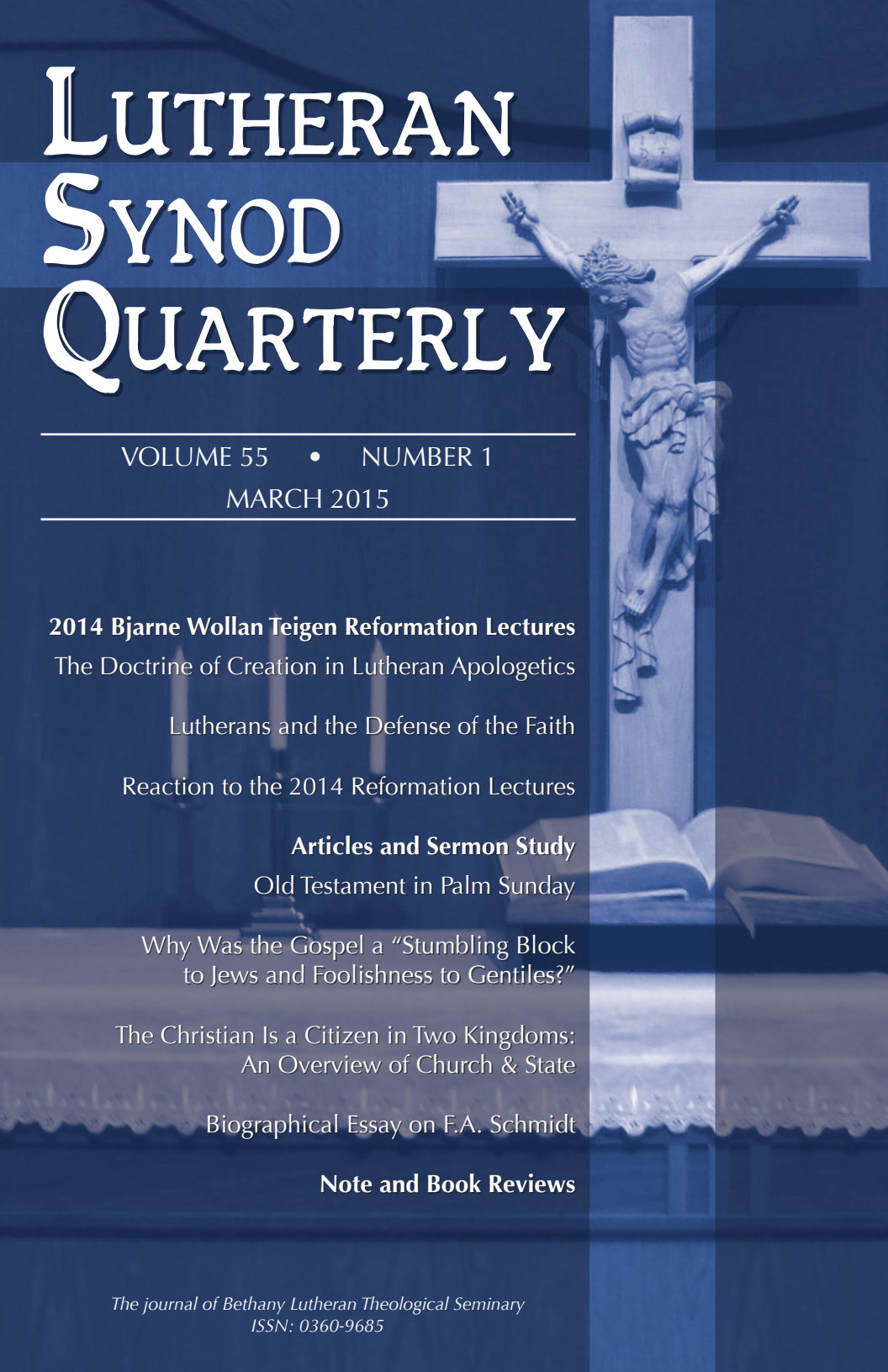


# LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY



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VOLUME 55 • NUMBER 1  
MARCH 2015

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## **2014 Bjarne Wollan Teigen Reformation Lectures**

The Doctrine of Creation in Lutheran Apologetics

Lutherans and the Defense of the Faith

Reaction to the 2014 Reformation Lectures

## **Articles and Sermon Study**

Old Testament in Palm Sunday

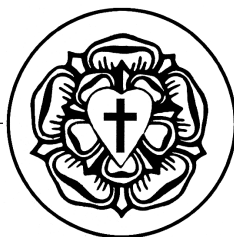
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An Overview of Church & State

Biographical Essay on F.A. Schmidt

## **Note and Book Reviews**

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*The journal of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary*

# LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY

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# Foreword

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*LSQ* Vol. 55, No. 1 (March 2015)

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**I**N THIS ISSUE OF THE *QUARTERLY* WE ARE PLEASED to share with our readers the 2014 annual Bjarne Wollan Teigen Reformation Lectures, delivered October 30–31, 2014, in Mankato, Minnesota. These lectures are sponsored jointly by Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. This was the forty-seventh in the series of annual Reformation Lectures which began in 1967. The format of the Reformation Lectures has always been that of a free conference and thus participation in these lectures is outside the framework of fellowship.

This year there were two presenters. The first lecture was given by Prof. Allen J. Quist of St. Peter, Minnesota. Prof. Quist holds a B.A. from Gustavus Adolphus College, an M.A. from Minnesota State University, Mankato, and B.D. from Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. He currently serves as a member of the Doctrine Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Prof. Quist was Professor of Psychology at Bethany Lutheran College from 1968 to 1982. He served three terms in the Minnesota House of Representatives from 1983 to 1988. While in the Legislature, he served as Chair of the Social Services Subcommittee and as Vice-Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee. Prof. Quist was the author of numerous bills including the bill that created Minnesota's Department of Jobs and Training. In 1994 he won the Republican party endorsement as a candidate for governor of Minnesota. Prof. Quist is the author of seven books, one of them

being an unofficial best-seller with sales of over 10,000 copies. He is also the author of numerous articles in a wide variety of publications, and has been a frequent speaker at national conferences dealing with education policy. His recent publications include: *Ten Truths About Evolution that Everyone Should Know* and *Proclaiming the Truth of Jesus to a Postmodern World*. Prof. Quist and his wife, Julie, live in rural St. Peter. They have 10 children and 42 grandchildren.

The second presenter was Dr. Daniel van Voorhis. Dr. van Voorhis received his B.A. in Theology from Concordia University, Irvine and earned his Ph.D. in History from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. He is currently the chair of the department of History and Political Thought at Concordia University, Irvine. He is the author of numerous articles in fields ranging from Reformation polemics to contemporary issues in religion and politics. He is the co-host of the "Virtue in the Wasteland" podcast (a production of the League of Faithful Masks) as well as a speaking fellow for both the League of Faithful Masks and the 1517 Project. Dr. van Voorhis is currently co-writing a book with colleague Dr. Jeffrey Mallinson on Christianity and culture. His article "Who's Afraid of the Enlightenment?" was accepted as a chapter in an upcoming work on the legacy of Western Civilization. Dr. van Voorhis and his wife, Beth Anne, have been married for 11 years and are blessed with two sons. He is a native of southern California.

The theme of the lectures was "Apologetics in Lutheranism." The first lecture, given by Prof. Quist, was entitled "The Doctrine of Creation in Lutheran Apologetics." The second lecture, presented by Dr. van Voorhis, was entitled "Lutherans and the Defense of the Faith." The two reactors to the Reformation Lectures were Prof. Lyle Lange of Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota, and Prof. Erling Teigen of Bethany Lutheran College.

The Reformation Lectures were a study of biblical apologetics. There is a considerable amount of discussion among Christians today concerning apologetics. The term "apologetics" refers to the defense of the Christian faith. Defending the Christian faith may include an explanation of the basic beliefs of Christianity. It may also include giving grounds or reasons for accepting the Christian Gospel message as true or a refutation of criticisms of the faith, as well as exposing inadequacies in alternative religions and worldviews.

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In the exegetical essay entitled “Old Testament in Palm Sunday,” the Rev. Alexander Ring indicates that there are many Old Testament connections, allusions, and pictures to be found in the historic Palm Sunday Gospel. It is rich with Old Testament imagery. The Rev. Ring is pastor of Parkland Lutheran Church in Tacoma, Washington.

In 1 Corinthians 1:23, Paul makes a very bold claim in describing the gospel: it is a “stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles.” Why does he describe the apostolic message of “Christ crucified” in such a way? How has this description of the gospel been interpreted by various commentators? Why would the message of the gospel be met with such skepticism or unbelief? These questions and more are addressed in a paper by Prof. Michael K. Smith, “Why Was the Gospel a ‘Stumbling Block to Jews and Foolishness to Gentiles?’” Prof. Smith serves as Professor of New Testament and Dean of Students at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary in Mankato, Minnesota.

The essay, “The Christian Is a Citizen in Two Kingdoms: An Overview of Church & State,” gives a summary of the Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms. God has assigned certain responsibilities to the church and certain responsibilities to the state which do not conflict with each other. To the church God has given the responsibility of proclaiming the Gospel of forgiveness in Christ. To the state God has given the responsibility of punishing evildoers and protecting the innocent, and of promoting civil order among the people. The essay was written by the Rev. Jonathan Madson, who is the pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Okauchee, Wisconsin.

Friedrich Schmidt (1837–1928) was a professor at the Norwegian Synod seminary at the time of its founding in 1876 in Madison, Wisconsin. His name is closely associated with the Election Controversy of the 1880s. Schmidt and his followers held that God elected and converted some in view of the faith (*intuitu fidei*) that they would someday possess. This implied, contrary to Scripture, that faith was a work of man on the basis of which God elected him. The biographical essay of F.A. Schmidt in this *Quarterly* was presented at the General Pastoral Conference of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in 1947. The author of this essay was the Rev. Christian Anderson (1847–1959), who was pastor at Belview, Minnesota, at the time.

Also included in this *Quarterly* is a summary of the eighth triennial convention of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference in Peru and two book reviews.





# The Doctrine of Creation in Lutheran Apologetics

Allen J. Quist  
St. Peter, Minnesota

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LSQ Vol. 55, No. 1 (March 2015)

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WE BEGIN BY DEFINING OUR TERMS. THE WORD “apologetics” comes from the Greek word ἀπολογία (“apologia”) which means, “to defend a person or thing.”<sup>1</sup> “Apologia” was commonly used to denote a speech in a court of law whereby persons would make their case, especially their case in defending themselves against various charges. Any such court defense would necessarily rely on giving reasons in support of a person’s position. That is, a defense in court would involve evidence of some kind as well as reasoning based on that evidence.

*Strong’s Concordance* says, “An ‘apology’ in classical times had nothing to do with saying, ‘I’m sorry,’ but rather was a reasoned argument (defense) that presented evidence (supplied compelling proof).”<sup>2</sup> Apologetics, then, focuses on providing evidence and reasoning based on that evidence in support of a person’s position.<sup>3</sup>

The Apostle Peter used the term “apologia” when he said, “But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer [apologia] to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1961).

<sup>2</sup> <<http://biblehub.com/greek/627.htm>>.

<sup>3</sup> In Lutheran apologetics, reason has a ministerial role (that of servant) as opposed to a magisterial role (that of master).

you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15).<sup>4</sup> Peter here admonished us to be ready to give our reasons for believing that the Christian gospel message is true.

If, for example, someone were to ask you, “Why should I become a Christian instead of a Muslim?” what would you say? Peter told us we should be ready to give our reasons (our evidence and logic) for being Christians. What reasons would we present for adopting Christianity instead of Islam?

Dr. Rod Rosenblatt defined “apologetics” as follows: “Apologetics is the strategy of setting forth the truthfulness of the Christian faith.”<sup>5</sup> That is, apologetics focuses on this one question: What evidence do we have for claiming that Christianity is true? More simply, apologetics focuses on the question: Why should we believe that Christianity is true?

All the evangelistic sermons recorded in the New Testament offered evidence to support the truthfulness of what the Apostles said. This evidence was consistently organized around four lines of argument. The four lines of argument are:

1. Jesus’ resurrection has proven him to be the Messiah.
2. There are many eyewitnesses of the resurrection.
3. Jesus fulfilled the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament.
4. Jesus’ many miracles, and those done by the Apostles in his name, demonstrated that he is the Messiah.<sup>6</sup>

We can easily see that when the Apostles proclaimed the gospel message as recorded in the New Testament, they didn’t expect their listeners to believe them simply because they said so. The Apostles consistently provided evidence to demonstrate that their message was true. All these evangelistic sermons accomplished two goals: (a) explaining the content of the gospel message (doctrine), and (b) supplying evidence to demonstrate that what they said was true (apologetics). *Apologetics is part of every missionary sermon recorded in the New Testament.*

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<sup>4</sup> All Bible quotations are from the New International Version, © 1973, 1978, and 1984 unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>5</sup> Rod Rosenblatt, “Beyond Culture Wars,” *Modern Reformation* 2, no. 3 (May/June 1993): 1.

<sup>6</sup> Allen Quist, *Many Convincing Proofs: A Biblical Approach to Christian Apologetics* (Mankato: Lutheran Synod Book Company, 2008), 5–44.

What, then, is “Lutheran” apologetics? Ideally, all apologetics would be Lutheran in nature. Lutheran apologetics rests on the foundational principles of Lutheranism. These principles are Christ alone, faith alone, grace alone, and Scripture alone.

**Christ alone:** Lutherans believe that we are saved only by means of the life and death of Jesus the Christ, as Acts 4:12 states: “Neither is there salvation in any other [than Jesus]: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (NKJV).

**Faith alone:** Paul said in Romans, “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:28).

**Grace alone:** “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8–9).<sup>7</sup>

**Scripture alone:** 2 Timothy 3:15 says, “From infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” And the Formula of Concord states, “We believe, teach and confess that the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachers alike must be appraised and judged....”<sup>8</sup>

The Bible makes it clear that the power to create a new life of faith is only in the saving message of Jesus the Christ. Romans 1:16 states, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (NKJV).

In God’s Word, the Holy Spirit gives us objective reasons for recognizing that this message of Christ is true—reasons that we can share with others as Peter said we should. The Christian faith is not a blind faith; it is a faith based on real history—based on the historical truth that God has declared the whole world forgiven because of the atoning work of Jesus the Christ. It is a faith based on objective, verifiable, historical evidence.

In providing reasons in support of what we say, we must always keep in mind that in order to have any value, the argument and evidence we employ must point to the saving message of the cross. The power to save is only in the cross. Professor of Theology Lyle Lange described the Christ-centered nature of apologetics when he said:

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<sup>7</sup> The Augsburg Confession defines justification in terms of Christ alone, faith alone, and grace alone. (Augsburg Confession, IV in Theodore Tappert, trans. and ed., *The Book of Concord*, [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959], 30.)

<sup>8</sup> Formula of Concord, Epitome 1 in Tappert, 464.

It is evident, then, that apologetics is Christocentric in nature. It flows from sanctifying Christ in our hearts. It gives a defense of the hope that we have in Christ. This hope is objective, not subjective in nature. The Christian faith is based on the historical events of Christ's life, death, and resurrection. Apologetics is a natural outgrowth of our faith in Christ. Christians do apologetics. Apologetics has often been called "pre-evangelism." I would rather put it this way: Apologetics may involve "pre-evangelism" (removing obstacles which prevent us from sharing the gospel). However, Lutheran (biblical) apologetics is evangelism.<sup>9</sup>

*Apologetics is effective because it points us to the cross of Christ. The power of God to create faith is in the message of the cross.* The Apostle John said it this way: "Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:30–31). Jesus' many miracles, especially his resurrection, demonstrated that he truly is the Messiah who lived and died to make atonement for our sins, and the power to save souls is in this message of the cross of Christ and his resurrection.

As Professor Lange mentions above, apologetics takes two forms. The one is removing obstacles to the Christians faith. The other is evangelism itself; that is, presenting the evidence that substantiates the truth of the gospel message of Christ.<sup>10</sup> To present the evidence for the gospel message is to present the message itself, and that is evangelism.

The gospel message of Christ contains its own evidence, especially that of the resurrection. Paul appealed to this evidence in his speech at the Areopagus when he said, "For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). In

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<sup>9</sup> Lyle Lange, "Lutheran Apologetics: From Our Classrooms and into the World" (paper presented to the Lutheran College Conference, August 9, 2010), 5. Reprinted in *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (December 2011): 334–335.

<sup>10</sup> A study document of the Doctrine Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod describes the two forms as follows: "The term 'apologetics' refers to the defense of the Christian faith. Defending the faith may include an explanation of the basic beliefs of Christianity. It may also include giving grounds or reasons for accepting the Christian gospel message as true or a refutation of criticism of the faith, as well as exposing inadequacies in alternative religions and worldviews." See Appendix A and/or <<http://www.evangelicallutheransynod.org/apologeticsdoc/>>.

Romans Paul said, “[He was] declared with power *to be* the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4). *The primary evidence for the truth of the message of Christ is in the message itself, it is in the resurrection.* The doctrine and the proof are intertwined.

In our time, Creation is a doctrine where apologetics is especially important. Indeed, the scriptural message of the gospel of Christ begins with the historical account of the Creation and Fall as recorded in Genesis. After Adam and Eve had fallen into sin, God gave them this promise, as he said to the serpent:

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel (Genesis 3:15; NKJV).

The Apostle Paul was referencing this gospel promise in Genesis when he said, “But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship” (Galatians 4:4–5). When Paul here used the language “when the set time had fully come,” and “born of a woman,” he was explaining that Jesus was the fulfillment of the promise God had made to Adam and Eve in the Garden after the Fall into sin.

From the time of the Fall going forward, God’s people were eagerly awaiting the coming of the Messiah. They were waiting for him thousands of years later when the fullness of time had finally come. John the Baptist, for example, sent two of his followers to find out if Jesus was the fulfillment of the promise first made in Genesis 3. Luke recorded this account for us: “Summoning two of his disciples, John sent them to the Lord, saying, ‘Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?’” (Luke 7:19; ASV). Even a Samaritan woman was aware of the prophesied Messiah. She said to Jesus, “‘I know that Messiah’ (called Christ) ‘is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us’” (John 4:25). And there was a man called Simeon who had been promised that he would not die until he had personally seen the promised Messiah (Luke 2:26). All these individuals were awaiting the coming of the “seed of the woman” as first promised in Genesis 3:15.

Since God promised in Genesis that the Messiah would be the “seed of the woman,” namely, that he would be a human being, it is not surprising that Jesus often referred to himself as the “Son of Man.” The “seed of the woman” and the “Son of Man” mean the same. Jesus said, “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his

life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). And again: “Jesus replied, ‘Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head’” (Matthew 8:20).

We may wonder: Why did Jesus repeatedly stress his humanity by calling himself “the Son of Man”? He was making it clear that he was the “seed of the woman” promised in Genesis chapter 3. He was also explaining that he was the Messiah prophesied in Daniel<sup>11</sup> as well as emphasizing that he was fully man and fully God.

David predicted in Psalm 110:1 that the Messiah would be God as well as man. He said, “The LORD said to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’” The word “Lord” here means that the promised Messiah would be God himself. The doctrine of the incarnation of Christ is central to Christianity.

In the genealogy in his gospel, Luke traced Jesus’ ancestry all the way back to Adam.<sup>12</sup> By doing so, Luke made it clear that Jesus was the descendent of Adam (the seed of the woman), that he is the long-awaited Messiah whom God had promised to Adam and Eve, the descendant who would make things right by crushing the head of the serpent. The Genesis account is an integral part of this gospel history and message.

In addition to the importance of Jesus being the seed of the woman, Jesus gave his personal approval to the Creation history in Genesis when he stated, “Haven’t you read ... that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate” (Matthew 19:4–6). This statement by Jesus is an unmistakable reference to, and quotation from, the Creation account in Genesis 1:27: “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

For all these reasons, it is both incorrect and terribly destructive to say that the historicity of Genesis is unimportant, to say that only the gospel message is really important. If Genesis is not true history, then

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<sup>11</sup> Daniel, on several occasions, called the coming Messiah the “Son of Man,” as in Daniel 7:13–14: “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”

<sup>12</sup> Luke 3:22ff.

Jesus was either mistaken in what he said about Genesis or was deliberately misleading his audience. Either way, that would mean he was not God in the flesh. The only other option is that the New Testament writers quoted Jesus incorrectly. To take that view is to discard biblical inerrancy, which in turn undermines the gospel message as well.

The New Testament documents, including the testimony of Jesus himself,<sup>13</sup> everywhere regard the Old Testament, including Genesis, as real history—as literal and reliable history in the ordinary sense of the words. It was Paul who said, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (1 Timothy 3:16–17). Accordingly, Lutherans confess in the Formula of Concord: “We believe, teach, and confess that the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachers alike must be appraised and judged....”<sup>14</sup> In addition, confessional Lutherans acknowledge with Luther that “God’s Word cannot err.”<sup>15</sup>

If Genesis is not accurate history, then Jesus is not the God-man who made atonement for the sins of the world. *To give up the historicity of Genesis is to give up everything. It is not surprising, then, that Satan’s attacks on the church focus so pointedly on Genesis. To recognize the truth of Genesis, on the other hand, is to point us to the truth of the glorious message of Jesus the Messiah because Genesis points us to the “seed of the woman,” Jesus himself, the Savior.*

In proclaiming this glorious message of Jesus the Messiah, Genesis enables us to identify the one and only true God for our listeners. The Apostle Paul did just that in addressing the Athenian philosophers when he said, “Now what you worship as something unknown, I am going to proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth” (Acts 17:23–24). We reveal the only true God to our listeners by identifying him as the God of Creation, the God of Genesis.

In proclaiming this message of Christ, we explain to our listeners both the law and the gospel, both sin and grace. How will sin be understood without knowing about its origin in the Garden of Eden? And how will sin be recognized without seeing that it is essentially disobedience to God—beginning in the Garden with Adam and Eve? Sin

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<sup>13</sup> See Luke 11:51, “From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah....”

<sup>14</sup> Formula of Concord, Epitome 1 in Tappert, 464.

<sup>15</sup> Large Catechism IV.57 in Tappert, 444.



and grace will not be fully understood without the historical context of Genesis.

In addition, Genesis is indispensable in dealing with the problem of evil, a major barrier to faith for large numbers of people. God himself began with Genesis in dealing with Job's agonizing questions on the problem of evil. God responded to Job by asking, "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if you have understanding" (Job 38:4; NKJV). Answering questions on the problem of evil should begin from that perspective. Noted Christian philosopher, Alvin Plantinga, points to Genesis in showing there is no genuine contradiction in recognizing a God who is both almighty and loving along with the existence of real evil, in showing that if God created human beings who are free, then what happens in this world is largely up to them.<sup>16</sup>

Because Genesis is indispensable to the gospel message,<sup>17</sup> what could be the reason for discarding it? The primary reason would appear to be that people have adopted Darwinian evolution as fact. Evolution and Genesis cannot both be true in any meaningful sense. This means that Darwinism is one of the most significant heresies of our time. The Church of Christ has always had to deal with heresies. The New Testament Church, for example, strenuously opposed the Gnostic heresy. The early Church composed and adopted the Apostles' Creed largely to combat this falsehood. The church of today, similarly, needs to deal extensively with the Darwinian heresy.

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<sup>16</sup> Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom and Evil* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1974).

<sup>17</sup> Genesis is fundamental to understanding a host of other subjects. The nature of man as created in God's image and also fallen is essential to comprehending human nature (psychology). Our being made in his image as Creator equips us to begin to fathom the artistic talents of men and women that otherwise defy explanation (the arts). The complementary nature of the relationship between men and women is explained in Genesis (sociology), as well as the essence of marriage—which serves as the model for understanding the bride and bridegroom relationship that all believers have with the Savior.

In addition, the obvious deterioration of the human genome makes no sense without Genesis (genetics). The nature of life (biology), for which modern science has no explanation or insights, is explained by Genesis. The origin of life, again having no scientific explanation, is detailed in Genesis. And what, really, is the physical world? Is it the end—all of everything that exists? That, too, is explained in Genesis. Without Genesis, the liberal arts are a hollow shell. But with Genesis we can personally realize the wisdom of the very first Proverbs which states, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7).

As noted above, the refutation of heresies is one of our important tasks. Paul, for instance, said, “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). We follow Paul’s example today.

The Lutheran Confessions, accordingly, give substantial attention to the refutation of falsehoods. The section in the Augsburg Confession which refutes the prohibition of marriage by priests is a prime example of how the Confessions “demolish arguments that set themselves up against the knowledge of God.” This section employs some 21 arguments (depending on how they are organized) composed to counter the doctrine and practice of the Roman Church in forbidding the marriage of priests. These arguments are a combination of those based on Scripture, directly or indirectly, along with non-biblical lines of argument.<sup>18</sup>

When Jesus was facing false teachings, he usually responded by quoting Scripture. When facing the false accusation that he was casting out demons by the power of Beelzebul, however, Jesus refuted the criticism by showing that the allegation was irrational because a kingdom divided against itself could not stand (Matthew 12:25). And Peter, in his Pentecost message, answered the accusation that he and the other Apostles were drunk by pointing out such drunkenness was contrary to human experience since it was only 9:00 in the morning (Acts 12:15). We do well to heed the examples of both the confessions and Scripture in refuting positions that are contrary to the Christian faith. We quote Scripture first and foremost, but there are times when we should use other lines of argument as well.

Some caution here is in order. The miracles recorded in the Bible are by their very nature beyond any kind of scientific proof. This is true for the Creation miracle as well. Hebrews 11:3 clarifies, “By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.” (By its very nature, science describes how nature normally operates. It cannot describe, nor can it explain, exceptions to the norm.) At the same time, however, the Scriptures say, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim

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<sup>18</sup> Augsburg Confession XXIII in Tappert, 51–56. The non-biblical arguments and evidence includes: (1) common knowledge, (2) the views of Platina and Cyprian, (3) the position of several priests, (4) selected Church canons, (5) the position of Pope Pious, (6) the practice of pagans, (7) the logical consequences of forced celibacy, (8) wrongful breaking up of marriages when forced celibacy was put into effect, and (9) various facts of history. For more detail, see Appendix B.

the work of his hands” (Psalm 19:1). So can we conclude from nature that a creator God exists? Yes, we can, and at times there is value in doing so. But, can we conclude from nature that the triune God exists and/or that he created the world out of nothing in six days? No, we cannot. Evidence from nature does not take us very far regarding the reliability of Genesis. We should use evidence and arguments especially, however, to refute the false teaching of those who say that evolution is a proven fact in order to remove this objection to saving faith.

The Christian faith is not a blind, uninformed, or based-on-experience kind of faith. It is faith based on genuine history and in many ways is based on solid evidence. Dr. Rod Rosenblatt, for example, said, the “lynch pin” of Lutheran apologetics is the integrity of the four gospels. That is, said Rosenblatt, when the New Testament gospels are scrutinized using the normal tests for historical reliability commonly used to evaluate documents going back to Greek and Roman times, these documents then emerge as primary source documents of the first class.<sup>19</sup> We have every reason to be confident in the accuracy and integrity of these four gospels. The same can be said generally for the integrity of the other biblical documents. *There are good reasons for trusting the integrity of the Scriptures, and these Scriptures lead us to Christ.*

We now turn to the theory of evolution itself. The following table summarizes a recent Gallup poll, and it demonstrates the significance of the Darwinian worldview in our time.<sup>20</sup>

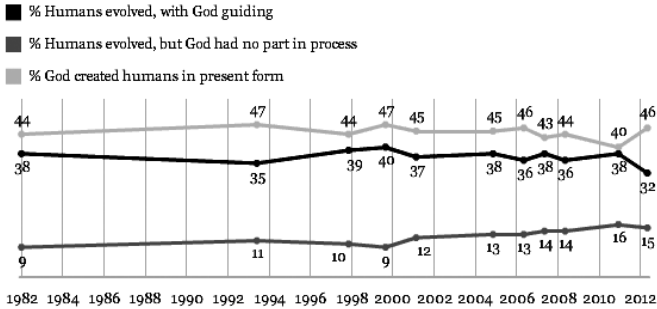
Several conclusions can be drawn from this data. The first is that the percentage of Americans who are creationists has changed little over the past 30 years. (Some evolutionists have been lamenting this apparent limited success of their indoctrination programs.) Secondly, evolution in some form has been adopted by about one-half of our population. In our work in evangelism and discipleship, this means that evolution is a serious barrier to faith and orthodoxy. It needs to be dealt with.

Those individuals who have adopted evolution as being true have largely done so because they believe it has been scientifically verified. Is this really the case? This paper will examine several of the most compelling arguments for the view that evolution has been scientifically verified. Looking to evolutionists themselves to identify these arguments, we would expect that in his debate with Ken Ham, Bill Nye would have used what he felt were the best available arguments and evidence in

<sup>19</sup> Craig Parton and Dr. Rod Rosenblatt, “Defend the Faith,” at Christ Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, October 30, 2009; <[www.christsiouxfalls.org](http://www.christsiouxfalls.org)>.

<sup>20</sup> June 1, 2012, Gallup Poll.

*Which of the following statements comes closest to your views on the origin and development of human beings – (human beings have developed over millions of years from less advanced forms of life, but God guided this process, human beings have developed over millions of years from less advanced forms of life, but God had no part in this process, (or) God created human beings pretty much in their present form at one time within the last 10,000 years or so)?*



GALLUP

support of evolution and in opposition to creation. And because this debate was widely publicized, we would expect that Nye would have received substantial advice from other evolutionists regarding what they saw as their strongest arguments. In this way we allow the evolutionists themselves to tell us what they believe are their most convincing lines of reasoning. What are they?

Bill Nye's line of argument was a three-fold focus on reasons to accept the view that the earth is very old, too old to fit the Genesis account. His arguments for an old earth emphasized these pieces or groupings of evidence: (1) a picture of a spruce tree that he said is 9,950 years old, (2) ice cores from Antarctica and Greenland that allegedly show the earth to be at least 680,000 years old, and (3) various references to the fossil record which Nye said or implied serve to demonstrate that the earth is very old and that life evolved over many millions of years. We will consider each of these arguments in turn.

### The 9,550 year-old spruce tree

About this tree, Bill Nye said:

If we go to California, we find the enormous stands of Bristlecone pines. Some of them are 6000 years old to 6800 years old. There is a famous tree in Sweden that is 9550 years old.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> <<http://www.youngearth.org/index.php/archives/rmcf-articles/item/21-transcript-of-ken-ham-vs-bill-nye-debate>>.

The tree in Sweden to which Nye was referring is indeed a famous tree. It's a Norway spruce tree called "Old Tjikko" (Lief Kullman, the man who discovered the tree, named it after his late dog).<sup>22</sup> It lives on a mountaintop in Sweden.

Bill Nye included a PowerPoint photograph of this tree during the debate. With the picture of the tree on the screen, he confidently asked:

You can try this yourself, everybody. I don't mean to be mean to trees, but get a sapling and put it under water for a year. It will not survive. Nor will its seeds. It just won't make it. So how could these trees be that old if the Earth is only 4000 years old?<sup>23</sup>

The audience for the debate expected that the age of this Swedish tree had been determined in an objective manner, that is, by counting growth rings. Guess again. Like so many of the claims that evolutionists make, what Nye said was deliberately misleading. Nye incorrectly stated the age of this particular tree, and he conveniently didn't say how the supposed 9,000-plus date for the tree had been calculated. He forgot to mention that the tree in the picture, according to an article in *National Geographic*, is only a few hundred years old.<sup>24</sup> A few hundred years old is a long way from the 9,550 years of age that Bill Nye claimed.

So where does this 9,550 year-old date come from? It was supposedly calculated by means of carbon-14 dating methods used on tree roots found underneath the tree. That means we are operating in the realm of assumptions, not proven facts. Carbon dating only works for plant and animal matter after it has died. Do we know that Old Tjikko grew up from the same tree roots that allegedly died over 9,000 years ago? We do not. That is an assumption, not fact. And should we accept another assumption that dead tree roots can survive, without being treated with preservatives, in moist soil, for over 9000 years without decomposing? That seems very unlikely. Normally wood can't avoid rotting away in 90 years under those conditions. How could wood survive 100 times that long? Maybe the wood was preserved by being petrified. But carbon-14 dating can't be used on petrified wood. Other questions involve the accuracy of carbon-14 dating on wood alleged to be that old. The bottom line is that we know that Mr. Nye's claim about the age of the tree in the picture is dead wrong. We know he was misleading us on

<sup>22</sup> <[www.wired.com/2010/03/old-tree-gallery/12/](http://www.wired.com/2010/03/old-tree-gallery/12/)>.

<sup>23</sup> <<http://www.youngearth.org/index.php/archives/rmcf-articles/item/21-transcript-of-ken-ham-vs-bill-nye-debate>>.

<sup>24</sup> <[njoySweden.se/en/object/old-tjikko-oldest-tree-in-the-world/](http://njoySweden.se/en/object/old-tjikko-oldest-tree-in-the-world/)>.

that score. Beyond that, we simply have no way of knowing the age of any tree roots underneath the Swedish tree. And Nye's statement that the tree roots must be post-flood is another assumption that can not be defended.

Regarding the time of creation, however, we should note that WELS seminary professor, John Brug, has said:

The genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 provide some information for the times before Abraham. The Anglican Archbishop James Ussher (1581–1656) determined that the world was created about 4000 B.C. by adding together the age of each person in the genealogies of Genesis when that person “became the father of” the next person in the genealogy.

The problem with attempting to arrive at an exact date using this system is that the Hebrew expression that is translated most often into English as “became the father of” does not necessarily imply a direct father/son relationship. The expression can mean “became the ancestor of.” In other words it can imply a grandfather/grandson relationship or a great-grandfather/great-grandson relationship. These genealogies were intended to trace the line of the human ancestry of our Savior rather than provide us with an exact chronology.

Nevertheless, the Bible presents creation as relatively recent. An age of not less than 6,000 years and not more than about 12,000 years fits with the biblical presentation. An age of millions or billions of years does not.<sup>25</sup>

*All things considered, neither the Norway spruce tree, nor the bristle-cone pine trees (whose alleged ages are about 5,000 years) present any real evidence for evolution or against creation.*

## Ice cores from Antarctica and Greenland

Bill Nye stated this argument as follows:

My scientific colleagues go to places like Greenland, the Arctic, they go to Antarctica and they drill into the ice with hollow drill bits.... And we pull out long cylinders of ice, long ice rods. ... And we find certain of the cylinders to have 680,000 layers.

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<sup>25</sup> <<http://www.wels.net/news-events/forward-in-christ/december-1999/origins-earth-and-people?page=0,1>>.

680,000 snow winter/summer cycles. How could it be that just 4000 years ago, all of this ice formed?<sup>26</sup>

And later in the debate Nye said:

Thank you Mr. Ham, but I am completely unsatisfied. You did not, in my view, address fundamental questions: 680,000 years of snow ice layers, which require winter/summer cycles.<sup>27</sup>

So Bill Nye not only included, he also emphasized this argument for an old earth based on ice cores. He brought it up twice in the debate. He said that the ice cores prove that the earth is at least 680,000 years old. Was he right about that? Are ice cores really meaningful evidence against creation and for evolution?

We begin with the ice cores from Greenland. The scientific community typically says that based on ice core analysis, the Greenland ice cap is between 400,000 and 800,000 years old.<sup>28</sup> Relatively recent factual information, however, proves that this supposed age of the Greenland ice is inaccurate.

We know these alleged dates of Greenland ice to be incorrect because of the discovery on Greenland of an airplane called “The Glacier Girl” in 1992. During World War II, on July 15, 1942, Glacier Girl’s squadron was forced to make an emergency landing in Greenland. All the crewmembers were rescued, but Glacier Girl, along with the unit’s five other P-38 fighters and two B-17 bombers, were abandoned and were eventually buried beneath 268 feet of ice. In 1992, the Glacier Girl was discovered and brought to the surface by members of the Greenland Expedition Society after years of searching. The aircraft was then restored to flying condition.

Numerous earlier search parties had attempted to locate and rescue one of these planes but had failed. One reason they failed is the world of science had advised the would-be rescuers that the plane should at most be down about 40 feet, one-sixth of its actual depth.

This means that the scientific consensus regarding the rate of ice build-up on Greenland is wrong—so wrong that it should not be taken seriously. At the known rate of ice accumulation on Greenland, as revealed by the Glacier Girl, it would only take about 1,000 years

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<sup>26</sup> <<http://www.youngearth.org/index.php/archives/rmcf-articles/item/21-transcript-of-ken-ham-vs-bill-nye-debate>>.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> <<http://www.skepticalscience.com/greenland-used-to-be-green.htm>>.

to accumulate a mile-thick ice cap. We additionally know from reliable historical records that Greenland was much warmer 1,000 years ago than today and that some 5,000 Norwegian settlers lived there at that time. There were two successful Norwegian colonies on Greenland. They were successful, that is, until the climate starting getting cold around AD 1200. The agricultural colony came to an end about AD 1350, and the fishing colony ceased to exist around AD 1500.

So even if we allow for compaction of the deepest layers of ice on Greenland, the entire ice-cap could have easily accumulated during the time-frame described in Genesis. The supposed 400,000 to 800,000 years of age for the ice cap is proven to be fictitious. Once again, an important supposed proof for the old earth is revealed to be inaccurate, so inaccurate as to be of no value.

But what about the ice cores from Antarctica? Regarding Antarctic ice, Nye said, “You did not, in my view, address this fundamental question: 680,000 years of snow-ice layers, which require winter-summer cycle.”<sup>29</sup>

Bill Nye perhaps didn’t know that we now have extraordinary and verifiable historical artifacts which reveal that the ice core dating methods used for Antarctica, like those used for Greenland, are a complete sham. One such artifact is the map of Antarctica and other continents drawn in 1531 by French cartographer (mapmaker) Oronteus Finnaeus.

This map pictures the globe from the perspective of the South Pole and shows Antarctica in the center. South America is pictured in the lower right, Africa and Madagascar in the lower left, and Australia in the upper left.

There are numerous sensational features of the map, one of them being that it obviously pictures Antarctica as being largely ice-free and does so long before the continent was supposedly discovered in 1820.



*Oronteus Finnaeus Map of Antarctica*

<sup>29</sup> <<http://www.youngearth.org/index.php/archives/rmcf-articles/item/21-transcript-of-ken-ham-vs-bill-nye-debate>>.



Secondly, the depiction of Antarctica is extraordinarily accurate, so accurate that modern mapmakers are mystified as to how it could have been drawn with such amazing precision. Obviously the map-making ability of earlier people (perhaps the Phoenicians), including their abilities in mathematics and geometry, was far superior to what has been imagined by modern man.

The map not only shows much of Antarctica as being ice-free, it also pictures the coast of Antarctica in great detail, along with accurate depictions of major bays, rivers, and mountain ranges. This means that the evolutionary view that Antarctica has been covered with a mile-thick ice cap with 680,000 winter-summer cycles is obviously false. It is so off base as to be meaningless.

It is important to recognize that the authenticity of this map is virtually beyond question. Its author, Oronteus Finnaeus, is a well-known figure of history having been chairman of the Department of Mathematics at College de France (1531–1555) and having published numerous scholarly works under his own name, including this map.

Finnaeus would have used source maps to make his map. Some of the source maps could date back to the time of the Phoenicians or perhaps even earlier. Based on his source maps, and using his mathematical expertise, Finnaeus drew this map of Antarctica. Finnaeus, it should be added, calculated the value of pi to be 3.1410, a figure known to be quite accurate. Finnaeus was a brilliant mathematician and cartographer.

There are other ancient maps that show Antarctica largely ice-free.<sup>30</sup> One of them is the PiRi Reis map of 1513. This map is also recognized as authentic beyond any reasonable doubt. PiRi Reis, the cartographer of the map that bears his name, said that his source maps dated back to the time of Alexander the Great (325 BC).<sup>31</sup> Reis, like Finnaeus, was an accomplished cartographer.<sup>32</sup> Regarding these maps, the Ancient Wisdom website says:

There is no record of anyone ever having charted [Antarctica], it is a feat said by geologists to have been last physically possible

<sup>30</sup> The Mercator World Map of 1538 also shows the Antarctic and its coastline in great detail, and the Bauche Map of 1737 shows Antarctica consisting of two land masses, something unknown to modern cartographers until it was revealed by sonograms in the early 1950s. The Hadji Ahmed Map of 1559 also shows Antarctica as well as a land bridge from Siberia to Alaska.

<sup>31</sup> See <<http://www.ancientdestructions.com/piri-reis-map-of-antarctica/>>.

<sup>32</sup> For an analysis of the Reis map, see <<http://ancient-wisdom.co.uk/pirireismap.htm>>.

only through a window of opportunity between 10,000 BC and 4,000 BC, a date that was arrived at through analysis of core samples taken from the Ross sea-bed, which established that sub-tropical flora and fauna were present on Antarctica during these dates, and following which a severe climatic shift resulted in the region freezing over. The conclusion of this fact is that the cartographers of the map would have had to have charted that region no later than 4,000 BC (*before* the coastline froze over).<sup>33</sup>

The notion that Antarctica has been covered with a mile-thick ice cap for the last 680,000 years is proven false. This thesis was one of Nye's primary objections to the Genesis record as well as one of the main proofs for evolution he used in the debate.

How could the evolutionists be so completely wrong on the matter of ice-core dating? In the first place, the entire system is based on the assumption that ice cores can be dated the same way tree rings are dated: there is one layer for each year. But many of us living in northern climates, who have shoveled snow that has been around for a while, have seen that different layers of snow and ice can represent different climatic events within a given year and do not necessarily represent different calendar years.

Secondly, social scientists speak of a phenomenon they call "group think," the process of blindly adopting the consensus of a group without ever examining its truthfulness. It may be that evolutionists have fallen into this common trap. Recognition of the process of group think is nothing new. Seneca described it as follows:

For it is dangerous to attach one's self to the crowd, and so long as each one of us is more willing to trust another than to judge for himself, we never show any judgment in the matter, but always a blind trust, and a mistake that has been passed on from hand to hand finally involves us and works our destruction. (Seneca, 4 BC to AD 65)

Seneca's description is 2,000 years old, but then, human nature does not change.

*In the final analysis, the ice-core dating cited by Bill Nye is based on assumptions that cannot be verified while the historical artifacts presented here are objectively verifiable and are actually beyond serious question.*

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<sup>33</sup> <<http://ancient-wisdom.co.uk/pirireismap.htm>>.

*Clearly, the actual depth of the Glacier Girl is beyond any meaningful doubt. The right approach is to view the historical artifacts as being far more credible than the ideological-driven and assumptions-based dating schemes of the evolutionists.*

## The fossil record

Bill Nye's third argument for evolution was based on the fossil record. Nye stated his argument this way:

We are here in Kentucky on layer upon layer of limestone. I stopped at the side of the road today and just picked up a piece of limestone that has a fossil, right there. ... How could those animals have lived their entire lives and formed these layers in just 4000 years?<sup>34</sup>

The geological column is typically pictured in a form like that below.<sup>35</sup> The existence of man is now put at about the last 200,000 years, although the estimates for man's timetable vary somewhat.

We also observe that the age of mammals is thought to comprise the last 65 million years, and before that we have the age of dinosaurs, extending back for another 160 million years or so. The age of dinosaurs is said to include the Jurassic period which, as we know, relates to the modern (1993) horror film *Jurassic Park*.

*National Geographic* comments on this fossil record by saying:

Humans have walked the Earth for 190,000 years, a mere blip in Earth's 4.5-billion-year history. A lot has happened in that time.

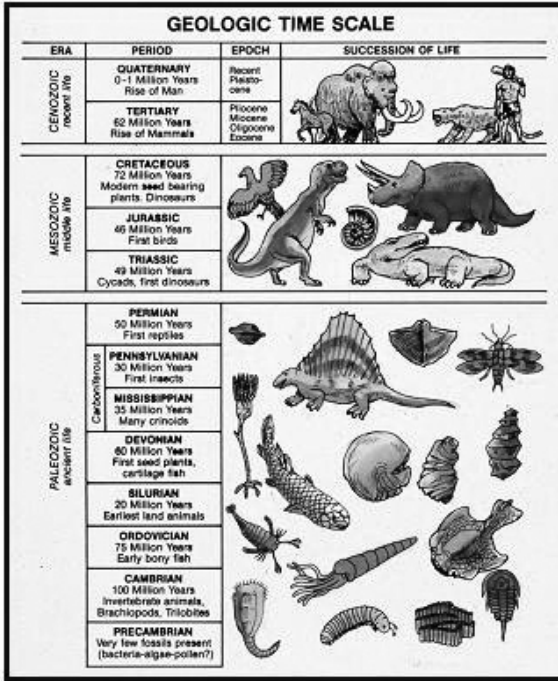
Earth formed and oxygen levels rose in the foundational years of the Precambrian. The productive Paleozoic era gave rise to hard-shelled organisms, vertebrates, amphibians, and reptiles. Dinosaurs ruled the Earth in the mighty Mesozoic. And 64 million years after dinosaurs went extinct, modern humans emerged in the Cenozoic era.<sup>36</sup>

The usual thesis advanced by the fossil record is that life evolved gradually over many millions of years, just as Darwin had said. As we

<sup>34</sup> <<http://www.youngearth.org/index.php/archives/rmcf-articles/item/21-transcript-of-ken-ham-vs-bill-nye-debate>>.

<sup>35</sup> <[www.nwcreation.net](http://www.nwcreation.net)>.

<sup>36</sup> <<http://science.nationalgeographic.com/science/prehistoric-world/prehistoric-time-line/>>.

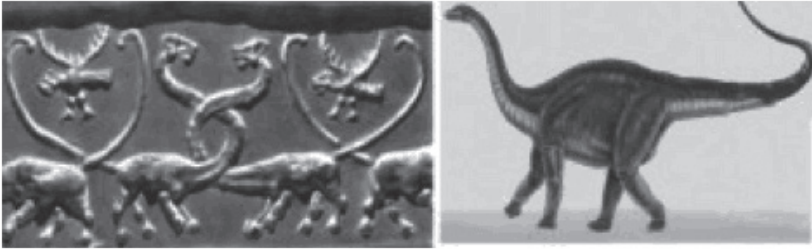


dig deeper into the Earth’s crust, we supposedly find forms of life that are more primitive and are also much older, many millions of years older, than the life we see today.

But is this viewpoint an accurate overview of the actual history of life on Earth? It is not. To consider this argument by evolutionists, let us evaluate one of its central assertions, namely, the statement as worded by *National Geographic*: “And 64 million years after dinosaurs went extinct, modern humans emerged [190,000 years ago] in the Cenozoic era.” *That is, 64 million years separate humans and dinosaurs.*

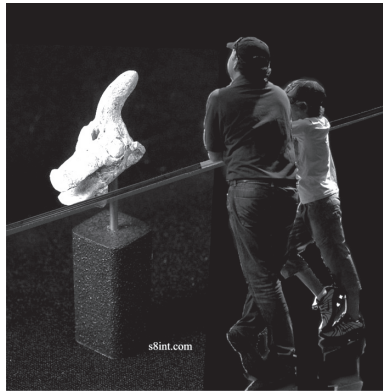
Is this an accurate statement? Available historical records and artifacts say otherwise. We will begin our examination of that assertion by observing several of the relevant historical artifacts. The cylinder from Mesopotamia pictured below is one such artifact. It is dated at 3300 BC. Notice the similarity of the artwork, on the left, to a modern sketch of a sauropod on the right. (Sauropods are the family of very large plant-eating dinosaurs.)

The creatures in the cylinder certainly appear to be dinosaurs, but an artist living 5300 years ago could not have seen them, and known what they looked like, if they have actually been extinct for 65 million years.



*Mesopotamian cylinder compared to a modern sketch of a sauropod*

Notice the top of the dinosaur's heads. The heads appear to be adorned with what may be cartilage of some kind, perhaps cartilage similar to the comb on a chicken. Dinosaur artistic artifacts commonly have this type of head decoration. Notice also that while the bodies of the dinosaurs pictured above appear very similar to what we know them to have been like, their heads seem a bit unusual. But compare those heads on the metal cylinder above to a sculpture of a dinosaur head uncovered in Egypt shown below.



*Stone sculpture of a dinosaur head, dated 2,000 BC, on display in a museum in Cairo, Egypt*

The similarity between the heads of the dinosaurs on the Mesopotamian cylinder and this stone sculpture of a dinosaur head found in Egypt is striking. Notice the nose which resembles that of a pig. Notice the open mouth. Notice the single horn, or boney structure, to which cartilage could have been attached. It appears that the same or similar dinosaurs are being portrayed. (This may be the unicorn that is often mentioned in ancient literature. The word "unicorn" simply means "one horn" which this creature represented by the stone sculpture above clearly had. The Bible has often been criticized for mentioning unicorns which everyone supposedly knows never existed. Well, maybe they did.)

Another important artwork depicting dinosaurs is the following slate palette from Heirakonpolis (a royal residence of the kings of Upper Egypt and important archeological site today) dated at 3100 BC. The palette depicts that King Narmer unified Egypt under his control. On the palette are bulls (Egyptian gods) and dinosaurs with intertwined necks apparently denoting strength and unity. The other side of the palette depicts King Narmer's subjugation of his enemies.<sup>37</sup>



The creatures in the center of the palette clearly appear to be dinosaurs of some kind, and no one questions the authenticity of the artifact.

The following Roman mosaic is dated AD 200. Two dinosaurs with their necks intertwined again appear to symbolize strength and unity which is a common motif in ancient artworks.



*Roman Mosaic, dated AD 200*

<sup>37</sup> From p. 93 of Pritchard's book, *The Ancient Near East in Pictures*.  
<<http://www.genesispark.com/exhibits/evidence/historical/ancient/dinosaur/>>.

Notice once again the turned-up noses and the head decorations of these sauropods. Any cartilage would not have survived to our time, whereas the bones could survive, so our only knowledge about this feature of sauropods comes from artworks like these. The authenticity of this mosaic is once again essentially beyond doubt.

Another important dinosaur artwork was recently discovered as a carved-in-stone relief on the wall of a temple in Cambodia that has long been hidden in the jungle. The building of the temple is dated at AD 1200.<sup>38</sup> The creature is included along with stone reliefs of animals and birds common to the area, such as monkeys and swans. None of the reliefs picture mythological animals; they are all depictions of creatures known to the people of that time and place. The relief in question is clearly a stegosaurus as can be seen by comparing the artwork on the temple wall to a reconstructed stegosaurus skeleton.



*Relief on the wall of a Cambodian Temple*



*Stegosaurus skeleton*

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<sup>38</sup> The Cambodian Stegosaurus: Proof That Humans And Dinosaurs Coexisted?>  
<<http://www.relativelyinteresting.com>>.

The only creature known to have fins like these is a stegosaurus. Some paleontologists think that the fins may have served to keep the animal cool, much like the fins on an air-cooled engine.

Turning to the Americas, the following dinosaur was discovered etched in stone in the Havasupai Canyon in Arizona.<sup>39</sup> It goes back many hundreds of years.



*Arizona Dinosaur*

Notice once again the turned-up nose. Cartilage to form such a nose would have had to have been observed while the creature was alive or shortly after its death.

The authenticity of many of these artworks is virtually beyond question. The only reasonable conclusion that can be drawn from the art is that people and dinosaurs lived at the same time. The artists may not have seen the dinosaurs themselves, but if they didn't have first-hand knowledge of dinosaurs, they must have had access to other artworks or reports of some kind that allowed them to construct the art with such accuracy. Such art raises serious questions about the validity of the geological column and related timetable used by evolutionists.

There are over 50 ancient artworks depicting dinosaurs that are similar to the examples above. Others continue to be discovered right along, and as noted above, the authenticity of many of them is beyond dispute. (Additional examples are available on the author's website: [cmods.org](http://cmods.org).)

In addition to the artwork, we also have written accounts of dinosaurs and other creatures that were their contemporaries. One of the most sensational written records is the description of a dinosaur in Job chapter 40, beginning with verse 15.

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<sup>39</sup> Barnes and Pendleton, *Canyon Country Prehistoric Indians – Their Culture, Ruins, Artifacts and Rock Art*, 1995.



- <sup>15</sup> Look at Behemoth,  
which I made along with you and which feeds on grass like  
an ox.
- <sup>16</sup> What strength it has in its loins,  
what power in the muscles of its belly!
- <sup>17</sup> Its tail sways like a cedar;  
the sinews of its thighs are close-knit.
- <sup>18</sup> Its bones are tubes of bronze,  
its limbs like rods of iron.
- <sup>19</sup> It ranks first among the works of God,  
yet its Maker can approach it with his sword.
- <sup>20</sup> The hills bring it their produce,  
and all the wild animals play nearby.
- <sup>21</sup> Under the lotus plants it lies,  
hidden among the reeds in the marsh
- <sup>22</sup> The lotuses conceal it in their shadow;  
the poplars by the stream surround it.
- <sup>23</sup> A raging river does not alarm it; it is secure,  
though the Jordan should surge against its mouth.
- <sup>24</sup> Can anyone capture it by the eyes,  
or trap it and pierce its nose?

This description is an excellent match for a large sauropod dinosaur. The description fits no other creature. No other plant-eating and land-dwelling animal can be described as having the first rank (being largest) of the land-dwelling creatures made by God and having a tail like a cedar tree. Its name, “behemoth,” is a Hebrew word for mega-beast—which also fits a sauropod very well.

The next creature described in Job is also of interest to us. Job 41 reads as follows:

- <sup>1</sup> Can you pull in Leviathan with a fishhook  
or tie down its tongue with a rope?
- <sup>2</sup> Can you put a cord through its nose  
or pierce its jaw with a hook?
- <sup>3</sup> Will it keep begging you for mercy?  
Will it speak to you with gentle words?
- <sup>4</sup> Will it make an agreement with you  
for you to take it as your slave for life?

- <sup>5</sup> Can you make a pet of it like a bird  
or put it on a leash for the young women in your house?
- <sup>6</sup> Will traders barter for it?  
Will they divide it up among the merchants?
- <sup>7</sup> Can you fill its hide with harpoons  
or its head with fishing spears?
- <sup>8</sup> If you lay a hand on it,  
you will remember the struggle and never do it again!
- <sup>9</sup> Any hope of subduing it is false;  
the mere sight of it is overpowering.
- <sup>10</sup> No one is fierce enough to rouse it.  
Who then is able to stand against me?
- <sup>11</sup> Who has a claim against me that I must pay?  
Everything under heaven belongs to me.
- <sup>12</sup> "I will not fail to speak of Leviathan's limbs,  
its strength and its graceful form.
- <sup>13</sup> Who can strip off its outer coat?  
Who can penetrate its double coat of armor?
- <sup>14</sup> Who dares open the doors of its mouth,  
ringed about with fearsome teeth?
- <sup>15</sup> Its back has rows of shields  
tightly sealed together;
- <sup>16</sup> each is so close to the next  
that no air can pass between.
- <sup>17</sup> They are joined fast to one another;  
they cling together and cannot be parted.
- <sup>18</sup> Its snorting throws out flashes of light;  
its eyes are like the rays of dawn.
- <sup>19</sup> Flames stream from its mouth;  
sparks of fire shoot out.
- <sup>20</sup> Smoke pours from its nostrils  
as from a boiling pot over burning reeds.
- <sup>21</sup> Its breath sets coals ablaze,  
and flames dart from its mouth.
- <sup>22</sup> Strength resides in its neck;  
dismay goes before it.
- <sup>23</sup> The folds of its flesh are tightly joined;  
they are firm and immovable.
- <sup>24</sup> Its chest is hard as rock,  
hard as a lower millstone.

- <sup>25</sup> When it rises up, the mighty are terrified;  
they retreat before its thrashing.
- <sup>26</sup> The sword that reaches it has no effect,  
nor does the spear or the dart or the javelin.
- <sup>27</sup> Iron it treats like straw  
and bronze like rotten wood.
- <sup>28</sup> Arrows do not make it flee;  
slingstones are like chaff to it.
- <sup>29</sup> A club seems to it but a piece of straw;  
it laughs at the rattling of the lance.
- <sup>30</sup> Its undersides are jagged potsherds,  
leaving a trail in the mud like a threshing sledge.
- <sup>31</sup> It makes the depths churn like a boiling caldron  
and stirs up the sea like a pot of ointment.
- <sup>32</sup> It leaves a glistening wake behind it;  
one would think the deep had white hair.
- <sup>33</sup> Nothing on earth is its equal—  
a creature without fear.
- <sup>34</sup> It looks down on all that are haughty;  
it is king over all that are proud.



*Artistic depiction of SuperCroc*

Up until a few years ago, we could not identify this creature. But in 1997 a skeleton of SuperCroc (*Sarcosuchus Imperator*) was unearthed in a dry river bed in the Sahara Desert. From this skeleton and others like it we know what this creature was like. We now know that SuperCroc was much like today's largest crocodiles, but it was 10 times bigger! It weighed in at 10 tons—making it almost twice as big as Tyrannosaurus Rex (six tons).



*Sarcosuchus skull compared to a modern crocodile skull*

As can easily be seen, the description in Job 41 is a striking match for SuperCroc. (The fire-breathing imagery is obviously figurative language just like the “bones of brass” metaphor used to describe the sauropod in Job 40.)

SuperCroc’s armor is described in Job 41:

<sup>13</sup> Who can strip off its outer coat?

Who can penetrate its double coat of armor?

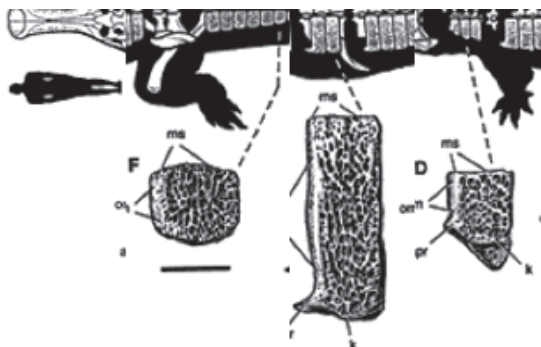
<sup>14</sup> Who dares open the doors of its mouth,  
ringed about with fearsome teeth?

<sup>15</sup> Its back has rows of shields  
tightly sealed together;

<sup>16</sup> each is so close to the next  
that no air can pass between.

<sup>17</sup> They are joined fast to one another;  
they cling together and cannot be parted.

Then compare this description from Job to *National Geographic’s* depiction of the overlapping bone shields, called “scutes,” that covered

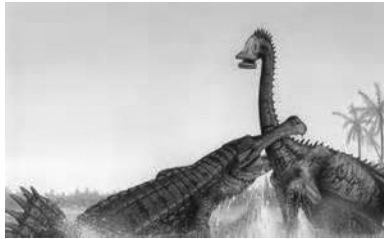


SuperCroc's back.<sup>40</sup> As can be easily seen, the two descriptions are a perfect match.

(For detail on how well Job 41 matches SuperCroc, see, *National Geographic's* DVD: "SuperCroc," running time: 90 Minutes. See also *National Geographic*, October 28, 2012 and *National Geographic Special on SuperCroc*, December, 2001.)

Notice that Job also said of leviathan, "Nothing on earth is its equal." That is clearly true of SuperCroc and only SuperCroc, in that no dinosaur or other creature, past or present, could stand up to it.<sup>41</sup> Paleontologists think, by the way, that SuperCrocs routinely killed and ate dinosaurs.

Even Tyrannosaurus Rex couldn't compete with SuperCroc since SuperCroc was almost twice as big, was at home on land and in the water, had a bite that was twice as strong and had full body armor. Since SuperCroc ruled during the age of dinosaurs and was at the top of the food chain, the period should really be renamed the "age of SuperCroc" (or at least the "age of dinosaurs and SuperCroc").



*Artistic depiction of SuperCroc*

The match of Job 41 and SuperCroc should not surprise us since Job, the person, and SuperCroc lived at the same time and in the same general location. The context of Job also fits SuperCroc very well. In this setting, God was comparing Job to the most impressive creatures that God had created. Being compared to a sauropod and SuperCroc would have made Job feel pretty small, especially when God was actually comparing Job to the Supreme Being who had made them.

SuperCroc, however, like the dinosaurs it is thought to have eaten for lunch, is said by evolutionists to have been extinct for more than 65

<sup>40</sup> <[http://www.supercroc.org/supercroc/main-graphics/crock\\_illustration/e\\_a.gif](http://www.supercroc.org/supercroc/main-graphics/crock_illustration/e_a.gif)>.

<sup>41</sup> On the matter of size, compare SuperCroc at 10 tons, to T Rex at 6 tons, killer whales at 6 tons, great white sharks at 4 tons, and grizzly bears at ½-ton.

million years. So once again, the dating used for SuperCroc, as well as the dinosaurs, turns out to be totally inaccurate.<sup>42</sup>

There are other impressive indications that dinosaurs lived on this earth within the past several thousand years. There have been several instances of Carbon-14 dating that reveal dinosaur bones to be quite recent, for example. Following is one of many reports of this nature.

In June of 1990, Hugh Miller submitted two dinosaur bone fragments to the Department of Geosciences at the University of Tucson, Arizona, for Carbon-14 analysis. ... the C-14 analysis indicated the bones were between 10,000 and 14,000 years old—a far cry from their alleged 60-million-year-old age.<sup>43</sup>

There should be no radioactive carbon left past 100,000 years, so the notion that these bones go back millions of years is shown to be false.<sup>44</sup>

We additionally have objective evidence of soft tissue being identified within dinosaur bones. There have been found more than 30 specimens of bones from various kinds of dinosaurs that contain soft tissue.<sup>45</sup> That, as far as we know, would be impossible if they were millions of years old.

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<sup>42</sup> It should be mentioned that the numerous accounts of dragons in the narratives and artworks of early civilizations are often interpreted as being ferocious dinosaurs. That may be. Many of the artworks, however, look to be more similar to SuperCroc than to dinosaurs. See the painting of St. George slaying the dragon below:



Such dragon artworks appear to be composites of various types of creatures with large wings like pterodactyls and with various features that resemble dinosaurs, serpents and crocodilians.

<sup>43</sup> Michael Snyder, *Freedom Outpost*, March 6, 2014.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

This soft tissue found in dinosaur bones commonly includes red blood cells, and red blood cells apparently can't last more than a few thousand years. Why, then, is this sensational information not widely known? The following example explains why.

Self-described creationist scientist Mark Armitage filed a lawsuit against California State University Northridge this week, claiming he was fired by college officials after he discovered soft tissue on a triceratops horn and published his findings....

Armitage ... has some 30 publications to his credit and is past-president of the Southern California Society for Microscopy... In the summer of 2012, while at the world-famous dinosaur dig at Hell Creek Formation in Montana, Armitage discovered the largest triceratops horn ever unearthed at the site. According to his attorneys, "When examining the horn under a high-powered microscope back at CSUN, Armitage was fascinated to see the soft tissue," stated lawyers with the Pacific Justice Institute, which represents Armitage. According to the lawsuit ... the discovery sent shock waves through the Cal State Northridge community.

The lawsuit contends that that discovery was the beginning of the end of Armitage's employment at Cal State Northridge, with one university official storming into his office in June 2012 and shouting: "We are not going to tolerate your religion in this department!"

Things got more tense after the scholar published his findings, first in the November 2012 issue of *American Laboratory* magazine, which published images of the soft tissue on its cover, and then online in February 2013 in the peer-reviewed journal *Acta Histochemica*, according to the lawsuit.

On Feb. 27, 2013, his employment was terminated.<sup>46</sup>

Notice in the example above that no one disputed the accuracy of Armitage's findings. His photographs of the red blood cells were clear for anyone to see. What he claimed was there can readily be observed by others. When the evolutionists can't dispute the information, they sometimes rely on persecution to suppress the information. In his video, *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*, Ben Stein documented the

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<sup>46</sup> Reported in *The College Fix* on July 25, 2014. See <<http://www.thecollegefix.com/post/18549/>>.

extraordinary persecution that people in science and the media face if they publish information that contradicts evolution.<sup>47</sup> One wonders what the evolutionists are so afraid of if their viewpoint is the proven science they claim it to be.

As we have seen, therefore, relating to the age of dinosaurs at least, the geological column and the timeline accompanying it are left in shambles by the available historical and scientific information. If this is true about the age of dinosaurs, which is a major and central segment of the column and its timeline, we have good reason to take neither the column nor the timeline very seriously.

*As is evident overall, the claims made for evolution and against creation, as used by Bill Nye, are a long way from being proven, scientific facts. The claims are only useful to evolutionists because the public is unaware of the evidence that contradicts them.* In addition, one of the fundamental principles of historical research is that relevant documents and artifacts should be given the benefit of the doubt unless there is compelling evidence to the contrary. There is no compelling evidence to cast doubt on the historical documents and artifacts presented in this paper. They need to be taken at face value and be allowed to speak for themselves. They carry more weight than the opinions of evolutionists.

There are other arguments for evolution, of course, but they are no better than the three we have examined here. All the arguments for evolution are a house of cards; they cannot stand up to serious investigation. For summaries of these arguments and a presentation of the information that contradicts them, see the short book by the author written to accompany this lecture: *Ten Truths About Evolution that Everyone Should Know*.<sup>48</sup>

For a more extensive and scholarly exposition of the fallacies involved with the major arguments supporting evolution, see Jonathon Wells, *Icons of Evolution: Science or Myth*.<sup>49</sup> Several years ago the author had a student tell him that this book changed her life. Accurate information on important subjects has a way of doing that.

Jonathon Wells said, “The public has been systematically misled about the evidence for evolution.”<sup>50</sup> We do well to know what the real

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<sup>47</sup> 2008 documentary film directed by Nathan Frankowski and starring Ben Stein.

<sup>48</sup> © 2014, Allen Quist publishing, available from the Lutheran Synod Book Company and online at the Doctrine Committee section of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod website.

<sup>49</sup> Jonathon Wells, *Icons of Evolution: Science or Myth* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2000).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, xii.



evidence is. The notion that Darwinism is factual is far more flawed than the public has been led to believe. We do well to be informed about Darwinism so we can be instrumental in combating this major obstacle to the pursuit of knowledge and to the Christian faith.

This is a time when apologetics is especially important because it focuses on the truth of Christianity. In a sense we are back to New Testament times where we need to be ready to deal with the most basic questions, issues like: How do we know that Jesus even existed? Why should we believe what the Bible says? Don't accepted philosophical viewpoints such as evolution disprove the Bible? And the new questions on the block: Why should creationists be allowed to call themselves scientists? Why should they be allowed to teach in our schools or to even work in the scientific field?

The leaders of the Reformation were intensely engaged in refuting the errors of their time. John Warwick Montgomery described this emphasis by the Reformation church on refuting errors when he said, "Indeed, the tone of the Reformation Lutheran Confessions in general, with their constant stress on refuting 'antitheses' as well as setting forth 'theses,' reveals a veritable preoccupation with the defense of sound teaching over against falsehood."<sup>51</sup>

We, in our day, need to be just as engaged, as were the leaders of the Reformation, in refuting the falsehoods of our time and in defending the sound teaching of the Scriptures.

In the matter of defending Genesis, we must recognize that the first promise of the Savior—the non-negotiable and all-important promise—is at stake. We also recognize that the claim of Jesus to be fully man and fully God is at stake. We cannot overstate the extraordinary importance of this defense.

Proverbs 10:14 states, "The wise store up knowledge," and Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." Storing up knowledge should be our goal, especially when that knowledge better equips us to "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15). [LSQ](#)

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<sup>51</sup> John Warwick Montgomery, "Christian Apologetics in the Light of the Lutheran Confessions," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (July 1978): 258.

## Appendix A

### Apologetics Study Document of the Doctrine Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

#### *Confess and Defend: ὁμολογία and ἀπολογία*

1. The New Testament establishes that each Christian is to stand ready to defend (ἀπολογέομαι/apologeomai) the faith (Lk 12:8–11, 1 Pet 3:15, Jude 3). The term “apologetics” refers to the defense of the Christian faith. Defending the Christian faith may include an explanation of the basic beliefs of Christianity. It may also include giving grounds or reasons for accepting the Christian gospel message as true or a refutation of criticisms of the faith, as well as exposing inadequacies in alternative religions and worldviews.

2. “Apologetics” is used in either a narrow or a broad sense. It is used in a narrow sense when referring to the presentation of rational arguments and historical evidence in defense of the truthfulness of Scripture against attacks, including the historicity of the events of the Old and New Testaments, especially the events of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In its broad sense, “apologetics” includes the use of the law to show the folly of unbelief, and also the use of the gospel in giving the reason for Christian hope. These theses primarily speak of apologetics in the broad sense.

3. The New Testament also commands that each Christian is to confess (ὁμολογέω/homologeō) the faith (1 Tim 6:12, 2 Cor 9:13, Rom 10:9,10, 1 Jn 4:1,15, Phil 2:11, Lk 12:8–11). Ὁμολογέω means “to speak the same thing,” i.e. to agree, assent, acknowledge, or profess.

4. Jesus’ words in Luke 12:8–11 connect “confess” (ὁμολογία v. 8) and “answer/defend” (ἀπολογία v. 11). Therefore we hold that “confess” and “defend” (ὁμολογία/ὁμολογέω and ἀπολογία/ἀπολογέομαι) speak of closely related activities, both of which are commanded by Christ and the apostles.

5. All of Scripture is the infallible and inerrant word of God and belongs to the faith for which the Christian is to contend (1 Pet 3:15, Jude 3). The heart of Christian confession and defense is the gospel itself—the revelation of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God made flesh and his sacrificial atonement by which God justifies the sinner. As we can see from the apostles’ activity in the book of Acts, when Christians are called upon to defend the Christian faith or the gospel itself, they will always confess the person of Jesus Christ and his work and give witness to the gospel (Acts 2, 4, 19, 22, 26 etc.).

6. The Holy Scripture is the word of God and therefore is inherently powerful and self-authenticating. Historical and other external evidence and argument from sources apart from Scripture are a useful and important part of Christian apologetics in that they lay bare and condemn the presumption of unbelief and skepticism, but they neither verify nor authenticate Scripture as God’s revelation.

7. Human reason is a gift of God (First Article in Luther's Small Catechism), even though it is corrupted by human sin. We distinguish between a ministerial and a magisterial use of reason. Reason is used ministerially—as a servant—when it is an instrument in presenting and apprehending the gospel, and when it is used to show the foolishness of unbelief. Reason is used magisterially—as a master—when it stands in judgment over Scripture and its teachings, or when it reinterprets or dismisses clear teachings of Scripture to agree with human reason and experience. We reject the magisterial or critical use of reason applied to the teachings of Holy Scripture.

8. The cause of conversion or regeneration is not to be sought in the human presentation of evidence and argument, as important as they are, but only in the inherent power of God's word of the gospel (2 Cor 4:6; Eph 2:8,9; 2 Tim 3:15; 1 Pet 1:23).

9. The Christian confession and defense will always be done with the understanding that regeneration is only the work of the Holy Spirit working through the means of grace, word and sacrament, and is not aided or effected by man. The absolute predominance of *sola fide*, *sola gratia*, and *sola Scriptura* (*solus Christus*) will always be made clear in carrying out the apologetic task.

10. Since the apologetic task is engaged not only in confessing the faith, but in using the law to reveal the presumptuousness of unbelief, care will be taken not to confuse the law and the gospel or to make the law a part of the gospel presentation, instead of a necessary adjunct to it. Christian confession and defense will always keep in mind C. F. W. Walther's exposition *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel*, especially the final thesis: "The Word of God is not rightly divided when the person teaching it does not allow the Gospel to have a general predominance in his teaching."

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## Appendix B

The arguments in the Augsburg Confession which oppose the required celibacy of priests may be summarized as follows:

- a) Pope Pious reportedly favored allowing priests to marry.
- b) Platina supports the marriage of priests.
- c) Priests have themselves historically supported the marriage of priests.
- d) The Apostle Paul said to avoid fornication every man should have his own wife (1 Cor. 7:2, 9).
- e) Christ himself said it is natural order of creation for men to marry, except for those who are physically unable to do so (Matt. 9:11).

f) Unless a man has a gift of celibacy, it is not within his power to alter this natural order of creation.

g) No man's law can alter the command and ordinance of God.

h) In the ancient church, priests were married men.

i) Paul said a bishop should be the husband of one wife (1 Tim 3:2).

j) In Germany, 400 years ago, priests were violently compelled to obey this new rule.

k) It is common knowledge that this law has caused much harm and has done no good.

l) Since man's nature is steadily weakening as the world ages, it is even more important that this prohibition on marriage for priests be abolished.

m) God created marriage to guard against human frailty.

n) Even the Church canons say that priests should be able to marry.

o) The Church will likely lack pastors at some time in the future because of this heresy.

p) The cruelty of this law is especially noteworthy because it violates God's command to honor marriage.

q) Even among the heathen, marriage is honored.

r) Priests are now cruelly put to death, contrary to the Church canons.

s) Paul calls this a doctrine of devils (1 Tim. 4:3).

t) No law or vow can overturn a commandment of God.

u) Cyprian said that women who cannot remain chaste also should marry.

v) Even the canons show leniency toward those who have taken a vow of celibacy before they came of age.



# Lutherans and the Defense of the Faith

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**A**LWAYS BE PREPARED TO MAKE A DEFENSE TO any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you (1 Peter 3:15).

## I. The Lutheran Apologetic

- “Unless I am convinced by the testimony of Holy Scriptures or by evident reason...”
- “I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my limbs, my reason, and all my senses, and still preserves them. ... This is most certainly true.”

## II. The Lab “ORA” torium and the Lutheran Roots of the Copernican Revolution

- Melanchthon and Astrology
- Johannes Kepler
- The *Societas Christianae* and the Rosicrucians

## III. Who’s Afraid of the Enlightenment?

- “When we call the eighteenth century the Age of Reason, we only mean an age when men talked a great deal about reason and hoped that its conscious use would bring about a marked improvement in human affairs” (Jacques Barzun).

#### IV. The Problem of Pietism

- “What is a Pietist? One who studies God’s Word and leads a holy life according to it” (Joachim Feller).

#### V. Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg and German Higher Criticism

- “The modern theology of feeling is totally foreign to apologetic efforts. ... An overreaction to rationalism has made us lukewarm to natural theology.”
- Zöckler and Darwin.

#### VI. The Problem with Postmodernism

- “However comforting it might be, postmodernism is the cure that kills the patient, the military strategy that concedes defeat before the first shot is fired... and it is an immoral, cowards way out” (J.P. Moreland).

#### VII. A Modest (Modernist) Proposal

- Critical commitment
- *Eucatalepsia*

#### VIII. A Call to Engagement

- Oratio, Meditatio, Tentatio *and* Vocatio

# Reaction to the 2014 Reformation Lectures

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**P**ETER'S PREACHING THE GOSPEL AT THE HOUSE of Cornelius was a watershed moment for the early Christian church. Peter declared, "All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (Acts 10:43). Peter and the early Christian church realized that the gospel was for all people. I believe that the Reformation Lectures this past October were a watershed moment for the Confessional Lutheran churches. In these essays, Allen Quist and Dr. Daniel van Voorhis clearly demonstrated that there is such a thing as a Lutheran apologetic. It centers on Christ and flows from the means of grace. It recognizes that only the Holy Spirit can bring people to faith. Both essayists agreed with Martin Luther who taught that we cannot by our own reason or strength come to believe in Jesus. Both essayists also recognized that reason can be used in showing the fallacies of arguments raised against Christianity. This use of reason can serve as a bridge to bring a person the gospel which alone can convert a person.

One reason why many Lutherans have a bad image of apologetics is because of statements Franz Pieper made in his dogmatics text. However, we must understand Pieper's statements in the context of his times. The nineteenth century was the time when Darwinian evolution had a catastrophic effect on Protestantism in the United States. Religious liberalism wove Darwinian evolution into the fabric of its theology. By



the end of the nineteenth century Protestantism had widely rejected the authority of the Scriptures and the authority of God.

The twentieth century dawned with conservative Lutherans holding to Scripture but with no distinct apologetic to answer the Darwinian evolution which permeated religious liberalism. It was in the early days of the twentieth century that Protestant Fundamentalism arose to meet the challenge of religious liberalism and Darwinian evolution. Fundamentalism was interested in preserving the fundamentals of the Christian faith. However, it was not interested in preserving all doctrines of Scripture. It opposed Darwinian evolution by using logic and reason to try to convince people to believe in Jesus. It believed humans had the ability to decide by their own reason to believe in Jesus. For this reason, Fundamentalism was not prepared to meet the challenge it faced.

It was this brand of Fundamentalism against which Franz Pieper reacted when he wrote his anti-apologetic remarks in his dogmatics text. To condemn the apologetics we spoke of at the Reformation lectures this year because of Pieper's comments is to misuse his statements and to take them totally out of their historical setting.

Allen Quist clearly presented what Lutheran apologetics involves. Included in his paper were also a set of theses on Lutheran Apologetics which he and Prof. Erling Teigen developed. These theses deserve to be read and studied by all Confessional Lutherans. These theses clearly lay out the parameters of what is truly called Lutheran apologetics. Dr. Van Voorhis presented a historical overview of apologetics from the time of the Lutheran Reformation. His presentation showed many of the challenges to biblical theology which arose over the centuries and how the church tried to meet these challenges.

It was encouraging to see the interest raised by these lectures on Apologetics. The attendance appeared to be higher than in previous years. We pray that the flame ignited by these lectures continues to burn brightly in our circles. May we always heed the encouragement of Peter: "In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15). [LSQ](#)

# Reaction to the 2014 Reformation Lectures

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I HAVE APPRECIATED THE PRESENTATIONS OF BOTH of our speakers in this year's lectures. Prof. Quist's exposition of Christian apologetics especially as applied to the biblical doctrine of creation has given us some good help in realizing the relationship between the apologetic task and methodology and our biblical faith, lived out under our Lutheran Confessions. A Lutheran approach finds itself threading a very careful path through the great pillars of the divine monergism of Luther and his reliance on the Augustinian doctrine of grace on the one hand and the necessity to engage with modern thought in this post-scientific world on the other. For that reason, I was especially gratified by Prof. Quist's careful walk in the last two paragraphs of his opening section.

Dr. van Voorhis's lecture was also very helpful. As promised, it was a very packed presentation, which, nonetheless, offers a very coherent view of the challenges faced by a Lutheran apologetic today. As someone known around here to have a preoccupation with the dangers of Pietism, I was very happy to get confirmation of some of my views as to how Pietism has led to some later views in the church which ultimately denied the possibility of true doctrine. As a teacher at Halle, J. S. Semler is often credited with introducing theological rationalism into Lutheranism. Whether contemporary post-modernism owes its paternity to German Pietism, with Rationalism as the midwife, or to a more modern corruption of philosophical inquiry like logical positivism, the

end result is, as both lecturers have demonstrated, a serious breakdown in the ability to even talk about anything as being true. And that remains the central challenge for both church and academy in the twenty-first century. I hereby bequeath to my younger colleagues the adventure of having to deal with this challenge in the coming decades.

I would like to offer some general reflections on the matters we have dealt with these two days. One of the things that over the years has made me suspicious of some apologetic discussions has been the fact that much literature circulating among our people has been colored by general Protestant theology, which is not always so clear on the nature of biblical revelation, the weakness of human reason, and even the nature of faith. On the one hand I have always been appreciative of the study of Luther's doctrine of reason by Brian A. Gerrish: *Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther* (Clarendon Press, 1962). Siegbert Becker's *The Foolishness of God* (Northwestern, 1982), which was begun as a PhD dissertation under Gerrish, is also a good treatment. However, much other work from Reformed circles (as well as Anabaptist and Pentecostal sources) have given much more power to human reason, even more, it would seem, than Thomas Aquinas did.

In regard to the apologetic for creation, one issue I would like to pursue here is the Christological aspect of creation, which was touched on briefly in our discussion. While this will not be a prominent aspect of the engagement with evolution concerning scientific principles and empirical facts, it can hardly be absent from a Christian's presentation of the doctrine of creation. It will be especially relevant in engagements with the syncretism of Christian revelation and the theory of evolution in such theories as theistic evolution. While we usually think of apologetics as an engagement with unbelief, it may also be a part of the Christian's engagement with other Christians, for example in matters involving human life, human sexuality and marriage, and, certainly, creation.

The assumption by many modern Christians, also some "conservative" ones, is that Scripture and science are not at odds on the matter of creation, or that the two can be easily synthesized. And so it is suggested that one can indeed hold to a divine creation *per verbum* (by the word) and yet hold to an evolutionary theory. And the acceptance of evolution is justified by holding that creation does not involve the gospel itself.

What about this? Is it true?

Genesis 1 clearly establishes creation by his word of command: "Let there be light, and there was light." Martin Luther makes the

distinction in his *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* between *Heisselwort* (command word) and *Thettelwort* (deed word). A similar distinction needs to be observed in the matter of creation. "Let there be light" is the same creative and powerful word as the word that calls Lazarus out of the tomb, and makes Christ's body and blood substantially present in the sacrament, and that creates faith through baptism. And that point is reiterated in Psalm 33:6: "By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (NKJ). This thought is repeated in Hebrews 11:3a: "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God" (NKJ). So far, we can hear a simple, but important expression of a creation by fiat, by command.

All of this becomes Christological, however, when we meet up with the first chapter of John's gospel: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made.... And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:1, 3, 14). Not only does *logos* ("word") refer to the creative power of God's communication through his writers, but the *Logos* refers to the eternal Son, and he is placed directly at the center of this creation. This, by the way, is not unique to the New Testament, that the *Logos* is the creator. The famous eighth chapter of Proverbs, the wisdom chapter, begins with wisdom as the feminine muse, as Sophia, but by the middle of the chapter, this wisdom becomes masculine and stands with the creator, even before the foundations of the world: "I have been established from everlasting.... When he prepared the heavens I was there.... Then I was beside him as a master craftsman" (Proverbs 8:23, 27, 30; NKJ). The one who is called Wisdom here is identified with Christ by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:30: "You are in Christ Jesus who became for us wisdom from God" (NKJ). We would invite you to stop by Meyer Hall (the science building) and spend some time with Prof. William Bukowski's creation fresco. In the frame devoted to the creation the fresco captures the thrust of the master craftsman of Proverbs 8 and the creating *Logos* of John 1.

And by this time it doesn't seem to me that one can so easily divorce the *creatio per verbum* of Genesis and Psalms from the Christological implications of Solomon and John.

I suppose that we could say that this Christological and evangelical aspect of creation is hardly going to be of any meaning for the humanistic purveyors of evolutionary dogma, but it certainly would be in place

as an apologetic to a Christian who has tried to synthesize Scripture and science. One might also explore the connection between creation and redemption (see Romans 8).

One other issue: Franz Pieper, in his *Prolegomena*, volume I of *Christian Dogmatics* comes down somewhat harshly on apologetics. (One must bear in mind that this is published just post WWI, though lectured in the decades prior). There one will find these selected remarks: “Christ therefore does not ask the Church to prove the Gospel to men; His orders are to proclaim.” “Christian theology does not attempt to prove its truth by rational or philosophical arguments.” “The man in whom the Law of God has wrought *contrition* has lost all interest in rational and philosophical proofs, because he is crushed and ‘knocked into a heap.’” “The best apology of the Christian religion is its proclamation.” And finally, in a more friendly spirit, Pieper says, “[The Christian apologist] must ever keep in mind that his real business is not to demonstrate the truth of the Christian religion to the unbeliever, but to uncover the insincerity of unbelief, for all who reject Christianity do so, consciously or unconsciously, because of their evil will and not because of their pretended ‘intellectual honesty’” (Vol. 1, 109, 110).

I invite my colleagues to comment on Pieper’s treatment, which would seem to be more or less “Lutherish.” Can you get Pieper off the hook? Or is there no need? [LSQ](#)

# Old Testament in Palm Sunday

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*The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,*

*"Fear not, daughter of Zion;  
behold, your king is coming,  
sitting on a donkey's colt!"*

*His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about Him and had been done to Him." (St. John 12:12–16)*

**W**HEN I TALK TO PASTORS, I ALWAYS LIKE TO ask about their seminary experience. What classes did you take? What did you like? What did you not like? What classes do you get the most from, and which did you feel were useless? The classes they liked or got the most from, these always vary. But I can tell you one class that is never on the "favorite" list, and that is counseling. It is ironic that counseling classes got added to seminary curricula in an effort to make seminary training more practical, but the trouble with counseling classes is that for better or worse they are the most theoretical of all the classes you take in seminary. Because no

matter what you might read in a book or learn from a professor, it bears little or no resemblance to what happens when people actually come to you. The biggest problem, as experienced pastors and counselors can tell you, is you have no context, and the stories you get from the people in your office are often meaningless without their context.

Context is an issue in the Palm Sunday account as well. The story of Jesus entering Jerusalem that day isn't meaningless without it, but the context does give a deeper understanding of the events and help answer some questions. Jesus had attended the Passover in Jerusalem at least two other times during His ministry. Why is He hailed as Messiah this time? Psalm 118 was a well-known Passover psalm. Why is the crowd misquoting it? Why palm branches? And perhaps most importantly, the Jewish leadership had been gunning for Jesus for a while now. Why do they choose this week to act? Context is also why Pilate, looking at the same set of facts, is not worried and in fact is inclined to let Jesus go, even though only four days ago the crowd had been singing "Blessed is the King of Israel!"

The donkey is a good place to start, because it is a part of the picture we (mostly) understand, and we sympathize why Pilate wouldn't. It is also the first part of the picture that sets everything else in motion, resulting in the event we call the "Triumphal Entry."<sup>1</sup> It isn't unusual to hear that Jesus enters on the donkey as a testament to His humility. But here we have something in common with Pilate, because while the donkey may be humble animal, riding one into Jerusalem at this time was not a show of humility. After all, if the goal was a humble entry, why not simply walk in? Wouldn't that be even more humble? But Jesus' goal here, in one sense, is just the opposite. Riding the donkey—and riding it coming from the Mount of Olives—was one of the ways Jesus wished to call attention to Himself and show He was the Messiah.

The first reason for riding the donkey was to fulfill Zechariah 9:9. All the Gospel writers draw attention to the donkey, the synoptics relate how Jesus sends the disciples to get the donkey for Him, and both St. Matthew and St. John point out that what Jesus is doing fulfills what was written by Zechariah:

גִּילִי מְאֹד בַּת־צִיּוֹן הָרִיעִי בֵּת יְרוּשָׁלַם הִנֵּה מֵלְכֶךָ יָבוֹא לָךְ צָדִיק  
וְנוֹשֵׁעַ הוּא עָנִי וְרֹכֵב עַל־חֲמֹר וְעַל־עִיר בֶּן־אֲתָנֹת:

<sup>1</sup> Had Pilate seen this as a "triumphal entry" he would have arrested and executed Jesus that day. Under Roman law it was illegal for anyone to ride in triumph into a city without express permission of the Roman Senate.

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

A fuller understanding of this passage gives quite a bit of context on its own. With very few exceptions this passage is understood as Messianic. Most translations do a good job with it, but there are a few things worth pointing out:

ךָּ is usually translated “to you,” but of course also has the idea of “for you,” i.e. “for your benefit.”

יָבֵט is usually translated “humble” or “gentle” (following the LXX which has *πραῦς*).<sup>2</sup> But that is not its primary meaning, and very likely not the meaning in Zechariah. What it usually means is something like “poor, needy, afflicted.” It also has the idea of suffering, especially someone who suffers affliction from those who are powerful.

It is likely that Jesus rides the donkey for another reason as well. You may recall that when David was getting closer to death his son Adonijah decided to stage a coup of sorts, claiming the throne for himself. He got the support of Joab (commander of David’s army), Abiathar (a priest), all his brothers, and all the royal officials of Judah. He even staged a coronation of sorts to which he invited all these people, and then lost the invitations for Nathan, Zadok (the high priest), and Solomon. When Nathan found out he conferred with Bathsheba, who went to David to report this news. David acted immediately.

“Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada.” So they came before the king. And the king said to them, “Take with you the servants of your lord and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon. And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet there anoint him king over Israel. Then blow the trumpet and say, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ You shall then come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne, for he shall be king in my place. And I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.” (1 Kings 1:32–35)

We don’t know why David had Solomon ride a mule rather than a horse. Perhaps it was to be a symbol of his humble obedience to his father contrasted with Adonijah’s pride. The important thing was

<sup>2</sup> Matthew quotes the LXX in referencing the passage, though it is interesting that John does not. He gives his own translation: Μὴ φοβοῦ, θυγάτηρ Σιών· ἰδοὺ ὁ βασιλεὺς σου ἔρχεται, καθήμενος ἐπὶ πῶλον ὄνου. You’ll notice he leaves out the word “humble” (*πραῦς*).



it identified the true king, the true Son of David. It was a sign to the peoples that David had chosen Solomon. The king's mule would have been housed in the king's stables, something only David would have had access to. Therefore, to trot Solomon out on the king's mule showed that David had personally selected him as his successor as opposed to Adonijah, who has proclaimed himself king but does not show any token of succession or intimacy with the king.<sup>3</sup> When the people saw Solomon seated on the mule of David and anointed by Zadok, they switched their allegiance from Adonijah to Solomon. Seeing Jesus on the donkey must have brought this story to mind. After all, they don't simply sing "Hosanna," but they adapt Psalm 118 to "Hosanna to the Son of David!" (St. Matthew 21:9) and "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord" (St. Luke 19:38).

Which brings us to the use of Psalm 118. It is the last of the Hallel psalms, the group of psalms that focus on God's acts of deliverance, especially delivering His people from slavery in Egypt. This becomes a springboard to speak of the deliverance God will bring through the work of the Messiah. The Hallel psalms had a special place in the worship of Israel: they were sung during the Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Tabernacles, and of course, Passover.<sup>4</sup> Psalm 118 was especially associated with Passover, and is also the most Messianic of the Hallel Psalms.<sup>5</sup> So it shouldn't surprise us that they begin to sing this psalm—and adapt it—at the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

It very likely that all of this also reminded them of the entry of the Maccabees into Jerusalem after their victory over the Seleucids in 160 BC. When Jerusalem was finally taken, "the Jews entered it with praise and palm branches, and with harps and cymbals and stringed instruments, and with hymns and songs, because a great enemy had been crushed and removed from Israel" (1 Maccabees 13:51). Palm branches will show up again in 2 Maccabees 7 with the cleansing of the Temple: "carrying ivy-wreathed wands and beautiful branches and also fronds of palm, they offered hymns of thanksgiving to him who had given success

<sup>3</sup> In 1 Kings 2 Adonijah will try to establish such a connection by asking for one of David's concubines as his wife. This will not work out so well for him.

<sup>4</sup> They were also sung during Hanukkah, the origin of which is found in the Maccabean cleansing of the temple, something we're just about to touch on.

<sup>5</sup> Psalm 118 will show up again on Tuesday of Holy Week when Jesus quotes it to the Scribes and Pharisees after telling the Parable of the Tenants. "He looked directly at them and said, "What then is this that is written: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone"? Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him" (St. Luke 20:17-18). Luke tells us this made them so mad they wanted to arrest Him that very hour.

to the purifying of His own holy place” (2 Maccabees 7:10). Because of these events, palm branches became a national symbol of Israel.<sup>6</sup> This is why they begin to wave them and put them on the road. It isn't because the palm branches happen to be convenient and they are looking for anything they can use; the crowd is making a statement. By riding the donkey into Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives Jesus had all but hung a sign around His neck that said “I Am The Messiah.” The people recognize the symbolism of Jesus riding a donkey into Jerusalem during the week of Passover. They see the fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, and the symbolism of riding a donkey because He the true “son of David” and affirm it by taking up their part. They begin to welcome Him as Messiah, singing Psalm 118, emphasizing the “Hosanna!...Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the LORD!” (Psalm 118:25 & 26) and as we noted, adding in the “Son of David” for good measure.<sup>7</sup>

And in the end, it is this which really upsets the Jewish leadership, makes them indignant, because they get it too. This is why “when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’ they were indignant, and they said to Him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” (St. Matthew 21:15-16). They recognize that Jesus is clearly, openly identifying Himself as the Messiah, and worse, the people are accepting it.

So obvious is all of this to them that they choose this time to plot against Jesus, and suffering from their own blindness it doesn't even cross their minds that none of this would be obvious to Pilate. They arrange for Jesus' arrest Thursday evening with plans to have Him before Pilate first thing in the morning, something they certainly would not have done if they weren't sure they could get a death sentence from Pilate. Having gotten the formalities of a religious trial out of the way, they march Him over to Pilate and give their rehearsed speech which now had the (literal) *coup de grâce* at the end: “We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that

<sup>6</sup> There is another interesting (possible) Maccabean connection. John finishes up his very short Palm Sunday account with the Pharisees saying, “Look, the whole world has gone after Him” (St. John 12:19). The next verse tells us, “Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks.” The Maccabean conflict had been against Greek Selucids.

<sup>7</sup> Another factor in all of this is to what extent the prophecy of the 70 weeks in Daniel plays in all of this. The people were certainly aware of this section of Daniel, and if each week is to represent a year, the end of the 70 weeks would be right about the time of Jesus' ministry. This would also have contributed to their fervor and excitement, but all that is worth its own paper.

He himself is Christ, a king” (St. Luke 23:2). The conversation following this is an example of two parties talking past each other because each are working within a different context: the Jews, amazed it isn’t obvious to Pilate that Jesus is calling Himself a king, and Pilate wondering what the big deal is and why the Jews are so worked up about this.

As was said before, the context of the Palm Sunday events is an issue, but it is more of an internal one than external. In other words, the story isn’t meaningless without it; the context simply gives a better understanding of the story. It is also another example of how our reading of the Old Testament informs our reading of the New. [LSQ](#)

# Why Was the Gospel a “Stumbling Block to Jews and Foolishness to Gentiles”?

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**I**N HIS FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS, PAUL addresses a plethora of topics, many of which needed attention because of particular problems in the church at Corinth. Thus, there are many practical applications from this epistle to be made even today. Yet before application of truth from God can be made, it was necessary for Paul to focus on what lay at the heart of the Christian message: “Christ crucified” (1 Corinthians 1:23). As will be seen, this message is not simply tantamount to the Gospel; it *is* the Gospel.

Answering the question at hand will take place in three parts. First, various interpretations of 1 Corinthians 1:23 and pertinent surrounding material will be summarized. Second, the details and implications of 1:23 will be examined. Third, a brief evaluation of the initial interpretations will be offered.

## Summary of Various Interpretations

The question addressed in this paper makes the logical assumption that τὸ εὐαγγέλιον and Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον are interchangeable. That this is a correct understanding is borne out by Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον being the content of what Paul and his co-laborers proclaimed (κηρύσσομεν).<sup>1</sup> That is, it is impossible to separate the act of proclamation from the content

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, “The Significance of Recent Research on 1 Corinthians for Hermeneutical Appropriation of this Epistle Today,” *Neotestamentica* 40, no. 2 (January 2006): 329.

of the proclamation.<sup>2</sup> Paul has already made it clear that proclaiming the cross of Christ is the essence of his ministry (1:17) and that this message has power (1:18). The specific verse under consideration (1:23) bears this out in a remarkable fashion.

This powerful message is, according to Gordon Fee, a “contradiction in terms.” Comparing it to “fried ice,” he states, “One may have a Messiah, or one may have a crucifixion; but one may not have both—at least not from the perspective of merely human understanding.”<sup>3</sup> In similar fashion but taking a different tack, Thiselton recommends that because Χριστόν is anarthrous, a translation of “a Christ crucified” or “a crucified Christ” is preferred to “Christ crucified.” According to his recommended translation, the juxtaposition of “Christ”—regarding which the Jews were expecting a conquering hero—and “crucified”—showing the polar opposite of might and power—is brought more to the fore.<sup>4</sup> As Martin Hengel states, “To assert that God himself accepted death in the form of a crucified Jewish manual worker from Galilee in order to break the power of death and bring salvation to all men could only seem folly and madness to men of ancient times.”<sup>5</sup> Specifically, as Craig Blomberg points out, the Jews would have thought that God cursed Jesus for some sin he committed (Deuteronomy 21:23), and the Greeks would have found the ideas of a suffering God and being able to achieve salvation apart from human speculation ludicrous.<sup>6</sup> Craig Keener suggests that another aspect of how foolish preaching Christ crucified would have been considered is that to have advocated one who had been accused of treason and then executed might have been quite dangerous.<sup>7</sup>

In keeping with the order he established in the previous verse (1:22), Paul first addresses what, precisely, the proclamation of Χριστόν

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<sup>2</sup> Gregory J. Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 68–69.

<sup>3</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 75.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony J. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 170–171. See also Lockwood, 70.

<sup>5</sup> Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 89.

<sup>6</sup> Craig L. Blomberg, *1 Corinthians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 34. Lockwood also mentions that “the early Christian apologists had to devote considerable attention to why Israel’s Messiah had to be crucified” (70).

<sup>7</sup> Craig S. Keener, *1–2 Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 29.

ἑσταυρωμένον means to the Jews. To state that “Christ crucified” is a σκάνδαλον to the Jews assuredly connotes a negative response on the Jews’ part. Fee maintains that σκάνδαλον should be understood as “something that offends to the point of opposition.”<sup>8</sup> Ben Witherington III likewise believes that to translate σκάνδαλον as something over which someone would trip, such as a “stumbling block,” is to miss the point of its offensive nature.<sup>9</sup> Thiselton prefers the translation of “an affront.”<sup>10</sup> He argues that even though σκάνδαλον is used in the LXX to translate primarily מוקש and מכשול, which pertain to “catching in a snare” or “trap,” these ideas do not fit well in the context of 1:23. Thus he believes that “an affront seems to capture the mood and nuance most closely.”<sup>11</sup> However, Gustav Stählin propounds a stronger meaning: he maintains that the meaning of σκάνδαλον in the New Testament can parallel that of the Old Testament usage of “the cause of both transgression and destruction...for a fall in faith is a fall in the absolute sense.”<sup>12</sup>

What is Χριστὸν ἑσταυρωμένον to the Gentiles? Paul writes ἔθνεσιν δὲ μωρίαν. “Foolishness” here stands in stark contrast to “wisdom,” a contrast which Paul began explicating in 1:18. Hans Conzelmann notes that μωρία should not be understood simply as a misunderstanding, as if the Gentiles did not perceive the content of Christian preaching.<sup>13</sup> To the non-Christian in New Testament times, the idea of following the teachings of, much less worshipping, a convicted and executed criminal was ridiculous. An example of ancient graffiti in Rome shows a person worshipping a crucified figure whose head was that of an ass. The inscription accompanying the picture reads, “Alexamenos worships [his] god.”<sup>14</sup> Fee makes reference to the estimations of Tacitus and Pliny the Younger, the former referring to a message of a crucified savior being “pernicious superstition” and the latter calling it “a perverse,

<sup>8</sup> Fee, 75n38.

<sup>9</sup> Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 109.

<sup>10</sup> Thiselton, *Significance*, 327.

<sup>11</sup> Thiselton, *First Epistle*, 171 (emphasis in original).

<sup>12</sup> Gustav Stählin, “σκάνδαλον κτλ,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 7, ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, trans. G. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 345.

<sup>13</sup> Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1988), 42n18.

<sup>14</sup> Arthur Just, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1996), 397.

extravagant superstition.”<sup>15</sup> Lockwood cites Lucian referring to Jesus as “that gibbeted sophist.”<sup>16</sup> The word that Paul uses here for “foolishness,” according to Hengel, “does not denote either a purely intellectual defect nor a lack of transcendental wisdom. Something more is involved...” which he concludes is “madness.”<sup>17</sup> Lawrence Welborn approaches an understanding of *μωρία* in a different manner. He makes the case that the Greek reader in Paul’s day would have understood *μωρία* as the designation for “the attitude and behavior of a particular social type: the lower class buffoon. The ‘foolishness’ of this social type consisted in a weakness or deficiency of intellect, often coupled with a physical grotesqueness.”<sup>18</sup> Even so, the Gentile unbeliever would have had a dim view of the message Paul and his associates proclaimed.

### A Closer Look at 1 Corinthians 1:23

Paul begins 1:23 with the emphatic use of the first person plural personal pronoun, *ἡμεῖς*. This draws a sharp distinction between what the Jews demand (signs) and what the Greeks seek (wisdom). Neither of these highly sought-after prizes compares to what Paul and the church put forth as the essence of their proclamation: *As opposed to what the Jews and Greeks pursue and think is vital, WE preach...* This contrast is heightened slightly, of course, with the adversative use of *δέ*.

The word Paul uses to describe the work he and other preachers of the gospel carry out is *κηρύσσω*. This word connotes a message being given in a very public manner—BDAG gives the meaning here as “proclaim aloud” in the context of making public declarations.<sup>19</sup> This was not a message about which Paul and those others who preached it were ashamed (cf. Romans 1:16). At the same time, the emphasis here is not so much on *how* the preaching was carried out, but on the *content* of what was preached. Such a thought corresponds to Paul’s use of *κήρυγμα*

<sup>15</sup> Fee, 76n41.

<sup>16</sup> Lockwood, 71.

<sup>17</sup> Hengel, 1.

<sup>18</sup> Lawrence L. Welborn, “*Μωρός γένεσθω*: Paul’s Appropriation of the Role of the Fool in 1 Corinthians 1–4,” *Biblical Interpretation* 10, no. 4 (2002): 424. Welborn also cites the use of the word *crux* as a taunt in comedies of the day, adding to the evidence that anyone preaching such a “foolish” message would have been derided along with his message (430n67).

<sup>19</sup> Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick W. Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. 2.

in 1:21.<sup>20</sup> It also fits well with Paul’s stated purpose of his apostleship: to preach the gospel (1:17).<sup>21</sup> The present tense of *κηρύσσομεν* carries with it an imperfective aspect, indicating that proclaiming this message was the continuing business of Paul and the others. That is, they did not necessarily anticipate an end point to their work, nor were they satisfied with having preached their message only in one or two places and then ceasing. Proclaiming the good news of God’s salvation through Christ was simply what they did; it was a vital and integral part of their very identity. Also interesting to note regarding Paul’s use of *κηρύσσομεν* is that this is the first time in 1 Corinthians that he makes use of a first person plural verb. While in some of his epistles Paul makes frequent use of the first person plural, indicating in some cases perhaps those who assisted in the actual writing of the letters (e.g. 1 & 2 Thessalonians), such is not common in 1 Corinthians.<sup>22</sup> It is more likely that Paul’s use of the first person plural in 1:23 indicates the universal nature of his preaching, i.e. the content of the message he proclaimed does not differ in substance from what was proclaimed throughout the apostolic church (cf. Galatians 2:6–9).<sup>23</sup>

Precisely what did not differ in Paul’s preaching compared to his Christian contemporaries was the content of his message, namely *Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον*. This phrase expresses neatly Paul’s descriptive phrase in 1:18: *ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ*. In this latter verse, how would *λόγος* best be translated? Most standard translations render it with “word” (e.g. ESV, NASB, RSV) or “message” (e.g. NIV, NKJ, GWN, CSB), both of which are sufficient expressions. Lockwood suggests that Martin Luther’s differentiation between “the theology of glory” and “the theology of the cross” might assist in understanding Paul’s expression.<sup>24</sup> In Thesis 21 of his Heidelberg Disputation, Luther states, “God can be found only in suffering and the cross. ... It is impossible for a person a person not to be puffed up by his good works unless he has first been deflated and destroyed by suffering and evil until he knows that he is

<sup>20</sup> Gerhard Friedrich states, “It is worth considering whether the reference in 1 C. 1:21 might not be to the act, namely, that it pleased God through something foolish, i.e., human preaching, to save men. But the context...favours the sense of content in v. 21.” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 3, ed. G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, trans. G. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 716n15.

<sup>21</sup> Fred B. Craddock, “Preaching to Corinthians,” *Interpretation* 44, no. 2 (April 1990): 167. Granted, Paul employs *εὐαγγελίζω* in 1:17 to describe his designated work, but the emphasis remains on the content of his preaching versus the act.

<sup>22</sup> Fee, 30.

<sup>23</sup> Lockwood, 69n39.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.



worthless and that his works are not his but God's."<sup>25</sup> Thus, ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ summarizes nicely what Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον states more explicitly. With this understanding it is also more apparent why “the word of the cross” would be “foolishness” to those who reject it (1:18).

Whether or not the anarthrous Χριστὸν should be viewed as “a Christ”<sup>26</sup> or as a title (almost akin to a proper name) might depend on the perspective of the intended recipients of the message. The non-Christian might hear “a crucified Christ” and understand that to mean “a crucified person who claimed to be a savior.” The Christian might hear “Christ crucified” and thus naturally think of their one and only Savior, Christ Jesus, who allowed himself to be sacrificed for their sake. Either way, the fact that Christ was ἐσταυρωμένον drew the attention of his letter’s recipients back to Paul’s primary emphasis. The perfect tense of this participle stresses that the action of Christ’s crucifixion lay in the past but the results of it continue in the present. There is twofold significance of these continuing results: (1) the effect of the crucifixion of Christ was to bring about salvation—in 1:18 Paul states that the “word of the cross... to us who are *being saved*... is the power of God” (emphasis added); and (2) the resurrected Christ remains the crucified Christ as he himself powerfully demonstrated in John 20:24–29.<sup>27</sup> In addition, ἐσταυρωμένον can be classified as an attributive participle, specifying an attribute of Χριστός. By using the participle in this way, Paul in essence is telling the reader to forget everything else they know about Christ for the moment and to concentrate on this key characteristic of him. In his present line of argument, this particular fact about Christ, that he is the crucified one, is Paul’s focus.

What was the hearers’ reaction to this startling message of Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον? In keeping with the bifurcation he presents in 1:22, Paul explains how both the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles react to the content of his preaching. Paul describes the Ἰουδαῖοι in this section (1:22–24) as people who σημεῖα αἰτοῦσιν (1:22). Such a description is in keeping with the history of the Jews, since they had witnessed so many signs from God through the millennia (such as during their Exodus) and they had made demands of Jesus to produce signs to substantiate his claim to be their Messiah (Matthew 12:38; 16:1; John 2:23; 6:30).<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Martin Luther, “The Heidelberg Disputation,” *Luther’s Works*, vol. 31, *Career of the Reformer*, ed. Harold J. Grimm (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957), 53.

<sup>26</sup> See Thiselton above.

<sup>27</sup> Lockwood, 70. Cf. also Revelation 5:6, 12; 13:8 where Jesus is described as “the Lamb who was slain.”

<sup>28</sup> Lockwood, 69.

A related occurrence that is slightly more than ironic is included in Matthew’s account of Jesus’ crucifixion. Matthew records, “And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, ‘You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross’” (27:39–40; ESV). Had Jesus accommodated their demand, they ostensibly would have accorded him the status of their Messiah. Yet had Jesus succumbed to their wishes, he would no longer have been fulfilling what the Jews’ own Scripture prophesied he must do to be their Messiah. Thus the demand of signs from Jesus was a powerful testimony of the Jews’ stubborn unbelief and refusal to recognize Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies regarding the Messiah.

Since the Jews refused to believe in the crucified Jesus as their long-awaited Messiah he became for them a *σκάνδαλον*. This term should most properly be understood in a relatively strong sense; even “stumbling block” as a translation seems to be somewhat weak. Consider that Paul is here describing unbelieving Jews, those of God’s original chosen people who saw in the crucified Jesus only a defeated pretender. What was God’s judgment on people of such unbelief? Since in this context Paul is describing those who do not believe in Jesus as their Savior, a consideration of what Paul states in 1:18 regarding the fate of those who think “the word of the cross is foolishness” is necessary. These unbelievers are described as *τοῖς... ἀπολλυμένοις*. An important consideration here is whether this participle should be translated in the middle or passive voice since either is possible according to its form. In the middle voice the translation would be “those who are perishing,” a translation followed by most modern translations. However, if the word is translated as a passive, it would be best rendered “those who are being destroyed.” Such a translation parallels nicely with *τοῖς... σωζομένοις*, which is assuredly passive<sup>29</sup> and emphasizes that there is nothing being done by those being saved to be saved. That is, God is the agent behind this passive. Thus it would seem that a translation for *σκάνδαλον* stronger than “stumbling block” or something similar is warranted. Stählin’s recommendation for a meaning that would capture “the cause of both transgression and destruction...for a fall in faith is a fall in the absolute sense” (see above) might be encapsulated sufficiently in “deathtrap.”<sup>30</sup> A “crucified Messiah” would have caused more than a mere visceral

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 61. Lockwood also cites as support Paul’s quotation in 1:19 where God is definitely the agent of destruction.

<sup>30</sup> R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of I and II Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963), 66.

reaction in the unbelieving Jew so as to make him upset. The rejection of the crucified Jesus has eternal and thus quite grave consequences.

Paul's designation of the other group that does not believe in Jesus switches from "Ἕλληνες in 1:22 to ἔθνη in 1:23. In 1:22, Paul points out that the Greeks especially were the ones who σοφίαν ζητοῦσιν. As the Greek historian Herodotus stated concerning them, "All Greeks were zealous for every kind of learning."<sup>31</sup> To be more specific, in this context Paul implies that the Greeks were especially zealous to have more wisdom about God. Such a thought parallels nicely with the fact that the signs the Jews demanded (1:22) were for proof of Jesus' divinity.<sup>32</sup> Paul had witnessed this zealous desire for learning firsthand when he preached to those gathered on the Areopagus in Athens: "For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean" (Acts 17:20; ESV).<sup>33</sup> However, it was not just the wisdom-seeking Greeks that found Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον to be preposterous. Fee states that Paul expands this group to include all non-Jews so that especially the Romans and those influenced by them (anyone in the Roman Empire) would be included.<sup>34</sup> Fee also offers the following observation:

It is hard for those in the christianized West, where the cross for almost nineteen centuries has been the primary symbol of the faith, to appreciate how utterly mad the message of a God who got himself crucified by his enemies must have seemed to the first-century Greek or Roman. But it is precisely the depth of this scandal and folly that we *must* appreciate if we are to understand both why the Corinthians were moving away from it toward wisdom and why it was well over a century before the cross appears among Christians as a symbol of their faith.<sup>35</sup>

In spite of how "utterly mad" this message would have seemed to the Gentiles at that time, it was quite necessary for Paul to use the

<sup>31</sup> Herodotus, *History*, vol. 4, trans. A.D. Godley, Loeb Classical Library (London: W. Heinemann, 1920), 277.

<sup>32</sup> Peter Lampe, "Theological Wisdom and 'The Word About the Cross': The Rhetorical Scheme in 1 Corinthians 1-4," *Interpretation* 44, no. 2 (April 1990): 120.

<sup>33</sup> Gordon H. Clark, "Wisdom in First Corinthians," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 15, no. 4 (Fall 1972): 198.

<sup>34</sup> Fee, 76n40. Lenski states that the Greeks would have been representative of all Gentiles because they were considered to be the upper class (67). Conzelmann opines that Paul's switch to "Gentiles" in this verse is indicative of the later designation by the Greeks of all foreigners as "pagans," or τὰ ἔθνη (47, including fn 78).

<sup>35</sup> Fee, 76.

fact of Jesus’ crucifixion as a historical anchor for his message. That is, Χριστὸς ἐσταυρωμένος was not simply a powerful symbol of God’s love for mankind; it was a concrete and necessary expression of God’s action in history to demonstrate the depth and greatness of his love and mercy.<sup>36</sup> As with the Jews, the Gentiles’ reaction to “Christ crucified” ensured the same fate: eternal condemnation. While Paul might appear to use a softer term to describe the Gentiles’ reaction than he does for the Jews’ reaction (“foolishness” vs. “deathtrap”), to consider this “message of the cross” (1:18) as utter folly is nothing short of a wholesale rejection of God and his grace.

The question at hand is, “Why was the Gospel a ‘stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles?’” It might be enough to respond with the rejoinder, “There were many in both groups that rejected Jesus and the salvation he offered.” But in this section of 1:18–25, Paul presents a strong case that the reason is the incredible superiority of God’s wisdom versus that of sinful humankind. There is absolutely no comparison between the two. It would have been impossible for any human being to concoct a plan for saving the entire world from eternal death and destruction that included a God-man dying on a cross. God’s wisdom is so much higher and comprehensive than that of humankind that God will destroy those who think themselves wise in their own right (1:19). Anyone that considers themselves wise, or whom the world considers wise, are not even in the same arena as the all-wise God (1:20). “The Christian theology of the Corinthians, being so enthusiastic and so proud of possessing wisdom about God, stands on the same level as the wisdom of the rest of the world. Both are driven *ad absurdum* by the word about the cross. Both are equally godless.”<sup>37</sup> Even though those in the world consider themselves to possess great wisdom, God’s wisdom conceived of and carried out a plan that was so wise as to defy sinful human logic. This plan included the proclamation of what God had accomplished, a proclamation which would produce salvation for those who would not reject it (1:21). But to those who could not suppress their own supposed wisdom and allowed other pursuits to interfere, such as seeking signs and wisdom, the message of salvation still was announced, causing in these Jewish and Gentile rejecters consternation and thus condemnation (1:22–23). However, not everyone, not every Jew nor Greek in particular, considered the message of “a crucified Christ” to

<sup>36</sup> V.C. Pfitzner, “The Theology of the Cross – 1 Corinthians 1–4,” *Lutheran Theological Journal* 5, no. 1 (May 1971): 27.

<sup>37</sup> Lampe, 125.

be worthy of rejection. To them, this message powerfully demonstrated God's power and wisdom as personified in that same Christ (1:24). Those who accepted "a crucified Christ" as God's wisdom realized that what looks to be foolish in the eyes of the world ("the foolish *thing* of God") is pure wisdom and infinitely supersedes that of humankind. So also, what appeared to be an act of weakness (the supposed Savior being executed on a cross) was a remarkable and unmatched feat compared to anything humankind could accomplish (1:25).

Ralph Terry's analysis of the structure of 1 Corinthians provides substantiation for this strong emphasis on God's wisdom. Terry states that "wisdom" is one of four themes of the letter, a theme which is explicated in 1:1–4:17. Within these chapters is a pattern represented by ABA' followed by CDC'.

### 1. Church division 1:10–4:17

A Division 1:10–17

B Wisdom 1:18–2:16

A' Division 3:1–4

C Servanthood 3:5–15

D Wisdom and division 3:16–23

C' Servanthood 4:1–17

In both sections B (1:18–2:16) and D (3:16–23), the center of each chiasm, wisdom is Paul's focus.<sup>38</sup> Along with Paul's discourse on the resurrection in chapter 15, this initial discourse concentrating on the wisdom of the cross "provides a de facto theological framework for everything in between."<sup>39</sup>

## Conclusion

Paul addresses the fact that both Jew and Gentile/Greek were desirous of hearing τὸ εὐαγγέλιον in the sense that they wanted to hear ultimate "good news" about their existence. They wanted to hear a message of hope for this life and for the next. But when Paul and other Christian preachers proclaimed Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον, neither the Jews nor Greeks could in any way accept that as εὐαγγέλιον. Fee is correct in his assessment of such a message as an oxymoron for both Jew and Greek: "*Messiah* meant power, splendor, triumph; *crucifixion* meant

<sup>38</sup> Ralph Bruce Terry, "Pattern of Discourse Structure in I Corinthians," *Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics* 7, no. 4 (1996): 16.

<sup>39</sup> Victor Paul Furnish, "Paul and the Corinthians: The Letters, The Challenges of Ministry, The Gospel," *Interpretation* 52, no. 3 (July 1998): 237.

weakness, humiliation, defeat. Little wonder that both Jew and Greek were scandalized by the Christian message.”<sup>40</sup> Thiselton’s preference for translating Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον as “a Christ crucified” or “a crucified Christ” is also helpful in making the application of what Paul states as the content of his proclamation more general, since even the Greeks would not have been able to tolerate the idea of a crucified “savior-figure.” Hengel’s observation of how “men of ancient times” would have viewed Jesus’ death is illuminating in that he focuses on the supposed *atonement* nature of Christ’s crucifixion; to regard a crucified criminal as a universal Savior is one thing, but to imagine that God would view such a death as having any substitutionary value for all humankind is to push past the boundaries of likelihood even further. Whether or not all Jews would have seen Jesus’ crucifixion as an indication of God’s curse as Blomberg points out is perhaps questionable, but possible support for such a view is seen in Paul’s application of Deuteronomy 21:23 to Jesus in Galatians 3:13. The reason Blomberg’s application might be questionable is that this Old Testament reference does not refer to a sinner being killed on a “tree,” but to him being hanged on a tree after being killed. Paul’s application of this verse to Jesus is inspired by the Holy Spirit, on the other hand.

The question of how best to translate and/or understand σκάνδαλον in 1:23 is likely to be a continued subject of debate. Stählin’s argument for an understanding of the word that connotes an absolute fall (from faith) is preferable to weaker terminology, such as “something that offends” (Fee), something over which one would trip (Witherington), or “affront” (Thiselton). In this context of the parallels Paul establishes in this section of 1 Corinthians, the encountering of a σκάνδαλον must imply a terrible outcome, since those who do so are “being destroyed” (1:18) by God. It is possible, however, that a less-pointed term for σκάνδαλον is preferred in part to balance with μωρίαν in the same verse.

Regarding μωρία in this section of 1 Corinthians, Conzelmann is correct in cautioning against considering it to be akin to confusion. The Greeks/Gentiles who encountered the message of Χριστὸν ἐσταυρωμένον understood intellectually what was presented to them; they simply were adamant in their opinion that the message was “madness” as Hengel declared. As with σκάνδαλον, what is vital to draw from these words of Paul is the result of one’s estimation of the “word of the cross” as either a deathtrap or foolishness: eternal destruction.

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<sup>40</sup> Fee, 75.

Thus, one way in which the question being considered—“Why was the Gospel a ‘stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles’”—can be answered could be condensed into a single word: unbelief. The sinful, human mind is not predisposed to listen to the message of Christ Jesus with any hint of openness. As Paul says in Romans 8:7, “The way of thinking of the flesh is enmity toward God, for to the law of God it does not subordinate itself, for it is not able....” The sinful mind on its own has nothing but hatred for God and has no reason to listen to a nonsensical message ostensibly from him. For the Jews, who were looking forward to the coming of a grand and glorious savior-king, Χριστὸς ἑσταυρωμένος was a letdown and proof of Jesus being an impostor. For the Gentiles, any “God” who would allow himself to be killed by his opponents was worth only their derision. Only those Jews and Gentiles whose hard hearts were shattered by God’s Word (Jeremiah 23:29), who were called to faith (1:24), were and are counted among those being saved (1:18). God’s wisdom is indeed superior to humankind’s. [LSQ](#)

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# The Christian Is a Citizen in Two Kingdoms: An Overview of Church & State

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I pledge Allegiance to the flag  
of the United States of America  
and to the Republic for which it stands,  
one nation under God, indivisible,  
with Liberty and Justice for all.

**M**ANY CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES, YOUNG and old alike, know the Pledge of Allegiance by heart. The pledge that many of us may have learned as young students in school is certainly not a clear statement of truth regarding the one true God. However, the words of the pledge, including the 1954 addition of “under God,” serve a useful purpose in reminding all who hear or recite it that there is a God. Some have objected to the government making such a religious statement and allowing its use in public settings. This is just one of several places in society where the two kingdoms—church and state—cause discussion and in some cases division. What does God say about these two institutions, church and state? Who instituted them? What is the purpose of each kingdom? How does each kingdom operate? What responsibilities do Christians have in each of these kingdoms? These are important questions for the church to answer on the authority of God’s Word and for the instruction of God’s people.

Christians are members of both kingdoms—the kingdom of the right and the kingdom of the left; the kingdom of grace and the

kingdom of power. In the booklet entitled *We Believe, Teach, and Confess* (produced in 1992 by the ELS Doctrine Committee), paragraph #11 under the heading, “Church and State,” reads:

We confess that God has assigned certain responsibilities to the Church and certain responsibilities to the State, which do not conflict with each other. The Church and the State are each to operate within their own sphere of responsibility, using only those means which God has entrusted to each to carry out their God-given tasks.<sup>1</sup>

This statement is not intended as a thorough presentation of the beliefs and practices of our synod. However, the statement does provide information for those interested in knowing the scriptural and confessional position of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod on the subject of the two kingdoms.

### **God’s Word Concerning the Two Kingdoms**

The passages often cited from Scripture that teach the doctrine of the two kingdoms include the following:

Matthew 22:21—Then he [Jesus] said to them, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”<sup>2</sup>

John 18:36—My kingdom is not of this world.

Romans 13:1–2—Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

1 Peter 2:13–14—Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.

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<sup>1</sup> *We Believe, Teach, and Confess*, Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 12.

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the NIV84.

Acts 5:29—We must obey God rather than men!

In the Lutheran Confessions, the doctrine of Church and State is addressed in the writings of the *Augsburg Confession*, the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, and others. The passages of Scripture which lay the framework of this doctrine are summarized in the Confessions. Evidence that Christians live and operate in both kingdoms is heard in these words of Melancthon written in the *Apology, Article XVI*:

... a Christian might legitimately hold public office, render verdicts according to imperial or other established laws, prescribe legal punishments, engage in just wars ... take an oath when the government requires it. ... Lawful civil ordinances are God's good creatures and divine ordinances in which a Christian may safely take part.<sup>3</sup>

The two kingdoms are established by God and, while serving in different ways, are to be honored to his glory and his honor. Lutheran theologians have written clearly to distinguish between the kingdom of Christ and political kingdoms. Melancthon summarizes:

Christ's kingdom is spiritual; it is the knowledge of God in the heart, the fear of God and faith, the beginning of eternal righteousness and eternal life. At the same time it lets us make outward use of the legitimate political ordinances of the nation in which we live, just as it lets us make use of medicine or architecture, food or drink or air.<sup>4</sup>

Holy Scripture doesn't produce any new laws for governments established in the world in which we live. It simply commands us to obey the laws that have been passed. Whether the laws were formed by Christians or unbelievers does not determine whether or not we obey those laws. St. Paul's words in Romans 13 grant us no wiggle room: "The authorities that exist have been established by God" (Rom 13:1).

### The Establishment of the Kingdoms

The importance of the doctrine of the two kingdoms is taught in God's Word. In Holy Scripture, we learn that God has established both with distinct purposes as reflected in common terms used for the

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<sup>3</sup> Theodore G. Tappert, ed., "Apology of the Augsburg Confession," Article XVI, *The Book of Concord*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), para. 1, 222.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 2.

two kingdoms—kingdom of *grace* and kingdom of *power*. As for the establishment of the kingdom of power, Martin Luther writes, “First, we must provide a sound basis for the civil law and sword so no one will doubt that it is in the world by God’s will and ordinance.”<sup>5</sup> God’s institution of governmental authority is found in many places in Scripture. Luther cites two sections in particular—in Romans 13:1–2, St. Paul buttons down the fact that everyone is to obey those who are placed in positions of government because it is God who has established those positions of authority. Anyone who decides to go against the government is disobeying God. The result of such rebellion will bring judgment from the civil authorities and from God himself.

The other Scripture section referenced by Luther in proving that the kingdom of power is established by God is 1 Peter 2:13–14. St. Peter confirms that we are to place ourselves under government authority instituted by men for the Lord’s sake. Regardless of the position of the government officials or their religious leanings (or lack thereof), we are to obey them. Presidents, senators, governors, mayors, etc. are placed in authority to be obeyed by the citizens under their rule. God’s purpose in establishing the government of the left is to punish wrong doers and commend the people who are law-abiding.

Martin Luther refers to the first murder committed in the history of the world as proof that the kingdom of power has been around a long time,

The law of this temporal sword existed from the beginning of the world. For when Cain slew his brother Abel, he was in such great terror of being killed in turn that God even placed a special prohibition on it and suspended the sword for his sake, so that no one was to slay him [Gen. 4:14–15]. He would not have had this fear if he had not seen and heard from Adam that murderers are to be slain.<sup>6</sup>

Even with fear of punishment for murder, such crimes didn’t end with Cain’s cold-blooded action. The world corrupted by sin continues to plunge men into ruin and destruction. Already in the days of Noah, the earth was full of violence and chaos was rampant. Open disobedience to the holy God wreaked havoc on society. Order needed to be restored in the evil world to protect the citizens therein. God did not let

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<sup>5</sup> Martin Luther, *The Christian in Society II*, vol. 45, *Luther’s Works* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1962), 85.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

the sinful world consume itself; instead, he established law and order to control the outward behavior of man.

God established his kingdom of grace for the eternal good of mankind. As is the case with the kingdom of the left, the kingdom of the right is not man's invention evolving out of the needs of society. Yet, God's Church began out of the need of all mankind that erupted in the Garden of Eden with the fall of man into sin. Man's disobedience of the holy God wrecked the perfect world that God designed by his almighty Word. Before the dust had a chance to settle after man's great fall in Eden, God's love and mercy is proclaimed to meet the need that sin has now caused. In Genesis 3:15, God sets the record clear with Satan in the words of the first Gospel promise: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

The first Gospel promise didn't eliminate sin from the landscape of God's perfect world gone bad. Daniel Deutschlander writes,

The promise of the Savior created faith in Adam and Eve. The promise, however, did not put an end to sin. It is perfectly clear by the end of Genesis 4 that sin was not going to go away. It is equally clear that the promise of the Savior was not going to go away either.

The continuing presence of both sin and God's gracious promise made a need obvious. The faithful children of Adam needed and wanted to worship, to offer sacrifice. Sin needed to be addressed by God's Word of law and gospel.<sup>7</sup>

As Genesis 4 closes, God records that his church was at work with believers publicly confessing the name of the Lord God. God's kingdom of grace was at work in the world corrupted by sin and evil. The outward order now needed in a world affected by evil would mean nothing in the end if there were no remedy for the sin that had blackened the hearts of people. Both kingdoms were established by God because of need: need for order to direct outward civic behavior and need for order in the heart of man now inclined only to do that which is evil. The two kingdoms established by God are both sorely needed because of sin. Though God established them for different purposes, as we shall note in the next section, they were established to work together. The Gospel of Christ Jesus is the power of God for the salvation of all who believe

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<sup>7</sup> Daniel Deutschlander, *Civil Government: God's Other Kingdom* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1998), 14.

it (Romans 1:16). Redeemed, restored, and forgiven—blessings received in the kingdom of the church—lead Christian hearts in thanks to serve God in the kingdom of the state.

Melanchthon defined the differences between the two kingdoms, but with an emphasis on how they are connected:

On this account our teachers have been compelled, for the sake of comforting consciences, to point out the difference between spiritual and temporal power, sword, and authority, and they have taught that because of God's command both authorities and powers are to be honored and esteemed with all reverence as the two highest gifts of God on earth.<sup>8</sup>

God's establishment of both kingdoms brings us to examine the purpose of each kingdom as it relates to the Christian in the world.

### The Purpose of the Kingdoms

In the United States we often hear the expression “separation of church and state.” This terminology is not used within Scripture nor is it a phrase found in the Constitution of the United States. The principle of the separation of church and state is addressed in the Bill of Rights.<sup>9</sup> The two kingdoms are certainly separate in the sense that they are distinguished from each other. However, these two kingdoms are not on two different planets with nothing in common. The opening statement of the *Augsburg Confession*, Article XVI, reads as follows:

It is taught among us that all government in the world and all established rule and laws were established and ordained by God for the sake of good order, and that Christians may without sin occupy civil offices or serve as princes, judges, render decisions and pass sentence according to imperial and other existing laws, punish evildoers with the sword, engage in just wars, serve as soldiers, buy and sell, take required oaths, possess property, be married, etc.<sup>10</sup>

Christians live in both kingdoms and participate in both on a daily basis. It is also true that God has established both kingdoms

<sup>8</sup> Tappert, “Augsburg Confession” Article XXVIII, *Power of Bishops*, para. 4, 81.

<sup>9</sup> Erling Teigen, “Two Kingdoms: Simul iustus et peccator: Depoliticizing the Two Kingdoms Doctrine” *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 54, no. 2–3 (June–September 2014): 158.

<sup>10</sup> Tappert, “Augsburg Confession” Article XVI, *Civil Government*, para. 1–2, 37.

and exercises his power in both. God rules over the earthly kingdom without personally revealing himself, without nations giving the okay, not explaining exactly how his rule is being carried out even when he is opposed, and calling on believers to trust his Word whether they see his rule or not. God rules over the Church with Christ revealing himself to the believers through the Gospel, by giving eternal life through the Gospel to believers who know Christ through the Word, and in the Means of Grace establishing an intimate union of love between himself and the Church.<sup>11</sup> How he exercises his power is evident in different ways as we consider the purpose for which God has established both. In addressing the distinction between the two kingdoms, Deuschlander offers this simple summary:

The two are distinct kingdoms, even though Christ is King over both. The two kingdoms are separate even though Christ rules over governments and nations always and only for the benefit of his believers. It is not our job to separate the two kingdoms. They already are separate by virtue of the very different ways in which Christ rules over them....

One has territory on a map; the other exists in hearts. One is concerned only with bodily and temporal matters; the other is chiefly concerned with spiritual and eternal matters. One is concerned only with outward behavior; the other always is concerned first with the attitude that motivates the behavior. We enter one by a visible, physical birth; we enter the other invisibly, through a spiritual rebirth, through the door of faith in the gospel promise, which the Holy Spirit created in us through Baptism. In one kingdom we die; in the other we live forever.<sup>12</sup>

The purpose of the state is to provide for the temporal welfare of the citizens under its watch.<sup>13</sup> Genesis 9:6, "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed," gives evidence of the purpose of the state as God provides government the right to punish wrongdoers, to wield the sword for the sake of society. God establishes governing authorities to provide protection for its citizens and appropriately punish those who break laws. The need for civil authority is sin and all the consequences that come with it. There are people who live decent

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<sup>11</sup> Deuschlander, 51, 53.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 53–55.

<sup>13</sup> Lyle Lange, *God So Loved The World* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2005), 645.



and orderly lives. However, there are others who cheat, steal, and take advantage of others whenever they can.<sup>14</sup> Because of this evil, God gives the sword to the government to keep control and punish lawbreakers for the sake of good order.

St. Paul's letter to the Romans describes the purpose of God's governing authorities—keeping order with the law: “For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer” (13:3–4).

The civil law aims only at the outward behavior of its citizens. It isn't the authority of the kingdom of the left to seek ways to change hearts and, thereby, produce Christian citizens. Christian citizens are indeed a benefit to society; however, the kingdom of this world is not tasked with changing the hearts of people. The kingdom of the left threatens all people, Christians and non Christians alike, when their behavior is done without respect resulting in injury to others or damage to property.

The kingdom of the church is spiritual. Jesus' answer to Pilate's question of whether or not Jesus was the king of the Jews trumpets the truth of the otherworldliness of Christ's kingdom, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place” (John 18:36). Melancthon writes concerning the spiritual kingdom “... it is the knowledge of God in the heart, the fear of God and faith, the beginning of eternal righteousness and eternal life.”<sup>15</sup> The kingdom of the left serves the purpose of keeping outward behavior in check. The kingdom of the right serves the purpose of changing dead hearts to living hearts through the living and enduring Word of God. Through the power of the Gospel, God brings sinful people into a “personal relationship with Him so that He rules, guards, and protects them as His special chosen people.”<sup>16</sup>

Because of the spiritual nature of the kingdom of the church, preaching the Gospel is in its very essence preaching the kingdom of God. The kingdom of the left wields its power by God's authority. That includes the power to punish and to reward. The kingdom of the right

<sup>14</sup> Deutschlander, 21.

<sup>15</sup> Tappert, “Apology of the Augsburg Confession,” Article XVI, para.2, 222.

<sup>16</sup> Bjarne W. Teigen, *I Believe, A Study of the Augsburg Confession and the Apology of the Augsburg Confession* (Mankato: Lutheran Synod Book Co., 1980), 66.

also comes by the power of the holy God. However, its purpose is to change hearts and provide the promise of eternal life in the kingdom of heaven. The purpose of God's kingdom is to "make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you..." (Matthew 28:19-20; NKJV). God's kingdom comes in the power of the Word attached to the water in Baptism and proclaimed in the ears of hearers.

Since the kingdoms serve different functions as designed by God, the means with which they operate is also distinct. The next section reviews the tools by which the two distinct kingdoms, over which Christ rules, operate.

### The Tools of the Kingdoms

The simple division of the tools which God provides for church and state are summarized as follows:

Church: The Means of Grace (Word and Sacraments)

State: Reason, legislation, threats, punishment, condemnation, reward<sup>17</sup>

The tools designed by God for the state are not the tools that make disciples of all nations. That isn't the objective of the government. Although the state's purpose is not proclaiming the message that changes hearts from sinners to saints, the tools given by God to governing authorities seek to bring peace and safety to society. The temporal affairs of the world are the concern of the state. Therefore, the state operates on the principle of reason in establishing laws covering all areas of life and stating fair punishments when those laws are not carried out. The God-given gift of reason is most valuable in this life. Government at every level (local, state, and federal) uses reason to determine what is going to be helpful or harmful for people in this world. Appropriate speed limits, fair penalties for lawbreakers, and reasonable taxation policies are instituted by reasonable governing authorities for the good of society.

The authority to use the tool of reason in government comes from God as Jesus taught Pontius Pilate in the midst of his trial:

The Jews insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God." When

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<sup>17</sup> Lange, 645.

Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace. “Where do you come from?” he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. “Do you refuse to speak to me?” Pilate said. “Don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?” Jesus answered, “*You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above.*” (John 19:7–11 [emphasis added])

Whether it is Pontius Pilate or any other ruler or government leader at any time in the history of the world, the power he or she wields comes from God. He establishes government to enact and carry out legislation to serve the outward needs of its citizens.

The tools of reason, legislation, threats, punishment, and condemnation fall under the use of the sword. Threat and punishment is how civil authorities work to keep outward order in the land. St. Paul’s instruction to the Roman Christians gives evidence of this fact: “Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience” (Romans 13:5).

The secular kingdom falls under the rule of the Law and not the Gospel. The secular kingdom would crumble without laws; and even if laws are on the books, without enforcement, there would be no order. It may certainly appear at times, in our democratic society, that the use of force to keep order is not evident. However, such force is there and forms the foundation for how the state operates in its sphere.<sup>18</sup>

All authority in the kingdom of the world comes from the Fourth Commandment as stated by Luther in the Large Catechism, “Out of the authority of parents, all other authority is derived and developed.”<sup>19</sup> Therefore, the secular kingdom doesn’t operate with the Gospel but with the Law since the Fourth Commandment serves society as part of the natural law,

Society is exclusively directed to natural law and not to the Gospel. All mankind has a natural knowledge of God’s law. All human beings show the work of the Law written in their hearts (Rom. 2:14, 15). ... Civilizations the world over have recognized these moral precepts, although this is not to say that they have always kept them in a high degree. But this natural knowledge of the law, operating through the social and political

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<sup>18</sup> B.W. Teigen, 67.

<sup>19</sup> Tappert, *Large Catechism*, para. 141, 384

orders, has put restraints on mankind so that the world can live somewhat peaceably.<sup>20</sup>

Through the use of reason, legislation, threats, punishment, condemnation, and rewards, the state carries out its purpose to provide for the temporal needs of society. Whether it is the punishment of the evildoer or the commendation of those who do good, the work of the government only lasts for this life. It is necessary and important but temporary. What a chaotic culture would result if there were no rules and laws or no authority to enforce them. God spare us from such a mess!

But the tools of the Church, the Means of Grace, work on the hearts of hearers and have eternal benefits. The Gospel holds no terror at all nor does it threaten any punishment. It is God's gracious invitation to receive the spiritual gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation won through the active and passive obedience of Christ Jesus punctuated with his powerful resurrection from the dead.

The purpose or mission of the Church is to "make disciples of all nations." Jesus' command to his Church for such work provides the tools in making disciples of all nations—baptize and teach. The miraculous change in Baptism results in sin-darkened hearts transformed into enlightened hearts credited with the perfect life of Christ Jesus. This change from death to life has nothing to do with threats and punishments or enforcing the rules of the powers who are in authority. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16).

In the preface to his commentary of St. Paul's letter to the Galatians, Dr. Luther includes the following excerpt regarding the two kingdoms in the life of God's believers. The emphasis is freedom from sin provides freedom to serve both God and neighbor.

We set forth two worlds, as it were, one of them heavenly and the other earthly. Into these we place these two kinds of righteousness, which are distinct and separated from each other. The righteousness of the Law is earthly and deals with earthly things; by it we perform good works. But as the earth does not bring forth fruit unless it has first been watered and made fruitful from above...so also by the righteousness of the Law we do nothing even when we do much; we do not fulfill the Law even when we fulfill it. Without any merit or work of our own, we must first be justified by Christian righteousness,

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<sup>20</sup> B.W. Teigen, 67.

which has nothing to do with the righteousness of the Law or with earthly and active righteousness. But this righteousness is heavenly and passive. We do not have it of ourselves; we receive it from heaven.<sup>21</sup>

This heavenly treasure of Christian righteousness comes through God's Word and Sacraments. The church has one mission—to proclaim the Gospel of Christ Jesus to the world. The miracle of dead hearts made alive through the gift of faith produces fruits of faith in the hearts of young and old alike. Fruit produced through the Means of Grace is made evident in the behavior of Christians living in the earthly kingdom. Since it is God who establishes earthly authority over us, we are duty-bound to be obedient to them as God's representatives to us. This leads us to the final part in this overview of the two kingdoms—the church and the state.

### **The Christian in the Kingdoms**

The Pharisees' desire to bring Jesus down was so intense that no subject was off limits if it could in some way trap Jesus in his own words. Such was the case as recorded by Matthew in chapter 22. This particular trap was baited with obedience to the government, specifically to the paying of taxes to Caesar. The Pharisees were certainly anti-Rome. However, in this attempt to trap Jesus, they teamed up with the Herodians who were pro-Rome. The question lobbed was a grenade: "Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" (Matthew 22:17) To answer their question, "No, it is not right to pay taxes to Caesar," the Herodians would surely report Jesus to the Roman authorities as one subverting the power of the government. If, on the other hand, Jesus answered the question, "Yes, it is right to pay taxes to Caesar," the Pharisees would brand him as disloyal to the Jewish nation. Jesus was wedged between the proverbial rock and a hard place.

Jesus' answer, however, describes perfect wisdom in obedience to the authority of both kingdoms, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's" (Matthew 21:22). What belongs to God is everything. Even the government under Caesar belonged to God because God establishes government. Therefore, in obeying our government leaders, we are obeying God. In giving to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, we are giving to God what is rightfully his.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Luther, *Luther's Works, Lectures on Galatians 1535*, Vol. 26, 8.

<sup>22</sup> Deutschlander, 62.

The Christian's responsibility as a member in both kingdoms begins with the kingdom of the right. In the spiritual realm, the heart is driven to despair of its own goodness and brought to life through the goodness of Christ's sacrifice. Through the Means of Grace, God the Holy Spirit "enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith..." (Explanation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Article). Jesus' warning about worry in Matthew 6 teaches us what we are to seek first as citizens in two kingdoms: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things [earthly needs] will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33).

As members of God's kingdom of grace through faith in the Lord Jesus, honor to God is evident in obedience to the governing authorities. Romans 13:1ff instructs every soul to submit, or be subject, to the governing authorities. The sole reason for such obedience is that government has its authority over us only because God gave it. Whether the government is good or not, obedience is required. The Christian's conscience is formed by the Word of God. "We obey and submit to God-established authority because *God* wants us to do so."<sup>23</sup> Christians are to be obedient and peaceable citizens of the kingdom of the left because they know that this kingdom established for their physical well-being comes from God.

Dr. Luther's explanation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment includes obedience not only to our immediate parents but also to our superiors. All authority is derived from parents, a subject on which Luther expands in the Large Catechism.

The same may be said of obedience to the civil government, which...is to be classed with the estate of fatherhood, the most comprehensive of all relations. ... Through civil rulers, as through our own parents, God gives us food, house and home, protection and security. Therefore, since they bear this name and title with all honor as their chief glory, it is our duty to honor and magnify them as the most precious treasure and jewel on earth.

He who is obedient, willing, ready to serve, and cheerfully gives honor where it is due, knows that he pleases God and receives joy and happiness for his reward. On the other hand, if he will not do so in love, but despises or rebelliously resists

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 42.

authority, let him know that he shall have no favor or blessing from God.<sup>24</sup>

Obedience to the governing authorities flows from God's love for us in Christ Jesus. Christ's perfect obedience to the law of God is ours through faith. Christ's perfect obedience to death on the cross paid for all our sins, including sins of disobedience against his governing authorities. Whether sins of thinking, acting or speaking, Christ's flawless obedient sacrifice covers them all. This freedom leads us to be obedient and respectful to those whom God places to govern us. Regardless of how governing authorities have risen to power, they have been established by God. In addition to Romans 13, God speaks to us on other occasions in the New Testament regarding the obedience and respect for authorities in the earthly kingdom. Paul writes to Titus (3:1), "Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good." Peter writes in his first letter, "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right" (1 Peter 2:13-14).

But what if the government doesn't carry out its responsibilities rightly or enacts laws that are in direct opposition to God's Word? Do Christians have the right to disobey wicked and evil governments? Acts 5 records the attempt of the Sanhedrin to silence the apostles from preaching in the name of Christ: "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name...." (Acts 5:28). The response of Peter and the other apostles is bold and clear: "We must obey God rather than men!" (Acts 5:29) Melancthon addresses this situation under the section "Civil Government" in the *Augsburg Confession*:

The Gospel does not overthrow civil authority, the state, and marriage but requires that all these be kept as true orders of God and that everyone, each according to his own calling, manifest Christian love and genuine good works in his station of life. Accordingly Christians are obliged to be subject to civil authority and obey its commands and laws in all that can be done without sin. But when commands of the civil authority cannot be obeyed without sin, we must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Tappert, *Large Catechism*, para. 150–151, 385–386.

<sup>25</sup> Tappert, *Augsburg Confession*, Article XVI (*Civil Government*), para. 5–7, 38.

When the government tries to be the church, it seeks to invade the kingdom of God. In the case of Paul and the apostles, the government gave strict orders not to teach God's Word. From the other perspective, if the state sought to order all of its citizens to believe the Word of God, they would have no right to do so. God didn't give matters of faith and the heart to the state. It has been given the sword. "The state is not free to forbid what God commands."<sup>26</sup> To which we might add, nor is the state free to do what God has established his church to do. The Apostles' response to the Sanhedrin did not advocate open rebellion against the governing authorities that publicly persecuted them. Yet we must take notice that the apostles refused to do what the authorities commanded them. They resisted the government which was telling them to disobey God's command. Acts 5:39 is clear and concise. God is the King over the hearts of people through the Gospel. He is also the King over governments and nations to whom he has given the sword.

Christian citizenship holds responsibilities in both kingdoms with the understanding that the Lord of heaven and earth rules over both. The church operates in the realm of the earthly kingdom and receives benefits from it. Police and fire protection and other government services are gladly received by the church. Therefore, along with obedience and respect to the kingdom of the left comes the paying of taxes by individual citizens. St. Paul does not justify any kind of tax evasion. We are aware of governments using tax money to fund godless activities (abortions, false teaching in public schools as well as good teaching, etc.). Paul gave no exceptions to the paying of taxes to the Roman government, and we find no exceptions granted by God in our present age. "Submission belongs to us; judgment belongs to God."<sup>27</sup>

Evidence of our heavenly citizenship is being good, law-abiding, faithful citizens on earth. Christians are not of the world but live in the world (John 15:19; 17:16; 1 John 5:4) and have responsibilities and obligations to fulfill in thanks to God for his merciful sacrifice in Christ. Citizenship in the earthly kingdom grants us privileges together with responsibilities. To that end, the Christian also prays for the government. St. Paul instructs the believer on the matter of Christian citizenship in 1 Timothy 2:1-2, "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." Since this pleases God, we need no more

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<sup>26</sup> Deuschlander, 65.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.



incentive to pray daily for our government leaders. Pray that God grants them wisdom and fairness to be good managers of the earthly blessings provided. Pray that peace be maintained allowing God's Word to have free course and be proclaimed throughout the world.

Good citizenship lived by God's believers pleases him and is lived according to his will. Good citizenship aids in the spread of the Gospel message.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. (1 Peter 2:9–12)

Obedience, respect, paying taxes, and prayer are privileges and responsibilities that God gives his believers in the earthly realm. When earthly governments seek to be the church or try to force Christians to sin, our obedience is to God first and foremost. Christians in society serve God as dearly loved children who are led by the Spirit to serve God and neighbors.

Yea, Lord, 'twas Thy rich bounty gave  
 My body, soul, and all I have  
 In this poor life of labor.  
 Lord, grant that I in ev'ry place  
 May glorify Thy lavish grace  
 And serve and help my neighbor.<sup>28</sup>

## Conclusion

Much more could be written, and certainly has, concerning the subject of the two kingdoms. God is King over both, Christians find themselves living in both, and service is carried on by Christians in both. A summary of the relationship between the two kingdoms was clearly and concisely confessed in Article XXVIII of the *Augsburg Confession*,

<sup>28</sup> ELH #406:2a.

a confession that remains steadfast on the foundation of God's holy Word:

Inasmuch as the power of the church or of bishops bestows eternal gifts and is used and exercised only through the office of preaching, it does not interfere at all with government or temporal authority. Temporal authority is concerned with matters altogether different from the Gospel. Temporal power does not protect the soul, but with the sword and physical penalties it protects body and goods from the power of others.

Therefore, the two authorities, the spiritual and the temporal, are not to be mingled or confused, for the spiritual power has its commission to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments. Hence it should not invade the function of the other, should not set up and depose kings, should not annul temporal laws or undermine obedience to government, should not make or prescribe to the temporal power laws concerning worldly matters....

Thus our teachers distinguish the two authorities and the functions of the two powers, directing that both be held in honor as the highest gifts of God on earth.<sup>29</sup>

God bless our citizenship on earth as we eagerly await the eternal citizenship stored in heaven for all God's faithful. LSQ

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<sup>29</sup> Tappert, *Augsburg Confession*, Article XXVIII (*The Power of Bishops*), para. 10–14, 18, 82–83.

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# Biographical Essay on F.A. Schmidt

*Christian Anderson*

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**F**RIEDRICH AUGUSTUS SCHMIDT WAS BORN IN 1837 at Leutenberg, Thüringen, Germany. The family came to the United States in 1841. Friedrich attended Concordia College in Altenburg, 1848–1850; and in St. Louis, 1850–1853. After his graduation he served as teacher at Concordia College for one school year, after which he entered Concordia Seminary, becoming a candidate of theology in 1857. His first charge was in Eden, New York, which he served from 1857–1859. From there he was called to Baltimore, Maryland. When the Norwegian Synod at the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 found it advisable to establish its own school, Prof. L. Larsen was called from St. Louis as president of the new institution. But it became necessary to get a man who was qualified to teach especially English. F.A. Schmidt, having been highly recommended by officials of the Missouri Synod, was called to this position. He accepted the call, and began his work together with Prof. Larsen at the opening of the school in 1861 in the parsonage at Half Way Creek near La Crosse, Wisconsin. Professor Schmidt continued his work at Luther College until 1872, teaching besides the English branches also Latin, Greek, German, mathematics, and religion. From the very beginning he took a lively interest in the work, becoming proficient in the use of the Norwegian language in a remarkably short time. He was a regular contributor to the publications of the synod, was frequently used as an essayist at conferences and

synod conventions, and was held in high esteem as a theologian. He soon became the most influential theologian in the entire synod.

Since Luther College never established a theological department, as was originally planned, the synod continued to send its theological students to Concordia Seminary at St. Louis for training. The original agreement with the Missouri Synod was that our synod was to furnish one theological professor. After Prof. Larsen left St. Louis, efforts were made to get a theologian from Norway to fill this position. When it became apparent that the right kind of person could not be obtained in this way, the synod resolved to call F.A. Schmidt for this position. From 1872 until the practical department of the Seminary was established in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1876, Prof. Schmidt served as theological professor for the Norwegian Synod at Concordia Seminary. Here he held many positions of trust. For two years he wrote the foreword for *Lehre und Wehre*, wrote a number of controversial articles, especially against Professor Fritschel of the Iowa Synod, taking often the opposite view of that for which he later contended. He was a strong exponent of the idea of establishing a joint theological seminary for all the synods of the Synodical Conference. And when in 1878 the matter of moving the theoretical department of our seminary was considered, he opposed it very strongly and insinuated that it was the theologians from Norway who were back of this move. He warned against the danger of separating from the Missouri Synod, which had stood so firmly for old Lutheran doctrines down through the decades. He said, among other things: "There is no church body in the world which stands as firmly on Scripture as the Missouri Synod."

On February 2 of the same year, 1878, a pastoral conference of the Eastern District of the synod was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. At this meeting the matter of establishing a joint theological seminary or a seminary for the Norwegian Synod alone was discussed at considerable length. In the course of the discussion Prof. O. Asperheim who in the school year of 1875<sup>1</sup> had acted as the Norwegian Synod's professor at the seminary (which was now begun) in Madison, Wisconsin, presented in four points accusations against the Missouri Synod. The second point read as follows: "There are signs of a certain dogmatic deformation which appear especially in the Missouri Synod's doctrine of election, since they by excluding faith as a part of God's election place themselves in a dangerous middle position between the Calvinistic doctrine

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<sup>1</sup> The official date for the founding of Luther Seminary in Madison, Wisconsin, is 1876.

of election and the Lutheran doctrine as it is clearly developed by the later Lutheran dogmaticians, as for example by Gerhard." This statement was vigorously attacked by Prof. Schmidt. He even presented a very strongly-worded resolution in which the conference renounced the opposition raised against the Missouri Synod, because it endangered the firm position which this synod had taken against all liberalism, indifference, and open questions of so many so-called Lutheran theologians, and because it coincided with the same gross, untruthful, and shameful accusations and slanders which the most bitter enemies have made against the Missouri Synod. The resolution furthermore voiced regret that even one of the teachers of the synod held such views, and contended that this could not be tolerated, but that the president of the synod should deal with Prof. Asperheim in this matter and take whatever steps were necessary in Christian wisdom and consistent with unflinching faithfulness to the truth.

In the discussion which followed many of the pastors criticized not only Prof. Asperheim for his accusation against the Missouri Synod, but also Prof. Schmidt because he went too far in his attack on Prof. Asperheim. When a more moderate resolution was offered and passed, Prof. Schmidt attacked the whole conference for being lax in such important matters and threatened to leave the synod if it continued in this way. Prof. Asperheim soon after this accepted a call as Seaman's Missionary in New York and later served as pastor in different parishes in Norway.

But it was not long after this episode at the pastoral conference in Milwaukee that Prof. Schmidt began to make the same accusations against the doctrines of the Missouri Synod as Prof. Asperheim had done, but Prof. Schmidt went a great deal further. He explains it himself in this way: "Two weeks after the conference in Milwaukee I received a copy of the Proceedings of the Western District of 1877, in which this doctrine for the first time was explicitly and in detail set forth. Soon after this I stated to members of the Church Council in Madison that this changed my position in this matter."

However, this same doctrine is presented in Dr. Walther's volume of Gospel Sermons. In 1855 it was the subject for discussion at the meeting of the Western District. In 1871 there was an article discussing this doctrine in *Lehre und Wehre*. While Prof. Schmidt himself was on the editorial staff of this magazine, there were several extensive articles on election and conversion. In 1872 there was an article of 70 pages

entitled, "Is it really Lutheran doctrine that the salvation of man in the last analysis rests upon man's own free decision?"

In May of 1878 Schmidt sent a postcard to President Wunder<sup>2</sup> of the Missouri Synod stating his willingness to accept a call to the seminary in St. Louis if such were forthcoming, and that they should not take too tender consideration of the Norwegian Synod in the matter. In June of the same year at the convention of the Norwegian Synod in Koshkonong he contended strongly against establishing a seminary of our own, as we have heard. And at the meeting of the Synodical Conference in July, to which Prof. Schmidt was a delegate, he did not voice any protest against the report that the Proceedings of 1877 contained "glorious considerations of the doctrine of election."

What took place in the soul and mind of Prof. Schmidt during the last half of 1878 we have no means of determining with any certainty. At any rate, about New Year's Day in 1879 he sent a lengthy letter to Dr. Walther, in which he "frankly expressed his opinion of his doctrine of election." Prof. Schmidt claimed at one time that he never received an answer to this letter. However this may have been, in May of 1879 Prof. Schmidt sent to one of the members of the faculty in St. Louis four theses, with antitheses, with which it was his purpose "briefly and thoroughly to set forth the points in which he took issue with the 1877 Proceedings of the Western District." In these theses he rejects the statement that "election is not made in accordance with divine foreknowledge of the different ways in which men would conduct themselves toward the proffered divine grace." In the antitheses he contends that God's particular will of grace as the immediate cause and rule for election in the narrowest sense surely presupposes the different conduct of man to the general grace. Later Prof. Schmidt made the statement that man not by grace, but by his own natural power and by virtue of his free will can remove his resistance to God's grace. This was something which the St. Louis faculty could not be expected to pass by. During the summer a colloquy was held in Columbus, Ohio, without reaching any settlement. As Prof. Schmidt would not agree not to publish anything in regard to the negotiations, no more colloquies were held.

Prof. Schmidt tells us in his book on election that when he read the Proceedings of the Western District in 1879, in which he and pastor Alwardt (though without naming them) were designated as adversaries, and that their doctrine was characterized as synergism based on human

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<sup>2</sup> Heinrich Wunder (1830–1913) was the first president of the Illinois district of the Missouri Synod (1875–1891).

reason, and so on, they both came to the decision that they would begin to write publicly against the doctrine of the Missourians. Schmidt says that it was not only their "false doctrine" that he now would oppose, but also the tyrannical spirit in which the Missouri Synod tried to subdue every objection, even though it was made in private and in a modest way.

In January, 1880, Prof. Schmidt began the publication of a theological magazine in the German language, called *Altes und Neues*, which was continued until 1885. In the preface he makes the statement, "The reason for our publishing *Altes und Neues* just now is a very special one. In the writings of the Missouri Synod during the last years a doctrine of election has been explicitly presented and defended concerning which we cannot but acknowledge that it militates against Scripture and the confessions, a Calvinistic error. So let there in God's name be a battle, an open and serious battle against the new crypto-Calvinism."

In this publication he attacks the Missouri Synod most violently and recklessly. He does not hesitate to call their leaders hypocrites, liars, sophists, etc. The title of one article is, "How Missouri in the main agrees with the Calvinists." He brands the present doctrinal position of the Missouri Synod as simple apostasy from the pure Gospel. He declares that the Calvinists are worthy of all respect because they openly acknowledge their doctrine of irresistible grace. Irresistible grace is and continues to be the second half of every absolute election: if the election is unconditional, then the carrying out of it must surely be just as unconditional, just as absolute. "But fie, shame upon such cowardly, crypto-Calvinistic, fox theology, which teaches the same, but does not want to give the child the right name because it is ashamed of its ancestry and relationship."

These are only a few samples of the way in which Prof. Schmidt carried on his polemics in *Altes und Neues* during the five years of its existence. In this controversy a few of the Missouri pastors and congregations were won over to his side. The theological faculty of the Ohio Synod sided with him, and this led to the severance of this synod from the Synodical Conference. In 1883 the degree of D.D. was conferred upon Schmidt by the seminary at Columbus.

Schmidt did not from the start bring the controversy openly into the Norwegian Synod. He evidently wanted to make it appear that the vast majority of the Norwegians were on his side. But since most of the Norwegian pastors read the German publications, it was unavoidable that his controversy with the Missouri Synod from the beginning



caused quite a stir. And at the Seminary in Madison he spent a great amount of time trying to force his ideas upon the students. Since the other two professors, Stub and Ylvisaker, took the opposite view, there arose contention in the faculty, which grew more grave as time went on. The matter soon came up also in the congregation to which all the professors and students belonged. In 1881 Prof. Stub delivered his well-known lecture on the so-called two forms of the doctrine of election, in which he contended that there was no cause for separation so long as those who held the doctrine of election in view of faith did not thereby ascribe to man's faith the cause of his election. Schmidt, however, ascribed to man's faith a greater importance in his election than did the theologians of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and he was therefore not satisfied with Stub's exposition. Schmidt delivered a series of lectures in the congregation, which, with some additions, were published as a pamphlet of 90 pages. Here he repeats his accusations that the Missourians and their friends in the Norwegian Synod were teaching Calvinistic doctrine. He states time and again that if God has elected some men to salvation out of a large body of men who were equally deeply fallen, without considering their faith the difference in their conduct over against the proffered grace of God, while he passed by others, this certainly was the same as the Calvinistic doctrine that God has predestined some to salvation and others to eternal damnation. This of course is a reasonable deduction, and when he began with Pontoppidan's definition of election and contended that the Missourians were trying to introduce new doctrines which threatened to draw people away from what they had learned in their childhood, it is not strange that he gained a large following especially among the lay people, who were unable to read the German publications and thus check up on Schmidt's accusations against the Missourians. He soon had the majority of his own congregation on his side, and it was not long after this that the neighboring congregations in Koshkonong and Norwegian Grove with large majorities deposed their pastors, J.A. Ottesen, H.A. Preus, and C.K. Preus. Prof. Schmidt was present and pleaded his cause at many of the meetings that were held in these congregations.

Prof. Schmidt soon realized that he would not get very far with his controversy in the Missouri Synod itself. He bitterly bewails this fact. He says in his book on election, "One or another may ask, 'How is it possible that such faithful Lutherans as the Missourians have been—and still are in other points—could depart so far from the truth, and that the error, at least within the Missouri Synod, could in so short a

time gain such a sway? How can this be explained?' I have called it a bewitching, as Paul exclaims: 'O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth?' [Galatians 3:1] There are three things which must be considered in this bewitching: 1) the fear of ascribing anything to man in his conversion and salvation; 2) the high esteem in which Dr. Walther is held in the Missouri Synod; and 3) the honor of the Missouri Synod as an orthodox church body."

This failure to gain a greater hearing in the Missouri Synod led Prof. Schmidt to concentrate his efforts the more strongly in the Norwegian Synod. In January, 1882, he began the publication of a paper in the Norwegian language entitled *Lutherske Vidnesbyrd* (Lutheran Witness), which was continued until the formation of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in 1890.

In the forward of the first number he says among many other things, "Our new paper probably does not appear so entirely unexpectedly to those who have followed the development of our Lutheran Church these last years, partly in the Synodical Conference and partly within our Norwegian Synod. It may rather be that many have wondered why a new church paper has not appeared before this, as it has long since been clear that the editors of *Kirketidende*, also in the question of doctrine, have made common cause with the Missouri Synod in its new and essentially Calvinistic doctrine of predestination unto salvation." Then he goes on: "But shall the Norwegian Synod really be split and torn to pieces?" After elaborating on this, he asks, "Is it ungodly love for strife which has called forth the church paper? Do we perhaps now want to make extraordinary efforts to bring about a new and very sad split?"

"By no means, dear reader! So far from its object being to cause a split, the real purpose of this paper is none other than to make peace and preserve in our church body the formerly acknowledged truth and confessed faith and doctrine. ... With God's help we want to do what we can to prevent the calamity, that also our Norwegian church like the Missouri Synod leave the old Lutheran paths and accept as its confession a Calvinizing doctrine which cannot but drive out from the house all those who wish to preserve the old Lutheran truth in faith and confession. ... The question is about a point of doctrine which has been among the most distinctive and decisive between Lutherans and Calvinists. It concerns the doctrine of God's eternal counsel of grace for the salvation of sinners. Has God made this decree in close connection with his eternal counsel for the salvation of all and in complete agreement with His revealed Gospel, so that He has foreseen what sinners

through faith will appropriate Christ's merit and has now destined them to eternal life by virtue of the merit of Christ, which they have apprehended through faith? Or has he come to an unchangeable determination of what sinners He really wants to save, in a secret counsel and according to an unconditioned good pleasure—according to a special rule of grace which is not revealed—yet so that He in time saves the predestinated sinners by giving them faith and constancy (*bestandibed*) by virtue of a free decree?" Then he starts out with Pontoppidan's definition of election and builds up his own peculiar doctrines and through a series of syllogisms he tries to show that the doctrine of the Missourians is Calvinistic, appealing all the while to the high esteem in which Pontoppidan was held by our people.

The appearance of *Lutherske Vidnesbyrd* served to increase the tension which had already been created in the Norwegian Synod. Every number of the paper was filled with the strongest invectives, and Schmidt soon gained a large following, both among the clergy and the laity. He published reports of meetings where controversial matters were considered, always colored by his own views, thus strengthening the prejudice of those whose suspicions against the doctrine of the Missourians had been aroused. The number of subscribers to this paper grew steadily.

For a long time the officials of the Norwegian Synod tried to keep the controversy from breaking out openly among the people, who were not prepared to deal with the questions which arose. But after Schmidt's paper began to be broadcast, it could no longer be prevented. The official organ of the synod, *Kirketidende*, edited by the faculty of Luther College, began to answer some of Schmidt's many accusations against the Missouri Synod. In order not to fill the paper with controversial articles, a special publication entitled *Nødtvunget Forsvar* (Necessary Defence) was sent out for about a year. This magazine contained many excellent articles on the disputed doctrines.

In 1882 a regular convention of the Synodical Conference was to be held. The Eastern District of the synod decided not to send any delegate. But the Minnesota District elected Rev. B.J. Muus, Rev. J.A. Thorsen, Prof. Stub, and Prof. Schmidt. The Iowa District was represented by Pres. V. Koren and Pastor T.A. Torgerson. The general pastoral conference of the Missouri Synod, which had met in Chicago shortly before, considered throughout its meeting the disputed doctrine of election and conversion. The conference went on record as being unwilling to sit in meeting as brethren with those who had openly attacked the synod as

had been done the past two years. This position of the pastoral conference was endorsed by the Synodical Convention held shortly afterward. The delegates of the Missouri Synod therefore submitted a lengthy and extensive protest against accepting Prof. Schmidt as a member of the meeting of the Synodical Conference. Protests were submitted by the delegates of the Wisconsin and Minnesota Synods also. This naturally placed the Norwegian Synod, which had elected Schmidt as a delegate, in a very unfavorable light. Prof. Schmidt tells us in his paper that Rev. Koren had made a trip to St. Louis to try to prevent the bringing of these protests before the meeting, but had failed. The protest was based on two things: that Prof. Schmidt had for a long time publicly accused and attacked the Missouri Synod for false doctrine and had taken part in the division of congregations belonging to synods of the Synodical Conference.

The matter of seating Prof. Schmidt was considered at several sessions of the conference. Schmidt was not permitted to speak in the open meeting, so he used all his time to take notes on the proceedings. He published a lengthy report from his point of view in *Lutherske Vidnesbyrd*, with comments that were very suitable for arousing the feelings of his followers. Long articles were written about what the anti-Missourians were now to do.

Especially two articles were sent in to Schmidt's paper by Pastors P.A. Rasmussen and O. Waldeland, urging the congregations to protest against the action of the Synodical Conference in refusing to recognize Prof. Schmidt as a delegate to its meeting, to condemn the Missourians and accept Schmidt's doctrine, and to demand of their pastors that they subscribe to these resolutions. A large number of congregations followed this advice, and it was at this time that Pastor H.A. Preus and his assistants, Pastors C.K. Preus and J.A. Ottesen, were deposed, and many other pastors placed in great difficulties. The action of the convention of the Synodical Conference proved a great aid for the anti-Missourian cause among the Norwegians.

From this time on the doctrinal controversy and matters connected with it were the chief topic of discussion at general and district meetings of the synod, at pastoral conferences, and in congregational meetings. Committees were appointed from both sides to meet in colloquies, and Prof. Schmidt took part in a large number of these meetings. A detailed account of the progress of the controversy may be found in *Festskrift* and in *Grace for Grace*.

To the general pastoral conference, held in Decorah, Iowa, in 1884, a series of theses, entitled "En Redegjørelse" (an accounting to the congregations of the synod), edited chiefly by Pastor Koren and dealing with the disputed doctrines, was submitted. After a lengthy discussion this document was signed by 106 pastors and professors and printed in 20,000 copies. The anti-Missourian pastors held a meeting in Red Wing on October 14 of the following year, at which they formulated a confession and resolved to urge the congregations of the Synod to depose the pastors who had subscribed to "En Redegjørelse," and also urged that Pastors B. Harstad and V. Koren be deposed as presidents of the Minnesota and Iowa Districts, respectively. Prof. Schmidt sent a written request to the Church Council to discipline Professors Stub and Ylvisaker for teaching false doctrine. It is remarkable how closely the wording of this request resembles the resolution which he in 1878 offered against Professor O. Asperheim.

In the meantime conditions at the seminary in Madison were deplorable. Prof. Schmidt's propaganda against Missouri bore rich fruit among the students. During the school year of 1881-1882 Prof. Stub was granted leave of absence because of ill health, and Prof. Ylvisaker spent the year abroad in further study, as had been promised him when he accepted the call. Pastors T.A. Torgerson and K. Bjørgo served as vicars in their absence, but, as might be expected, Prof. Schmidt wielded the greatest influence among the students. In the fall of 1882 Stub and Ylvisaker returned, but the friction continued as before. On November 10, 1883, Professor Schmidt refused to join in a celebration of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Luther's birth with men whom he considered as having departed from Luther's spirit. At the end of that school year he refused to sign the diplomas of four of the students who would not subscribe to his doctrines. At the end of March, 1885, Prof. Schmidt discontinued his lectures, announcing to the students that he was broken down in body and soul and in need of a rest. He did not take part in the final examinations of that school year. To the synod convention that year he reported, "Since my colleagues after five years of manifold developments in regard to those things still can cling to gross errors, I cannot find that it is right before God and His orthodox church to continue such important and responsible work as the work at Luther Seminary." When the majority of the Church Council failed to find his colleagues guilty of false doctrine, Schmidt declared in the November number of his paper, "This doctrine is prevalent at our seminary and is now sanctioned by the Church Council as unassailable. For that reason

I must rescind my former advice to the effect that we Lutherans may still support our synodical educational institutions.”

However, on November 2, the students were surprised to find an announcement in their classroom that Prof. Schmidt would lecture six times a week. Only one student reported for his class, so it was discontinued, and so ended Schmidt's connection with Luther Seminary.

In the fall of 1886 the anti-Missourians established a theological school in connection with the St. Olaf School in Northfield, with Prof. Schmidt and Rev. M. Bøckman as teachers. They declared that it was not their intention to withdraw from the synod, but only to make it possible for them to train a ministry which would not from the school be contaminated by false doctrine. When the convention of 1887 passed a resolution by a vote of 230 to 98 that such an opposition institution could not be tolerated within the synod, a protest was presented by Prof. Mohn with the signatures of 30 pastors and 27 lay delegates. In the course of this and the following year about one third of the pastors and congregations withdrew from the synod. Prof. Schmidt continued as the head of this new seminary until 1890, when the United Norwegian Lutheran Church was formed by the merger of the anti-Missourians with the N.D. Conference and the Norwegian Augustana Synod, at which time Schmidt discontinued publication of *Lutherske Vidnesbyrd*. After this merger Augsburg Seminary was to serve as the theological school of the church body. Here Schmidt was to work together with his former adversaries Oftedahl and Sverdrup. It soon became apparent that this was not a very happy combination. Schmidt was chief editor of a new church paper, *Luthersk Kirkeblad*, until 1895, while *Lutheraneren*, inherited from the conference, was the official organ of the church body. Schmidt continued at Augsburg Seminary only until 1893, when a majority of the church body decided to establish a new theological school, while a minority, which eventually withdrew from the church body, continued Augsburg Seminary. This minority was at first known as “Friends of Augsburg,” but they later organized as the Lutheran Free Church.

After the division which was brought about by the controversy concerning the ownership of Augsburg Seminary, *Lutheraneren* became the undisputed official organ of the United Church, and Prof. Schmidt discontinued his editorial work to edit *Luthersk Kirkeblad*. From now on he did not take such prominent part in public discussions as before. Others assumed the chief leadership in the church body, while Schmidt's

activities were confined chiefly to his work at the Seminary. Only once more was he destined to come into the spotlight.

In 1900 the District Convention of the synod had issued an invitation to the United Church to discuss doctrinal differences through committees consisting of the presidents and theological faculties of each church body. The invitation was accepted, and two meetings were held. It was the understanding that no report from these meetings was to be published until some worthwhile agreement had been reached. But after the second meeting Dr. Schmidt published an article protesting vigorously against the manner in which the negotiations were carried on. The Church Council of the synod recommended to the 1902 convention that the synod should not continue these committee discussions if Dr. Schmidt were retained as a colloquut. Later the Church Council published a pamphlet reviewing a number of instances in which Dr. Schmidt throughout the long controversy on election had shown himself unreliable and dishonest. The United Church later published an answer to the charges and so the negotiations ended for the time being. Sometime after this Dr. Schmidt published a series of articles in *Lutheraneren*, defending his doctrinal position as well as his action in attacking the Missouri Synod's doctrines.

In 1912 Dr. Schmidt retired from active work at the Seminary and was elected Professor Emeritus. After the acceptance of the documents which formed the basis of the merger of the three church bodies consummated in 1917, Dr. Schmidt wrote a book entitled *Sandhed og Fred* (Truth and Peace) in which he at great length discussed the doctrines involved. He now admitted that the so-called "first form" of election may be used without involving Calvinism. But throughout the book he tries to show why the so-called "second form" is to be preferred. This book received little notice and was to my knowledge hardly ever mentioned in discussions.

Dr. Schmidt lived the last years of his life in comparative obscurity. He died May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1928, an almost forgotten man. It is natural that in the merger those who once opposed him tried to forget his activity, while his friends tried to cover up his characterization of the doctrines which they now were supposed to have accepted besides their own. LSQ

# Note and Book Reviews

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## The Eighth Triennial Convention of the CELC and the Meeting of the Theological Commission

The Theological Commission of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC) met on May 29, 2014, in Lima, Peru. The members of the Theological Commission of the CELC were Prof. John Brenner, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS); the Rev. Andreas Drechsler, Evangelical Lutheran Free Church (ELFK), Germany; the Rev. Davison Mutentami, Lutheran Church of Central Africa—Zambia (LCCA-Z); the Rev. Takeshi Nadaira, Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church (LECC), Japan; Prof. Gaylin Schmeling, Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS); and the Rev. Daniel Koelpin (WELS), CELC president, *ex officio*.

The Theological Commission wrote a document summarizing the five essays on the doctrine of the church delivered at the 2011 CELC convention in New Ulm, Minnesota. In addition, the commission completed its review of a statement entitled “Make Known God’s Manifold Wisdom,” focusing on outreach, which was presented to the 2014 CELC convention. This statement is Article VI 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, Article III of the work of the Holy Spirit, Article IV of the person and work of Christ, and Article V of the doctrine of eschatology. These statements may be found in PDF form on the CELC website under the heading “Eternal Word: A Lutheran Confession” <[www.celc.info](http://www.celc.info)>.

The eighth triennial convention of the CELC was held in Lima, Peru,



on May 30–June 2, 2014. It met at the Hotel Ferrua in downtown Lima, three blocks from the seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Peru. The convention began with an opening worship service on Friday, May 30, at 1:00 p.m. and concluded with a communion service late Monday afternoon, June 2. The following church bodies became associate members of the CELC: Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church of Albania, St. John's Lutheran Church in Finland, Christ Evangelical Lutheran Ministries–India (CELM), Lutheran Mission of Salvation–India (LMSI), and Christian Church of the Lutheran Reformation (Chile). In the hearts of everyone there was thanks to God for allowing His Gospel to be spread and allowing our association to continue to grow.

The theme of the convention was “We Are God’s Workmanship—Created in Christ Jesus for Good Works,” a study of the doctrine of sanctification. This theme was based on St. Paul’s words in Ephesians: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (2:10). The essays were:

Essay 1: God Sanctifies Us—He Makes Us Holy After He Declares Us Holy – Prof. John Brenner (WELS – USA)

Essay 2: God Gives Us Power—His Gospel in the Means of Grace Gives the Power for a God-pleasing Life – Prof. Gottfried Herrmann (ELFK – Germany)

Essay 3: God Guides Us—His Law in the Bible Guides Us in Godly Living – the Rev. Brester Msowoya (LCCA – Malawi)

Essay 4: Honoring God—We Are Created to Love God According to the First Table of the Law – the Rev. Petr Krakora (CELC – Czech Republic)

Essay 5: Sanctification—Serving Others Is the Christian’s Seal – the Rev. Guillermo Carrera (ELS – Peru)

These essays demonstrated the truth that the Christian faith-life nourished by the means of grace will always be a “living, busy, active, mighty thing” as Luther explains (LW 35:370). It will show forth itself in love toward God and love toward our fellow man.

The Rev. Ugis Sildegs from Latvia and Prof. Michael Smith from the ELS were appointed to the Theological Commission, taking the places of Prof. Gaylin Schmeling and the Rev. Takeshi Nadaira, who finished their terms. The officers of the CELC are: president, the Rev. Daniel Koelpin; vice-president, Prof. Gaylin Schmeling; secretary, the Rev. Timothy Buelow; planning committee, the Rev. Michael Duncan and the Rev. Larry Schlomer.

On Sunday, June 1, those gathered for the convention had an opportunity to worship with local Peruvian congregations at the seminary. Hundreds of people attended this bilingual service. Voices were heard from around the world. It was amazing to see how the Gospel transcends culture, language, and borders. We are indeed one in the Lord.

Women at the CELC convention also had an opportunity to gather and

share with each other in Christian fellowship. "We were able to share the blessings and the joys along with the sorrows and some of the heartaches that come with sharing our Savior in various places," says Anita Smith, wife of Prof. Michael Smith. "Those joys and sorrows of the ministry bridge that cultural gap. I'm in awe that God is able to place all those things on our heart."

The 2017 CELC convention, which occurs at the time of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, will be held in Germany. The ELFK is planning to hold the convention at the Gymnasium St. Augustin in Grimma on June 28/29–July 2, 2017. This is one of the places where Paul Gerhardt went to school, and the city is located close to Wittenberg and other Luther and ELFK sites. A special CELC committee intends to produce "Ninety-five Theses for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" as an anniversary project. These theses will present all the Lutheran fundamentals but also will include topics needed in our contemporary society. This idea follows in the tradition of the 95 theses of Claus Harms in 1817.

The CELC is the third largest worldwide Lutheran fellowship, following the larger Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the International Lutheran Council (ILC). The LWF was established in 1947, and 144 church bodies belong to this organization with an approximate membership of 72,000,000. The ILC was founded in 1952, and 35 church bodies belong to this organization with an approximate membership of 3,450,000. The largest church

body in this organization is the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS). The CELC was organized in 1993 at Oberwesel, Germany, and includes twenty-nine church bodies with approximately 500,000 members. The members of the CELC are as follows:

**CELC Members:** All Saints Lutheran Church of Nigeria, Bulgarian Lutheran Church, Christ the King Lutheran Church of Nigeria, Concord Evangelical Lutheran Church (Russia), Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mexico, Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church of Puerto Rico, Confessional Lutheran Church in Latvia, Czech Evangelical Lutheran Church, Evangelical Lutheran Free Church (Germany), Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia, Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Peru, Evangelical Lutheran Synod (USA), Geraja Lutheran (Indonesia), Lutheran Church of Cameroon, Lutheran Church of Central Africa—Malawi, Lutheran Church of Central Africa—Zambia, Lutheran Confessional Church in Finland, Lutheran Confessional Church in Norway, Lutheran Confessional Church in Sweden, Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church (Japan), Ukrainian Lutheran Church, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (USA)

**CELC Associate Members:** Christ Evangelical Lutheran Ministries—India, Christian Church of the Lutheran Reformation (Chile), East Seoul Canaan Church (Korea), Lutheran Church of Portugal, Confessional Evangelical Lutheran

Church of Albania, Lutheran Mission of Salvation—India, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Finland

The conference accepts the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments (the verbally inspired and inerrant Word of God) as the 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 central article of Scripture and the Confessions is justification by faith alone. We are declared righteous by nothing we do or accomplish, but alone on the basis of Christ's redemptive work which is counted as ours through faith in the Savior. He accomplished salvation for all on the cross and announced it to all by His resurrection declaring the whole world righteous. This wonderful treasure is offered to us in the means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments, and is received by faith alone in Him as the Savior, which faith is worked, strengthened, and preserved through these same means of grace. This is the message of salvation proclaimed by each member church of the CELC.

– Gaylin R. Schmelting

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## The Americanization Process in the Second Generation: The German Lutheran Matthias Loy (1828–1915) Caught Between Adaptation and Repristinization

Fry, C. George, and Joel R. Kurz. *The Americanization Process in the Second Generation: The German Lutheran Matthias Loy (1821–1915) Caught Between Adaptation and Repristinization*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005. 366 pages. \$119.19.

Matthias Loy (1828–1915) was a giant of the Ohio Synod, one of the synods which formed the American Lutheran Church (ALC) of 1930. The ALC was formed when the Ohio Synod was united with the Iowa Synod and the Buffalo Synod. This group, in turn, was one of the church bodies which formed The American Lutheran Church (TALC) of 1960 and ultimately merged into the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 1988.

The first two chapters of the book give a summary of the history of the Ohio Synod. The Ohio Synod began in 1812 when pastors from the Pennsylvania Ministerium organized a conference in western Pennsylvania and Ohio. As these German Lutheran settlers entered the Ohio Valley, they carried with them their precious books including Luther's *German Bible*, his *Hauspostil*, Arndt's *True Christianity*, and the

*Hagerstown Almanac* (4). In a meeting at Somerset, Ohio in 1818, the Ohio Synod separated from its parent organization and became an independent church body. Because the synod was bilingual, it experienced rapid growth. Its college and seminary were established at Columbus, Ohio.

As the immigration of Old Lutherans from Germany increased, the makeup of the church body became more orthodox and confessional. The result was a number of splits in the organization between the German element, which wanted to be truly Lutheran, and the English-speaking element, which wanted more accommodation to the American Lutheranism of Samuel S. Schmucker (1799–1873). A number of small English districts left the synod as it slowly moved toward confessionalism. The desire for the use of the English language was often symptomatic of a tendency toward American Lutheranism and the doctrine of Schmucker's *Definite Platform*. This is not to say that those advocating German were not at times extreme. Some said that the English language itself was not capable of adequately explaining Lutheran doctrine, which was only possible in German.<sup>1</sup> Some even went so far as to say, "Even in Paradise the Lord spoke to Adam in German, for do we not read in the third chapter of Genesis: 'The Lord God called unto Adam and said unto him, Wo bist du?'" (20) In addition, there were problems with union churches, congregations made up of both Lutherans and the

Reformed. This problem increased with the Prussian Union in Germany. As late as 1845, the church body was not willing to vote to reject the Prussian Union distribution formula: "Jesus says, 'This is My body. This is My blood.'"

The Ohio Synod continued its slow process toward confessionalism so that by 1872 it was one of the founding members of the Synodical Conference. Its membership in the Synodical Conference, however, was quite brief. Because of the Election Controversy in the 1880s, it left the Synodical Conference and remained a separate organization until 1930.

Chapters 3–6 speak of Matthias Loy's early years, his life as a pastor, educator, editor, and author. Loy was born in 1828 to immigrant German parents in Pennsylvania's Blue Mountains. Later, his family moved to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where he served as a printer's apprentice. He became interested in the public ministry and hoped to attend Gettysburg Seminary; however, he received a scholarship to enter the Ohio Synod's seminary at Capital University in Columbus.

After graduating from seminary in Columbus, Loy served a union congregation including both Lutheran and Reformed members in Delaware, Ohio (73–79). The congregation appreciated Loy because he was able to preach in both English and German. Loy showed himself to be an ardent Lutheran by leading the Lutherans out of this unionistic partnership to form their own congregation (81). During his time at this parish he faced struggles with

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<sup>1</sup> It was assumed that English was synergistic by its very nature.

open communion (86-87), a proper use of private absolution (93), and the Lodge (96).

In 1853, Loy added teaching at Capital University to his duties as parish pastor. In 1864 he became editor of the *Lutheran Standard* and the following year he became a professor at the seminary. He was a professor at the seminary from 1865–1915 and was president of Capital University from 1881–1890 (100). A theological journal was established at Capital entitled, *Columbus Theological Magazine*. Its founder and editor was Loy.

Chapters 7–9 describe Loy as a church leader and president of the Ohio Synod. He was elected president of the synod in 1860 and continued until 1894, with a hiatus in the years 1878–1880. In the 1860s, Loy hoped that the Ohio synod would be able to unite with the General Council; however, the General Council was never able to resolve the conflict concerning the Four Points in its midst (209).<sup>2</sup> Therefore, Ohio did not join the General Council, as was the case with the Wisconsin Synod and the Minnesota Synod.

Probably the most difficult event that occurred during Loy's presidency was the Election Controversy. He had been striving to move the Ohio

Synod toward fellowship with the Missouri Synod. That was accomplished in 1872, but shortly thereafter doctrinal controversy ripped apart the organization. Loy and the Ohio Synod viewed Walther's presentation of election as crypto-Calvinistic (226).

The Missouri Synod taught that God elected men *unto* faith (*ad fidem*); that God's eternal decree of election was the cause *of* faith—predestination preceded faith. The doctrine, therefore, was a theological one, for it concerned the mystery God's will. The Ohio Synod held, on the other hand, that God elected men *in view of* faith (*intuitu fidei*); that God's eternal decree of election was caused *by* faith—faith preceded predestination. The subject, therefore, was a psychological or anthropological one, for it involved the mystery of the human will. (226)

From the above, one can see that Walther taught the scriptural doctrine—that we are elected alone by God's grace and not on the basis of anything in men—while the Ohio Synod position resulted in synergism.

The authors of this book make this interesting observation concerning the results of the Election Controversy. They believe that it drew the Lutheran theologians who were involved away from the questions of biblical criticism and evolution, which were burning issues in the American church at the time. While other

<sup>2</sup> "Loy made it clear to the constitutional committee, of which he was a member, that Ohio could not join the General Council without insisting on a final decision on 'four points' prohibiting (1) the sharing of pulpits with non-Lutherans, (2) the admission of non-Lutherans to Holy Communion, (3) membership in secret societies, and (4) chiliasm, or millennialism."

denominations split into liberal and fundamentalist factions concerning these issues, this was not the case among the church bodies involved in the Election Controversy. The authors quote a Prof. Sheatsley as saying,

[The Election Controversy] sent men into the treasure house of the Sacred Scriptures as well as back into the study of the Confessions of the Church. Indeed it would almost seem to us now that the mighty force which held the Lutheran Church of this country to her moorings in the ... age of rationalism, higher criticism and evolution was the close study given in many quarters to the faith of the fathers.... It may be that this generation after getting the proper perspective may be able to discern the "unfortunate controversy" as a blessing in disguise. (239)

It is the viewpoint of this reviewer that there is some merit in this particular theory. Still it is his conviction that the primary factor that insulated these Lutheran churches from the inroads of higher criticism and evolution was the fact that these church bodies spoke primarily the German language and were not as influenced by issues in the American culture. They lived in an ethnically Germanic subculture that separated and sheltered them from the influences of the greater Anglo culture.

Chapters 10–12 summarize Matthias Loy's life as preacher, theologian and family man. The

Victorian age was the golden age of the American pulpit. Colorful preachers could become national figures like movie stars today. While Loy was not as dynamic as many of the other American preachers, within his German Lutheran circles he was a powerful figure (247). Loy taught homiletics for almost half a century to pastors of the Ohio Synod and as synod president he was asked to speak on many major occasions. Loy believed that sermons should be written out in full (262), and the manuscript should be properly memorized for presentation (264). At the same time, when there was a need, he was not above reading, though he was never happy with this situation (265). Loy stated, "Certainly a better way is to teach students to write their sermons and memorize them. When they are early trained to do this the committing to memory soon becomes so easy that it is the work of but a few hours, and the preacher has all the advantages of a carefully worked sermon and unhampered delivery" (264).

As a theologian, Loy considered himself to be a Protestant scholastic of the seventeenth century stripe (281). According to the authors of the book, biblical scholasticism of the seventeenth century and its nineteenth-century repristination included three elements. These three elements identified in seventeenth century Lutheran Orthodoxy were authority, methodology, and adherence to tradition (282).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> These three elements are also used in Theodore G. Tappert, "Orthodoxism, Pietism, and Rationalism," in *The Lutheran*

The Orthodox Lutheran theologians considered Holy Scripture to be the infallible Word of God and the final authority in doctrine and practice. Loy maintained the verbal inspiration of Scripture as did the seventeenth-century theologians, such as Quenstedt (283). They maintained that this had always been the teaching of the church.

The second formative element in seventeenth-century Lutheran Orthodoxy is the reintroduction of Aristotelian methodology. David Hollaz, theologian, pastor, and rector who died in 1713, suggested that

Without the use of reason we cannot understand or prove theological doctrines, or defend them against the artful objections of opponents. Surely not to brutes, but to men using their sound reason, has God revealed the knowledge of eternal salvation in His Word, and upon them He has imposed the earnest injunction to read, hear, and meditate upon His Word. The *intellect* is therefore required, as the *receiving subject* or *apprehending instrument*. As we can see nothing without eyes, and hear nothing without ears, so we understand nothing without reason. (284)

This, of course, refers to the ministerial use of reason, not the magisterial.

The third formative element in Lutheran Orthodoxy was a pervasive

traditionalism. Loy considered his primary work the preservation of the truths of Scripture handed down from the fathers. "Theology's task was essentially to conserve, and the theologian was a curator rather than a creator of truth" (285). The corpus of tradition was found in the Lutheran Confessions, as contained in the *Book of Concord*, for "the Confessions are decisive because they are the expression of the church's consent to the contents of that Word," the Scriptures (287). The Lutheran Confessions are a correct exposition of Holy Scripture.

In addition to his contributions in the theological magazines of the Ohio Synod, Matthias Loy wrote a number of books: *The Doctrine of Justification*, 1868; *Sermons on the Gospels*, 1888; *Christian Church*, 1896; *The Story of My Life*, 1905. He was also an important American Lutheran hymn writer. His hymns in the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* include, "Lord Jesus, Though But Two or Three" (5), "The Gospel Shows the Father's Grace" (233), "At Jesus' Feet Our Infant Sweet" (245), "A Wondrous Mystery Is Here" (309), and "The Law of God Is Good and Wise" (492). In addition he translated hymns 24, 100, 221, 290, 394, 417, 427, 491, and 551.

*The Americanization Process in the Second Generation* is an excellent contribution to the study of Lutheranism in American and to the study of the Ohio Synod and Matthias Loy in particular. There is a dearth of current, historical material concerning the Ohio Synod and even less concerning the life of Loy. This book definitely fills the void.

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*Heritage*, ed. H.C. Letts (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), 43-50.

For those of us who read the history of the Election Controversy from the perspective of Walther and the Norwegian Synod fathers, Loy's insights are extremely interesting. In addition, his vision of Lutheran Orthodoxy is intriguing. This book will be a benefit for every student of American Lutheranism.

— Gaylin R. Schmeling

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## Book Review: A Heart at Peace: Biblical Strategies for Christians in Conflict

Kremer, Kenneth J. *A Heart at Peace: Biblical Strategies for Christians in Conflict*. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2014. 190 pages. \$16.50.

What an excellent idea—a book on resolving human conflict from a biblical perspective!

*A Heart at Peace* is an easy and quick read, totaling fewer than 200 pages of text, plus two very useful appendices as well as endnotes. One adjustment I would prefer would be to include more of the Scripture passages directly in the text rather than referencing them in the endnotes. This would not only be helpful for readers with limited biblical knowledge, but would also avoid the distraction of paging back and forth while reading through the text.

If you choose to read this book, be sure to read the opening section entitled “From the Author.” It is helpful to know and understand the author’s background and credentials.

Mr. Kremer does not claim his book is the only answer, or even the perfect answer, to all conflict. But it is good to know that Mr. Kremer has lived the words of the book he has written. It is also advisable to take the time to read the introduction to the book carefully since it does an excellent job of mapping out the direction and goal of the book.

Mr. Kremer uses Part One (chapters one to seven) to describe why conflict, a result of sin, is so much a part of our lives. He speaks to the matter of conflict patterns and escalations, and how sin so easily turns little problems into big issues. In order to bring his lessons to life, the author provides a fictitious example of Peace Lutheran Church and the problems she faces through a difficult phase of her history. As a result, readers experience firsthand exactly what the author is talking about; additionally, the illustration compels one to keep reading so as to discover how things turn out for Peace Lutheran Church and how her conflicts are resolved.

In Part Two (chapters eight through fourteen) Mr. Kremer lays out many biblical exhortations to become and continue to be a Peace Maker, and also provides sound principles and tools to do the very task for which God calls us: first enjoying His peace, then sharing His peace with others.

Part Three is the shortest section of the book (chapter fifteen). It contains quite possibly the most educational section of all: practicing peace with the unbelieving world. This section is followed by two supplemental sections helping readers share the



practice of peace with children. The only weakness of the supplemental sections is that more might have been added on modelling peace as well as teaching it to children.

One of the greatest benefits of this book is that it constantly takes the reader back to the grace of God and all He has done to make peace with us. The author does not hesitate to connect conflict with sin and resolution to forgiveness.

There are a couple of areas which the author could have explored in more depth, such as preventing conflict before it develops, managing the spirit of relationships and entities such as church councils to prevent giving the devil a foothold in the first place, and utilizing the act of confession through all phases of a conflict.

In summary, there is more than enough material in this book to interest and educate the casual reader. I would recommend it for church officers, called staff members of churches and schools, and the general membership of congregations. You can also purchase an accompanying Bible study and a devotional booklet, but they are probably best used after reading the book itself.

While I do feel this book would also have something to offer pastors,

there are a few items that might rub them the wrong way. For instance, Mr. Kremer employs two speculative narratives, one about Cain and Abel and one about the sinful woman of John chapter eight. He includes them to “help the reader get a grip on the reality of conflict and zero in on conflict’s sin driven origin.” Since pastors are charged with the duty of not speculating beyond what God provides in his Word, these illustrations can get in the way of fully appreciating the book. Mr. Kremer also has a few overstatements, such as Jacob’s dislocated hip being a permanent disability (chapter 11). A few other statements were made that must be read within their context, such as the new man and the sanctified decision-making process; otherwise, misunderstanding could result. With a Peace Maker’s Heart in mind, I would not let these concerns prevent anyone, even pastors, from reading this excellent work or sharing it with friends and fellow members.

The benefits of logically laying out the dynamics of conflict as well as the systematic biblical approach to resolving them makes this a welcome addition to any library.

– Nathan C. Krause



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