of spirit and power, by which the inner man is clarified, strengthened, and made pure.¹³

Schwenckfeld was certainly not the first mystic to hit the religious playing field. Nor has he been the last. It is common at our own point in history for a wide variety of protestants and pentecostals (Penta-Metho-Bapti-costals) to condemn or deride any form of Christianity which smacks of a "means of grace" definition. Whether listening to well-meaning laymen or rabid media "preachers" (haranguers?) how often haven't we heard the tell-tale words, "The Lord told me...?" In most cases, there is not so much as even an attempt to hint that it was the Scriptures by which the Lord did this telling. No, it is a given — it is understood among them — that these revelations come directly from the Holy Spirit.

Contemporary writers from this camp make varying degrees of concession to the Christian nature of Lutheran theology. But they agree in this: the Holy Spirit works directly without any need of means to accomplish His purpose in believers. Here, B.B. Warfield is quoted:

It has been the boast of Lutheranism that it represents, in distinction from Calvinism, a "conservative" reformation. The boast is justified, as on other grounds, so also on this, that it has incorporated into its confessional system the essence of the sacerdotalism which characterized the teaching of the old Church. Confessional Lutheranism, like Romanism, teaches that the grace of salvation is conveyed to men in the means of grace, otherwise not. But it makes certain modifications in the sacerdotal teaching which it took over from the old Church... the means of grace are not represented as acting *ex opere operato* but... it remains sufficiently sacerdotal to confine the activities of saving grace to the means of grace, that is to say, to the Word and sacraments, and thus to interpose the means of grace between the sinner and his God (emphasis added).

The central evil of sacerdotalism is therefore present in this scheme in its full manifestation, and wherever it is fully operative we find men exalting the means of grace and more or less forgetting the true agent of all gracious operations, the Holy Spirit himself, in their absorption with the instrumentalities

through which alone he is supposed to work. It is in a truly religious interest, therefore, that the Reformed, as over against the Lutherans, insist with energy that, important as are the means of grace, and honored as they must be by us because honored by God the Holy Spirit as the instruments by and through which he works grace in the hearts of men, yet after all the grace which he works by and through them he works himself not out of them but immediately out of himself, extrinsecus accedens.¹⁴

Very likely, Kaspar Schwenkfeld felt his doctrine would save Christianity from its own worst tendencies. Many of the Penta-Metho-Bapti-costals of our own time feel the same way, looking upon Confessional Lutherans as barely enlightened—if at all enlightened—baby Christians who need to grow up and learn how to “really” walk and talk with God.

Luther referred to such people (the enthusiasts) as those who imagined they had “swallowed the Holy Spirit, feathers and all.” If emphasizing and relying upon the Means of Grace is what sacerdotalism actually was, we could rejoice in being called sacerdotalists.

The Effects of Sacerdotalism On Lutheranism

Since the definitions of Sacerdotalism vary so widely, we have to be careful about which definition has caused which of the following effects and reactions to it. Sacerdotalism can be honored and sought after among us if we are using the radical definition which makes the means of grace a mark of sacerdotalism. But it should be a cause for alarm and avoidance if we use the first definition. At times in Lutheran history, calm has prevailed and realistic measures have been used to identify and react appropriately but calmly to sacerdotalism. Sadly, there is also evidence of Lutherans treating sacerdotalism as the greatest thing since sliced bread, and stumbling all over themselves trying to incorporate it into their theology. At the opposite extreme there can also be a fearful over-avoidance of doctrine and practice which is truly biblical, but might have an appearance of “priestcraft.” With our definitions in place, it is time to get to this, the heart of the assigned topic for this paper.

I. Fawning Glorification

There is a certain “trendiness” about sacerdotalistic tendencies right now, as evidenced by a growing inclination for Lutheran theologians to leave the Lutheran church for the pastures of Romanism and Orthodoxy. Closer to home, we sometimes see it amongst Lutherans themselves through what almost seems sometimes like a near deification of the pastor.

This alleged deification is not what happens when the pastor is properly seen as an ambassador for Christ. There is nothing inherently wrong with saying that when the pastor proclaims God’s Word it is the same as if Christ Himself stood among us and proclaimed it. Such an understanding is proper and biblical when it refers to the man as he fulfills his office. Also Luther makes this clear in his exposition of Isaiah:

So every minister is established as the covenant for you, and you may firmly believe him. Thus, whoever hears or spurns him, is doing it to Christ. So the minister of the Word is the covenant by means of which God and the people are reconciled. This office of Christ has been transferred to the church. Let no one think that Christ is dead. Rather, the ministers function in His office.¹⁵

The last line especially helps us keep a clear distinction between the minister as a person and the minister as an office holder. Proclaiming and administering the Gospel (in the wider sense) is the sum and total of the office he holds. Matters of opinion and adiaphora are not truly a part of the office. But sometimes it happens that the pastor as a person, and the pastor’s opinions, and the pastor’s personal preferences are elevated to the level of doctrine, as if the minister—in every aspect of speech, conduct and wish—was to be obeyed. This kind of attitude (as rendered toward Stephan by the Saxon’s, etc) takes Luther’s idea of “functioning as Christ” to a different level of meaning entirely, in which the pastor becomes a “vicar for Christ” like the pope.

The growing disdain for the pastoral office among the laity is certainly not proper, either. But a sacerdotal elevation of the pastor

—as a man— is not the answer to that problem. A proper respect for the public office —because it belongs to Christ— is the answer.

The problem with the type of sacerdotalism just noted is that it is often more a matter of an inner attitude than an outward action. But outward action and teaching can also try to push the clergy to the fore as a necessary medium for establishing grace between God and man. We have even had incipient sacerdotalism rearing its head in our ELS.

Several years ago, when the *Chemnitz* e-mail list was active amongst our clergy, one exchange in particular lodged in my memory. Unless this writer can some day resurrect his twenty year old computer, it will not be possible to provide a word for word quote. But the gist of the conversation stated that a child who sinned against his parents should certainly apologize to his parents and receive *their* forgiveness. But in order to receive *God's* forgiveness, they concluded, the parents would need to take the child to their pastor to be absolved. If that is *not* a “view according to which the laity can establish relation with God only through priests,” then I don't know what is. This makes the pastor an indispensable requisite for receiving God's grace. By definition, that is sacerdotalism.

More subtly, in our discussions about the ministry, an impression is sometimes given that it is either not possible, or even that it is absolutely wrong for a layman ever to administer (consecrate and distribute) Holy Communion. All of us can think of some reasons that this *ought* not be done: 1. It is a corporate sacrament; 2. It is part of pastoral care to give or to withhold the sacrament as indicated for each individual. This requires thorough biblical knowledge and training; and 3. Holy Communion is not an “emergency sacrament” as Baptism sometimes will be.

Yet, in the debating, there might be a temptation on the one side to ignore such perfectly sound, scriptural reasons for avoiding this practice for the sake of not sounding sacerdotal; while on the other side of the issue, there might be a fear of stating quite clearly that there is a possibility of exceptions to the general rule, because of a fear of brushing aside God's will.

It bears repeating: while there is a growing trend toward disrespect for the office of the public ministry of the Word, embracing

sacerdotalism is not the cure. We will always want to be as clear as possible about both what the Bible does and does not say, so we as a synod avoid a fawning glorification of sacerdotalism. As a cure, it is as bad as the problem.

II. Condemnation

If that sounds like a condemnation of sacerdotalism, it is. If Lutherans in general and we as a synod in particular want to follow our Lord faithfully in serving Him as ambassadors, we will need to condemn this error just as much as any other doctrinal error. But it is also obvious that it is a condemnation of it as classically defined.

There is a danger in issuing such condemnations, however. A few years ago, Pastor Jack Cascione (formerly LC-MS) coined the phrase “hyper-Euro Lutheranism.” It was meant, I believe, as a somewhat sarcastic putdown – a “condemnation” if you will – of the fawning glorification of sacerdotalism illustrated above. The problem for us as confessional Lutherans is this: being “confessional” has recently come to be equated in many people’s minds with ornate vestments, symbolic liturgical motions (which way of signing the cross is more correct?), and whether the cross in front of church has the *corpus* mounted on it or not. Unfortunately, one is more likely to find true sacerdotalism coinciding with the presence of these adiaphora, than finding it coinciding with the absence of them. So as soon as a warning is sounded against *true* sacerdotalism (with or without the presence of these things) many will draw the conclusion that the person sounding the warning is un-confessional or even anti-confessional.

But the essence of being confessional has little or nothing to do with these outward matters. Being confessional as Lutherans is simply a matter of keeping all our teaching and practice in conformity with the Book of Concord. Of course, keeping our teaching faithful to the Lutheran Confessions means avoiding sacerdotalism. Therefore, when we see it developing in our midst, we will have to take the next step of correcting and if necessary, condemning the error. This will have to be done regardless of any “un-confessional” appellations which might be hurled at us.

But the other side of that same argument, is that we must guard against raising the accusation of sacerdotalism just because we see some outward practices which are occasionally used by some who truly are sacerdotal in their teaching. It is not the outward practices which are a danger. It is the diminishing of the power and authority of God's Word, implied in true sacerdotalism, which is the real problem.

The elevation of the host can serve as a clear example of this, because in Roman usage, it is clearly part and parcel of a complete sacerdotal system. In order to obtain grace from God, the priest must offer up (elevate) the body of Christ for sacrifice. Since only those properly ordained as priests can do this effectively according to Roman theology, both the elevating and the authorized person who does it are a necessary medium between man and God.

But just because the elevation of the host originated under such circumstances, doesn't mean that it carries that same meaning anywhere and everywhere it is used. A thoroughly "confessional" (in the proper sense) Lutheran pastor might elevate the host during the consecration for reasons which are neither sacerdotal nor unbiblical in any other way. The same can be said for other outward things such as vestments, regularly scheduled private confession and absolution, or any number of other outward practices or symbols which just happen to be bundled along with sacerdotalism in *other* settings and circumstances. While sacerdotalism is a false doctrine against which we must warn, we must guard against being so fearful of it that we condemn things which really have nothing essential to do with it.

III. Appropriate utilization

In fact we might want to consider promoting sacerdotalism in our midst. Of course, to do so, means taking up the "radical" definition of sacerdotalism for a moment. The fact is, by that definition, confessional Lutherans are already branded as sacerdotal anyway, because we insist that the Holy Spirit is promised to us only through means. If being sacerdotal means interposing Holy Scripture and the Sacraments "between" God and man as the only tools by which God has promised to work faith, then we are certainly not

“agin’ it.” Indeed, then we are “for” being sacerdotal.

In light of the ever increasing media presence of enthusiasts preaching ongoing direct revelations from the Spirit of God, we need to work harder than ever to keep our people’s eyes trained on what God has promised will work. If that means being labeled “sacerdotal” by the theologically ignorant, then so be it.

Even the moderate definition of sacerdotalism which sees having a called clergy as sacerdotal, but grudgingly agrees that God works through means, brought an appropriate response from some in the Reformed camp. They note correctly the need to maintain a proper distinction between “ministry” as an office, and the “universal priesthood.”

But if all Christians are priests, doesn’t that mean that there is no difference between an ordained minister and a layperson? To this question, the Reformers would answer, “yes and no.” Yes, there is no difference in terms of person. A minister and a layperson are equally justified and called to eternal life, co-heirs with Christ in equal measure. Rendered effectual by the ministry of Christ rather than by any essential virtue in ordination, the prayers of a minister are no more powerful than those of a layperson. God does not pay special attention to ministers. They have no red phone on their desk, no special direct line to God that the rest of Christ’s flock do not enjoy. Nevertheless, there is a difference in office or vocation. Just as a doctor is not a lawyer, a layperson is not a minister.

This is where, in my estimation, we have gone off the rails in this matter. We have confused priesthood with ministry, as if the priesthood of all believers means that all believers are ministers. Certainly this is not Luther’s or Calvin’s understanding of the priesthood of all believers.¹⁶

To the extent that such a confusion of position and role is feared by some among us, we need to be sure that both our position and our practice do not nullify the distinction. I do not believe that currently our synod encourages or even suggests such a confusion either, neither by practice nor by doctrine as expressed in the PMW. But we know the confusion exists in Christendom in general, perhaps among our own laity, and even within our wider fellowship to a degree.

But it is not a true sacerdotalism which suggests the need to maintain the unique, divine institution of the public ministry of the Word, as opposed to the more general call for all Christians to “declare the praises” of God by proclaiming His Word whenever and wherever we can to whomever we can. It is worthy of note that Ylvisaker not only connected the appearance of Christ to the five hundred with the written account of appearing to the eleven, but specifically notes that the command to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and by teaching was given not only to the apostles, but to all the disciples who were present with Jesus then.¹⁷

Yet it is hard to even imagine that Ylvisaker would want to erase any and every distinction between God’s call to faith and the royal priesthood vs. the call to the office of the public ministry of the word. Thus, if it is sacerdotal to maintain this important distinction between called workers and laymen, let us be sacerdotal.

In the end, it would be better if it weren’t so hard to tell if you should reject it or agree with it. But that is not the reality we face in the 21st century. So we will need to be aware of the ever changing theological vocabulary with which we must deal, and decide based on the context whether sacerdotalism is something we embrace or avoid.

Endnotes

¹E. G. Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), p. 160.

² *Ibid*, pp. 160-161. An ironically illogical defense of why only the scholars should interpret Scripture for the laymen:

These are the basic Principles of biblical interpretation as set forth by the doctors of the Sorbonne, 1523.

1. The Scriptures are obscure.
2. The Scriptures cannot be used by themselves.
3. The Scriptures must be interpreted by Masters, and especially by the Masters of Paris.
4. The Fathers are obscure.
5. The Fathers cannot be interpreted by themselves.
6. The Fathers must be interpreted by Masters, and especially by the Masters of Paris.
7. The Sentences are obscure.
8. The Sentences cannot be used by themselves.
9. The Sentences must only be interpreted by Masters, and especially by the Masters of Paris.
10. Therefore, the University of Paris is the Chief guide in matters of Scriptural interpretation, for its decrees against Luther and Melanchthon are clear and can be understood by everyone.

Cited in Schwiebert from Opera Lutheri, VI, 90-91.

³ Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics, Vol. III* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), pp.117-118

⁴ John Schaller, "The Origin and Development of the New Testament Ministry," 1911, translated composite, W. Gawrisch, ed; appearing in *Our Great Heritage Vol. III*, Lyle Lange, ed. (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1991), pp. 488-489

⁵ Even some among the Reformed understand the importance of retaining the use

of the keys also among the laity. Consider the following:

Thus, in addition to Roman priestcraft, sectarian fanaticism was also to be avoided at all costs. But if all Christians are priests, doesn't that mean that there is no difference between an ordained minister and a layperson? To this question, the Reformers would answer, "yes and no." Yes, there is no difference in terms of person. A minister and a layperson are equally justified and called to eternal life, co-heirs with Christ in equal measure. Rendered effectual by the ministry of Christ rather than by any essential virtue in ordination, the prayers of a minister are no more powerful than those of a layperson. God does not pay special attention to ministers. They have no red phone on their desk, no special direct line to God that the rest of Christ's flock do not enjoy. Nevertheless, there is a difference in office or vocation. Just as a doctor is not a lawyer, a layperson is not a minister.

This is where, in my estimation, we have gone off the rails in this matter. We have confused priesthood with ministry, as if the priesthood of all believers means that all believers are ministers. Certainly this is not Luther's or Calvin's understanding of the priesthood of all believers.

⁶ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, vol. 39: (Church and Ministry I) J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Eds.). (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, digital edition).

⁷ *Ordination. "Sacerdotalism"* <http://www.catholicapologetics.net>.

⁸ W. H. Griffith Thomas, *A Voice from the Past: PRIEST OR PROPHET*, *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*, Spring 1996 -- Volume 9:16.

⁹ Schaff's discussion of sacerdotalism notes a strong link between the anabaptist theology on this point, and the later position of the Quakers. Philip Schaff, *A History of the Christian Church*, 1910 edition with power search. (Corroborating discussion was found on a *Society of Friends* web site.)

The Anabaptists... were the forerunners of the Quakers, who dispensed with the external sacraments altogether, retaining, however, the spiritual fact of regeneration and communion with Christ, which the sacraments symbolize to the senses. The Quakers *protested against forms when they were made substitutes for the spirit, and furnished the historic proof that the spirit in cases of necessity may live without forms, while forms without the spirit are dead.*

¹⁰ This lengthy section from Pieper more fully explains the underlying problem when Calvinists try to articulate anything about "the means of grace." (Pieper, Vol. III, pp. 118-121)

Because saving grace is particular, according to the teaching of the Calvinists, there are no means of grace for that part of mankind to which the grace of God and the merit of Christ do not extend. On the contrary, for these people the means of grace are intended as means of condemnation. Calvin teaches expressly: “For there is a universal call, through which, by the external preaching of the Word, God invites all, indiscriminately, to come to Him, even those for whom He intends it as a savor of death and an occasion of heavier condemnation” (*Inst.* III, 24, 8). In spite of this, Calvin speaks of means of grace in relation to the reprobate, declaring that they merit double condemnation because they despise the grace offered also to them. This is one of the self-contradictions of which Calvinistic theology becomes guilty in its teaching regarding the appropriation or rejection of salvation.³⁰ With their teaching Calvinists cannot consistently speak of a contempt of grace by the reprobate because they hold that no saving grace is provided for these unfortunates. Hence there would be no grace which could be despised by them. This manifest self-contradiction has been called to the attention of the Calvinists in times past and present.³¹ To speak of means of grace in connection with the *reprobii* and *impii* and to charge them with contempt of the grace of God is obviously a concession to the language of Scripture and the Christian Church that is indefensible as long as men cling to the teaching of a particular grace.

But neither do the Calvinists have means of grace for the elect. Believers are expressly directed by Calvin not to ascertain their predestination from the external Word, that is, from the universal call (*universalis vocatio*) which occurs through the outward Word (*per externam praedicationem*), but from the special call (*specialis vocatio*), which consists in an inner illumination by the Holy Spirit. And that is entirely consistent from Calvin’s standpoint. It is impossible for believers to know their election from the external Word of the Gospel because through that Word, according to Calvin’s view, God invites not only the elect, but also “those to whom He intends it as a savor of death and an occasion of heavier condemnation.” So the *pui* and *electi* have no choice but to relinquish the external Word of the Gospel, since its invitation may be meant unto damnation instead of salvation, and to place their trust in the special call or the inner illumination of the Spirit (*interior Spiritus illuminatio*).

But according to the teaching of Calvinism this “inner illumination” is not brought about through the means of grace; it is worked immediately by the Holy Ghost. Modern Reformed, too, teach this very emphatically. Hodge, for example, says: “In the work of regeneration all second causes are excluded.. Nothing intervenes between the volition of the Spirit and the regeneration of the soul. The infusion of a new life into the soul is the immediate work of the Spirit.... The truth (in the case of adults) [that is, the setting forth of the truth of the Gospel through the external Word] attends the work of regeneration, but is not the means by which it is effected.” (*Syst. Theol.* II, 634 f.)

Consistent Calvinism therefore has no means of grace for the elect either, no means that offer the gracious will of God to man, and for that reason also no means that work saving faith and effect a regeneration. And how could faith, and with it regeneration to spiritual life, be effected by a Word that is, according to the Calvinist, equivocal in the extreme, perhaps intended by God to transmit wrath instead of grace? One cannot so gravely mutilate divine revelation, as by the denial of universal grace, and yet retain the means of grace as instituted by God. Denial of the *gratia universalis* nullifies the means of grace. The existence of means of grace, which are “signs and testimonies” (*signa et testimonia*) of the gracious will of God toward us, through which the Holy Ghost also awakens and strengthens faith, necessarily presupposes that all men without a single exception are reconciled to God through the vicarious satisfaction of Christ. When the Calvinists, therefore, follow us in calling the Word and the Sacraments “signs, symbols, seals” (*signa, symbola, tesserae, sigilla*) of the grace of God, they are simply accommodating themselves to the usage of Scripture and their Christian environment.³² If they actually maintain the *gratia particularis*, they lack all justification for the use of these terms, because then the Word and the Sacraments may be signs of wrath as truly as signs of grace. Ambiguous signs are no signs at all, for they fail to direct properly. Nor can the Word and the Sacraments be signs of the *interior illuminatio* of the Holy Spirit, because He is alleged to work this inner illumination not by external means, but immediately.

Moreover, when universal grace is denied and in consequence faith is said to be engendered by an immediate operation of the Spirit, also the Scriptural concepts of saving faith and of saving grace are lost. A faith that is not created by the outward Word

of the Gospel is not the faith of Holy Writ. The faith of which Scripture speaks always begins and continues only vis-à-vis its correlative, the Word of the Gospel (Rom. 10:14; Mark 1:15; 16:15-16). A faith that is torn from its correlative, the Gospel, and is supposed to be the product of an immediate exertion of divine omnipotence, is only a feeling infused into man. And saving grace no longer is the gracious disposition of God in Christ (*favor Dei propter Christum*), but becomes *gratia infusa*, a good quality implanted in the heart.

Hence, while to all appearances they are heading in different directions, Romanists and Calvinists concur in the *gratia infusa*. Rome conceives of saving grace as a current which flows into man by way of the many Papistic means of grace if man “does not place an obstacle in its way” (*obicem non ponit*), while Calvinism thinks of saving grace as a current which, like lightning, strikes immediately and hence irresistibly (*gratia irresistibilis*). Both take saving grace (*gratia salvifica*) to mean, not the mercy or favor of God in Christ, but a good quality implanted in the heart of man. At the outset Calvinists often give a perfectly correct definition of saving grace, namely, God’s gracious disposition in Christ or the forgiveness of sins (see Vol. II, 12, and footnote 21); but by their denial of universal grace, and the resultant denial of the appropriation of grace through the Word of the Gospel and the Sacraments, they are carried into the Roman current of “infused grace” as the basis for the remission of sins.

For this reason they have the same difficulty with their grace as do the Romanists. In practice the *gratia infusa*, or the “inner illumination,” proves to be imperfect and fluctuating. Recall the case of Oliver Cromwell, adduced above (p. 90). Because of its imperfection, the infused grace does not put an aroused conscience at rest, but perturbs it. In this dilemma the theory of the inamissibility of faith was added to the Calvinistic system. But this again severs faith in the gracious disposition of God from the means of grace and founds faith on faith, that is, on its presumed or actual earlier existence.

³⁰ For proofs see Vol. II, 24 ff.

³¹ For instance, by Gerhard, “*De elect.*,” § 68 (quoted Vol. II, 47, footnote 88). Steitz-Hauck, R. E., 2d ed., XIII, 294: “According to Calvin’s system, the elect, or predestinated, are the believers. Only these experience (*Inrt.* III, 24, 15 and especially *Consens. Tigur.*, c. 16) the internal power of the Spirit and receive, besides the signs, also the *yes* or *virtus sacramenti*. For this reason

it is actually nothing but vacuous talk when he says that the promise is offered also to the unbelieving; in fact, it sounds like irony when he addresses them: ‘You need merely in faith take hold of the word that is placed into the sign, in order to have with the sign also the substance [the effect].’” When Steitz-Hauck elsewhere opine that Calvin teaches an “objectivity of the means of grace” because his determinism leaves no place at all for “subjectivity,” it should be recalled that by “objectivity” of the means of grace we usually mean this, that by the means of grace God offers the remission of sins without distinction to all who use them and is active in all for the purpose of working or strengthening faith.

³² *Conf. Helvet.* II, c. 19: “The Sacraments are mystical symbols. Through them [God] seals His promises and externally represents what He Himself works internally in us and sets them, so to say, before our eyes to contemplate and thus strengthens and augments our faith, worked in our hearts by the Spirit of God. Through them He finally separates us from all other peoples and religions and consecrates and obligates us solely to Himself and signifies what He requires of us.” *Conf. Belgica*, Art. 33: “The Sacraments are visible signs and symbols of internal and invisible things. Through them, as through means, God Himself operates in us by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

¹¹ Michael Horton, “What About Bob?: The Meaning of Ministry in the Reformed Tradition,” *Modern Reformation*, 2005.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Rit Nosotro, *Schwenckfeld, Kaspar, 1489-1561, Protestant reformer who Luther opposed*. <http://www.hyperhistory.net>.

¹⁴ B.B. Warfield, quoted in discussion forum at <http://www.the-highway.com/forum>.

¹⁵ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works, vol. 17* (Lectures on Isaiah: Chapters 40-66) (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, eds.). (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House).

¹⁶ Michael Horton.

¹⁷ Johs. Ylvisaker, *The Gospels*, (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1977) p. 780.

The Use of Emotion in Preaching

by Steven L. Reagles

Introduction

In his “Preface” to the autobiographical *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, William Lloyd Garrison indicates what, he believes, made Douglass’s oratory effective: “As a public speaker, he excels in pathos, wit, comparison, imitation, strength of reasoning, and fluency of language. There is in him that union of head and heart, which is indispensable to an enlightenment of the heads and a winning of the hearts of others” (6). Douglass’s ability to appeal to pathos and to the heart reveals the important role that “emotion” played in his speaking. In fact, “emotion” is a critically important aspect of preaching, since human life is lived not just cognitively, but emotionally. And it is a central argument of this paper that good preaching is marked by emotion. What can be said about the proper use of emotion in preaching? This is the fundamental question I will address. Part one provides a sketch of the subject of emotion generally, its current renaissance, nature and some problems associated with emotion. Part two takes a practical turn, suggesting what a preacher may do to identify emotional elements in a biblical text and, then, structure them within a sermon. We turn, first, to the nature of emotion and some *aporia*, problems, associated with emotion as it relates to preaching.

Emotion: Research Renaissance, Its Nature & Select Aporia

Emotion: A Renaissance. We readily understand what is meant by emotion. By one definition, emotion is “a mental state that arises spontaneously rather than through conscious effort and is often accompanied by physiological changes; a feeling” (*American Heritage Dictionary*). To study “emotion” at this time in history is fortuitous. University presses have reflected what is a virtual renaissance in scholarship on emotions, with Oxford, Cambridge, and New York University “launch[ing] projects to capture the cutting edge research on this theme” (Corrigan 6).

The Nature of Emotion. According to a taxonomy manifest in Western culture, in Aristotle, Greco-Roman philosophy and rhetoric and centralized in various ways in the Reformation/Renaissance and then again in the Enlightenment, human nature can be divided into emotion, reason and will. Biblically, these distinctions seem, at least in part, reflected in the command to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind” (Luke 10:27). Those categories are often separated out in an unnatural way, but much contemporary research is interested in studying how reason and emotion are meaningfully linked. In the words of Lakoff and Johnson, “Reason is not dispassionate, but emotionally engaged” (4). Of course, this idea of complex interconnectedness has been noted by various figures through the ages and it is clear in the Hebrew and Greek words for “heart”—*לֵב* and *καρδία* respectively—which, depending upon the context, serve as metaphors signifying thought, will, emotions. Melancthon indicated the complexity at one point in writing that “Human emotions—love, hate, joy, sadness, envy, ambition, and the like—pertain to the will. . . . For what is the will if not the fount of the affections?” (cited in Shugar 121). Of course, contemporary study of emotion is often linked to assumptions, which may be challenged [e.g., the nature of emotion as part of an evolutionary development from a lower species]. Today, while I will do little more than touch on one facet of a multi-faceted subject, my main intention is to provoke preachers to think more carefully about the subject as they go about their exegetical and preaching tasks.

To illustrate the complexity of the subject, while providing a handle to engage in meaningful study of emotion and preaching, let us briefly examine select contemporary studies of the so-called “basic emotions.” Ortony and Turner’s survey of more than a dozen scholars suggests significant taxonomical difference about the “basic emotions.”

Basic Emotions

Scholar(s)	Basic Emotions	Basis for Inclusion
Plutchik	Acceptance, anger, anticipation, disgust, joy, fear, sadness, surprise	Relation to adaptive biological processes
Arnold	Anger, aversion, courage, dejection, desire, despair, fear, hate, hope, love, sadness	Relation to action tendencies
Ekman, Friesen, and Ellsworth	Anger, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, surprise	Universal facial expressions
Frijda	Desire, happiness, interest, surprise, wonder, sorrow	Forms of action readiness
Gray	Rage and terror, anxiety, joy	Hardwired
Izard	Anger, contempt, disgust, distress, fear, guilt, interest, joy, shame, surprise	Hardwired
James	Fear, grief, love, rage	Bodily involvement
McDougall	Anger, disgust, elation, fear, subjection, tender-emotion, wonder	Relation to Instincts
Mowrer	Pain, pleasure	Unlearned emotional states
Oatley and Johnson-Laird	Anger, disgust, anxiety, happiness, sadness	Do not require propositional content
Panksepp	Expectancy, fear, rage, panic	Hardwired
Tomkins	Anger, interest, contempt, disgust, distress, fear, joy, shame, surprise	Density of neural firing
Watson	Fear, love, rage	Hardwired
Weiner and Graham	Happiness, sadness	Attribution independent

(Table appears originally in Ortony and Turner)

While there is not time here to unpack the taxonomical differences, it is enough for our purposes to note that the above chart indicates difference of opinion about what the basic emotions are among fourteen groups of scholars. Some theorists suggest two ba-

sic emotions, others eight or more. Despite the differences one does find general agreement about the basic emotions. “Most agree . . . that there are four basic emotions—fear, anger, sadness, and joy” (Ratey 226).

For this paper I will use the taxonomy of Robert Plutchik as a basis for discussion. At this point readers are encouraged to read this paper by referring to one of the star-shaped illustrations of Plutchik’s “Basic Emotions,” available online through a Google Images search, with the terms “Robert Plutchik” and “Basic Emotions.” Two URL sites with the colored charts available at the time of this writing are listed below.¹

The Nature of Emotions By Plutchik

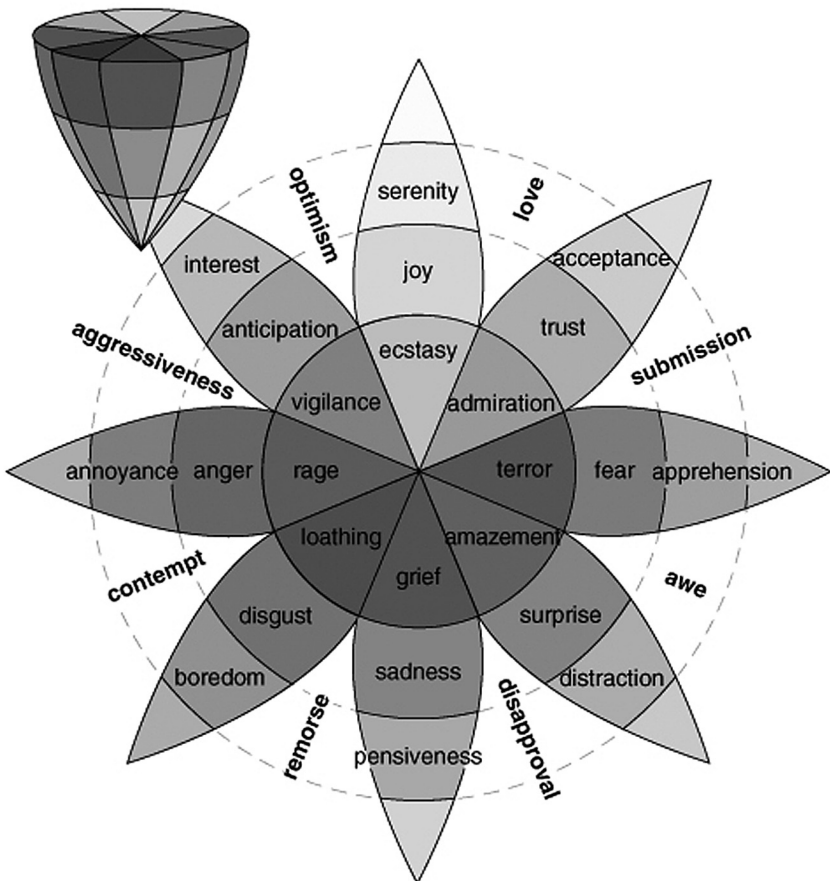


Figure 1

The four basic emotions--fear, anger, sadness, and joy -- show up in Plutchik’s star-shaped figure, (cf. Figure 1), in the second tier from the center at the 12:00, 3:00, 6:00 and 9:00 positions. You also see the element of “complexity,” captured in Plutchik’s theory as he suggests that emotions “mix” together (indicated in the “white spaces” between the colored points of the poinsettia-like star). Just as primary colors—blue, yellow and red—combine together to form a myriad of complex colors (yellow plus blue produces green) so different emotions, Plutchik suggests, mix together—rage and loathing producing contempt; terror and amazement producing awe.

Plutchik’s schema suggests, as well, how thought and emotion work together (cf. Figure 2).² The *cognitive* proposition of “danger” may result in a *feeling* of “fear” but sometimes we “feel” ourselves in certain kinds of emotional states without any cognitive basis for knowing why. These theoretical representations affirm that human feelings are often quite nuanced and complicated.

stimulus event	cognition	feeling state	overt behavior	effect
threat	“danger”	fear	escape	safety
obstacle	“enemy”	anger	attack	destroy obstacle
gain of valued object	“possess”	joy	retain or repeat	gain resources
loss of valued object	“abandonment”	sadness	cry	reattach to lost object
member of one’s group	“friend”	acceptance	groom	mutual support
unpalatable object	“poison”	disgust	vomit	eject poison
new territory	“examine”	expectation	map	knowledge of territory
unexpected event	“what is it?”	surprise	stop	gain time to orient

Figure 2

Emotion: Some Aporia (problems): As the Roman rhetorician Quintilian pointed out in his *Institutes of Oratory*, the Athenian orators were forbidden to use appeals to emotion, because of their irrational nature (385-7). Theologically, Lutheran systematic theologians rightfully warn against gauging faith on the basis of emotions. Franz Pieper critiques the notion of theology based upon psychology and feelings and specifically condemns Schleiermacher for leading theology back “into the morass of emotional rationalism” (I:267-8). Schleiermacher’s bold requirement to the readers of his infamous and highly influential *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* (1799) was that “[the reader] turn from everything usually reckoned religion, and fix [their] regard on the inward emotion and dispositions. . .” (23). Lutheran theologians, like Franz Pieper, consciously framed their dogmatic writing against such thinking. What Pieper says in his critical discussion of the relationship between emotions, feeling, and faith is echoed in most Lutheran textbooks on preaching used by synods associated with the old Synodical Conference. Such theological sensitivity reflects the continual tension evident in the minds of homiletic teachers, whose job is to teach preachers how to be “effective” preachers while paradoxically always returning to the central formulation that God’s Word (capital “W”) is “effective” through the animating presence of the Holy Spirit, rather than the mere signifier of humanly generated words (small “w”). Such theological qualification puts “emotions” and “feeling” in their proper place. Thus Pieper writes:

. . . the witness of the Holy Spirit is present not only when it is felt. There is such a thing as joyous feeling. A Christian has periods (days, hours, at times only moments) when he feels the truth, the sublimity, the majesty, the divinity, of Scripture so strongly that joyous emotions well up and flood his heart. But not only in these special periods of joy is the witness of the Holy Ghost to the divinity of Scripture present. This sensation of joy, strictly speaking, rather belongs to the effects and fruits of faith in the truth of the Word of God and thus to the external witness of the Holy Ghost (*testimonium Spiritus Sancti externum*). The inner witness of the Holy Spirit, in its first and proper sense, coincides, according to 1 John 5:9-10, with the Spirit-wrought faith in the written Word. It is present even when faith is not felt, but when the heart clings to the Word of Scripture, longs

and reaches out for it with an inner yearning” (I: 314).

Besides the *theological* aporia there are other problems with emotion in preaching. The fear of centralizing emotion, Buttrick suggests, causes “[m]any preachers today” to be “scared to death of emotion from the pulpit. Perhaps, we fear the labored histrionics, overblown affective tirades, which, in waves of emotion, swept over pews in days gone by” (77). On the other extreme is Kierkegaard who criticized the Lutheran preachers of his own day, in his native Denmark. He was concerned for the “pastor’s lack of or loss of passion.” Preaching had become a cold, intellectual presentation of information. “Passion was replaced with descriptions of passion” (Markquart 38).

Discovering Emotion in Biblical Texts & Structuring it Into Sermons

The names of those Lutheran theologians whose homiletics textbooks taught generations of Lutherans in the 20th century include Theodore Graebner, John Fritz, Richard Lenski, Johann Reu, Richard Caemmerer, Norman Madson, Senior, and, more recently, Joel Gerlach and Richard Balge, to name a few. Each of them taught the need to address the emotions. According to Graebner, in his *Inductive Homiletics*, “Unless that doctrinal, orthodox sermon addresses itself not only to the intellect, but penetrates to the sources of Christian life and action, the emotions and the will, it is not a sermon at all, but a dogmatical lecture. That is not the same as saying that the Spirit of God cannot, also through a formal and frigid presentation of doctrine, work conversion and sanctification. But the preacher is not doing his duty if he speaks his message as if it were intended for the intellect alone” (II: 17). Fritz argues that “In order to appeal to the imagination of the hearer and thus to kindle his emotions, illustrations should be used” (43). Caemmerer’s words are most zealous about the topic: “At this point the age-old debate enters the scene whether the preacher should be emotional in his manner. Actually he has no choice. The human organism operates in a bath of mood and emotion in every waking moment. Every speaker is always emotional. The only question is whether

the speaker is going to reflect those emotions which are appropriate to his purpose” (117). While Reu does not provide much practical aid for locating emotions in the text he suggests that it is the task of the preacher, nevertheless, to find those elements that address mind, feeling and volition. It is, he writes, the “duty of the preacher” to “find, through diligent toil, those elements lying in his text, and not always lying on the surface, that will enlighten the intellect, kindle the emotions, and move the will . . .” (Reu 120). Lenski, in addressing the pragmatic issue of getting at the emotions in the text, writes that the exegete should interrogate the text with questions. He suggests that commentators are often

coldly intellectual and often preachers are that way. Yet hundreds of texts throb with intense feeling. They are highly dramatic, at times tragic. Take Luke 12:16-21, the parable of the rich fool. Whoever penetrates to the emotions in this text will not preach on commonplace themes like “The Proper Use of Riches.” He will see the tragedy in the text—a man proud and happy in nothing but great earthly prosperity, his soul called to judgment that very night. All the Greek classics contain nothing that equals this one parable. Thus the whole range of human feeling runs through the texts one meets in the Bible (50-1).

While the biblical text should suggest a myriad of possible emotions, the Confessional Lutheran preacher will search, also, for “Confessional emotions” which are featured in the text. By “Confessional emotions” I mean the emotions attended to in the Book of Concord, and suggested by the indices in various editions—Triglotta, Kolb and Wengert, etc.—measured against the gestalt of Plutchik’s chart of emotions. For example, in the index of the *Concordia Triglotta* one finds the following “emotions” discussed in the Confessions, which match Plutchik’s taxonomy: trust, faith, terrors of conscience, fear, despair, doubt, guilt, wrath, steadfastness, peace, and joy. There are, of course, surprises, also when one considers that many of Plutchik’s so-called “dyadic” emotions (emotions, pictured in the white spaces between the points of the star, as *mixtures* of primary emotions: love, submission, awe, disapproval, remorse, contempt, aggressiveness, and optimism) are at

the heart of hundreds of biblical texts.

What can such information do to enhance lessons passed on by the well-established “canon” of homiletics textbooks? Here are a few suggestions:

- When doing exegesis and study of the text, the theologian/preacher should pay close attention not only to the intellectual values in the text, but those features which deal with human emotion.
- With Plutchik’s chart of emotions as a guide the preacher could ask himself the question: which of the eight basic emotions (or following Ratey which of the four basic emotions) are suggested in the text—**sadness**, disgust, **anger**, anticipation, **joy**, trust, **fear**, surprise? Consider, again, that the English word “heart,” a translation of the Hebrew לֵב and Greek καρδία, is found in hundreds of passages, where the text concerns itself with the “seat of the emotions.” The word “heart” is used in hundreds of Bible passages to describe a gamut of emotions--astonishment, brokenness, bitterness, fear, joy, terror, etc.
- Which of the dyad emotions (cf. emotions listed in the white spaces in Figure 1) inform the text for the day--love, submission, awe, disapproval, remorse, contempt, aggressiveness and optimism?
- How do those emotions provide fundamental support in the text for the Law or Gospel portion of the sermon?
- Does the text supply a tension of opposites, which can be used to set up a dramatic dialogue (cf. below)?
- Once the preacher has isolated emotional values within the text, the index of The Book of Concord—Triglotta, Kolb and Wengert—may be consulted as a confessional context for considering the biblical text. Which insights do the Confessions supply, thus aiding understanding of the sermon text?

Once one has discovered emotional elements within the chosen sermon text, the most difficult task still remains: How does the preacher incorporate emotional features into the sermon itself?

Incorporating Emotional Elements Within a Sermon

While there may be many ways explicitly to attend to emotion—and, of course, emotion naturally finds its way into a sermon, *unintentionally*, when our soul is stirred by its message --let me, here, sketch out how a preacher might *intentionally* weave the “emotion” discovered within a biblical text into the structure of a sermon. To begin with, we’ll consider a technique closely linked to the study of the text, 1) Identification; then consider 2) Language Figures; 3) Dramatic plot & dialogue; and 4) finally, how our preparation meshes with the Confessional Lutheran Law/Gospel dialectic.

Identification. Lutheran preachers during the Reformation followed the “Christianized” classical rhetorical tradition developed by Augustine in *De Doctrina*. That tradition was indebted especially to Cicero, but also to Aristotle and Quintilian. Graebner, Fritz, Reu, Gerlach, and Balge all acknowledge that tradition to a greater or lesser degree. One piece of advice mentioned by Quintilian in his *Institutes of Oratory* seems useful. While Quintilian wrote his work for students who were aspiring politicians and lawyers, the work became a standard textbook in European education. According to Schwiebert, Reformation era Lutheran students, before entering the School of Theology, were required to take a master’s degree in Liberal Arts, which included the study of Quintilian’s *Institutes of Oratory* (25). In the *Institutes* Quintilian addresses the question of how an orator may stir up emotion in others. The answer seems relevant to a preacher’s writing and delivery of the sermon:

The prime essential for stirring the emotions of others is . . . feel those emotions oneself. It is sometimes positively ridiculous to counterfeit grief, anger and indignation, if we content ourselves with accommodating our words and looks and make no attempt to adapt our own feelings to the emotions to be expressed . . . we must assimilate ourselves to the emotions of those who are genuinely so affected, and our eloquence must spring from the same feeling that we desire to produce in the mind of the judge (433).

Akin to the Stanislavski method of acting, a preacher, by strongly identifying with the emotions of biblical people in their respective conditions, the members of his own congregation, or

one's own life in related circumstances, is able, through sanctified imagination, to recapture the emotional state that is the subject of a biblical text.

Language Figures. Emotion, in Greco-Roman thinking, could be worked into a piece of oratory several ways, one of which was through stylistic figures of speech, i.e., the artful use of language. A “figure” was a word, phrase or clause used in a slightly unnatural way. Metaphors and similes set up a comparison on a word level and in the comparison reached outside of the normal category and in thus doing often evoked emotions by a striking contrast. The Greeks, similarly, catalogued a host of phrase level “figures”—anaphora (repeating the first words in successive clauses), epanaphora (repeating the last words in successive phrases), antithesis (juxtaposing opposites in a phrase or clause)—demonstrating that they could “raise the temperature” of human emotion by artful repetition of language. To put a spin on Chaim Perelman's notion, they created “emotional presence” in the mind of the hearer. Augustine's *De Doctrina*, was a classic defense for using the insights of Cicero's rhetoric against other Church Fathers who criticized pagan rhetoric. Augustine showed, on the basis of the Scriptures, that the same techniques used by the pagans were used in Scripture. St. Paul could have said, “God will never leave us,” which is true, but then St. Paul said it more eloquently by reflecting in his language the use of a “figure,” thus illustrating that language was the possession of both pagan and Christian, and capable of artful use for the sake of the truth. What can compare, then, with the emotional joy, created by the repetitive Pauline “rhetoric” in Romans 8:37-39:

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Similarly, St. Paul's beautiful, rhetorically powerful discourse on love in 1 Corinthians 13 comes, ironically, at the end of the same letter in which Paul says, “When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence. . .” (1 Corinthians 2:1). Of course,

as observed previously, the orthodox Lutheran homiletician was always careful to give all glory to God and the power of the written Word, animated by the Holy Spirit's power and to include caveats, such as this, from Fritz: "the preacher's language which appeals to human emotion, cognition and will is not the ultimate power" and "does not mean that the preacher can by the power of *his* words or the manner of *his* presentation persuade the hearer to accept the Word of God, but it means that [the preacher] should so present [the word] that the Holy Spirit be not hindered in exerting His divine influence upon the hearer's ears and *heart*" (43).

Preachers can become sensitive to what this "Classical style" of language use looks like by reading the sermons of great preachers through the ages. On this note Paul Scott Wilson in *The Practice of Preaching* (1995) recommends that preachers "Read sermons of our own times for parallelism, repetition, and short clauses and sentences of the sort that signal passion. . ." (269).

Dramatic Plot & Dialogue. One additional way that the preacher can incorporate emotion into a text is by capitalizing upon the dramatic elements within the pericopic text, a strategy which characterized Luther's own approach to preaching. There's not time here to detail the work of, Buttrick, Lowry, and others like Fred Craddock, but Lowry's *Homiletical Plot* offers a method for approaching texts dramatically, so that biblical texts are viewed in terms of upsetting equilibrium, discrepancy, clues to resolution through the Gospel, an approach which builds drama into the structure. Ian Pitt-Wilson's observation seems appropriate here:

. . . preaching is a kind of dramatic presentation. Christian doctrine from creation to parousia is *the* cosmic drama whose script is Scripture. The crucified Carpenter who made the galaxies is the heart of the drama.... His story is our stories, and ours is his, is the stuff of the drama. If we are preaching the centralities of the Christian faith and really believe what we say, we cannot play it cool. There should be no need to superimpose phony histrionics or inauthentic emotionalism on what we are saying. But there is an urgent need on the part of many of us to recover our sense of the drama of the gospel, to feel it ourselves, and not to be afraid to let others see how we feel. Often we inhibit our authentic emotions in the pulpit and substitute for them inauthentic emotionalism which, even when

it succeeds, can be dangerous and manipulative. The way in which the sense of drama is communicated will be determined by the temperament of the preacher (90-1).

Luther's own approach to the preaching of the sermon was not the Aristotelian method of theme and parts centralized in American Lutheranism by figures like Lenski and Fritz, but one in which the biblical drama in the text is centralized. Meuser's study of Luther's preaching shows that

Luther's only device, if it could be called that, was to set things in opposition to each other. He loved to employ tensions: *law/gospel*; conflict: *sin/grace, God/Satan*; paradox: *free will/bound will*; and above all, dialog, at which he was the master. Dialog is part of a very high proportion of his sermons. Usually he spoke in the first person for both parties. There is conversation between Luther and his hearers, between God and humanity, God and Adam, Jesus and disciples, God and Satan, Luther and Satan, sin and righteousness, life and death, and heaven and hell. In almost every sermon two sides confront each other. This is as close as Luther came to a designed form, but he did it so naturally that there was never anything phony about it. It was the way he saw life. . . (49-50).

Meuser's recounting of Luther's approach to preaching suggests that for any given text a preacher could employ a similar method by becoming aware of the emotional elements underlying the doctrine of a text, the Old Adam's response to it, the New Man's response, etc., and then fashioning brief dialogues between the "sides" implied within the text. Thus the preacher is able to capture the emotion implied in any text by a dramatic envisioning of the thoughts spoken through the mouth of imagined characters. Such dramatic dialogues could be judiciously woven into key portions of the text to support the preacher's thesis. This approach also captures the power of the "show don't tell" maxim well known to masters of creative writing, in which the author shows the key conflict within a text through concrete, imagined words of antagonists and protagonists. According to Meuser, this dialogic approach to preaching, for Luther, captures the insight that

The sermon is not just instruction, but conflict—of truth with error, God with Satan. There is the deepest kind of conflict within the reconciliation, which God achieves through the gospel. It is a part of life that will not end this side of the grave. It makes Luther's sermons vibrant, powerful, in touch with life as the hearer lives it. He could preach that way because he had come through great conflict, lived with conflict in his own soul, but also knew the Victor whose presence and promise made it possible to survive in the midst of the conflict without being drained or overcome by it" (49-50).

Standard Law/Gospel Dialectic. In this paper, so far, I have attempted to fulfill the assignment by providing some ideas that will help the preacher think about the use of emotion in preaching. At this point, I suggest that in the solid, orthodox approach to the writing of sermons, which is the strength of our tradition, communicated to us by Luther, the Lutheran Confessions and given masterful form in Walther's classic *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*, we have an approach to sermon writing that is already "wired" to capture the emotions within biblical texts and to communicate them in dramatic form. In translating the text from the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek the preacher is immediately aware that one's task is to ascertain the meaning of the text in terms of its law and gospel values. By asking the exegetical question, "Which of the words of the text are imbued with, or suggest, emotional values that relate to the Law or the Gospel?" the preacher immediately becomes aware of emotional features that may be worked into the sermon in a solid theologically and authentic way. Markquart tells how for years he had studied the book of Acts, but then one day he noticed two words that helped reinforce his duty to remember the emotional connection.

But in my years of study of the book of Acts, I had failed to focus on two words which were used to describe his preaching in Ephesus: "For three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one *with tears*." This is not to suggest that preachers are to weep in the pulpit and whip up crocodile tears for dramatic effect, but these two little words, "with tears," reveal that Paul was a passionate preacher. Paul describes passionate preaching when he advises Timothy how to speak: "Preach the

word, [that is:] be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching” (2 Tim. 4:2) (57-8).

As we structure the elements within the biblical text relating them to the intellect, will and emotions we are continually aware that whichever elements we weave into the Law, they create a dramatic Gestalt. The emotions within Plutchik’s schema-- terror, fear, apprehension, sadness, grief, loathing, disgust, boredom, annoyance, anger, rage—constitute the very elements that give the preaching of the Law its bite, setting up the biblical Gestalt of condemnation against which emotions related to the Gospel may, by the art of sanctified writing, be figured into the sermon in order to end with the soothing Gospel, where emotions of amazement, surprise, awe, trust, acceptance, love, joy, serenity, optimism and vigilance live and help drive the Gospel home to the believer, strengthening faith in the crucified and resurrected Savior, Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

Fifty-five years ago Norman Madson published *Preaching to Preachers*, a collection of sermons and writings on preaching, delivered over many years in his capacity as Dean of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. In chapter two of the book, “Scriptural Subjectivity,” Madson addresses the theme of this essay, by citing a segment from one of Luther’s sermons, illustrating how Luther’s preaching naturally exhibited emotion. Dean Madson’s words offer a fitting conclusion for this study, as he illustrates how Luther’s preaching tapped into the drama at the heart of the Gospel. In his discourse he reminds us how Luther taught that we are justified by faith, through the atoning work of Christ. This statement of fact is true, but can be stated in a fairly mundane fashion. Luther’s own story, however, naturally, breathes emotion into the truth and reminds Lutheran preachers of every age that not merely thought, but emotions—joy, trust, fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, anger, anticipation—are motivated by factors theological.

No one who is familiar with the sermons and writings of Martin Luther will ever make the charge against the great reformer that he was an emotional sentimentalist. And yet, when occasion

demanded it, the fearless Saxon was not afraid to let people know how he personally had sadly misunderstood Scripture while still under the bondage of the papacy. Permit me to offer two examples of his use of Scriptural subjectivity: At Lauterbach, on Sept. 12, 1538, he proclaimed: “This word, righteousness, had become in my heart a clap of thunder. For when I read while in the papacy: ‘Deliver me in thy righteousness’ (Ps. 31, 1), and likewise: ‘In this truth,’ I held it forthwith to mean the righteousness of His avenging zeal, namely His divine wrath. Paul I hated in my heart, when I read: ‘The righteousness of God is revealed through the Gospel.’ But later on, when I saw what followed, namely as it is written: ‘The just shall live by faith’ (Gal. 3, 11), and besides took counsel with Augustine, then I became joyful. As I learned to understand righteousness as the compassion of God, which accounts us righteous, then I had found the right remedy for my sickness” (24).

Notes

¹ <http://www.fractal.org/Bewustzijns-Besturings-Model/Nature-of-emotions.htm>.

<http://www.gatewaypsychiatric.com/Patient%20Resources/Mood%20Disorders%20Info/Mood%20and%20Emotion.htm>

² Figure 2 is available at <http://www.fractal.org/Bewustzijns-Besturings-Model/Nature-of-emotions.htm>.

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Lutheran Orthodoxy Under Fire:

An Exploratory Study of the Syncretistic Controversy and the *Consensus Repetitus Fidei Vere Lutheranae*

by Timothy R. Schmeling

It is fairly safe to assume that Abraham Calov(ius) (1612-1686), the *Consensus Repetitus Fidei Vere Lutheranae* (hereafter CRFVL), and Georg Calixt(us) (1586-1656) are not household vocabulary in much of contemporary Lutheranism. Yet all played a prominent and important role in the 17th century syncretist controversy. History has hardly been kind to Abraham Calov, the chief orthodox opponent of syncretism. Speaking of Calov, Gotthold Lessing (1729-1781) remarks that many people want to be Christians, but “*Freilich nicht wittenbergisch-lutherische Christen: freilich nicht Christen von Calovs Gnaden.*”¹ His nineteenth century biographer, August Tholuck (1799-1877), marshaled forth a chain of less than savory names to describe the Lutheran dogmatician such as “*lutherischen Archi-Theolog,*” “*heißblütigen Zionswächter,*” “*lutherischen Torquemada,*” “*Großinquistor,*” and “*Mann von Strahl und Eisen.*”² The reputation of the CRFVL has not fared much better than Calov. Referring to the CRFVL as “An Abortive Symbol against Syncretism, 1655,” Philip Schaff writes, “This new symbol goes far beyond the Formula of Concord, and would have so contracted Lutheranism as to exclude from it all independent thought and theological progress.”³ With the exception of Theodor Wotschke’s work, it is not surprising that Abraham Calov and his CRFVL have not been the main focus of scholarly study in the same way that Georg Calixtus has been until rather recently.⁴ In contrast, a two-volume nineteenth century biography of Georg Calixtus, a number of scholarly studies, and a modern edition of his selected works have been published.⁵ The reason for the greater interest in Georg Calixtus, the originator and intellectual leader of syncretism, is because his irenicism has won the attention of 19th and 20th century unionists and ecumenists.

The purpose of this present endeavor is to make a minor English contribution to the study of Lutheran Orthodoxy by exam-

ining the syncretist controversy and the CRFVL. First, this paper will define the term *syncretism* and explain why it was applied to Calixtus. Second, Calixtus' career prior to the controversy will be examined to illustrate factors that led him to advocate his union theology. Third, an overview of the syncretist controversy will be given to contextualize the CRFVL. Fourth, this essay will examine the structure of the CRFVL. Fifth, the content of this confession will be presented. Sixth, this essay will analyze how the polemic functions in the CRFVL. The thesis of this essay is that the union theology of Calixtus was made possible by his upbringing, education, and travels. This instilled in him an intellectual openness and a love for the ideal of antiquity. His union theology was prompted by the Thirty Years' War, but ultimately influenced and based upon the thought of Cassander and de Dominis. This paper further argues that the content, structure, and polemic of the CRFVL were designed with a threefold objective, i.e., to demonstrate the theological chasm between the syncretists and orthodox, to prove that the syncretist had abandoned the symbols to which they were bound, and to show the syncretists had departed from the Augsburg Confession (hereafter CA) and therefore should be excluded from Lutheranism.

It is only proper to introduce this paper with a definition of *syncretism* and the evolution of the term.

Syncretism, from συγκρητίζειν (not from συγκεραννύναι). An explanation is given by Plutarch in a small work on brotherly love ("Opera Moralia", ed. Reiske VII, 910). He there tells how the Cretans were often engaged in quarrels among themselves, but became immediately reconciled when an external enemy approached. "And that is their so-called Syncretism." In the sixteenth century the term became known through the "Adagia" of Erasmus, and came into use to designate the coherence of dissenters in spite of their difference of opinions, especially with reference to theological divisions. Later, when the term came to be referred to συγκεραννύναι, it was inaccurately employed to designate the mixture of dissimilar or incompatible things or ideas.⁶

This later use or misuse of the term *syncretism* was the way it was applied to Calixtus and his adherents. Properly speaking, the

syncretist controversy originates in the theology of Georg Calixtus. He was by no means the first to push for toleration or even intercommunion among the confessions of Christendom. Desiderius Erasmus (1469-1536) had been a proponent of mutual toleration between Roman Catholics and Protestants for the benefit of the external unity of the church as is evident in his *On Restoring Concord in the Church* (1533).⁷ This spirit continued in many of his followers, particularly George Cassander (1513-1566). Eventually a similar movement arose among the Reformed for inner-Protestant reconciliation best represented by Francis Junius (1545-1602) and David Pareus (1548-1622) called Reformed Irenicism.⁸ Even the most staunchly orthodox Lutherans, in truth, desired a reunion of Christendom as long as it was on the basis of complete doctrinal agreement. But Calixtus is unique in that he was a Protestant seeking the reunion of all of Christendom, even Catholics. Yet, he was very Lutheran in that he was convinced the Lutheran church (of Braunschweig) was the purest of the various confessions (albeit not totally pure) and that any union had to be based on doctrinal agreement.⁹ Unlike other Lutherans, he did not feel the Book of Concord or even the CA should be the basis of such a union. He was dubbed a syncretist by the orthodox Lutherans because he maintained that the Apostles' Creed contained all fundamental doctrine, i.e., doctrines necessary for salvation, and that it should serve as the sole doctrinal norm for reconciliation. He further advocated his *consensus antiquitatis*, i.e., consensus of the fathers and councils of the first five centuries as the proper explication of the Apostles' Creed.¹⁰ This consensus was intended for the clergy as a means of inculcating the timeless apostolic faith, as a means of opposing heresy, and as a common basis for the mutual toleration and the future reconciliation of the various confessions.¹¹ These ideas are the key to Calixtus' union theology and the focus of the CRFVL's polemic against him. Many Lutherans objected to this because he had appeared to dismiss the Lutheran symbols and placed tradition over the Bible not to mention the fact that the creed did not contain all fundamental doctrines such as justification.¹² Lutherans did not believe all the doctrine of the Book of Concord or even of the CA was fundamental, but they did believe that even the non-fundamental doctrine of the symbols

was essential for church union. For instance, the CRFVL does not condemn all non-Lutherans, but only false teachers and false doctrine.¹³ In contrast to Calixtus who maintained all who confessed the Apostles' Creed were church, the Electoral Saxon Lutherans argued the Lutheran church alone is true church although Catholics and Reformed can be Christians and saved by believing in true fundamental doctrine.¹⁴ In a nutshell, Calixtus' ecclesiology limited the doctrine necessary for salvation to the creed and made the adherence to creed's explication in the *consensus antiquitatis* the mark of true church and sole basis of church fellowship.

Since Georg Calixtus was the intellectual leader and origin of the syncretist movement, his career prior to the controversy will be examined to illustrate factors that led him to advocate his union theology. Calixtus was born December 14, 1596, in Medelby in Schleswig. His father, Johannes Calixtus, was a pastor known also to be an *Erasmophilus* and *Melanchthonicola*. Instilling in him a love of antiquity, Johannes taught his son at home until the age of twelve to shelter him from Gnesio-Lutheranism and the Formula of Concord particularly the teaching of ubiquity.¹⁵ After four years at the humanist-orientated Flensburg Latin school, his father sent him in 1603 to the University of Helmstedt. Its faculty was free of the Formula of Concord and fostered a Philippist as well as humanist tradition. In point of fact, the *Corpus doctrinae Juliam* only demanded subscription to the ecumenical creeds, CA, Apology, Smalcald Articles, Catechisms, *Kurze Bericht*, and *De formulis caute et citra scandalum loquendi de praecipuis christianae doctrinae locis* of Urbanus Rhegius (1489-1541).¹⁶ When Duke Heinrich Julius (d. 1613) assumed power in 1589, subscription to its *corpus doctrinae* was not enforced.¹⁷ Here Calixtus also came under the influence of Johann Caselius (1533-1613), the so-called last German humanist, and Cornelius Martini (1568-1621), who revived Aristotelian metaphysics in German Lutheranism. This atmosphere promoted a sense of history and a deeper love for the ideal of antiquity in Calixtus.¹⁸ Against both Daniel Hoffmann (c. 1538-1611) who opposed Aristotelianism in favor of Ramism and Balthasar Meisner (1587-1626) who argued logic was not necessary in theology, Calixtus supported Martini becoming a capable Aristotelian himself. He had

learned theology from Martini who deviated from the norm of early Lutheran Orthodoxy particularly in Christology. Hence Calixtus was later called an *αὐτοδίδακτος* that had never heard orthodox theology.¹⁹ In addition to philosophy and theology, he dedicated himself to church history and the fathers, which was vital to his later project. From 1609-1613, he made two important trips. On his travels, he encountered the Jesuit Becanus as well as the Reformed Irenicists Pareus and Casaubonus (1559-1614). The latter's stress on antiquity made a real impression on him.²⁰ His 1614 dispute with the Jesuit Turrianus (1566-1644) gained him the attention of Duke Friedrich Ulrich (1591-1634) who appointed him as a professor at Helmstedt in that year.

The new professor was immediately deemed suspect by some in Braunschweig. His 1616 dissertation was forwarded to Balthasar Mentzer (1565-1627), who considered it too philosophical and historical as well as lacking biblical proof.²¹ The anthropology and presentation of justification found in Calixtus' *Epitome theologiae* (1619) was considered "papist" by Mentzer in 1620.²² There was even an attempted refutation of Calixtus at Jena in 1625.²³ This suspicion of him at home and abroad seems to explain why he published few works as a professor until his *Apparatus theologicus* (1628). A notable exception was his *Epitome theologiae* published by his students. Eventually, he drew a sympathetic circle around himself composed of Conrad Horneius (1590-1649), Herman Conring (1606-1681), Gerard Titius (1620-1681), and Justus Gesenius (1601-1673). In any case, he was still convinced that Catholics and the Reformed are guilty of fundamental error and that church reunion is only possible via conversion to Lutheranism, a position he held until his union theology really developed in the 1620s.²⁴ Thus, the Melanchthonian humanist tradition, love of antiquity, and the intellectual openness that he was exposed to at this juncture did not lead Calixtus to his union theology though it created a disposition that made the development of such a theology possible.

The Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) played a vital role in promoting the ideas of irenicism and church union in Germany. Prompted by the Hapsburg and Valois persecutions of the Calvinists and being assured by Lutherans that they were not protected by

the Peace of Augsburg (1555), Calvinists such as the Brandenburg court preacher Peter Bergius (1587-1658) sought harmony among Protestants to present a united front against Catholicism. The closest that this idea came to being realized was when Peter Bergius convinced the Saxon theologians to dialogue at the Leipzig Colloquy (1631) resulting in a momentary shift away from Saxony's pro-imperial policy.²⁵ The amount of agreement achieved at this rather cordial colloquy only occurred because Ferdinand II's (1619-1637) edict of restitution caused the Saxon Lutherans to really question for the first time the stability of their status in the empire. The colloquy yielded the Leipzig Manifesto (1631), which made a united Lutheran and Reformed political front against the Hapsburgs possible. But as soon as the Lutherans gained an upper hand over the Catholics, they resumed their anti-Reformed policy. Seeing the devastation all around him and now convinced the divisions between the churches were the chief cause of this war, Calixtus was prompted to rethink the notion of fundamental doctrine and the unity of the church.²⁶

In midst of the Thirty Years' War, but prior to the Leipzig Colloquy, Calixtus republished Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana* and Vincent of Lerins' *Commonitorium* (1629) with a single preface that first expresses his notion of the *consensus antiquitatis*.²⁷ In 1633, Duke Ernst of Gotha invited him to help reorganize the duchy of Franconia. Here Calixtus first uses his *consensus antiquitatis* for irenic purposes and calls for tolerance of Catholics as true Christians.²⁸ Not long after he called all Catholic universities to religious discussions. He once again advocated religious discussions in 1642 via a work of and about George Cassander, which he sent to Mainz and Köln. When the response was unfavorable, he wrote his *Responsum maledicis theologorum Moguntinorum* (1644/45) presenting his plan for church union.²⁹ The first public attack on Calixtus and his *consensus antiquitatis* was made by Statius Büscher in his *Cryptopapism novae Theologiae Helmstadiensis* (1640), which accused him of abandoning the *Corpus Doctrinae Julium*.

The following observations are now in order. First, Calixtus' upbringing, freedom from confessional subscription, and humanist education gave him a great deal of latitude, a certain historical outlook, and tools that were necessary for the development of his union

theology. Second, his travels gave him a friendlier disposition to the Reformed and Catholics than was typical among Lutherans. Still, these aforementioned factors did not bring about his union theology, although they facilitated it. Third, the Thirty Years' War played a vital role in fostering irenicism and first prompted Calixtus to rethink his ideas about fundamental doctrine and the unity of the church. What ultimately influenced his particular union theology? The answer is Cassander and de Dominis. Hermann Schüssler has shown that the union theology that Calixtus developed was not influenced by the Lutheran confessional tradition nor Reformed irenicism, but by the old catholic church idea, which he drew from the union theology of Cassander and Marcus Antonius de Dominis.³⁰ In point of fact, Cassander believed that the creed contained the fundamentals and that Scripture and the tradition of the early church should solve theological controversies.³¹ De Dominis organized and developed these ideas by suggesting the church of the first five centuries is the true form of the catholic church and by providing a program for union arguing the best way to achieve church union was via adherence to the fundamentals contained in the creed. Even Abraham Calov recognized the connection between Calixtus' union theology and Cassander and de Dominis in the preface to the 1666 CRFVL.³² How did Calixtus encounter these ideas? Schüssler explains:

In Auseinandersetzung mit Ideen von Cassander und de Dominis hat Calixt in den zwanziger Jahren des 17. Jahrhunderts dann die Gedanken entwickelt, die zu seiner neuen Sicht der Trennung und der Einheit geführt haben. Bereits 1617 kennt er den ersten Teil der *Respublica Ecclesiastica*, der in diesem Jahr erschien. 1622 kommt der dritte Teil mit dem VII. Buch heraus, das die Ausführungen über die Kircheneinheit enthält. In seinen nächsten größeren Schriften hat Calixt das Werk benutzt. Gelegentlich läßt sich sogar bis in formale Einzelheiten hinein eine Abhängigkeit nachweisen. Vor allem zeigt er aber in seiner neuen Konzeption von der kirchlichen Einheit eine deutliche inhaltliche Beeinflussung durch de Dominis. Falls er vorher mit Cassanders Ideen noch nicht bekannt geworden war, wurde er durch de Dominis jetzt darauf aufmerksam.³³

The syncretistic controversy itself has been divided into three phases: The first phase occurred from 1645-1656, or the period

between the Colloquy of Thorn and death of Calixtus. The second phase occurred from 1661-1669, or from the time from the colloquies of Hesse-Kassel and Berlin until the Great Elector Frederick William (1620-1688) banned polemics. The third phase occurred from 1675-1686, or from the period when Calov renewed the controversy until the death of Calov.³⁴ During this last period, Calov sought wider acceptance of the CRFVL and began his polemics against Johann Musaeus (1613-1681) at Jena.

The *Colloquium caritativum* or Colloquy of Thorn (August 28 - November 21, 1645) was called by King Ladislaus IV of Poland with the ultimate hope of drawing the Protestants back into the Catholic fold.³⁵ When Calixtus heard of the colloquy, he quickly praised the venture and sought appointment. This action first gained him the animosity of Coelestin Myslenta (1588-1653) and Abraham Calov who were actively resisting the Great Elector's attempts to promote Calvinism in Prussia.³⁶ The Danzig city council, as part of Poland, considered sending Calixtus, but Calov, currently a Danzig pastor and rector of its school, prevented it. The Polish Lutherans chose Johann Hülsemann (1602-1661) of Wittenberg as one of their representatives, who along with Calov, would become the real leaders of the Lutheran party at Thorn. The Elector of Brandenburg was invited to send theologians because the Great Elector as Duke of Prussia was a vassal of the Polish king. Despite accepting Johann Bergius' proposed policy of toleration toward Lutherans, the Hollenzollerns still sought to undermine orthodox Lutheranism in their lands.³⁷ It is not surprising that the Great Elector would come to see an ally in Calixtus and the more moderate Lutherans already at this juncture. The Great Elector invited Calixtus, upon the recommendation of Bergius and in place of Coelestin Myslenta (1588-1653), hoping Calixtus could undermine the orthodox Lutherans.³⁸ He selected Levin Pouchen, Michael Behm, and Christian Dreier to represent the Lutheran University of Königsberg.³⁹ In addition, Friedrich Reichel and Bergius were sent as the Great Elector's Reformed envoys. There Calixtus worked for his union idea, but Calov and Hülsemann immediately took issue with Calixtus refusing to recognize him as a Lutheran. Calixtus ultimately sat with the Reformed and helped them produce their *Declaratio Thoruniensis*,

which Calov felt was so influenced by him that he called it the “*Calixtinische Professio*.”⁴⁰ The Lutheran statement, in contrast, was not allowed to be read. The Lutherans even refused to pray with the Catholics, Reformed, and Herrnhuters at Thorn.⁴¹ In the end, the colloquy achieved little other than to set the stage for the orthodox polemic against Calixtus.

The orthodox Lutheran attack on Calixtus and his school began in 1646 at Königsberg with the Johann Latermann affair. The Great Elector had appointed Latermann, a student of Calixtus who accompanied him to Thorn, as a professor of theology. His March 1646 *Habilitationsschrift, De aeterna Dei Praedestinatione*, divided the faculty and prompted *Gutachten* from other Lutheran universities because it sought to facilitate doctrinal agreement with the Reformed and argued no confession was free of error.⁴² Dreier, Pouchen, and Behm supported him. But Coelestin Myslenta would accuse Latermann of ten errors: deviations on original sin, synergism, a Calvinist explanation of election, denial of the main proofs of the Trinity, overestimation of works, and acceptance of tradition over Scripture.⁴³ In 1648, Myslenta issued the *Censurae theologorum orthodoxorum*, which was rebutted by Horneius of Helmstedt.

On December 29, 1646, the faculties of Wittenberg, Leipzig, and Jena issued an *Admonitio* to the University of Helmstedt intended to call Helmstedt back to an orthodox position on works as well as reassert the unity and purity of the Lutheran church.⁴⁴ It was prompted by Elector Johann Georg I (1585-1656) of Saxony when he was informed by Jakob Weller (1602-1664) that Horneius defended the necessity of works for salvation in a disputation.⁴⁵ Calixtus responded in February of 1647 with a sharp letter to Johann Hülsemann refuting the charges made against Helmstedt and reminding him that the Formula of Concord was not binding in Braunschweig. Made well aware of the issues, the Elector instructed his theologians to write up a refutation of Helmstedt’s errors “article by article” already in January of 1648.⁴⁶ By June 16, 1649, Johann Georg I took it upon himself to issue an address to the three Braunschweig dukes who operated the University of Helmstedt. Herein he accused Calixtus of manifold errors and schisms, asked that the Helmstedt theologians be barred from polemics, and “invited the dukes to a proposed alliance

of Evangelical states for restrictive measures, under threat of assuming protection against schism.⁴⁷ Conversely, the Braunschweig dukes had Conrad Horneius with the assistance of Calixtus write an apology against the Königsberg *Censurae theologorum orthodoxorum* treating subjects such as authority of the ancient church, good works, Trinity, and the charge of syncretism.⁴⁸ The following was the reaction to Johann Georg I:

Now, he [Calixtus] furnished an apology against Johann Georg's address, and the dukes of Brunswick in joint reply to the latter (1650) offered to acquiesce in the suppression of the polemical writings of their theologians, provisionally, if he would take the same steps, and proposed a convention to devise counsels against schisms in behalf of peace, but intimated resistance to the threatened directorate, if the same implied the assertion of superiority by force.⁴⁹

Johann Georg I retorted by calling Abraham Calov to Wittenberg in 1650 who had already written his *Institutionum theologicarum τὰ προλεγόμενα cum examine novae theologiae Calixtinae* (1649) and *Consideratio novae theologiae Helmstadioregiomontanorum syncretistarum* (1649). This move only suggested an increase in polemics was imminent.

Calixtus himself would not take part in the controversy after he wrote his *Widerlegung Wellers* in 1651. By 1650 the elector instructed his theologians to call for a conference of theologians to discuss the Helmstedt matter and in 1652 ninety-four errors of Helmstedt were collected for such a purpose.⁵⁰ This ultimately failed because the dukes of Saxony and theologians of Jena, who did not want this schism to grow wider, realized the electoral Saxons desired the exclusion of Braunschweig from Lutheranism.⁵¹ The electoral Saxons would not be stifled. In 1655, the Dresden high consistory requested a new confession against the syncretists. Between February and March, Wittenberg and Leipzig each wrote a draft out of which the CRFVL arose.⁵² It is almost certain that Abraham Calov wrote the CRFVL.⁵³ It in turn was signed by the theologians of the Universities of Wittenberg and Leipzig on March 14, 1655. Since the CRFVL never acquired any further signatures due in large part to Jena's mediating position between Helmstedt and the electoral

Saxons, it was never incorporated into the Book of Concord.⁵⁴ It was also not printed until 1664 because of the ducal Saxons as well as the death of both Georg Calixtus and Johann Georg I in 1656.⁵⁵

The second phase of the controversy opened with the colloquies of Hesse-Kassel and Berlin. With the Peace of Westphalia, the Lutheran University of Rinteln fell under the Reformed rule of William VI, the Great Elector's brother-in-law. To promote union and good will within his lands, he held the *Colloquium irenicum* at the Kassel (June 1-9, 1661) between the Reformed faculty of the University of Marburg (reopened in 1653) and the Lutheran faculty of the University of Rinteln.⁵⁶ Sebastian Curtius and Johannes Heinius were the spokesman for the Reformed. Johannes Heinichen and Peter Musaeus (1620-1674), the brother of Johann Musaeus, represented the Lutherans. The topics under discussion were Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the person of Christ, and election. The Wittenberg faculty sharply criticized this colloquy, when it learned of it, in a work titled *Epicrisis Theol. Fac. Witeberg. De colloquio Casselano Rintelino-Marpurgensium* (1662). This polemical treatise was followed up by a number of others. From September 8, 1662 to June 29, 1663, the Great Elector, Friedrich William of Brandenburg, called a colloquy in Berlin in which Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676) took part. But this colloquy produced little results. The Great Elector issued a new edict on September 16, 1664 that prohibited polemics on pain of removal from office.⁵⁷ Many Lutheran pastors such as Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676) disobeyed and were dismissed from office.

At the same time, the electoral Saxons published the 1664 *Consilia theologica Witebergensia* in Frankfurt am Main, a collection of theological opinions from the Wittenberg faculty demonstrating its orthodoxy all the way back to Luther. The 1655 CRFVL, promulgated earlier, was first published in this tome.⁵⁸ Ernst Henke states that there are three printed editions of the CRFVL.⁵⁹ The first edition appeared in Latin and German in the 1664 *Consilia theologica Witebergensia* mentioned above. Herein the German text is an elaboration or even explanation of the more cursory Latin text and was intended for the laity. Hereafter the CRFVL is published by itself. The 1666 second edition was issued by Abraham Calov and was printed at Wittenberg. It omits the German text and makes cer-

tain changes in the Latin text such as typographical and grammatical corrections. The 1666 edition expands the title, includes a table of contents, and adds a preface accusing the University of Rinteln of syncretism. This prompted Friedrich Ulrich Calixtus (1622-1701), the son of Georg Calixtus, to defend his father and refute the CRFVL. In response, Aegidius Strauch, student of Calov, and Deutschmann (1625-1706), a son-in-law of Calov, began their polemics against syncretism. This same Strauch would publish what Henke calls the 1668 third edition of the CRFVL at Wittenberg against Friedrich Ulrich Calixtus. This edition expands the title yet again and made some alterations to the text. It should also be noted that Ernst Henke published an edition at Marburg in 1846 under the title *Inest theologorum Saxoniorum consensus repetitus fidei vere lutheranae*.

Despite the polemics of Friedrich Ulrich Calixtus, the most capable and productive defense of Helmstedt was made by Hermann Conring in his *Pietas academiae Juliae*. It pointed out that the CRFVL could undermine Braunschweig's protected status under the Peace of Westphalia (1648).⁶⁰ To put an end to the schism, Friedrich Wilhelm of Saxon-Altenburg (d. 1602) convinced Johann Georg II (1613-1680) of electoral Saxony to speak with his theologians. They responded with a report on April 22, 1669.⁶¹ Though the report continued the schism, a refrain from polemics was decreed. Not long after Ernst the Pious encouraged by Spener (1635-1705) also sought to resolve the strife, but distrust prevented any real healing of the breach.⁶²

Abraham Calov inaugurated the third phase of the syncretistic controversy in 1675 with his *E diaboli excrementa Calixtinas sordes exquirere*. The Great Elector's capture and three-year imprisonment of Aegidius Strauch, now a Danzig pastor, as he was sailing toward Hamburg off the coast of Pomerania, no doubt only added fuel to the fire.⁶³ Since the Elector of Saxony barred polemics without permission, Calov now began to use pseudonyms. Yet, Abraham Calov still managed to make new enemies. He came into conflict with Johannes Meisner (1615-1684), his colleague at Wittenberg. But it was Johannes Musaeus, professor at the University of Jena, who received the brunt of his wrath for suggesting the issues with the syncretists are now negated. In fact, Calov compelled the Jena

faculty to condemn syncretism.⁶⁴ On January 12, 1680, Johann Georg II (1647-1691) prohibited polemics once again and punished the printers that issued Calov's *De Syncretismo Musaei*.⁶⁵ Calov's situation worsened as the new Elector Johann Georg III (1647-1691) of Saxony allied himself with the Great Elector. With great difficulty, Calov was still able to get his *Historia syncretistica* (1682), a virtual goldmine of information on the controversy, published in Frankfurt am Main. The elector soon confiscated it. Thus, a second edition was printed in 1685. Calov's death in 1686 marked the end of the final phase of syncretism.

In sum, the syncretist controversy was the most important and enduring controversy in the Age of Orthodoxy. The controversy had both religious and political implications. Theologically, orthodox Lutheranism felt threatened. Politically, Hohenzollern politics became intertwined with syncretism, the Saxon houses were unable to achieve a unified stance toward syncretism, and the controversy caused divisions within Lutheranism that could have undermined the legal status of Braunschweig if not Lutheranism in general. It should also be noted that the CRFVL ultimately failed to be accepted beyond electoral Saxony because of the mediating position that the University of Jena took with respect to it.

This paper will now examine the CRFVL itself providing first an examination of its structure. The 1664 CRFVL is composed of two preliminary articles, thirteen articles or topics, and a conclusion. In 1666, Abraham Calov would add a preface and table of contents. These articles are subdivided into eighty-eight points that delineate the subject matter of each article, however, at each article the count starts over again. The 1846 edition numbers its points consecutively, but this is not the case in the 1664 or 1666 editions. Such a feature makes the text more user-friendly. It also undermines the intended structure of the confession.

It is quite clear that the structure of the CRFVL down to the construction of its very articles is intentionally modeled after the CA. In point of fact, a horizontal line introduces each new CRFVL article, which is listed as a CA article even retaining the numbering of the CA. For instance, the heading of the article on free will reads: "*Articulus XVIII. Augustanae Confessionis de Libero Arbitrio.*"⁶⁶

Since the CRFVL lists its articles in this manner and because there is no standard method of referring to its articles, this paper has chosen simply to refer to each of its articles or topics with the CRFVL abbreviation instead of referring to them as CA articles of the CRFVL. In this way, any confusion with the CA can be avoided. Consequently, the previous italics reference to the article on free will shall now be abbreviated CRFVL XVIII. This will be the procedure for the rest of the paper.

There are four major differences from the CA's structure. First, the CRFVL has nonconsecutive numbering of its articles, despite generally retaining the CA's ordering of its topics. The reason for this will become clearer in the following points. Second, the CRFVL has two preliminary articles not treated in the CA. Third, the articles of the CA not in dispute with the syncretists are omitted in the topics or the articles of the CRFVL. Fourth, when possible, articles that come later in the CA, which can be assumed under earlier articles, are combined with those earlier articles in the CRFVL. A similar practice is already evident in the Apology to the Augsburg Confession. In other words, the CRFVL articles follow the topical arrangement of the CA more rigidly at the beginning than at the end because it combines later articles with earlier articles. For instance, the *Index Caputum* from the 1666 edition lists the "*Articulus XII. De Poenitentia, punct. III. p. 101*" immediately ahead of "*Articulus XVI. De Magistratu Politico, punct. II. p. 103.*"⁶⁷ This is because CA XIII was combined with CA IX in the CRFVL and there was no dispute with the syncretists over the content of CA XIV or XV. In another example, the *Index Caputum* from the 1666 edition lists its second non-preliminary topic as follows: "*Articulus II. & XIX. De peccator, eiusdemque causa, & que ei fuit opposita, imagine divina, habet XIII. puncta, p. 22.*"⁶⁸ Since more than one CA article is often assumed in one CRFVL article, it should come as no surprise to see the CRFVL heading for the article on the Lord's Supper reads: "*Articulus X. XXII. & XXIV. Augustanae Confessionis de Coena Domini et Abusu circa eandem scil. Missa Papistica.*"⁶⁹

To further support the contention that the structure the CRFVL was intentionally modeled after the CA, though with some deviations, one need only see the actual topical order of the CRFVL

keeping in mind that the numbering of its articles corresponds with the CA. The following is the actual topical order of the CRFVL with the CA articles combined in the CRFVL articles in parentheses: a preliminary article containing the basis of the whole discussion; a preliminary article on Scripture; God (I); sin and its cause as well as the image of God (II, XIX); Christ (III); justification and good works (IV, VI, XX); the Word of God and law and gospel (V); the church (VII, VIII, XXVIII); the sacraments in general and particularly Baptism (IX, XIII); the Lord's Supper and its abuses, particularly the papal mass (X, XIII, XXIV); repentance (XII); the political magistrate (XVI); the last judgment (XVII); free will (XVIII); and the cult of saints (XXI).

Every point under each article of the CRFVL has a definite structure similar to some of the articles of the CA, but still all its own. For instance, the CA article on God presents first a positive statement affirming true doctrine and then a condemnation of heretics and false teachings introduced with a *damnant*.⁷⁰ The CRFVL takes a similar approach, but the pattern for each of its points hardly ever varies and it consistently adds a third part. This third part lists the name or names of the individuals being refuted and proves their culpability from extensive citations from their writings along with references. CRFVL I:1 on God illustrates this standard pattern by beginning with “*profitemur & docemus*,” which precedes a positive statement of doctrine. Then, comes “*rejecimus eos, qui docent*” followed by the false doctrine in question. The point concludes with “*ita docet D. Georgius Calixtus*,” preceding in this case a citation from Calixtus' 1634 *Epitome Theologiae* found on pages 69-70 and from Horneius' *Dissertat. Theolog.* III held at Helmstedt on May 30, 1637.⁷¹

The last structural item worth noting is the marginal references to the Lutheran Confessions beginning with the 1664 Latin and German edition. The first point of the first preliminary article lists the following on its margin: “*Liber Concord, pag. 633. Edit. Lat. Lips. In 8vo publicatae Anno 1612. 1626. & Jenae 1645. Edit Germanae in folio Dresdae 1580. pag 256. August. Conf. art. 7. pag. 12. Edit Lips.*”⁷² These marginal references not only point the reader to the ecumenical creeds, CA, Apology, Smalcald Articles,

and Catechism, but also to the Formula of Concord and Catalogue of Testimonies.⁷³ The editions of the Book of Concord cited were ones available in that day. In some cases, the marginal references draw the reader's attention to other items such as Calixtus' *Epitome Theologia*, Council of Antioch, and the Council of Ephesus.⁷⁴

The following observations may now be made. First, the structure of the CRFVL intentionally reflects the CA. Its purpose was to cover the articles of the CA in order to bolster the claim that Georg Calixtus and his adherents are in conflict with the Augsburg Confession. Second, the structure of the CRFVL's points is unique in that it not only rejects false doctrines, but that it names false teachers and cites these teachers extensively. With this approach, the CRFVL went beyond the Formula of Concord which did not name names or cite from its opponents on each article. The marginal references were intended to show that the syncretists had departed from the CA and had abandoned other Lutheran symbols to which they were bound. In addition, references to the Formula of Concord only helped illustrate the theological chasm between subscribers of the Book of Concord and the syncretists. Fourth, the structure of the CRFVL demonstrates the Lutheran Confessions were very much a part of the thought process and polemical theology of the Silver Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy.

This paper will now shift to an examination of the CRFVL's content. Given the sheer length of the document, its complete contents cannot be presented. Instead, this paper will first introduce each CRFVL article or topic. The paper will then indicate in a series the specific condemnation for each point distinguishing the substance of each point with a semicolon. For the benefit of reader, the consecutive numbering of the points from the more accessible 1846 CRFVL is given in parentheses after the discussion of each article for the sake of reference. In the four points of the first preliminary article, the CRFVL defines the *totius negotii fundamentum* or the underlying presuppositions of the entire confession and root of the contention with the syncretists.⁷⁵ First, the CRFVL asserts that the Lutheran church is the *vera dei ecclesia* wherein the gospel is rightly taught and the sacraments are rightly administered. Thus, those who teach that the Lutheran church is only slightly less polluted

with errors than the Catholics and Calvinists are to be rejected. Second, only false doctrines and false teachers are condemned. The *rejecimus* of this confession are not intended against whole churches or people that err out of simplicity and do not blaspheme the truth of the Word of God. Third, neither all that is necessary to know and believe for salvation can be found in the Apostles' Creed, nor should those who only believe its articles be deemed brothers and heirs of heaven. Fourth, not all heresies are defined by the Apostles' Creed and therefore other confessions are necessary (1-4).⁷⁶ The second preliminary article treats Scripture. It rejects that the witness of the church is necessary to recognize Scripture, that not everything contained in Scripture is divine revelation, that a clearer church tradition is given in addition to Scripture, that Scripture requires interpretation according to the norm of the catholic church (i.e. *consensus antiquitatis*), and that tradition serves as a secondary principle to Scripture (5-9).⁷⁷ CRFVL I begins the regular topics by addressing the subject of God. It rejects that the existence of God and His attributes are not an article of faith; that it is enough to believe there is one God in three persons, though unnecessary to believe in the *notions divinae proprietates & relations*; that the mystery of the Trinity was only made known to the patriarchs and prophets via a special revelation from God; that the Old Testament is unclear about the doctrine of the Trinity; that only the gifts of God as opposed to His essence exist in the believer; that the deity of Christ and Spirit is unable to be proved from passages that say God appears as an angel in the Old Testament; and that the Jew and the Turk are not guilty of idolatry (10-16).⁷⁸ CRFVL II & XIX examines original sin, its cause, and the image of God. Herein the CRFVL rejects that the image of God does not belong to the natural state of man; that *iustitia originalis* of our first parents is supernatural not innate; that human nature was created rebellious; that the body of our first parents was only made incapable of dying via a supernatural gift; that God is the indirect cause of sin; that souls arise not from propagation, but *ex nihilo tunc primum creari* (creationism); that one should not seek the cause of original sin, but attribute it to a *causa moralis*; that original sin in infants is merely a *cauentia iustitiae*; that original sin is a mere privation or lack; that original sin means after the fall the

natural powers remain uncorrupted so that only supernatural powers are lost; that concupiscence is not sin; that it is sufficient to know for salvation that original sin means man was born excluded from heaven and subject to eternal damnation; and that original sin does not bring death unless actual sins are committed (17-29).⁷⁹ Christ is the focus of CRFVL III. It rejects that Old Testament believers neither had to know or believe the doctrine of Christ and His work as the God-man to be saved; that Old Testament believers did not have to believe in His divinity to be saved and were unsure if the messiah would be God, an angel, or man; that Christ never appeared in His own person before His incarnation and is only called an angel in two places (Isaiah 9:6 and Malachi 3:1); that the Son born *ex Maria pura santa semper virgine* subordinated Himself to sickness, suffering, and death by becoming man; that there is no communication of omnipresence to the human nature of Christ; that the human nature of Christ does not dwell in the believer; that the power to raise the dead with one word does not occur through the human nature, but only through the divine nature; that work of salvation only occurs through the divine nature; that divine attributes are not communicated to the human nature of Christ; that divine attributes are not communicated to the human nature through the personal union, but are only united with the person so that Christ human nature is not present on this earth after the ascension; that the universal merits of Christ are not the first and principle article of the faith; and that Christ did not descend into hell with His body (23-41).⁸⁰ CRFVL IV, VI, & XX discusses justification and good works. The CRFVL rejects that controversies concerning salvation between Lutherans and Catholics can be easily distinguished and settled; that *justificari* is not used in a forensic sense in I Corinthians 6:11 (1666 Edition has 7:11 and Henke has 6:2) and Titus 3:7 but in a moral sense; that confession of sins and praying for forgiveness belongs to justification itself; that good works, the intention to avoid sin, and obedience to the commandments are necessary to receive justification; that only works done before justification are excluded from one's justification; that faith is necessary for justification insofar as it is active; that justification consist of the remission of sins and sanctification of the Spirit; that attending to righteousness and love for ones brother are neces-

sary to be a saved child of God; that the cause of election is not only the mercy of God and merits of Christ but also something in man; that the active love of God, love of neighbor, and the obedience to the commandments are the *causa sine qua non* for receiving the inheritance of eternal salvation; that there are not three grades of faith; that via devoting oneself to sanctification one acquires the right of eternal life; that man must doubt his steadfastness in the faith until the end; that the intention of loving God and obeying the commandment is required for justification; that one can trust in God's mercy as well as the merits of Christ and can still live against conscience in unrighteousness; and that Lutheran doctrine prohibits good works and opens the door to impiety if it says: good works and the practice of piety are not necessity for justification or salvation (42-57).⁸¹ CRFVL V focuses on the Word of God, law, and gospel. In this article, any mixing of the law and gospel is opposed (58).⁸² CRFVL VII, VIII, & XXVIII pursues the topic of the church. The confession rejects that not only Lutherans and Greeks, but also Catholics and Reformed belong to the Christian church so that what Lutherans, Greeks, Catholics, and Reformed do not agree upon ought to be abandoned; that catholic is what all Christians everywhere can agree upon; and that several articles of Trent that conflict with the Lutheran symbols can be tolerated, softened, or excused (59-61).⁸³ The sacraments in general and Baptism in particular are considered in CRFVL IX & XIII. Rejected is that Scripture is unclear about the number of the sacraments, that sacraments justify *ex opera operato*, that the forgiveness bestowed in Baptism happens merely by the will of God and in no way via water and the word (i.e. Baptism is a mere confirmation of the forgiveness of sins), that infants have no faith of their own, and that Calvinists teach nothing that deviates from the CA on Baptism (62-66).⁸⁴ CRFVL X, XXII, & XXIV treats the Lord's Supper and its abuse, namely, the papal mass. Rejected is that John 6 applies to the Lord's Supper; that Lutherans, Catholics, and Calvinists agree that the *verum ac reale* body of Christ *vere & realiter exhibeatur* so that the disagreement between them is only over the mode of presence; that one can receive the Lord's Supper in the Roman manner if among Catholics or in the Calvinist manner if among the Calvinists; that the *dogma de ubiuitate carnis Christi* is

more absurd than the Catholic and Reformed teachings; that the body of Christ is present in the Lord's Supper via a particular divine power, but not through the power Christ received according to the His human nature through the personal union; that the *factio panis* and pouring out of the wine into the mouth of the believer were intended by Christ as signs of His passion; that the Lord's Supper is *sacrificium memorativum*; that Catholics hold to the fundamentals of salvation, are members of Christ, and have become citizens of the kingdom of heaven although they have many errors particularly on the mass (67-74).⁸⁵ Repentance is the subject of CRFVL XII. It rejects those who do not speak properly of the two parts of repentance, i.e., *contritio et fides*; that man who is not yet converted should cooperate in his conversion from the beginning of his conversion if he is to be converted; and that those who say that the regenerate cannot fall away are members of Christ and citizens of the kingdom of heaven (75-77).⁸⁶ CRFVL XVI talks about political magistrates. The CRFVL rejects that categorical subscription to the symbols, required by a magistrate, can be transformed into a hypothetical or *quatenus* subscription or that authors of the Lutheran Confessions make things necessary for salvation which God Himself has never proposed as necessary for salvation (78-79).⁸⁷ CRFVL XVII presents the last judgment. The confession rejects that none receive beatitude or damnation before the last day, that unbaptized infants who have died suffer only the lack of the beatific vision, and that eternal life and grades of glory or rewards are not distinct (80-82).⁸⁸ CRFVL XVIII speaks about free will. It rejects that there is synergy from the beginning of conversion and that the Reformers defended divine grace over against free will too vehemently (conversely, it affirms only two causes of conversion); that natural man has natural capabilities in some things to raise and save himself; that man does more in a negative way to inhibit his conversion than actively resisting conversion; and that one can only do morally good works on the basis of natural powers alone and that all works of the heathen are generally not to be equated with sin (83-86).⁸⁹ Finally, the cult of saints is addressed in CRFVL XXI. It rejects that if the dead saints understand ones invocation as the living do, then one may invoke them to pray for us or that the Catholics ought to be deemed children of God

for they are far from idolaters (87-88).⁹⁰ Though Philip Schaff's assessment of this confession is far from kind, he offers a generally sound and succinct overview of the previous content:

The first fundamental section anathematizes the Calixtine concession of the imperfection of the Lutheran church, the relative recognition of Catholics and Calvinists as Christian brethren and the assertion of the necessity of Christian tradition alongside of the Scriptures. The following doctrines are rejected not simply as doubtful, erroneous, or dangerous opinions (which some of them are), but as a downright heresies: That the article of the Holy Trinity is not clearly revealed in the Old Testament; the Holy Spirit dwells in believers as a gift not as an essence; that theology need not prove the existence of God, since it is already certain from philosophy; that Jews and Mohammedans are not idolaters; that original sin is simply a *caerentia iustitiae*; that souls are created by God (creationism); that Christ's body is not omnipresent; that sanctification entered in any way into the idea of justification; that the true church embraces also Calvinists, Papists, and Greeks; that infants have no faith; that John vi. treats the Lord's Supper; that man is active in his conversion; that symbolical books are to be only conditionally subscribed *quatenus Scripturae S. consentiunt*; that symbols contain many things as necessary to salvation, which God has not fixed as such; that unbaptized infants are only negatively punished; that good works are necessary to obtain eternal life. A prayer that God may avert all innovations and corruptions from the Orthodox Church, and preserve it in this repeated consensus, forms the conclusion.⁹¹

The following conclusions can be made. First, the CRFVL's articles do not correspond with all the topics of the CA. Articles XI, XIV, XV, XXII, XXIII, XXV, XXVI, and XXVII are omitted. The reason for this omission appears to be that these topics were not in contention or at least were not crucial to the argument being posed against Calixtus and his adherents. Second, the CRFVL presents a comprehensive refutation of the perceived deviations of Calixtus and his adherents from the Book of Concord and more importantly the CA. This is assuming the CRFVL has an accurate grasp of their theology on each point of controversy. Unfortunately, this paper was unable to confirm the CRFVL's accuracy. In addition, the CRFVL has stressed that there is no fundamental agreement between Lutherans,

Catholics, and Reformed on which to base a union. Third, the confession is remarkable in that it recognizes the underlying conflict of presuppositions between the syncretists and orthodox. Fourth, the confession condemns only false doctrines and false teachers. At other times, the confession seems to suggest Catholics and Reformed are not saved children of God, but such passages must be understood in light of its first preliminary article. Fifth, the articles that receive the most attention are justification and good works with 15 points, original sin with 13 points, Christ with 12 points, and the Lord's Supper with 8 points. Perhaps, it is somewhat surprising the soteriology and more particularly justification would need a thorough defense in the so-called Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy. The fact that CRFVL was trying to safeguard justification should temper remarks about dead or rigid orthodoxy and should indicate that not only the CA, but even the heart of the Lutheran faith itself was under fire. This may also explain some of the vehemence of Calov's own polemical writing. Sixth, the content of the CRFVL exceeds the express mention of the CA and even in a few instances the Formula of Concord. The Lutheran Confessions do not have specific articles on Scripture and confessional subscription. Nevertheless, the CRFVL neither really exceeds the thought expressed in the Formula of Concord's *summarischen Begriff* regarding Scripture nor the intention of the formulators regarding subscription.⁹² The Book of Concord does not bind the Christian to maintain that Old Testament believers expressly believed in the Trinity or the deity of Christ for salvation. Still, such ideas were not innovated by the CRFVL. Luther argued the Trinity was clearly taught in Old Testament and that the patriarchs and prophets understood these articles though many Jews rejected them.⁹³ Similarly, Johann Gerhard teaches that it was necessary for salvation in the Old Testament to believe in the Trinity.⁹⁴ The Lutheran Confessions also do not expressly teach the separation of the body and soul at death followed by the immediate beatitude or damnation before judgment day. This teaching is hardly a novelty among Lutherans.⁹⁵ Two instances where the CRFVL may exceed the norms of Lutheranism is the repudiation of creationism and its stress on ubiquity without any mention of the multivoli-presence. Many Lutherans did not want to be overly dogmatic about the

origin of the soul and only a select few were open to creationism. In spite of this, the language of the Formula of Concord regarding the transmission of original sin via carnal propagation appears very similar to CRFVL and could be understood as binding one to a sort of traducianism.⁹⁶ At any rate, the marginal references to the Smalcald Articles and Formula of Concord suggests the CRFVL believed its position was confessional or at least logical deductions from the Lutheran Confessions. Both the Swabian ubiquity and the Lower Saxon multivoli-presence were accepted in the Formula of Concord. The CRFVL might be read as placing far more stress on ubiquity to the detriment of the multivoli-presence. It is unclear if this is the case.

The function of the CRFVL's polemic will now be examined. The purpose of the CRFVL was really threefold. It sought to demonstrate that the syncretists were in disharmony with the Book of Concord to illustrate the theological chasm between the syncretists and orthodox. The confession intended to prove the syncretists had contradicted the symbols to which they were bound. Its primary objective was to show that the syncretists had departed from the CA and therefore should be excluded from Lutheranism.⁹⁷ This aim is confirmed in the full title of 1664 edition of the CRFVL:

Consensus Repetitus Fidei Vere Lutheranae in illis Doctrinae capitibus quae Contra puram & invariata[m] Augustanam Confessionem, aliosque libros Symbolicos in Formulae Concordiae comprehensos, scriptis publicis hodieque impugnant. D. Georgius Calixtus, Professor Helmstadiensis, eiusdemque complices.⁹⁸

The terms *consensus repetitus* echoes the Formula of Concord and suggest that the CRFVL is not so much a new confession as an explanation or commentary on the CA and other Lutheran symbols. In this way, it could be argued by the orthodox that the CRFVL was not imposing a new confession at all. There seems to be a potential political element to the CRFVL. If Calixtus and his adherents were proved to be in disharmony with the CA, then they were no longer Lutheran and needed to be excluded from Lutheranism. In other words, if the church of Braunschweig for instance was not adhering to the CA and had not become Reformed or Roman Catholic, then

it was not officially protected by the Peace of Westphalia (1648).⁹⁹ Whether or not this really mattered after the Thirty Years' War may be debatable. At any rate, subscription to the CRFVL was promulgated by Wittenberg and Leipzig as the mark of an authentic Lutheran.

The target of the 1664 CRFVL is the syncretists, i.e., first and foremost Georg Calixtus as well as his adherents: Conrad Horneius, Christian Dreier, Johannes Latermann, and Friedrich Ulrich Calixtus, all of whom are specially named in the CRFVL.¹⁰⁰ Particular doctrines of the Catholics and the Reformed are also under fire because the syncretists claimed they adhered to fundamental doctrine. In the expanded title and preface of the 1666 edition, the Lutheran University of Rinteln is included among the condemned syncretists. Friedrich Ulrich Calixtus receives further attention in the 1668 CRFVL whose expanded title now includes his name.

The design of the CRFVL's polemic is multifaceted and well conceived. Before the CRFVL even begins its refutation in its main articles, it set forth two preliminary articles that are intended to attack the presuppositions undergirding the syncretists' platform as conceived by Georg Calixtus. First, it argues the Lutheran church is the *vera dei ecclesia* and not all that is necessary for salvation is taught in the Apostles' Creed such as justification by faith alone.¹⁰¹ Second, the confession reasserts the inspiration, sufficiency, and clarity of sacred Scripture over against the need for the interpretation of Scripture via catholic tradition or the legitimacy of the reunion of Christendom on the basis of tradition. Granted the Formula of Concord's *status controversiae* generally present the real question at issue for each of its topics, but the CRFVL is distinct in that it recognizes and lists in its preliminary articles the central presuppositions underling the syncretists' entire deviations from the Augustana. In fact, the title of the first preliminary article demonstrated the CRFVL's recognition of the central issues at hand: "*Articulus, Prooemialis Prior, continens Totius negotii fundamentum.*"¹⁰² In this way, the CRFVL is unique among Lutheran symbols.

So far this paper has explained how the structure, content, and preliminary articles of the CRFVL are designed to prove the syncretists' deviations from the CA. The best way to fully illustrate how the polemic works is to sample one of its points and then sup-

plement this with other examples of how the polemic functions in this confession. The point under discussion will be *Punctum V* from *Articulus IV. VI. & XX. Augustanae Confessionis, De Justificatione & Bonis Operibus* or CRFVL IV, VI, & XX. The marginal references for this point are: “*Aug. Conf. art. 4. p. 11. Apologia p. 184. & Epitome Concordiae. art. 3. p. 584. nec non Declaratio ejusdem p. 690. Teut. fol. 481. 276.*” The following is the articles as it appear in the text:

Profitemur & docemus, hoc ipsam nostram esse coram Deo justitiam, quod Dominus nobis peccata remittit ex mera gratia, absque ullo respectu praecedentium, praesentium aut consequentium nostrorum operum, dignitatis et meriti. Ille enim donat atque imputat nobis iustitiam obedientiae Christi. Propter eam justitiam a Deo in gratiam recipimur, & iusti reputamur, non propter opera, etiamsi sint hominum regenitorum ac justificatorum, nec ex solis viribus humanis profecta. Quare etsi conversi & in Christum credentes habent inchoatam in se renovationem, sanctificationem, dilectionem, virtutes et bona opera: tamen haec omnia nequaquam possunt aut debent immisceri articulo Justificationis coram Deo, ut Redemptori honor illibatus maneat: et cum nostra nova obedientia imperfecta & impura sit, perturbatae conscientiae certa et firma consolatione sese sustentare valeant.

Rejicimus eos, qui docent, ea opera hic tantum esse excludenda, quae ante justificationem homo fecerit.

Ita docet D. Conradus Hornejus in *Iterata assertione* §. 37. Verba sunt haec: Verum etiam est, evidenter scriptum esse, hominem justificari absque operibus, ut Rom. III. 28. Arbitramur hominem justificari fide absq; operibus, nempe quae ante fecerit. Idem etiam Paulus ad Gal. II, 16. inculcat: Ex operibus legis non justificabitur ulla caro. Ita quoq; limitat §. 51. 53. 69. 110. & Repetit. p. 36. Dreier. *Erörter* p. 545.¹⁰³

Based on this article the following conclusions about how the polemic work can be made. First, the title of the article references CA IV, VI, & XX, which suggests that what is condemned in this article conflicts with these articles of the CA. Second, the point confesses and teaches that our righteousness is from God and that God forgives sins out of pure grace without any preceding, present,

or consequential works, merit, or worthiness. It further asserts that God gives and imputes to us righteousness because of the merits of Christ. Although the believer has sanctification, love, virtues, and good works, all these things ought not to be mixed into the article of justification. Note that the *profitemur & docemus* is modeled after the Formula of Concord's *credimus, docemus et confitemur*. Why the CRFVL did not strictly retain this pattern is unclear. Third, the point rejects those who teach only the works preceding justification are excluded from justification. Note that *rejecimus* does not reject the simple or whole church bodies, but only false doctrine and false teachers as the first preliminary article states in its second point. This point is typical of the polemic of the CRFVL with one exception that occurs in CRFVL X, XIII, & XXIV:2. Herein an *improbamus* and a *damnamus* are added in addition to the *rejecimus*.¹⁰⁴ Fourth, the marginal references provide the relevant passages in the Book of Concord that proves to the reader that what is rejected by the CRFVL is also condemned by the Book of Concord. In this case, the issue in question conflicts with the CA, Apology, and the Formula of Concord. In point of fact, the CA states, "*Item docent, quod homines non possint iustificari coram Deo propriis viribus, meritis, aut operibus sed gratis iustificentur propter Christum per fidem.*"¹⁰⁵ Granted this citation makes no distinction between works before justification and after justification. In truth, the CA does not distinguish between such works because *viribus, meritis aut operibus* are simply intended to exclude any work from justification regardless of how one wants to distinguish between them. Thus, the reference to the CA demonstrates that the syncretists had abandoned the Augustana, forfeiting the name Lutheran. The reference to the Apology shows Helmstedt was not in sync with its own confessions. The reference to the Formula of Concord further proves to the reader the disparity between the orthodox and syncretists. If the polemic went no further, it would conclusively prove that adherents of the doctrine condemned have departed from the Lutheran symbols. But there is more to the CRFVL's polemic. Fifth, the CRFVL goes on to name the transgressor and prove his culpability from his own writings so that the condemnation does not remain unsubstantiated. In this instance, Conrad Horneius and Christian Dreier are specifically

named. The damning citation comes from Horneius' *Iterata assertio de necessitate fidei per caritatem operantis* § 37: “*Verum etiam est, evidenter scriptum esse, hominem justificari absque operibus, ut Rom. III. 28. Arbitramur hominem justificari fide absq; operibus, nempe quae ante fecerit. Idem etiam Paulus ad Gal. II, 16. inculcat: Ex operibus legis non justificabitur ulla caro,*” i.e., “It is true and clearly found in Scripture that man is justified without works as Romans 3:28 says. We hold that man is justified by faith without works, i.e., which he has done beforehand. This Paul also teaches in Gal. 2:6: *Out of the works of the law no flesh is justified.*” The CRFVL further acknowledges that Horneius limited this proof in § 51. 53. 69. 110 and in his *Repetitio doctrinae verae de necessitate bonorum operum* p. 36. *Gründlicher Erörterung* p. 545 of Dreier is cited as an additional reference. It is possible that this citation of Horneius was taken out of context by the CRFVL because this paper was unable to confirm the citation. Regardless, the polemic of the CRFVL is unique among Lutheran symbols in that it names names and cites often extensively from the offender to prove their culpability.

The polemic of the CRFVL occurs in other ways not illustrated by the previously cited point. First, it generally makes use of Scripture to affirm its positions though in a few instances it lists Scripture passage in its condemnations. Scriptural citations seem more frequent in the CRFVL than the CA. The cited passages generally originate from the New Testament. The CRFVL probably references more Old Testament passages than any other Lutheran symbol. This is not that surprising given the fact that this confession treats the Trinity and deity of Christ in the Old Testament as well as the fact that Abraham Calov was an Old Testament professor. Its Old Testament citations are also not limited to the discussion of the Trinity and deity of Christ in the Old Testament. Genesis, Psalms, and Isaiah occur most frequently, but Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, II Samuel, Job, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, and Micah are all represented. Second, the polemic employs the Lutheran Confessions in the text of the articles themselves. In the text, the CRFVL references the Athanasian Creed, CA, Apology, Catechisms, and the Smalcald Articles.¹⁰⁶ These confessions were

selected because Helmstedt was technically bound to them confirming their deviations from their own official symbols. Third, the confession cites positively Luther, Melanchthon, Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, and Justin in support of itself.¹⁰⁷ It condemns Vincent of Lerins as a Pelagian heretic to undermine Calixtus' *consensus antiquitatis*, which is ultimately grounded in Vincent's definition of catholicity.¹⁰⁸ It even references the Heidelberg Catechism to show Lutherans and the Reformed are not in agreement over Baptism.¹⁰⁹

In conclusion, this essay has shown that the union theology of Calixtus was made possible by his upbringing, education, and travels. This instilled in him an intellectual openness and a love for the ideal of antiquity. It was prompted by the Thirty Years' War, but ultimately influenced and based upon the thought of Cassander and de Dominis. This paper has further demonstrated that the content, structure, and polemic of the CRFVL were designed with a threefold objective, i.e., to demonstrate the theological chasm between the syncretists and orthodox, to prove that the syncretists had abandoned the symbols to which they were bound, and to show the syncretists had departed from the CA and therefore should be excluded from Lutheranism. What was the impact of the syncretistic controversy and the CRFVL? The answer to this question is far beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, Valentine Ernst Loescher may shed some light on this issue when he writes, "In *Timotheus Verinus*, Part One I noted that one of the seeds of pietism was a lack of concern for the syncretistic ways of Calixtus. I lamented the fact that Dr. Glassius and Dr. Musaeus made light of Calixtus errors."¹¹⁰ This thesis certainly may account for one factor in the rise of pietism and explain some of the impact of the syncretistic controversy. But above all, this passage shows that there is still much research to be done on the Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy and the syncretistic controversy.

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Endnotes

¹ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Raul Rilla, vol. 8 (Berlin, 1956), 170, quoted in Johannes Wallmann, “Abraham Calov - theologischer Widerpart der Religionspolitik des Großen Kurfürsten,” in *700 Jahre Wittenberg Stadt Universität Reformation*, ed. Stefan Oehmig (Weimar: Verlag Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1995), 303.

² August Tholuck, *Der Geist der lutherischen Theologen Wittenbergs im Verlaufe des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg und Gotha: Friedrich und Andreas Perthes, 1852), 189, 202, 209, 229; August Tholuck, *Das akademischen Leben des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts, mit besonderer Beziehung auf protestantische-theologischen Facultäten Deutschlands* (Halle, 1853), 143.

³ Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes*, 4th ed., vol. 1 (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, Publishing, 1919), 349, 352.

⁴ Theodor Wotschke, “Calovs Historia syncretistica,” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 36 (1916): 425-458; Theodor Wotschke, “Aus Abraham Calovs Briefwechsel mit Niedersachsen,” *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für niedersächsische Kirchengeschichte* 24 (1919): 1-57; Theodor Wotschke, “Brandenburgische Brief an Hülsemann and Calov,” *Jahrbuch für brandenburgische Kirchengeschichte* 17 (1919): 48-80; Theodor Wotschke, “Kaspar Hermann Sandhagens Briefe an Abraham Calov,” *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für niedersächsische Kirchengeschichte* 42 (1937): 306-313; Jörg Baur, “Die Pflicht geschichtlichen Gedenkens. Anlässlich Geburtstages von Abraham Calov,” *LM* (1962): 230-232; Heinz Staemmler, *Die Auseinandersetzung der kursächsischen Theologen mit dem Helmstedter Syncretismus. Eine Studie zum “Consensus Repetitus fidei vere Lutheranae” (1655). Texte und Studien zum Protestantismus des 16. bis 18. Jahrhunderts* no. 4 (Waltrop: Hartmut Spenner, 2005); Wallmann, “Abraham Calov - theologischer Widerpart,” 303-311; Kenneth Appold, *Abraham Calov’s Doctrine of Vocatio in Its Systematic Context* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998); Volker Jung, *Das Ganze der Heiligen Schrift: Hermeneutik und Schriftauslegung bei Abraham Calov* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1999); Kenneth G. Appold, “Abraham Calovs Auseinandersetzung mit der tridentischen Rechtfertigungslehre,” in *Zur Rechtfertigungslehre in der Lutherischen Orthodoxie*, ed. Udo Sträter (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2003), 71-80.

⁵ Heinrich Schmid, *Geschichte der synkretistischen Streitigkeiten in der Zeit des Georg Calixt* (Erlangen, 1846); Wilhelm Gass, *Georg Calixtus und der Syncretismus* (Breslau, 1846); E.L.T. Henke, *Georg Calixtus und seine Zeit*, vol. 1-2 (Halle, 1853-1860); C. Dowding, *German Theology during the Thirty Years’ War: The Life and Correspondence of George Calixtus* (1863); Friedrich Hans, *Georg Calixtus, der Unionsmann des 17. Jhs. Inwiefern sind seine Bestrebungen berechtigt?* (Anklam, 1891); Franz Jacobi, “Das liebevolle Religionsgespräch zu Thorn 1645,” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 15 (1895): 345ff. and 465ff.; Friedrich Uhlhorn, “Die Bedeutung Georg Calixts für die lutherische

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⁶ Klemens Löffler, “Syncretism,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. Charles G. Herbermann et. al., vol. 14 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), 383.

⁷ Ruth Rouse and Stephan Charles Neill, *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948*, 2nd ed. (London: S.P.C.K., 1967), 35-36.

⁸ Theologically, Reformed Irenicism believed it was in fundamental agreement with Lutheranism, but that the Lutheran Reformation was incomplete and considerably too papist. Politically, the Reformed’s legal status under the 1555 Peace of Augsburg was tenuous at best and Calvinism was under siege in Western Europe. Thus, Reformed Irenicism was politically and theologically motivated to seek mutual toleration with Lutheranism against Roman Catholicism if the Calvinization of Lutheranism was not viable.

⁹ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia, Das ist/ Wittenbergische Geistliche Rathschläge Deß theuren Mannes GÖttes/ D. Martini Lutheri, seiner Collegen, und treuen nachfolger/ von dem heiligen Reformation – Anfang/ biß auff jetzige Zeit/ in dem Namen der gesampten Theologischen Facultät außgestellte Urteil/ Bedenken/ und öffentliche Schriften*, part 1 (Frankfurt am Mäyn: Balthasar Christoph Wusts, 1664), 928, 930.

¹⁰ Wallmann, “Zwischen Reformation und Humanismus,” 75; Note J. Dorsch first coined the term *consensus quinquesaecularis*.

¹¹ Schmid, *Geschichte*, 147-148, 160, 200; Gaß, *Georg*, 63; Calixt believed all fundamentals were contained in their final form, for all time, and without further need of explication regardless of new heresies in the Apostles’ Creed. Heresies were only cognizant denials of creedal articles. Calixt sought mutual toleration between the confessions with the ultimate hope of the reconciliation of Christendom, which he did not yet deem viable.

¹² For a thorough understanding of Lutheran Orthodoxy’s conception of the

distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrine cf. Nicolaus Hunnius, *Diaskepsis Theologica: A Theological Examination of the Fundamental Difference between Evangelical Lutheran Doctrine and Calvinist or Reformed Teaching* (Malone, TX: Repristination Press, 1999).

¹³ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:928-929.

¹⁴ Schüssler, *Georg Calixt*, 144; *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:928.

¹⁵ Johannes Wallmann, "Georg Calixt (1586-1656)," in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 7 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1981), 552; Schüssler, *Georg Calixt*, 2.

¹⁶ Emil Sehling, *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 6/1 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1955), 91-93; Cf. also Wallmann, "Zwischen Reformation und Humanismus," 64. Here Wallmann suggests the criticisms Duke Julius received for permitting his son to be ordained in the Roman manner were not the primary motive for withholding support of the Formula of Concord. Rather the Dresden court's assumption of the leading role of the Formula of Concord project caused rivalry between Julius and August, which contributed to Julius' withdrawal of support.

¹⁷ Wallmann, "Zwischen Reformation und Humanismus," 66.

¹⁸ Kantzenbach, *Das Ringen*, 235.

¹⁹ Wallmann, "Georg Calixt," 7:552; Schüssler, *Georg Calixt*, 3-4.

²⁰ Kantzenbach, *Das Ringen*, 235.

²¹ Wallmann, "Georg Calixt," 7:553.

²² Baur, "Die Helmstedter Lesart," 82.

²³ Ernst Koch, *Das konfessionelle Zeitalter – Katholizismus, Luthertum, Calvinismus (1563-1675)* (Leipzig: Verlagsanstalt, 2000), 304.

²⁴ Schüssler, *Georg Calixt*, 44-45, 51-52.

²⁵ Bodo Nischan, "Reformed Irenicism and the Leipzig Colloquy," in *Lutherans and Calvinist in the Age of Confessionalism* (Alderhot: Ashgate, 1999), XIII:1-26.

²⁶ Schüssler, *Georg Calixt*, 45; Cf. also Johannes Wallmann, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands seit der Reformation*, 5th ed. (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 2000), 99; Wallmann, "Zwischen Reformation und Humanismus," 74.

²⁷ Wallmann, "Georg Calixt," 7:553-754. Note Johann Dorsch first coined the term *consensus quinquesaecularis* not Calixtus.

²⁸ Wallmann, "Georg Calixt," 7:554.

²⁹ Wallmann, "Georg Calixt," 7:555.

³⁰ Schüssler, *Georg Calixt*, 49.

³¹ Rouse, *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948*, 38.

³² *Consensus Repetitus Fidei Vere Lutheranae in illis Doctrinae capitibus quae Contrapuram & invariata Augustanam Confessionem, aliosque libros Symbolicos in Formulae Concordiae comprehensos, scriptis publicis hodieque impugnant. D. Georgius Calixtus, Professor Helmstadiensis, eiusdemque complices. In gratiam Eorum, qui distantiam D. Calixti, Rintelensium, & aliorum Novatorum a fide Lutheranae in Synopsi intueri discipiunt, Ob Praesentem Ecclesiae necessitatem seorsim editus* (Wittebergae: Typis Johannis Borckardi, 1666), 2.

- ³³ Schüssler, *Georg Calixt*, 51-52; Calixtus, *Werke in Auswahl*, 1:284-285; Cf. endnotes 95-96 for Calixtus' pertinent references to de Dominis not found in the *Werke in Auswahl*.
- ³⁴ Paul Tschackert, "Syncretism, Syncretistic Controversies," in *The New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia*, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson, vol. 11 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949-1950), 219.
- ³⁵ Schüssler, *Georg Calixt*, 122.
- ³⁶ Tschackert, "Syncretism," 219.
- ³⁷ Bodo Nischan, "John Bergius: Irenicism and the Beginnings of Official Religious Toleration in Brandenburg Prussia," in *Lutherans and Calvinist in the Age of Confessionalism* (Alderhot: Ashgate, 1999), XII:402-4.
- ³⁸ Koch, *Das konfessionelle Zeitalter*, 305.
- ³⁹ Schüssler, *Georg Calixt*, 124.
- ⁴⁰ Schüssler, *Georg Calixt*, 128-129; W. Gaß, *Geschichte der Protestantischen Dogmatik in ihrem Zusammenhange mit der Theologie überhaupt*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1857), 161; Wallmann, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, 99.
- ⁴¹ "Zur kirchlichen Chronik," *Der Lutheraner* 64 (April 7, 1908): 111.
- ⁴² Schüssler, *Georg Calixt*, 135.
- ⁴³ Gaß, *Geschichte*, 2:163.
- ⁴⁴ Koch, *Das konfessionelle Zeitalter*, 304.
- ⁴⁵ Schüssler, *Georg Calixt*, 136.
- ⁴⁶ Schüssler, *Georg Calixt*, 140.
- ⁴⁷ Tschackert, "Syncretism," 11:220.
- ⁴⁸ Tschackert, "Syncretism," 11:220.
- ⁴⁹ Tschackert, "Syncretism," 11:220.
- ⁵⁰ Schüssler, *Georg Calixt*, 147.
- ⁵¹ Tschackert, "Syncretism," 11:220.
- ⁵² Schüssler, *Georg Calixt*, 147-8.
- ⁵³ When authorship is attributed to the CRFVL by scholars, it is generally attributed to Abraham Calov, the most unrelenting opponent of Lutheranism Syncretism. This may be because Helmstedt and Jena criticisms of the CRFVL often want to dismiss the document as product of a mere zealot and not as product of all Lutheranism or even of all Electoral Saxons. However, Heinz Staemmler has done an excellent job arguing Johann Hülsemann should be seen as the CRFVL's main author. Cf. Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, 1:351; Calixt, *Werke in Auswahl*, 1:32; Staemmler, *Die Auseinandersetzung*, 89, 93-96, 113.
- ⁵⁴ Koch, *Das konfessionelle Zeitalter*, 306; Wallmann, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, 100.
- ⁵⁵ Koch, *Das konfessionelle Zeitalter*, 304.
- ⁵⁶ Gaß, *Geschichte*, 2:171.
- ⁵⁷ Tschackert, "Syncretism," 11:221.
- ⁵⁸ Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, 1:351; Koch, *Das konfessionelle Zeitalter*, 304; Wallmann, "Abraham Calov," 7:566.
- ⁵⁹ E.L.T. Henke. *Inest theologorum Saxoniorum consensus repetitus fidei vere lutheranae* (Marburgi: Typis Elwertii Academicus, 1846), v-vi.

- ⁶⁰ Tschackert, “Syncretism,” 11:222.
- ⁶¹ Tschackert, “Syncretism,” 11:222.
- ⁶² Tschackert, “Syncretism,” 11:222.
- ⁶³ Wallmann, “Abraham Calov – theologischer Widerpart,” 311.
- ⁶⁴ Tschackert, “Syncretism,” 11:223.
- ⁶⁵ Tschackert, “Syncretism,” 11:223.
- ⁶⁶ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:989.
- ⁶⁷ *Consensus Repetitus*, Index Capitum.
- ⁶⁸ *Consensus Repetitus*, Index Capitum.
- ⁶⁹ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:976.
- ⁷⁰ *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, 11th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 51.
- ⁷¹ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:936-937.
- ⁷² *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:928.
- ⁷³ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:936, 938, 940, 948, 951, 952.
- ⁷⁴ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:938, 950, 955.
- ⁷⁵ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:928.
- ⁷⁶ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:928-931.
- ⁷⁷ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:932-936.
- ⁷⁸ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:936-938.
- ⁷⁹ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:938-948.
- ⁸⁰ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:948-956.
- ⁸¹ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:956-967.
- ⁸² *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:967-968.
- ⁸³ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:968-972.
- ⁸⁴ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:972-976.
- ⁸⁵ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:976-983.
- ⁸⁶ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:984-985.
- ⁸⁷ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:985-987.
- ⁸⁸ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:987-989.
- ⁸⁹ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:989-992.
- ⁹⁰ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:992-994.
- ⁹¹ Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1:352.
- ⁹² *Die Bekenntnisschriften*, 767-769.
- ⁹³ Martin Luther, *Dr. Martin Luthers Sämmtliche Schriften*, vol. 1 (St. Louis: Lutherischer Concordia-Verlag, 1881), 708; Hereafter W2; Luther, *W2*, 13:2687; Luther; *W2*, 2:940; Luther; *W2*, 3:1891.
- ⁹⁴ Johann Gerhard, *Loci Theologici*, ed. Ed. Preuss, vol. 1 (Berlin: Gust. Schlawitz, 1863), 373.
- ⁹⁵ Gerhard, *Loci Theologici*, 8: 95-96.
- ⁹⁶ *Die Bekenntnisschriften*, 847, 853-854.
- ⁹⁷ Johann Georg Walch, *Historische und Theologische Einleitung in die Religions-Streitigkeiten Der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirchen, Von der Reformation an bis auf ietzige Zeiten*, vol. 1 (Jena: Johann Meyers Witwe, 1730), 304; *Consensus Repetitus*, preface; Schüssler, *Georg Calixt*, 148.

⁹⁸ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:928.

⁹⁹ Tschackert, "Syncretism," 11:222.

¹⁰⁰ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:928, 229, 931, 935, 938.

¹⁰¹ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:929-930.

¹⁰² *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:929.

¹⁰³ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:959.

¹⁰⁴ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:977-978.

¹⁰⁵ *Die Bekenntnisschriften*, 56.

¹⁰⁶ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:937, 940, 960, 961, 965, 970, 972, 976..

¹⁰⁷ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:951, 965, 969, 985.

¹⁰⁸ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:935.

¹⁰⁹ *Consilia Theologica Witebergensia*, 1:976.

¹¹⁰ Valentin Ernst Loescher, *The Complete Timotheus Verinus*, trans. James L. Langebartels and Robert J. Koester, vol. 2. (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1998), 39.

Book Review

by Michael K. Smith

Koester, Robert J. *Gospel Motivation: More Than “Jesus Died for My Sins.”* Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2006, 191 pp.

Ask a Lutheran, “What motivates us as Christians to do good works?” The answer easily rolls off the tongue: “The gospel.” This is part of what makes us Lutherans, correct? From our pulpits and in our classrooms we do not anticipate hearing messages that beat us over the head with God’s law to incite us to obedience. Rather, we rely on the sweet message of God’s love and forgiveness in Christ Jesus to spur us on to good works.

Rev. Robert J. Koester has therefore done a great service to the Lord’s church by writing *Gospel Motivation*. In this thought-provoking and readable work he examines how the New Testament writers, especially the writers of the epistles, weave the gospel into their admonitions to Christian living. He urges modern-day proclaimers of God’s Word to emulate their style. As he states in his conclusion, “It is good to read Jesus and the apostles not just to find passages that back up our Lutheran teaching but to seek to imitate their way of speaking” (166).

In each chapter of chapters 1-10 Koester focuses on a particular manner in which the New Testament writers speak of the Gospel. For example, chapter 2 is entitled, “The Gospel of Death and Life.” Here Koester concentrates primarily on Romans 6-7:6, especially 6:3-4: “Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life**” (NIV; emphasis his). (Note a portion of Koester’s style in making his point: the bold type designates the specific gospel motivation for the admonition given in italics.) We are joined through our baptisms to Jesus’ death and resurrection, and this is “the foundation of our lives of faith” (27).

Another example Koester draws out is “The Gospel of How God Views New Creations” (ch. 6). His emphasis is on passages such as Romans 8:1 & 12-16, “some of the most difficult passages in the New Testament” (68). In this chapter Koester explains how God’s blessings to us are connected to the fruits of faith we produce as his new creations. Rather than scriptural injunctions which could be interpreted to support work-righteousness, we need to understand the New Testament writers’ encouragement of good works as being right in line with the righteousness granted us through faith, the righteousness of Christ. That is, we are given “an encouragement to live according to our new man, which is there only because we know Jesus’ forgiveness” (80).

In the final two chapters Koester examines a few longer portions of the New Testament in light of what he has already written. Ephesians 5:22-33 receives attention, and he stresses well the gospel motivation that drives the interaction between a wife and husband. Koester also concentrates on 2 Corinthians 8 & 9 as a good passage regarding stewardship and giving, illustrating how Paul reminds his readers to act based on what they already know.

Following an admirable conclusion, study questions for each chapter are included. Among the questions are Bible passages for study, specifically to determine the specific gospel motivation for the encouragement to a godly life in each passage. These make for good practice in applying what Koester writes.

This reviewer took issue with only one point in Koester’s book. In the context of stating that sanctification and justification are not laid out for us in the Bible as we would encounter in a dogmatics textbook, he states, “The New Testament is God’s call to holiness in Christ and to holy living. He makes us his children and then calls us to live in line with what we are” (134). The first sentence of this quote is probably overstated, especially if taken out of context. The New Testament, along with the Old, is about Christ Jesus and what he has done for us (making us his children).

Koester’s emphasis on seeing the specific gospel the New Testament writers use in a given passage is refreshing. Throughout his book he stresses the Word and Sacraments as those things that enliven and transform us. While pastors may glean quite a bit

from this book as they apply it to their preaching and teaching, any Christian could benefit from what Koester presents.

Martin Franzmann Anniversary

by Gaylin R. Schmeling

This year marks the 400th anniversary of the birth of Paul Gerhardt in 1607. Last year was the 330th anniversary of his death in 1676. The anniversary of another hymn writer is being commemorated this year, that of Martin Franzmann (1907–1976). Interestingly enough, his birth and death were the same years as Paul Gerhardt's, only 300 years later. Both these men were important hymn writers in the Lutheran church.

Martin Franzmann was born in Lake City, Minnesota, in 1907. He received his elementary education at St. John's Lutheran School (Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod [WELS]). He attended Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin, and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Thiensville, Wisconsin, from which he graduated in 1936. Following his seminary training, Franzmann returned to Northwestern where he was a professor of classics. Later he became a professor of exegetical theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, from 1946 to 1969. From 1969 to 1972 he served at Westfield House in Cambridge, England, a theological institution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England. While he was born and raised in the WELS, when the break in fellowship occurred between the WELS and the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LC–MS) in 1961, he unfortunately remained with the LC–MS.

He was a life-long student of Scripture, doing graduate work at the University of Chicago for over 20 years (1929–1951). In 1948 the Lutheran churches of Europe began holding conferences in Bad Boll, Germany, discussing the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. Franzmann was an American representative at these conferences. Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois, granted him an honorary doctorate in 1958. He served as the vice-chairman of the Committee on Doctrinal Unity (1950–1962) and secretary of the Synodical Conference (1952–1956). He was a member of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the LC–MS from 1962 until 1969.

Franzmann authored a number of volumes, including *Follow*

Me: Discipleship According to Saint Matthew (1961) and commentaries on Romans and Revelation. In addition to this, he wrote a number of devotional books such as *Ha! Ha! Among the Trumpets* (1966).

Franzmann is best remembered for his many hymns. His finely-written texts are filled with theological insights deeply rooted in our Lutheran heritage. As the hymns of Paul Gerhardt, his hymns enunciate the doctrinal truths of the faith. *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal* contains seven of his hymns, and our *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* contains three of his hymns. His deep theological insights are expressed in his hymn “O God, O Lord of Heaven and Earth.” Here he reminds us that life is not to be an aimless mote, a downward drift from futile birth. Rather our hope is found in the Prince of Peace who came into our house of doom, breaking down its walls, conquering all our foes. Thus there is hope and comfort for the church in these gray and latter days as the hymn assures us:

O Spirit, who did once restore
 The church that it might yet recall
 The bringer of good news to all:
 Breathe on your cloven church once more
 That in these gray and latter days
 There may be those whose life is praise,
 Each life a high doxology
 Unto the holy Trinity.

(CW 400:4)

Paul Gerhardt was indeed the sweet singer of Lutheranism in the seventeenth century, and Martin Franzmann was probably the best Lutheran hymn writer of the twentieth century.

Meetings of the Theological Commission and the Global Theological Educational Committee of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference

by Gaylin R. Schmeling

The Theological Commission of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) met May 29–June 2, 2007, at the Lutheran Theological Seminary (*Lutherisches Theologisches Seminar Leipzig*), the seminary of our sister church the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church (*Evangelisch-Lutherische Freikirche* [ELFK]) in Leipzig, Germany. The members of the Theological Commission of the CELC are Dr. Gottfried Herrmann, ELFK, Germany; Prof. Salimo Hachibamba, Lutheran Church of Central Africa—Zambia (LCCA); Rev. Takeshi Nidaira, Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church—Japan (LECC); Prof. Gaylin Schmeling, Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS); Prof. Lyle Lange, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), chairman; and Rev. Steven Petersen, CELC president, *ex officio*.

The Theological Commission reviewed a statement entitled “The Person and Work of Christ” for publication and presentation at the 2008 CELC convention at Kiev, Ukraine. In addition the commission began preparing a statement on eschatology. These topics will be Article IV and Article V respectively of *The Eternal Word: A Lutheran Confession for the Twenty-First Century*. Article I is a study of the doctrine of Holy Scripture, Article II of the doctrine of justification and Article III of the work of the Holy Spirit. These statements may be found in PDF form on the CELC website under the heading “Where We Stand” <www.celc.info>.

While in Leipzig, members of the commission lectured at the seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church. President Petersen gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled “Evangelism Today,” which consisted of thirty-six common sense ideas for evangelism. It also included a presentation on Friendship Evangelism. An essay was presented by Prof. Hachibamba on “Preaching Styles and Culture in Africa.” He explained the importance of deductive preaching in African culture. Prof. Lange gave an essay entitled “A Survey of

the Law God gave to Israel through Moses as Recorded in Exodus through Deuteronomy.” He presented the many facets of the law in the Pentateuch. An essay was presented by Rev. Nidaira on “Difficult Passages to Understand in the Japanese Old Testament.” This essay explained the need for dynamic equivalent translations in the Japanese language. The essay “The Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement” was presented by Prof. Schmeling. Here the dangers of the Pentecostal Movement were discussed.

The members of the commission had the opportunity to visit congregations of the ELFK in Leipzig, Nerchau, and Zwickau. The pastors of these congregations are Prof. Martin Hoffmann, Pastor Martin Wilde, Pastor Andreas Drechsler, and Pastor Michael Herbst. Dr. Martin Luther School was also visited, which is served by Pastor Uwe Klärner. This gave the members of the commission an excellent overview of the work and mission of the ELFK.

The Global Theological Education Committee met June 4–5, 2007, at Grethen, Germany. Besides the members of the Theological Commission (Petersen, Schmeling, Lange, Herrmann, Hachibamba and Nidaira), the following were present for the meeting: Prof. Larry Schlomer—Latin American Traveling Theological Educators, Prof. Adolph Harstad—Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Pres. David Haeuser—the Seminary of the Peruvian Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Church, Prof. John Vogt—St. Sophia Seminary, Pres. Paul Wendland and Prof. Ken Cherney—Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Dr. John Lawrenz—Asia Lutheran Seminary, and Rev. Daniel Koelpin—WELS World Missions Administrator.

Discussions at this meeting centered on sharing theological education on a worldwide level. Seeing our world growing smaller through technology, there are many ways that the churches of the CELC may be able to assist each other in education and worker training. This is especially true in our mission fields. As our mission churches and other sister churches mature, the need is increasing for men in these churches who are qualified to teach future pastors. The Global Theological Education meeting was to see what could be done to provide graduate-level study for potential future professors. It surveyed what was currently being done and discussed how distance-learning over the internet could bring courses to students

throughout the world. It was agreed to ask the CELC at its triennial meeting next June to establish a commission to advance and enhance efforts to provide theological education on the seminary and post-graduate level for present and potential seminary professors.

The ELFK, which hosted these meetings, has a membership of about 1,500 souls in some 30 congregations and preaching stations. Most of these congregations are in the former East Germany but mission work is being carried out in places such as Munich in Bavaria and in Ludesch in the Voralberg region of Austria. Our sister synod is proclaiming the Gospel in its truth and purity in Lutherland where today that Gospel is seldom heard. Many of the great and beautiful churches of Germany are virtually empty on Sunday mornings. But in the churches of the ELFK the Gospel resounds to the glory of our gracious Savior. These buildings and gatherings may be modest but they are rich in spiritual beauty. The president of the ELFK is Rolf Borszik, who serves as pastor in Lengendorf in Vogtland.

The sixth triennial convention of the CELC will be held in Kiev, Ukraine, June 3–5, 2008. This will be the 15th anniversary celebration of the CELC. The Ukrainian Lutheran Church has graciously agreed to host this meeting. The Planning Committee of the conference has chosen the convention theme, “Make Known the Manifold Wisdom of God,” based on Ephesians 3:10. This topic will be discussed in five essays by pastors from the various church bodies that make up the CELC. Each member church of the CELC is eligible to send two voting delegates (“the president or leader of the church and another representative chosen by the church”) plus up to four advisory, non-voting representatives. Additional visitors and observers are always welcome.

The CELC is the third largest worldwide Lutheran fellowship following the larger Lutheran World Federation and the International Lutheran Council. It was organized in 1993 at Oberwesel, Germany, and has approximately 450,000 members in 20 church bodies. The conference accepts the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments (the verbally inspired and inerrant Word of God) as sole authority for doctrine, faith, and life. The conference also accepts the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, not in so far as, but because they are

a correct exposition of the pure doctrine of the Word of God. The CELC continues to strengthen each of its member churches through mutual encouragement and consultation. We praise and thank our triune God who has permitted us to establish this confessional organization on the firm foundation of Jesus and His Word.

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