

LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY



VOLUME 55 • NUMBERS 2–3

JUNE–SEPTEMBER 2015

**Galatians 1–2: A Brief Summary of Luther's
Works 26 and An Exegesis of Galatians 2:11–21**

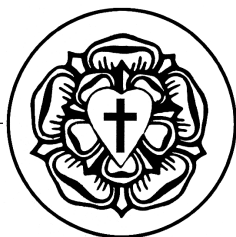
**In the World But Not of the World:
Engaging a World of Sinners Without
Engaging in Ecumenism**

Christian Witnessing with Natural Law

Jericho: A Place with a Past That Won't Go Away

Compassion Fatigue: A Problem for Pastors

LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY



VOLUME 55 • NUMBERS 2-3
JUNE-SEPTEMBER 2015

The journal of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary

LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF..... Gaylin R. Schmeling
BOOK REVIEW EDITOR..... Michael K. Smith
LAYOUT EDITOR..... Daniel J. Hartwig
PRINTER..... Books of the Way of the Lord

The *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* (ISSN: 0360-9685) is edited by the faculty of
Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary
6 Browns Court
Mankato, Minnesota 56001

The *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* is a continuation of the *Clergy Bulletin* (1941–1960). The purpose of the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, as was the purpose of the *Clergy Bulletin*, is to provide a testimony of the theological position of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and also to promote the academic growth of her clergy roster by providing scholarly articles, rooted in the inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* is published in March and December with a combined June and September issue. Subscription rates are \$25.00 U.S. per year for domestic subscriptions and \$35.00 U.S. per year for international subscriptions.

All subscriptions and editorial correspondence should be sent to the following address:

Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary
Attn: *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*
6 Browns Ct
Mankato MN 56001

Back issues of the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* from the past two years are available at a cost of \$10.00 per issue. Back issues of the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* and *Clergy Bulletin* prior to the past two years are available at <www.blts.edu/lsq>.

The *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* is abstracted in *Religious and Theological Abstracts*, PO Box 215, Myerstown, PA 17067 (E-mail: <rtabst@leba.net>; Website: <www.rtabst.org/abstracts>).

Copyright ©2015 by Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. Requests for permission to reproduce more than brief excerpts are to be directed to the Editor-in-Chief.



Contents

LSQ Vol. 55, Nos. 2–3 (June–September 2015)

Galatians 1-2: A Brief Summary of Luther's Works 26 and An Exegesis of Galatians 2:11-21	119
<i>Michael K. Smith</i>	
In the World But Not of the World: Engaging a World of Sinners Without Engaging in Ecumenism.....	169
<i>Edward L. Bryant</i>	
Christian Witnessing with Natural Law	197
<i>Allen J. Quist</i>	
Jericho: A Place with a Past That Won't Go Away.....	219
<i>Adolph L. Harstad</i>	
Compassion Fatigue: A Problem for Pastors	239
<i>Jerome T. Gernander</i>	
Journey of the Resolute	257
<i>Matthew W. Crick</i>	

BOOK REVIEW

Book Review: A Commentary on 1 & 2 Peter, Jude.....	259
<i>Michael K. Smith</i>	

Foreword

LSQ Vol. 55, Nos. 2–3 (June–September 2015)

IT IS NO SECRET THAT DR. MARTIN LUTHER HAD A deep appreciation for Paul’s letter to the Galatians. In partial preparation for the upcoming 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, this paper provides a summary of Luther’s commentary on Galatians 1–2 (LW 26). Also included is an exegesis of Galatians 2:11–21 by the author. The article was written by Prof. Michael K. Smith, who teaches New Testament at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota.

Each Christian struggles with the question: How do we do a better job of getting out of our own circles to interact meaningfully in our world with the gospel? How can we engage others in our community and throughout the world with Christ Jesus? These are the difficult questions that are confronted in the article, “In the World But Not of the World: Engaging a World of Sinners Without Engaging in Ecumenism” by the Rev. Edward Bryant. The Rev. Bryant is pastor of St. Timothy Lutheran Church in Lombard, Illinois.

Natural law is denied by the most influential worldviews of Western culture in our time. Whether we speak of secular humanism, postmodernism, logical positivism, materialism, or behaviorism—all of which have their roots in Darwinism—the contemporary and non-biblical ideologies of today typically reject all moral law including natural law. The purpose of the paper entitled “Christian Witnessing with Natural Law” is to provide a proper understanding of natural law, which will be

of benefit in evangelism and Christian missions. This article was written by Mr. Allen Quist of St. Peter, Minnesota.

Jericho is one of the world's oldest cities and one of the best known biblical sites. From the time of Joshua to the age of Herod the Great and continuing to today, Jericho has been in the news. Its reputation does not seem to wane. The author of this article explores Jericho and uses the city as a kind of exemplar for issues of biblical archaeology. The author has visited Jericho many times over the last forty years. The article was written by Prof. Adolph L. Harstad, who teaches Old Testament at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota.

In the article "Compassion Fatigue: A Problem For Pastors," the Rev. Jerome Gernander indicates that the landscape is littered with pastors who have broken down in some way. According to a book published in 2014, *Fail: Finding Hope and Grace in the Midst of Ministry Failure*, 1,500 pastors leave the ministry each month. This article refers to compassion fatigue as one of the explanations for this dismal situation and gives resources to assist pastors. The Rev. Gernander is pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church in Princeton, Minnesota.

Also included in this *Quarterly* is a Lenten poem by the Rev. Matthew Crick, who is pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in Medford, Oregon, and a book review by Prof. Michael Smith.

– GRS

Galatians 1–2: A Brief Summary of Luther’s Works 26 and An Exegesis of Galatians 2:11–21

Michael K. Smith
Professor, Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary
Mankato, Minnesota

LSQ Vol. 55, Nos. 2–3 (June–September 2015)

TO SAY THAT DR. MARTIN LUTHER HAD AN affinity for and deep appreciation of Paul’s letter to the Galatians is akin to saying that winter in Minnesota can be cold. “The Epistle to the Galatians,’ he once said at table, ‘is my epistle, to which I am betrothed. It is my Katie von Bora.”¹ Luther first lectured on Galatians in 1516–17 and published a commentary (with revisions and expansions) in 1519 based on these lectures. These earlier lectures are recorded in the American Edition of *Luther’s Works* volume 27.²

Luther’s exposition of Galatians as recorded in LW 26 is taken from his lectures on this vital epistle of Paul given in 1531 and compiled in 1535. George Röer was the primary transcriber and editor of Luther’s lectures on Galatians; his notes appear in the Weimar edition. Veit Dietrich and Caspar Cruciger also aided in this work. Luther himself acknowledged that his lectures as compiled were accurate: “I recognize that all the thoughts set down by the brethren with such care in this book are my own” (x).

¹ Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535, Chapters 1–4, Luther’s Works* Volume 26, ed. and trans. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), ix. Unless otherwise noted, hereafter all references to this volume will be given via the page number in parentheses immediately following the citation.

² Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535, Chapters 5–6; Lectures on Galatians 1519, Luther’s Works* Volume 27, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, trans. Jaroslav Pelikan and Richard Jungkuntz (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), ix.

The approach of this paper will be as follows. The initial portion of the paper will present somewhat of a compendium of Luther's commentary of the first two chapters of Galatians. In this initial section Luther will speak for himself to a moderate extent and summaries of his comments will comprise the remainder of this compendium. Luther's divisions of the text will be followed in this section. The second section of the paper will be an exegesis of Galatians 2:11–21. Finally, the author's own (relatively literal) translation of Galatians 1–2 will be presented.

Luther on Galatians

At the outset of his 1531 lectures, Luther explains why he chose to lecture again on this letter.

We have taken it upon ourselves in the Lord's name to lecture on this Epistle of Paul to the Galatians once more. This is not because we want to teach something new or unknown, for by the grace of God Paul is now very well known to you. But it is because, as I often warn you, there is a clear and present danger that the devil may take away from us the pure doctrine of faith and may substitute for it the doctrines of works and of human traditions. . . . Therefore this doctrine can never be discussed and taught enough. If it is lost and perishes, the whole knowledge of truth, life, and salvation is lost and perishes at the same time. But if it flourishes, everything good flourishes—religion, true worship, the glory of God, and the right knowledge of all things and of all social conditions. (3)

Prior to his exposition of the text proper, Luther expounds briefly on the "argument" that he believes Paul sets forth in Galatians. "The argument is this: Paul wants to establish the doctrine of faith, grace, the forgiveness of sins or Christian righteousness, so that we may have a perfect knowledge and know the difference between Christian righteousness and all other kinds of righteousness" (4). All other kinds of righteousness are based on works and do not require any assistance from God's grace to achieve. But the righteousness which God grants is purely by grace; Luther calls it a "passive righteousness" (5). This righteousness cannot be grasped fully by the human mind (because of the *opinio legis*); "...this is the righteousness of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, which we do not perform but receive, which we do not have but accept, when God the Father grants it to us through Jesus Christ" (6).

Luther admonishes his hearers/readers, “especially those of you who are to become instructors of consciences... that you exercise yourselves by study, by reading, by meditation, and by prayer, so that in temptation you will be able to instruct consciences, both your own and others, console them, and take them from the Law to grace, from active righteousness to passive righteousness, in short, from Moses to Christ” (10). Within these opening words it is easy to hear the themes of *sola gratia* and *sola fide*. Emphasizing the ever-vital theme of a proper understanding of justification, Luther comments, “For if the doctrine of justification is lost, the whole of Christian doctrine is lost” (9).

Galatians 1

verses 1–2

1. *Paul an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead*—2. *and all the brethren who are with me.*

Due to the false teachers (to whom Luther likens the pope) attacking and subverting Paul and his doctrine, Paul believes that he needs to defend himself and the teaching he brought to the Galatians by using a good offense. In fact, Luther maintains that this is Paul’s primary goal throughout the first two chapters of Galatians, in which “he does almost nothing else but set forth his calling, his ministry, and his Gospel” (15–16). Such confidence on Paul’s part serves as an inspiration to every minister because, like Paul, he has been called and sent by God himself (16).

verse 1

1. *Paul an apostle—not from men, etc.*

Luther states that the false teachers who had infiltrated the Galatian churches claimed to have apostolic teaching and authority while Paul did not. Counteracting successfully this accusation, Paul presents his credentials: “But as for me, I have been called and sent neither from men nor through man but immediately, that is, by Jesus Christ Himself” (19). While present-day pastors cannot make the same claim (the immediate call), to them belong the “heavenly and holy office” by which the very gates of hell are overcome (20).

1. *And through God the Father, who raised Him from the dead.*

Rather than being mere words of explanation in his greeting regarding the precise identity of God the Father, Luther chooses to view these words as a primary precursor of what follows: “Thus at the very outset Paul explodes with the entire issue he intends to set forth in this epistle. He refers to the resurrection of Christ, who rose again for our justification (Rom. 4:25)” (21).

verse 2

2. *And all the brethren who are with me.*

In order to show that he is not a sole voice speaking against the false teachers—even though his apostolic authority is sufficient in the battle—Paul calls on the support of his “comrades in arms” to give witness to the truthfulness of his teaching (22). Such a reference dispels any notions of pride on Paul’s part (23).

2. *To the churches of Galatia.*

Paul was a pioneer missionary, breaking new ground for the gospel. The false teachers, says Luther, took advantage of Paul’s work and infiltrated places where the gospel already held sway. He compares that situation to any day and age: “Here you should learn that pious preachers have this lot in life. In addition to the persecution that they have to endure from the wicked and ungrateful world and the hard labor that they experience in planting churches, they are forced to see the quick overthrow of what they had taught for so long in its purity, at the hands of the fanatics, who thereupon lord it over them and get the upper hand. This causes more anguish for godly ministers than any persecution by tyrants” (23).

In addition, the fact that many of the Galatian Christians had been swayed by the false teachers did not exclude them from comprising the church since “Baptism, the Word, and the name of Christ still continued among them” (25). As long as the marks of the church are present, even the presence and influence of the fanatics of Luther’s day did not destroy the church (25).

verse 3

3. *Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

This greeting common to Paul’s letters deserves special attention, says Luther, especially the two words “grace” and “peace.” He claims that “these two words embrace the whole of Christianity. Grace forgives

sin, and peace stills the conscience” (26). It is only the heavenly grace and peace, not the world’s versions thereof, that provide the troubled sinner refuge and comfort. The inclusion of “our Lord Jesus Christ” in this greeting should not be overlooked. The God who brings grace and peace to this world *is* the incarnate God, “Christ born of the Virgin as our Mediator and High Priest” (28). Luther’s theology, as well as Paul’s, is unabashedly incarnational: “This is why Paul makes such a frequent practice of linking Jesus Christ with God the Father, to teach us what is the true Christian religion. It does not begin at the top, as all other religions do; it begins at the bottom” (30).

verse 4

4. *Who gave Himself for our sins.*

To this appositive Luther attributes great power: “These words are a veritable thunderbolt from heaven against every kind of righteousness...” (32). Only the power of the blood of the Lamb of God could make satisfaction for the sins of the entire world (33). There is no sin too great that it cannot be covered by Christ’s sacrifice: “But you must learn from Paul here to believe that Christ was given, not for sham or counterfeit sins, nor yet for small sins, but for great and huge sins; not for one or two sins but for all sins; not for sins that have been overcome—for neither man nor angel is able to overcome even the tiniest sin—but for invincible sins” (35). Only those who believe they are included in “our” will be recipients of eternal salvation (35–36). The sacrifice of Jesus is definitely sufficient for all mankind: “Learn this definition carefully. Especially practice this pronoun ‘our’ in such a way that this syllable, once believed, may swallow up and absorb all your sins, that is, that you may be certain that Christ has taken away not only the sins of some men but your sins and those of the whole world. The offering was for the sins of the whole world, even though the whole world does not believe” (38).

verse 6

6. *I am astonished.*

Referring to Paul’s use of θαυμάζω, Luther commends Paul for using paternal admonition instead of any “harsh and stern words” (43). Had Paul spoken more abrasively, he would not have demonstrated the necessary patience to recall the straying Galatians. Luther goes so far as to say that Paul shows maternal warmth for the Galatians because he speaks so gently to them. “When a child has been bitten by a dog, the

parents chase the dog but console and soothe the weeping child with the sweetest of words” (44).

6. *That so quickly.*

How easily a Christian can fall from the faith, believes Luther, destroying not only themselves but also the hard work of faithful pastors (45)! Thus it is vital vigilantly to stand guard against the devil who would like nothing better than “to come while we are asleep and plant tares among the wheat (Matt. 13:25)” (46).

6. *You are removed.*

Luther again commends Paul here for using mild language to describe the plight of the Galatians. He understands μετατιθεσθε to be of a passive nature, placing the primary blame for the Galatians’ fall from faith not on them but on outside forces.³ At the same time, Luther believes Paul is chiding the Galatians in part: “Still I do wish that you had been a little more mature in the strength of sound doctrine. You did not take hold firmly enough of the Word; you did not sink your roots deeply enough in it. That is why such a light breeze can carry you away so quickly” (47).

6. *To a different gospel.*

When the devil wants to attack pure doctrine, what methods does he employ? “He peddles his deadly poison as the doctrine of grace,” says Luther (49). The devil makes his teaching appear to be the correct version of the true gospel, instead of promoting a completely different gospel (50). Such sly means are still employed by the devil today and compel Christians to “hold tightly to Christ and to His Word” (51).

verse 7

7. *Not that there is another [or Although there is not another] gospel, but there are some who trouble you.*

Here again, believes Luther, Paul is mild in his approach to the Galatians. He paraphrases Paul: “I am not accusing you so much as I am accusing those troublemakers who are disturbing your consciences and snatching you out of my hand” (51). Luther makes application of this verse to his day, citing especially anyone who teaches that one must do works and maintain the Law in order to be saved does indeed “trouble” the church (52).

³ Luther’s understanding of μετατιθεσθε is incorrect: it should more properly be understood to mean “deserting, becoming apostate.”

7. *And want to pervert the Gospel of Christ.*

The false teachers against whom Paul fought did not simply want to mislead the Galatians; they also were “intent on...utterly destroying and extinguishing the Gospel of Christ” (53). The false doctrine these teachers were promoting could be reduced to the doctrine of the Law. This false doctrine and the doctrine of grace cannot coexist: “One of them must be rejected and abolished, and the other must be confirmed or substantiated” (54).

verse 8

8. *But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed.*

“Here Paul is breathing fire. His zeal is so fervent that he almost begins to curse the angels themselves” (55), Luther exclaims. After giving a brief analysis of ἀνάθεμα, Luther comments that Paul displays clever debating skills by wishing himself accursed first. Paul so strongly believes the gospel he preached to be the only correct one that he speaks so boldly.

verse 9

9. *As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.*

Luther emphasizes the need to observe Paul’s shift in persons here.

He does this intentionally, to keep the Galatians from saying: “Paul, we have not changed the Gospel that you preached to us. We had misunderstood you, but the teachers who came after you have set us straight.” “I will not stand for this,” he says. “They should neither add anything nor correct anything. What you heard from me was the pure Word of God. Let only this stand. I myself do not want to be a different teacher of the Gospel from what I was, nor do I want you to be different pupils. Therefore if you hear anyone teaching a gospel different from the one you heard from me, or bragging that he will bring you something better than what you received from me, let him and his disciples be accursed.” (56)

Harkening to his comments regarding the initial two verses of this chapter, in his comments on verse 9 Luther again maintains that the primary doctrine of the epistle (justification) has not been addressed.

Rather, chapters one and two of the letter are filled with “defenses and refutations” (57). Even so, Luther is able to use what Paul has written thus far to argue that neither the pope nor the church has authority over Scripture.

verse 10

10. *Am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God?*

According to Luther, Paul’s boldness in preaching the gospel makes the answer to his question quite clear. The message of the gospel does not naturally curry favor with men. “For the world finds nothing more irritating and intolerable than hearing its wisdom, righteousness, religion, and power condemned” (58). Our boldness to preach the pure gospel gives us the impetus and strength to condemn any other so-called gospel (59).

10. *Or am I trying to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ.*

With his teaching Paul is seeking only to be faithful to the God that called him. He does not desire praise from men for his doctrine.

verses 11–12

11. *For I would have you know, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached by me is not man’s Gospel.*

12. *For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Luther maintains these verses express the epitome of the first two chapters of Galatians (61). The fact that Paul’s gospel is “not man’s Gospel” (v. 11) emphasizes its divinity. Correspondingly, Luther points out, by juxtaposing not receiving the gospel from man but from Jesus Christ, Paul is indicating Jesus to be no mere man but true God and true man simultaneously.

The attack of the false teachers or apostles on Paul’s character was based on the fact that he did not receive his doctrine from them. Their argument gained traction with the Galatians, in part due to their weakness of faith. On top of that, the main teaching being perverted—justification—is not easily grasped. “By this subtlety the false apostles easily deceived the Galatians, who were not well grounded in faith but were still weak. Besides, the question of justification is an elusive thing—not in itself, for in itself it is firm and sure, but so far as we are concerned” (63). Luther admits that even for someone like himself,

mature in his faith, it is difficult always to stand firm. Luther was no stranger to *Anfechtungen* and grants that the Galatians may have been more susceptible to being led astray. He closes his comments on these verses with numerous comparisons to the teachers of his day, making it clear that everyone of Luther's mindset should be "certain of his calling and doctrine" (67).

verses 13–14

13. *For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it;*

14. *and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people.*

Paul cites part of his own experience to demonstrate the uselessness of pursuing justification through the law. Had this been possible, would not Paul, as a Pharisee, been able to achieve it (68)?

14. *So extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.*

Luther points out that, contra Jerome, Paul is not speaking here about the laws of the Pharisees. Rather, "he calls even the holy Law of Moses 'the traditions of my fathers,' in the sense that they were handed down and received as a legacy from the fathers" (68).

verses 15–17

15. *But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through His grace,*

16. *was pleased to reveal His Son to me, in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood,*

17. *nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus.*

Speaking about his first journey, Paul here emphasizes the pure grace of God in calling him to be an apostle. Luther details some of his experience which mirrors the unworthiness of Paul to receive such grace.

I crucified Christ daily in my monastic life, and I blasphemed God through the false trust in which I was constantly living. Outwardly I was not like other men: extortioners, unjust, adulterers (Luke 18:11). I observed chastity, poverty, and obedience. In addition, I was free of the cares of this present life and was

devoted only to fasting, vigils, prayers, reading Mass, and things like that. Nevertheless, under the cover of this sanctity and confidence I was nursing incessant mistrust, doubt, fear, hatred, and blasphemy against God. This righteousness of mine was nothing but a cesspool and the delightful kingdom of the devil. (70)

16. *To reveal His Son to me.*

Only through the gospel is Jesus revealed. The law does not reveal him; he “is revealed by God, first by the external Word and then inwardly through the Spirit. Therefore the Gospel is a divine Word that came down from heaven and is revealed by the Holy Spirit...” (73).

16. *That I might preach Him among the Gentiles.*

Luther points out that not only did Paul emphasize that he was sent to the Gentiles and not to the Jews, he also stresses the content of his message. Paul was not to preach the law to the Gentiles as their Moses, but to show them Christ, pure and simple (73). This reality opposes the false teachers, who were directing the Galatians back to the law instead of the gospel (74).

17. *Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus.*

Just as Paul did not receive his doctrine from the other apostles, so Luther and his co-reformers “did not receive our doctrine from the pope” (75). They received their doctrine from God as a gift through studying, reading, and researching it, contrary to the advice of their opponents who wanted them to take their doctrine from the pope and his bishops (75).

verses 18–19

18. *Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days.*

19. *But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord’s brother.*

Paul did not deny he visited with certain ones of the apostles; he simply stresses that he did not learn the gospel from them. Luther states Paul’s ultimate motivation for his claims: “But why does Paul repeat so often, almost too often, that he did not learn his Gospel from men or even from the apostles themselves? It is his purpose to persuade the churches of Galatia, which had been led astray by the false apostles, and

to convince them beyond any doubt that his Gospel was the true Word of God” (76).

verses 20–24

20. *(In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!)*

Luther mentions here that Paul found it necessary to swear this oath so that the churches in Galatia would believe what he said (77).

21. *Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.*

22. *And I was still not known by sight to the churches of Christ in Judea;*

23. *they only heard it said: He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.*

24. *And they glorified God because of me.*

Paul completes the recounting of his initial mission work, closing with a statement of approval from the churches in Judea. Paul’s message of the gospel was universally received (78).

Galatians 2

verse 1

1. *Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem.*

One of the questions that arises from this statement of Paul is: To which visit to Jerusalem does Paul refer? Luther opts for a visit sometime after the account recorded in Acts 15: “...I do not think that this is the same controversy that Luke describes in Acts 15. For that one seems to have arisen right after the beginning of the Gospel; but the history that Paul is reciting here seems to have happened much later, because he had already been preaching the Gospel for almost eighteen years” (79–80). Luther gives the reason for this particular visit of Paul to compare what he was preaching with what the other apostles were preaching, so that Paul’s listeners would be assured of his faithfulness to God’s Word (81).

1. *With Barnabas, taking Titus along with me.*

In order to bolster his claim of preaching the pure gospel, Paul brings along two witnesses. Barnabas especially had been with Paul when he preached the gospel and freedom from the law (81).

verse 2

2. *I went up by revelation.*

Luther believes Paul makes this statement to show how he was convinced to go to Jerusalem, even though he may have wanted to be stubborn and remain where he was. For the good of the message, he went: “His purpose was to promote and establish the truth of the Gospel” (81).

2. *And I laid before them the Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles.*

The topic of discussion at this meeting of Paul and the other apostles, according to Luther, was whether or not people were justified by the law or by the gospel, and whether or not people had to observe the law in order to be saved. Obviously, Paul put great emphasis on the gospel and stressed that the Gentiles need not observe the law as the Jews had done previously (82).

2. *Lest somehow I should be running or had run in vain.*

Luther insists that Paul himself was not in doubt about the usefulness or results of his gospel proclamation thus far. Paul makes this statement because there were others who thought he had been preaching all these years in vain because he was not pressing the Gentiles into observance of the law (83).

verse 3

3. *But even Titus, who was with me, was not compelled to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.*

The outcome of the meeting between Paul and the other apostles is clear. Luther says that the phrase “was not compelled” meant “that the Gentiles should not be forced to be circumcised...” (83). At the same time, Luther infers that the conference concluded ἐπιείκεια⁴ was in order: the Jews would be allowed to continue practicing circumcision temporarily, not as a means of attaining righteousness but because of tradition and not wanting to offend the weak (83–84). This verse also indicates the “glorious victory” Paul achieved at this meeting since Titus was not circumcised (86).

⁴ The definition of ἐπιείκεια is “the quality of making allowances despite facts that might suggest reason for a different reaction, *clemency, gentleness, graciousness, courtesy, indulgence, tolerance*” (BDAG).

verses 4–5

4. *But because of false brethren secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage—*

5. *to them we did not yield submission even for a moment, that the truth of the Gospel might be preserved for you.*

Ultimately, why did Paul go to Jerusalem? Luther maintains that Paul needed no affirmation from the other apostles or that he himself needed reassurance about his message; he wanted to make sure “that the truth of the Gospel might abide among the Galatians and in all the churches of the Gentiles” (87). Luther summarizes that to which Paul was adhering: “The truth of the Gospel is this, that our righteousness comes by faith alone, without the works of the Law. The falsification or corruption of the Gospel is this, that we are justified by faith but not without the works of the Law” (88). Indeed, Luther says, when Paul places such strong emphasis on maintaining the “truth of the Gospel” he is also countermanding the opposite (89).

Luther compares Paul’s attitude here to that of his own day when he and his co-reformers refused to concede freedom of conscience to the papists, a freedom they would have abandoned had they been co-opted into some brand of work-righteousness: “If faith yields on this point, the death of the Son of God will be in vain. Then it is only a fable that Christ is the Savior of the world. Then God is a liar, for He has not lived up to His promises” (90).

Luther also takes the opportunity to differentiate between the proper uses of the law and the gospel.

But here someone will say: “But the Law is divine and holy.” Let the Law have its glory. But no Law, no matter how divine or holy, has the right to tell me that I obtain justification and life through it. I will grant that it can teach me that I should love God and my neighbor, and live in chastity, patience, etc.; but it is in no position to show me how to be delivered from sin, the devil, death, and hell. For this I must consult the Gospel and listen to the Gospel, which does not teach me what I should do—for that is the proper function of the Law—but what someone else has done for me, namely, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has suffered and died to deliver me from sin and death. (91)

verse 6

6. *And from those who were reputed to be something (what they were makes no difference to me).*

The false apostles who were leading the Galatians astray argued that Paul was not on the same level as the original apostles. Thus when Paul refers to “those who were reputed to be something” he is not dishonoring the apostles but answering the false apostles contemptuously. When the false apostles threw this argument of Paul’s lesser status at the Galatians, Paul says, “So what? This argument does not prove anything. Let the apostles be ever so great; let them even be angels from heaven—that makes no difference to me. The issue in this controversy is the Word of God and the truth of the Gospel. This must be preserved at all costs; this must prevail. Therefore it makes no difference to me how great Peter and the other apostles have been or how many miracles they have performed. What I am contending for is that the truth of the Gospel be preserved among you” (93).

6. *God shows no partiality.*

Luther applies this “*γῶμη* or principle of theology” (94) to everyday life in this way: God has established certain social positions (or masks), and some are deserving of more honor from men than others (97). However, “we are not to worship or adore them” so much so that we put them in God’s place (95). Regarding the apostles, therefore, God does not show partiality to them where the matter of justification is involved (96).

6. *Those, I say, who were of repute added nothing to me.*

Paul is not bragging here; rather, he is standing up for the truth of the gospel he preached. Had he given in to the false teachers and said he learned the gospel from the apostles, all his work would have been undermined (98). Luther compares such a situation to his opposition to the pope, that a certain level of pride in the gospel is necessary: “All we aim for is that the glory of God be preserved and that the righteousness of faith remain pure and sound. Once this has been established, namely that God alone justifies us solely by His grace through Christ, we are willing not only to bear the pope aloft on our hands but also to kiss his feet” (99). Paul’s refusal to yield to anyone is mirrored in Luther’s own attitude of unyielding adherence to the pure gospel (99).

verses 7–9

7. *But on the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the Gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the Gospel to the circumcised*

8. *(for He who worked through Peter for the mission to the circumcised worked through me also to the Gentiles),*

9. *and when they perceived the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.*

Since the false teachers were using the authority of the apostles against him, Paul turns things around and cites the authority of the apostles to support his work. Luther calls this a “rhetorical inversion” (100). He gives Paul credit here for making a powerful argument: “In this unusual way he turns the arguments of his opponents back upon them. These words are filled with sheer ardor, and there is more passion here than mere words can express. This is also why Paul has forgotten his grammar and confused the sentence structure” (100).

Regarding the phrases “the Gospel of uncircumcision” and “the Gospel of circumcision,” Luther explains that these phrases can be used in an active or passive sense.⁵

Luther summarizes these verses in part by mentioning that they demonstrate the clear equality of the apostles since they had “the same calling, the same commission, and the same Gospel” (102). None of the apostles should have been considered any greater than the others. Thus also, the pope has no right to claim the primacy of Peter among the apostles (103).

8. *For He who worked through Peter, etc.*

Since the false teachers were placing Peter on a higher pedestal than Paul, Luther states that Paul lays claim to the same power of Peter since both received their power from the Holy Spirit. Paul is not afraid of being bold in making this claim: “In short, Paul refuses to be regarded as inferior to the rest of the apostles in any way, and he takes a pious and holy pride in this” (103).

⁵ In our day we would refer to these as examples of genitives of destination or purpose. Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 101. These might also be referred to simply as objective genitives.

9. *The right hand of fellowship.*

This is a strong indication of what Paul had been claiming, that his gospel and doctrine was the same as the other apostles. Circumcision should have been an adiaphoron in the context of the gospel. Luther posits this opinion regarding circumcision as a ceremony: "I also believe that if the believing Jews at that time had observed the Law and circumcision under the condition permitted by the apostles, Judaism would have remained standing until now, and the whole world would have accepted the ceremonies of the Jews. But because they insisted on the Law and circumcision as something necessary for salvation and constructed an act of worship and some sort of god out of it, God could not stand for it" (105).

verse 10

10. *Only they would have us remember the poor, which very thing I was eager to do.*

Paul is not reluctant to keep the poor in mind as he preached the gospel. "...Everywhere true religion is in need, and Christ complains that He is hungry, thirsty, without shelter, naked, and sick (Matt. 25:35). On the other hand, false religion and wickedness flourish and abound with all sorts of possessions. Therefore a true bishop must be concerned also about the poor, and Paul here admits that he was" (106).

verse 11

11. *But when Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.*

Regardless of who is threatening the *Hauptartikel* of the church, no matter how much prestige he holds, he must be opposed, believes Luther. Just as some have accused Paul of pride in his opposition to Peter, so also Luther and his allies were accused of being "stubborn and unbending" (107). Note also that Paul opposed Peter "to his face." He did not speak slanderously about him behind his back.

Luther also looks to this verse as a comfort for believers. That is, if even the holy apostles can sin, any Christian can look to that fact and know he is no worse than any other sinner, even the apostles (108). Luther applies this idea to how the church leaders in his day misled the people: "The apostles were not superior to us in anything except in their apostolic office. We have the same gifts that they had, namely, the same Christ, Baptism, Word, and forgiveness of sins. ... This I say in

opposition to the monstrous flattery and praise with which the foolish scholastics and monks have adorned the saints. They said that the church is holy in the sense that it is completely without sin. The church is indeed holy, but it is a sinner at the same time” (109).

verse 12

12. *For before certain men came from James, he ate with the Gentiles. But when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.*

“Here you see Peter’s sin. Paul describes it carefully. He accuses Peter of weakness, not of malice or ignorance. ... Thus he was more concerned about the Jews than about the Gentiles and was responsible for endangering Christian freedom and the truth of the Gospel” (110). Luther continues by stating that Peter’s deed in and of itself was not evil, but the motivation or purpose of his deed was wherein sin lay. Paul could not ignore such a sin because it threatened the very gospel (111).

verse 13

13. *And with him the rest of the Jews acted insincerely,⁶ so that even Barnabas was carried away by their insincerity.*

Luther praises God that he sustained the entire church and the gospel through Paul, even after he had been abandoned by Barnabas and opposed by Peter. Cautioning also against mixing in reason with faith, Luther explains why he holds Paul up as God’s instrument.

I am saying this in order that we may learn the doctrine of justification with the greatest diligence and distinguish most clearly between the Law and the Gospel. On this issue we must not do anything out of insincerity or yield submission to anyone if we want to keep the truth of the Gospel and the faith sound and inviolate; for, as I have said, these are easily bruised. Here let reason be far away, that enemy of faith, which, in the temptations of sin and death, relies not on the righteousness of faith or Christian righteousness, of which it is completely ignorant, but on its own righteousness or, at most, on the righteousness of the Law. As soon as reason and the Law are joined, faith immediately loses its virginity. (113)

⁶ The word translated here in the RSV as “with [him] acted insincerely” is συνυποκρίνομαι, which can also be translated as “join in pretending, playing a part; speak or act falsely along with, join in hypocrisy” (BDAG). The word is a hapax legomenon.

Even the most wise and intelligent person needs to trust in God alone in order not to slip into error or false teaching (114).

verse 14

14. *But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the Gospel.*

Paul is not here accusing Peter and the others of not preaching the gospel. Luther clarifies that Peter and the others were adding law into the gospel, thus abrogating and overthrowing it. A true theologian is one that “knows well how to distinguish the Gospel from the Law...” (115). In fact, all Christian doctrine can be summarized in the proper distinction between law and gospel (117).⁷

14. *I said to Cephas before them all: If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?*

Luther posits that Paul is not chiding Peter for ignorance, since Peter knew precisely what he was doing. Rather, Paul rebukes Peter for being pretentious (118). Luther paraphrases this part of Paul’s rebuke: “You compel them to fall from grace and faith to the Law and works, and to deny Christ, as though He had suffered and died in vain” (119). Luther also maintains that such compulsion abolishes faith and invalidates the promises of God, ultimately resulting in damnation (119).

verse 15

15. *We ourselves, who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners.*

How is a Jew accounted righteous before God? Since Jews are born with the law, they are righteous, but not in the sight of God. Righteousness in God’s sight comes only from Christ through faith. “For if you bind all these together into one bundle—the Law, its works and righteousness, circumcision, adoption, the covenants, the promises, the apostolate, etc.—still Christian righteousness does not come through these; for none of these is Christ” (121).

⁷ Walther includes a lengthy quote from Luther’s treatment of vss. 13–14 in his third lecture on law and gospel. Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, *Law and Gospel: How to Read and Apply the Bible*, ed. Charles P. Schaum, tr. Christian C. Tiews (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010), 30–32.

verse 16

16. *Yet who know that a man is not justified by works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ.*

In his copious comments regarding this verse, Luther attacks the papistic doctrines of *meritum congrui* and *meritum condigni*. When someone apart from faith does a good work and is given grace from God, this grace is given “by congruity.” When that person then does another good work, he receives grace “by condignity.” According to the latter, God is a debtor toward the person and under obligation to grant him eternal life. This system, however, makes Christ and his work superfluous since man has the power to merit grace (124–125).⁸ Neither works done preceding faith or following faith assist man in his justification (127).

Luther summarizes the essence of Christianity thusly:

Now the true meaning of Christianity is this: that a man first acknowledge, through the Law, that he is a sinner, for whom it is impossible to perform any good work. ...[T]hus he justifies God in His Word and confesses that he deserves death and eternal damnation. ...The second step is this: If you want to be saved, your salvation does not come by works; but God has sent His only Son into the world that we might live through Him. ... Therefore the Law only shows sin, terrifies, and humbles; thus it prepares us for justification and drives us to Christ. (126)

Taking the scholastics to task regarding their understanding of God’s demands, Luther clarifies that God is not a tyrant who makes demands what man cannot produce. Thomas Aquinas had stated, “Scripture requires us to say that in addition to our natural love, with which He is not satisfied, God also demands a love that He Himself grants” (128). Luther explains that such a thought means that God not only demands obedience to his law, but that he also demands keeping the law in love. God thus requires man to have a supernatural love “infused into us from heaven...which they call the formal righteousness that informs and adorns faith and makes it justify us. Thus faith is the body, the shell, or the color; but love is the life, the kernel, or the form” (129). Luther shifts the focus away from man to Christ. Our

⁸ Luther later comments that this “wicked and dangerous notion...makes [a man] a Turk, a Jew, an Anabaptist, or a fanatic. For who cannot perform a good work by his own powers without grace and thus merit grace?” (130)

faith is not the “empty husk in the heart” (129) but that which takes hold of Christ, making him “the One who is present in the faith itself” (129). Faith justifies because it lays hold of Christ, not because it is formed by love (130). The man who despairs of his sins and seeks a Savior is shown Christ in the gospel and he takes hold of him by faith. Thus Christ is shown to be not a lawgiver but the propitiator. In addition, God accepts him and considers him righteous solely because of Christ (131–132). Luther defines a Christian as follows: “A Christian is not someone who has no sin or feels no sin; he is someone to whom, because of his faith in Christ, God does not impute his sin” (133). Such a Christian performs good works because they flow from faith (133). Luther concludes his comments on this portion of v. 16 by remarking about God’s “inestimable” patience in not destroying the papacy because of its false teaching regarding justification (136).

16. *Even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the Law.*

Luther once again⁹ states “the true meaning of Christianity” using a shorter definition that encapsulates *sola fide* and summarizes the key thought of v. 16: “...we are justified by faith in Christ, not by the works of the Law” (136). In fact, “When we are involved in a discussion of justification, there is no room for speaking about the Law. The question is what Christ is and what blessing He has brought us” (137). Luther goes so far to say that he does not mind that he and his followers are referred to as “solafideists” by his Roman opponents because of his emphasis on Christ alone for our justification (138).

16. *Because by works of the Law shall no one be justified.*

Here Luther focuses briefly on the meaning of the phrase οὐ...πᾶσα σὰρξ. Referring to it as a Hebraism, he states that it simply means “no flesh” (as opposed to “not all flesh”) and is equivalent to “no one.” He elaborates, however, on the deeper meaning of σὰρξ: “Therefore ‘flesh’ means the entire nature of man, with reason and all his powers. This flesh, he says, is not justified by works, not even by those of the Law” (139). Luther closes his comments on v. 16 with an application of the universal principle expressed therein: “Enlarge on this by running through all the stations of life as follows: ‘Therefore a monk shall not be justified by his order, a nun by her chastity, a citizen by his uprightness, a prince by his generosity, etc.’” (141).

⁹ See p. 126.

verse 17

17. *But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not!*

After giving a 245-word¹⁰ restatement of this verse, Luther states that Paul is here accusing the false teachers and anyone who is self-righteous of changing “Law into grace and grace into Law, Moses into Christ and Christ into Moses” (142). Included in this grouping of people would be “the papists, the Zwinglians, [and] the Anabaptists” (143). Rather than working as an “agent of sin,” the work of Christ is to absolve sinners who believe the gospel (143).

17. *Is Christ then an agent of sin?*

Considering this phrase to be another Hebraism, Luther defines it as “nothing else but a lawgiver, a teacher of the Law, or a taskmaster, who teaches good works and love...” (148). Reiterating that the purpose of the law is to “make guilty those who are smug and at peace” (148), he summarizes the purpose of the law by stating that “all the Law can do is render us naked and guilty” (149). If faith in Christ is not what justifies man, Christ is indeed an agent of sin (150).

17. *Certainly not!*

With this use of Paul’s well-known retort to a rhetorical question, “Paul separates Christ from Moses just as far as he can” (151). Christ’s purpose is not to bind with the law but to liberate with the gospel: “Whatever the miserable and afflicted conscience seeks, that it finds in Christ” (151).

verse 18

18. *But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor.*

Paul has not taught what the false teachers taught; if he had, he would have been sinning against the very Savior who called him to preach. Luther paraphrases Paul in a colorful manner: “Thus by the preaching of the Gospel I have destroyed the Law, lest it continue to rule in the conscience. For Moses, the old settler, has to yield and emigrate somewhere else when Christ, the new guest, comes into the new house to live there alone” (152).

In Luther’s day, among the most egregious offenders against justification by grace through faith alone were the monks. As an example

¹⁰ In the English translation.

of their false teaching in this matter, Luther cites “A Form of Monastic Absolution” which they used in their dealings with one another.

May the merit of the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Blessed and Ever Virgin Mary, and of all the saints; the merit of your order; the burden of your order; the humility of your confession; the contrition of your heart; the good works that you have done and will do for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ—may all this be granted to you for the forgiveness of your sins, for the growth of merit and grace, and for the reward of eternal life. Amen. (154)

Luther points out “that Christ is completely idle here” and that the emphasis is instead placed on the good works of the monks. He admits and regrets how he himself used to be enmeshed in these false ideas of salvation (154).

verse 19

19. *For I through the Law died to the Law, that I might live to God.*

“This is most delicious language” (155). Thus Luther lauds how Paul juxtaposes grace and the law of Moses. Here Luther understands διὰ νόμου in the wide sense; that is, the saving work that Christ carried out for all people (as reflected in Romans 7:4). This “law” of grace overwhelmingly countermands the law that accuses and damns. In this way Paul teaches the very opposite of what the false teachers were promoting, that “unless you live according to the Law, you are dead in the sight of God” (156). In addition, Paul’s statement “I have died to the law” is much more emphatic than other expressions, such as “I am free of, or liberated from the Law for a while” or “I am the lord of the Law” (157).

Twice previously Luther had defined Christianity. He now defines a Christian: “He is a child of grace and of the forgiveness of sins. He has no Law at all, but he is above the Law, sin, death, and hell” (159). Because of this new status, when the Christian is confronted with his sins and feels guilty, he need only look to the bronze serpent, Christ crucified (John 3:14–15), for relief (159). Through Christ alone are we pronounced righteous; the law does not contribute to our salvation at all (160). The Christian has no need to be afraid of the law because of the freedom he has over it in Christ. “Thus Christ is a poison against

the Law, sin, and death, and simultaneously a remedy to regain liberty, righteousness, and eternal life” (163).

verse 20

20. *I have been crucified with Christ.*¹¹

Through grace and faith all the things that were crucified in Christ—“sin, the devil, and death”—are also crucified in the Christian. These enemies no longer have any jurisdiction over the Christian. Thus Paul continues to place the emphasis on Christ alone as the one who accomplishes salvation (165).

20. *Yet not I.*

With this phrase Paul explains Christian righteousness: “...that righteousness by which Christ lives in us, not the righteousness that is in our own person” (166). Luther adds, “But here Christ and my conscience must become one body, so that nothing remains in my sight but Christ, crucified and risen” (166).

20. *Nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me.*

Luther explains that Christ is the true “form” of faith, that “which adorns my faith as color or light adorns a wall” (167). The intimate union of Christ and the Christian is such that the Christian is completely liberated from sin and placed into Christ’s kingdom: “...so far as justification is concerned, Christ and I must be so closely attached that He lives in me and I in him” (167).

20. *And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God.*

Here Luther comments that Paul’s explanation of his life in the flesh can be viewed as “not a true life but only a mask of life, under which there lives another One, namely, Christ, who is truly my Life” (170). This is the key difference between a Christian and an ungodly man regarding how he lives in this physical world (171). The non-Christian can only live a life in the flesh, a life which the Christian no longer lives (172).

20. *Who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

Here is justification boiled down to its basic element: Christ Jesus. Man did not take the initiative in his salvation. Luther expresses how powerful these words of Paul are: “These words, ‘the Son of God,’ ‘He loved me,’ and ‘He gave Himself for me,’ are sheer thunder and heavenly

¹¹ Both the UBS 4 and NA 28 texts place this clause at the end of v. 19. Among the English translations that follow this placement are the GWN, HCSB, and NRSV.

fire against the righteousness of the Law and the doctrine of works” (175).

20. *For me.*

With these words, Luther explains, Paul makes justification very personal: “Who is this ‘me’? It is I, an accursed and damned sinner, who was so beloved by the Son of God that He gave Himself for me” (176). Christ’s role as the ultimate high priest is quite distinct from the role of Moses, whose task it was to be a lawgiver. Christ instead “is nothing but sheer, infinite mercy, which gives and is given” (178). Because of this vast mercy applied in such a personal manner, Christians need never doubt that they are included in the “me” of this verse (179).

21. *I do not nullify the grace of God. For if justification were through the Law, then Christ died to no purpose.*

Luther cites this verse as the second argument of Paul’s letter (180). If a person attempts to be justified through works of the law, he nullifies God’s grace. Luther argues, “If you can show me anyone who has been justified on the basis of the Law of the Decalog, it is still true that Christ died to no purpose. For anyone who is justified on the basis of the Law of the Decalog has within himself the power to acquire righteousness” (181). Rather than clinging to the law or himself, the Christian should count Christ as such a treasure that everything else in comparison is garbage (182). Luther closes his comments on this verse with this conclusion: “For whoever seeks righteousness apart from faith in Christ—whether it be through works or satisfactions or afflictions or the Law of God—is nullifying the grace of God and despising the death of Christ, even though he may speak otherwise with his mouth” (185).

An Exegesis of Galatians 2:11–21

Since this paper was assigned under the “exegetical” banner, what follows is an exegesis of a pericope from Galatians 1–2. This section serves as the epistle reading for Pentecost 4 in Year C of the ILCW series. After the entire text is given in Greek, verses will be examined individually or in pairs. Included in this examination will be the verse(s) as diagrammed. My translation of the section will be set forth thereafter. The translation of the verse(s) under consideration will be given from four modern English translations in parallel format. Subsequently, commentary on and application of the verse(s) will be given.

The Text

¹¹ “Οτε δὲ ἦλθεν Κηφᾶς εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτῷ ἀντέστην, ὅτι κατεγνωσμένος ἦν.

¹² πρὸ τοῦ γὰρ ἐλθεῖν τινὰς ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου μετὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν συνήσθην· ὅτε δὲ ἦλθον, ὑπέστελλον καὶ ἀφώριζεν ἑαυτὸν φοβούμενος τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς.

¹³ καὶ συνυπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ [καὶ] οἱ λοιποὶ Ἰουδαῖοι, ὥστε καὶ Βαρναβᾶς συναπήχθη αὐτῶν τῇ ὑποκρίσει.

¹⁴ ἀλλ’ ὅτε εἶδον ὅτι οὐκ ὀρθοποδοῦσιν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, εἶπον τῷ Κηφᾷ ἔμπροσθεν πάντων· εἰ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὑπάρχων ἐθνικῶς καὶ οὐχὶ Ἰουδαϊκῶς ζῆς, πῶς τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζεις Ἰουδαΐζειν;

¹⁵ ἡμεῖς φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἀμαρτωλοί·

¹⁶ εἰδότες [δὲ] ὅτι οὐ δικαιούται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεῦσαμεν, ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ.

¹⁷ εἰ δὲ ζητοῦντες δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ εὐρέθημεν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἀμαρτωλοί, ἄρα Χριστὸς ἀμαρτίας διάκονος; μὴ γένοιτο.

¹⁸ εἰ γὰρ ἃ κατέλυσα ταῦτα πάλιν οἰκοδομῶ, παραβάτην ἑμαυτὸν συνιστάνω.

¹⁹ ἐγὼ γὰρ διὰ νόμου νόμῳ ἀπέθανον, ἵνα θεῷ ζήσω. Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι·

²⁰ ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῆ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός· ὁ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί, ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ.

²¹ Οὐκ ἀθετῶ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰ γὰρ διὰ νόμου δικαιοσύνη, ἄρα Χριστὸς δωρεὰν ἀπέθανεν.

Verse-by-Verse Translation (with notes on selected vocabulary)

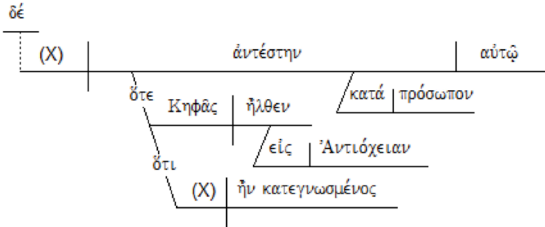
(11) “Οτε δὲ ἦλθεν Κηφᾶς εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτῷ ἀντέστην, ὅτι κατεγνωσμένος ἦν.

- Κηφᾶς—noun nom. m. sg.; *Cephas*; this reading is preferred over Πέτρος, because it is better attested and the more difficult reading
- κατὰ πρόσωπον—prep. + noun acc. n. sg.; *to (his) face*; could be translated as *face to face* or *in person*, but the negative context lends more toward *to (his) face*¹²
- ἀντέστην—aor. act. ind. 1 sg. fr. ἀνθίστημι; *I opposed, set myself* (ἵστημι) *against* (ἀντί); aorist tense reinforces decisive action on Paul’s part; in Mt 12:41 ἀνθίστημι is used for *accusing* in court

¹² All definitions, unless otherwise indicated, are from BDAG.

- κατεγνωσμένος ἦν—pf. pass. ptc. nom. m. sg. fr. καταγινώσκω + impf. act. ind. 3 sg. fr. εἶμι; *he stood condemned* (by his own actions or by his opinions publicly expressed); perfect tense emphasizes the ongoing nature of Peter's status; periphrastic construction also emphasizes the perfective aspect of the participle

Ga 2:11



(Diagrams from Leedy's *NT Diagrams in BibleWorks*)

(11) Now when Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

ESV: But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

NIV: When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

NKJV: Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed;

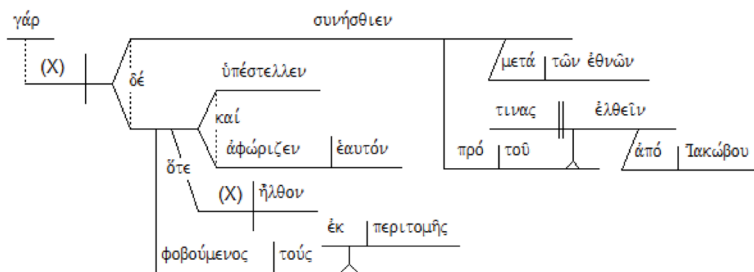
NLT: But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him to his face, for what he did was very wrong.

(12) πρὸ τοῦ γὰρ ἐλθεῖν τινὰς ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου μετὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν συνήσθιεν· ὅτε δὲ ἦλθον, ὑπέστειλεν καὶ ἀφώριζεν ἑαυτὸν φοβούμενος τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς.

- πρὸ τοῦ ... ἐλθεῖν—prep. + art. gen. n. sg. + aor. act. inf. fr. ἔρχομαι; *before [some] came*; articularized infinitive with πρὸ indicates temporal quality
- τινας—indef. pron. acc. m pl.; *some men, certain men*; accusative subject of ἐλθεῖν

- συνήσθιεν—impf. act. ind. 3 sg. fr. συνεσθίω; *he was eating with, he went on eating with*; imperfect tense could be iterative or customary
- ἦλθον—aor. act. ind. 3 pl. fr. ἔρχομαι; *they came*
- ὑπέστειλεν—impf. act. ind. 3 sg. fr. ὑποστέλλω; (*began*) *withdrawing, drawing back*; ingressive force of imperfect
- ἀφώριζεν—impf. act. ind. 3 sg. fr. ἀφορίζω; (*began*) *separating (himself), holding (himself) aloof* (to remove one party from other parties so as to discourage or eliminate contact); ingressive force of imperfect
- φοβούμενος—pres. m/p (dep.) ptc. nom. m. sg. fr. φοβέομαι; (*because he was*) *fearing, afraid of*; circumstantial causal participle; present tense indicates ongoing nature of this fear
- τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς—art. m. pl. + prep. + noun gen. f. sg.; *the ones of the circumcision*

Ga 2:12



(12) For before certain men came from James he {was/went on} eating together with the Gentiles; but when they came he began withdrawing and separating himself because he was fearing the ones of the circumcision.

ESV: For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party.

NIV: For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group.

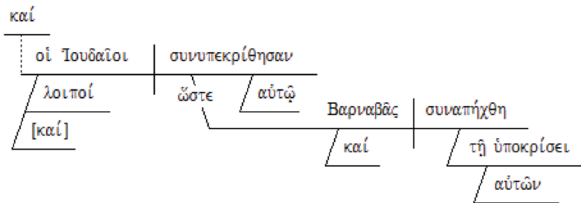
NKJV: for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.

NLT: When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile Christians, who were not circumcised. But afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision.

(13) καὶ συνυπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ [καί] οἱ λοιποὶ Ἰουδαῖοι, ὥστε καὶ Βαρναβᾶς συναπήχθη αὐτῶν τῇ ὑποκρίσει.

- συνυπεκρίθησαν—aor. pass. (dep.) ind. 3 pl. fr. συνυποκρίνομαι; *joined in pretense/hypocrisy, joined in playing a part*; takes a dative; hapax
- οἱ λοιποὶ Ἰουδαῖοι—art. m. pl. + adj. m. pl. + noun m. pl.; *the rest of the Jews*; “Jews” by race
- καὶ—conj.; *even* (ascensive)
- συναπήχθη—aor. pass. ind. 3 sg. fr. συναπάγω; *was carried away by, was carried off along with* (to cause someone in conjunction with others to go astray in belief); aorist tense indicates the decisive action involved
- τῇ ὑποκρίσει—art. dat. f. sg. + noun dat. f. sg.; *by (their) hypocrisy*; instrumental dative or dative because of συν-

Ga 2:13



(13) And the rest of the Jews [also] joined in hypocrisy with him so that even Barnabas was carried off along with [them] by their hypocrisy.

ESV: And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

NIV: The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

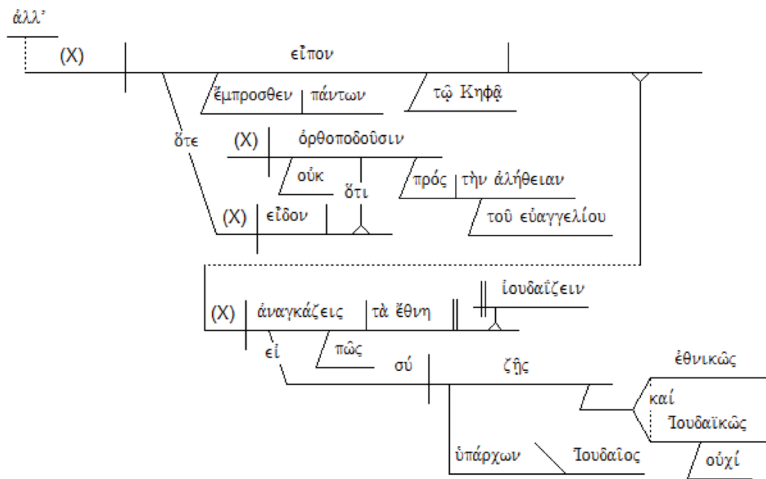
NKJV: And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

NLT: As a result, other Jewish Christians followed Peter's hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

(14) ἀλλ' ὅτε εἶδον ὅτι οὐκ ὀρθοποδοῦσιν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, εἶπον τῷ Κηφᾶ ἔμπροσθεν πάντων· εἰ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὑπάρχων ἔθνικῶς καὶ οὐχὶ Ἰουδαϊκῶς ζῆς, πῶς τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζεις ἰουδαΐζειν;

- ἀλλ'—conj.; *but*; stronger adversative than δέ
- ὀρθοποδοῦσιν—pres. act. ind 3 pl. fr. ὀρθοποδέω; *acting rightly, being straightforward, behaving as they should*; lit., *walking straight or upright*; present tense emphasizes the ongoing nature of their action (which actually took place in the past, but the tense remains the same in indirect discourse); hapax
- τοῦ εὐαγγελίου—art. gen. n. sg. + noun gen. n. sg.; *of the gospel*; epexegetical genitive (clarifying the ambiguity of *the truth*)
- ὑπάρχων—pres. act. ptc. nom m. sg. fr. ὑπάρχω; *(you) are, (you) live*; possibly circumstantial concessive
- ἔθνικῶς—adj.; *after the manner of the Gentiles*; lit., *Gentile-ily*; hapax
- Ἰουδαϊκῶς—adj.; *according to Jewish custom, in a Jewish manner*; lit., *Jew-ily*; hapax
- ζῆς—pres. act. ind. 2 sg. fr. ζάω; *you live*
- ἀναγκάζεις—pres. act. ind. 2. sg. fr. ἀναγκάζω; *you compel, force*; possible conative force
- ἰουδαΐζειν—pres. act. inf. fr. ἰουδαΐζω; *to live in Jewish fashion or manner, live according to Jewish customs* (live as one bound by Mosaic ordinances or traditions); hapax

Ga 2:14



(14) But when I saw that they were not living uprightly toward the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before everyone, “If you yourself a Jew live existing after the manner of the Gentiles and not according to Jewish custom, how do you compel the Gentiles to live according to Jewish customs?”

ESV: But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?”

NIV: When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?”

NKJV: But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before *them* all, “If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?”

NLT: When I saw that they were not following the truth of the gospel message, I said to Peter in front of all the others, “Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and

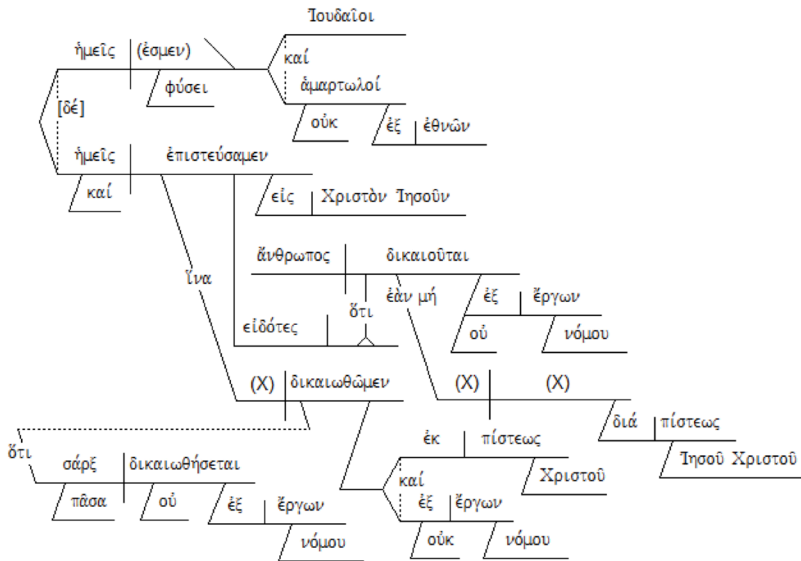
are living like a Gentile, why are you now trying to make these Gentiles follow the Jewish traditions?

(15–16) ἡμεῖς φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἀμαρτωλοί· ¹⁶ εἰδότες [δὲ] ὅτι οὐ δικαιούται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεῦσαμεν, ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ.

- ἡμεῖς—pron. nom. m. pl.; *we ourselves*; included for emphasis
- φύσει—noun dat. f. sg.; *by nature* (especially as inherited from one’s ancestors, in contrast to status or characteristics that are acquired after birth); dative of respect
- εἰδότες—pf. act. ptc. nom. m. pl. fr. οἶδα; *knowing*; possibly attributive (*who know*), stressing a key characteristic of “we;” or causal (*because we know*) which gives the reason why Paul, et.al. believe
- δικαιούται—pres. pass. ind. 3 sg. fr. δικαιῶ; *is declared righteous, justified*; agent of the passive is God
- ἐξ ἔργων νόμου—prep. + noun gen. n. pl. + noun gen. m. sg.; *by works of law*; even though νόμου is anarthrous, some prefer to translate *works of the law*
- ἐὰν μὴ—conj. + neg. part.; *but only, but; except*; Das argues for *except* based on Pauline usage¹³
- Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ—noun gen. m. sg. + noun gen. m. sg.; *in Jesus Christ*; objective genitive
- ἐπιστεῦσαμεν—aor. act. ind. 1 pl. fr. πιστεύω; *we believed, came to believe*; aorist tense emphasizes that this action definitely took place
- δικαιωθῶμεν—aor. pass. subj. 1 pl. fr. δικαιῶ; *we might be declared righteous*; possibly ingressive (*get to be declared righteous*)
- δικαιωθήσεται—fut. pass. ind. 3 sg. fr. δικαιῶ; *will be declared righteous*; future is either timeless or refers to the final judgment
- πᾶσα σὰρξ—adj. nom. f. sg. + noun nom. f. sg.; *each person*

¹³ A. Andrew Das, *Galatians*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014), 253–254.

Ga 2:15–16



(15–16) “We ourselves [are] by nature Jews and not sinners from the Gentiles; (16) who know that a man is not declared righteous by works of law but only through faith in Jesus Christ, and even we came to believe in Christ Jesus in order that we might get to be declared righteous out of faith in Christ and not out of works of law, because each flesh will not be justified out of works of law.”

ESV: We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; ¹⁶ yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

NIV: “We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles ¹⁶ know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

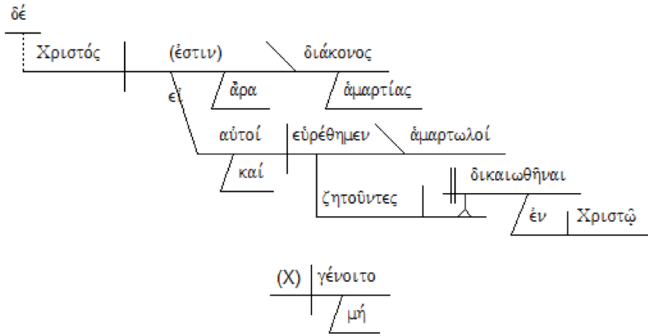
NKJV: “We *who are* Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,¹⁶ knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

NLT: “You and I are Jews by birth, not ‘sinners’ like the Gentiles.¹⁶ Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law.”

(17) εἰ δὲ ζητοῦντες δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ εὐρέθημεν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἁμαρτωλοὶ, ἄρα Χριστὸς ἁμαρτίας διάκονος; μὴ γένοιτο.

- ζητοῦντες—pres. act. ptc. nom. m. pl. fr. ζητέω; *seeking, striving for, aiming (at), trying to obtain, desiring, wishing (for)*; circumstantial attendant circumstance
- δικαιωθῆναι—aor. pass. inf. fr. δικαιόω; *to be declared righteous*; supplementary infinitive
- εὐρέθημεν—aor. pass. ind. 1 pl. fr. εὐρίσκω; *we were found, proven to be*; God is the agent of the passive
- ἄρα—part.; *then*; interrogative inferential particle indicating anxiety or impatience, used only in direct questions
- διάκονος—noun nom. (pred.) m. sg.; *assistant, agent* (one who gets something done at the behest of a superior)
- ἁμαρτίας—noun gen. f. sg.; *of sin*; possessive genitive
- μὴ γένοιτο—neg. part. + aor. mid. (dep.) opt. 3 sg. fr. γίνομαι; *May it never be!* A favorite answer of Paul to his own rhetorical question; voluntative optative indicating abhorrence

Ga 2:17



(17) "But if while seeking to be declared righteous in the sphere of Christ also we ourselves were found to be sinners, then is Christ a [willing] {servant/agent} of sin? May it never be!

ESV: But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not!

NIV: "But if, in seeking to be justified in Christ, we Jews find ourselves also among the sinners, doesn't that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not!

NKJV: "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, *is* Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not!

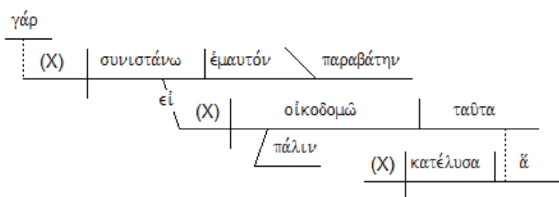
NLT: But suppose we seek to be made right with God through faith in Christ and then we are found guilty because we have abandoned the law. Would that mean Christ has led us into sin? Absolutely not!

(18) εἰ γὰρ ἂ κατέλυσα ταῦτα πάλιν οἰκοδομῶ, παραβάτην ἑμαυτὸν συνίστανω.

- γὰρ—conj.; *for, because*; gives the reason for the foregoing
- εἰ—conj.; *if*; introduces a 1st-class conditional (assumed true for argument's sake)

- κατέλυσα—aor. act. ind. 1 sg. fr. καταλύω; *I demolished, destroyed, dismantled, tore down*; aorist emphasizes the fact that Paul did this
- οἰκοδομῶ—pres. act. ind. 1 sg. fr. οἰκοδομέω; *rebuild, restore*
- παραβάτην—noun acc. m sg.; *transgressor, sinner, violator* (one who disobeys a specific divine command)
- συνιστάνω—pres. act. ind. 1 sg. fr. συνίστημι; *demonstrate, show, bring out* (to provide evidence of a personal characteristic or claim through action)

Ga 2:18



(18) “For if that which I demolished, these things I {rebuild/restore} again, I demonstrate myself [to be] a transgressor.

ESV: For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor.

NIV: If I rebuild what I destroyed, then I really would be a lawbreaker.

NKJV: “For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

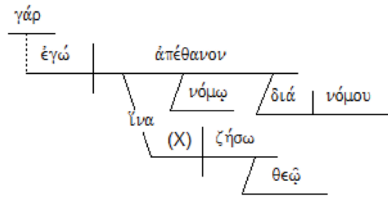
NLT: Rather, I am a sinner if I rebuild the old system of law I already tore down.

(19a) ἐγὼ γὰρ διὰ νόμου νόμῳ ἀπέθανον, ἵνα θεῷ ζήσω.

- ἐγὼ—pron.; *I*; emphatic use
- νόμῳ—noun dat. m. sg.; *to the law*; dative of respect
- ἀπέθανον—aor. act. ind. 1 sg. fr. ἀποθνήσκω; *I died, suffered death*; aorist tense indicates this truly happened
- ἵνα—conj.; *in order that*; introduces purpose clause
- θεῷ—noun dat. m. sg.; *to God*; dative of respect

- ζήσω—aor. act. subj. 1 sg. fr. ζάω; *I might live*; aorist indicates Paul really wanted this to happen

Ga 2:19a



(19a) “For I myself died through the law to the law, in order that I might live to God.

ESV: For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God.

NIV: “For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God.

NKJV: “For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.

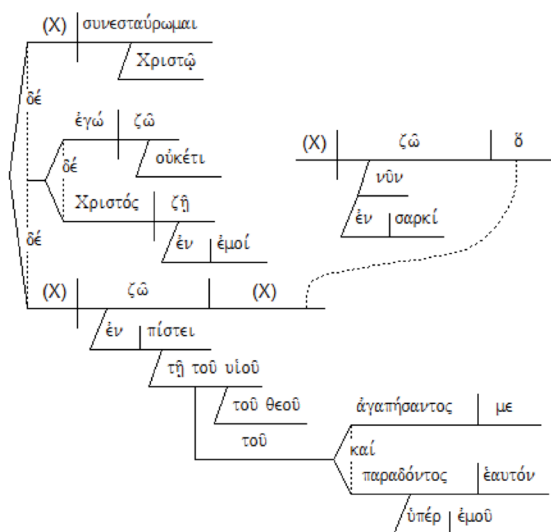
NLT: For when I tried to keep the law, it condemned me. So I died to the law— I stopped trying to meet all its requirements— so that I might live for God.

(19b–20) Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι.²⁰ ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῆ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός· ὁ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί, ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῆ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ.

- Χριστῷ—noun dat. m. sg.; *Christ*; dative because of συν-
- συνεσταύρωμαι—pf. pass. ind. 1 sg. fr. συσταυρόω; *I have been crucified with*; perfect emphasizes the completed action in the past with results continuing in the present
- ζῶ—pres. act. ind. 1 sg. fr. ζάω; *I live*; present tense indicates present reality
- ἐγώ—pron.; *I*; emphatic use
- ζῆ—pres. act. ind. 3 sg. fr. ζάω; *I live*; present tense indicates present reality

- ὁ—rel. pron. acc. n. sg.; *that which*; if taken to express the content of the verb ζῶ, can be translated as *the life*
- ἐν σαρκί—prep. + noun dat. f. sg.; *in the flesh*; expresses Paul’s physical life or possibly a concessive idea (*although still in the flesh*)¹⁴
- ἐν πίστει—prep. + noun dat. f. sg.; *in (the sphere of) faith*
- τῇ—art. dat. f. sg.; [*the faith*]; article used as relative pronoun
- τοῦ υἱοῦ—art. gen. m. sg. + noun gen. m. sg.; *in/of the son*; objective genitive
- τοῦ θεοῦ—art. gen. m. sg. + noun gen. m. sg.; possessive genitive
- τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός—art. gen. m. sg. + aor. act. ptc. gen. m. sg. fr. ἀγαπάω; *who loved*; aorist tense indicates this is a fact; attributive participle emphasizing a key characteristic
- παραδόντος—aor. act. ptc. gen. m. sg. fr. παραδίδωμι; *gave over/ up, delivered over, handed over*; aorist tense indicates this is a fact; attributive participle emphasizing a key characteristic
- ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ—prep. + pron. gen. m. sg.; *for me, in behalf of me*; substitutive idea stressed

Ga 2:19b–20



(19b–20) “I have been crucified together with Christ; and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me; and that which I now live in the flesh, in the sphere of faith I am living, [the faith] which is of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up in behalf of me.

¹⁴ Das, 236–237.

ESV: It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

NIV: and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

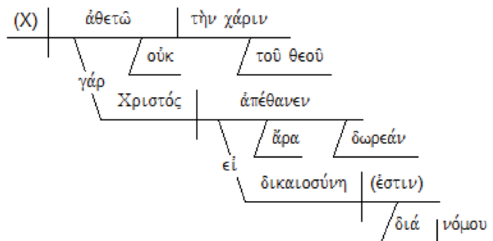
NKJV: it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

NLT: It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

(21) Οὐκ ἄθετῶ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰ γὰρ διὰ νόμου δικαιοσύνη, ἄρα Χριστὸς ὄωρεάν ἀπέθανεν.

- ἄθετῶ—pres. act. ind. 1 sg. fr. ἀθετέω; *I declare invalid, nullify, ignore, regard as nothing, set aside*
- γὰρ—conj.; *for*; provides reason why first part of verse is true
- εἰ—conj.; *if*; introduces 1st-class conditional (assumed true for argument's sake)
- ἄρα—inferential particle; *then*
- ὄωρεάν—noun acc. f. sg.; *in vain, to no purpose, for no reason*; accusative of manner (used adverbially)

Ga 2:21



(21) “I am not declaring the grace of God invalid; for if righteousness [is] through the law, then Christ died for no reason.”

ESV: I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

NIV: “I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”

NKJV: “I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness *comes* through the law, then Christ died in vain.”

NLT: I do not treat the grace of God as meaningless. For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die.

Galatians 2:11-21 Translation

(11) Now when Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

(12) For before certain men came from James he {was/went on} eating together with the Gentiles; but when they came he began withdrawing and separating himself because he was fearing the ones of the circumcision.

(13) And the rest of the Jews [also] joined in hypocrisy with him so that even Barnabas was carried off along with [them] by their hypocrisy.

(14) But when I saw that they were not living uprightly toward the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before everyone, “If you yourself a Jew live existing after the manner of the Gentiles and not according to Jewish custom, how do you compel the Gentiles to live according to Jewish customs?”

(15) “We ourselves [are] by nature Jews and not sinners from the Gentiles;

(16) who know that a man is not declared righteous by works of law but only through faith in Jesus Christ, and even we came to believe in Christ Jesus in order that we might get to be declared righteous out of faith in Christ and not out of works of law, because each flesh will not be justified out of works of law.

(17) ”But if while seeking to be declared righteous in the sphere of Christ also we ourselves were found to be sinners, then is Christ a [willing] {servant/agent} of sin? May it never be!

(18) “For if that which I demolished, these things I {rebuild/restore} again, I demonstrate myself [to be] a transgressor.

(19) “For I myself died through the law to the law, in order that I might live to God. I have been crucified together with Christ;

(20) and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me; and that which I now live in the flesh, in the sphere of faith I am living, [the faith] which is of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up in behalf of me.

(21) “I am not declaring the grace of God invalid; for if righteousness [is] through the law, then Christ died for no reason.”

Commentary

This section of Galatians is the closing portion of Paul’s recounting of the history of his apostolic ministry. Such a recounting became necessary because the Galatians were veering away from the true gospel and into false teaching (1:6–9). In order to show that the gospel he preached is *the* true gospel, Paul explains how he became an apostle of Christ: that it was not through the agency of man, even of the other apostles, but solely by God’s grace and direction (1:11–19). That he was accepted as an apostle by the congregations in Jerusalem and Judea is the first proof that his apostleship is equal to that of the Twelve. Eventually he went to Jerusalem and received approval from the church leaders there (2:1–9), the second proof of the equality of his apostleship. The passage under consideration, which comprises the third proof of his equal apostleship, is Paul’s account of a confrontation he had with Peter regarding how a person is declared righteous. In this passage he delves into doctrine vital to a proper understanding of justification.

Verse 11

Verse 11 sets the stage for the remainder of the chapter: Peter comes to Antioch where Paul and Barnabas were (v. 11) and hypocritically stops eating with the Gentiles (v. 12). Not to go so far as to say that Paul got “in Peter’s face” (κατὰ πρόσωπον), but Paul had no problem being confrontational with Peter! Compared to how Paul describes his interaction with Peter in v. 14 (ἐμπροσθεν πάντων), this rebuke seems to have been one-on-one. In Paul’s mind, there was no doubt as to the sinfulness of Peter’s action and his resulting guilt; he κατεγνωσμένος ἦν. For the good of Peter and the church, a confrontation was necessary.

Application points:

- Confront sin face-to-face if possible before making the matter public.
- For the sake of the truth of the gospel, sin must not go unnoticed.

Verse 12

Apparently, prior to the arrival of the delegation from James, Peter believed it was acceptable to eat with the Gentiles, a matter that should have been settled for him after his vision regarding unclean foods (recounted in Acts 11:4–10). Some sort of “holy peer pressure” caused him to slide back into legalism, not wanting to upset some of his fellow Jews. Perhaps there was a bit of timidity on Peter’s part, as reflected by the ingressive imperfects *ὑπέστειλεν καὶ ἀφώριζεν*. Still, he knew better and should have remained steadfast in the freedom of the gospel.

Application points:

- No amount of pressure from others should cause us to abandon the truth of God’s Word.
- Legalism is a dangerous frame of mind.

Verse 13

The ripple effect (*συνυπεκρίθησαν*) of caving in to legalistic peer pressure is a demonstration of how caustic legalism can be. In addition, once the wave gains momentum, it can sweep away even the stalwart leaders (*καὶ Βαρναβᾶς*). Here Paul makes clear the essence of Peter’s sin: hypocrisy. Peter’s hypocrisy led to the hypocrisy of *οἱ λοιποὶ Ἰουδαῖοι* which led to Barnabas’ hypocrisy. What a tragic mess!

Application points:

- One’s actions are never done in a complete vacuum.
- Leaders in the church are not immune from sin, even public sin.

Verse 14

Here Paul zeroes in on the essence of this particular case of hypocrisy: these people sinning in this way *οὐκ ὀρθοποδοῦσιν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου*. Like a drunk who is unable to walk a straight line, these hypocrites were weaving wildly in their attempts at living the way God wants them to and the way they know is right.¹⁵ Also, there is no

¹⁵ Das (213n98) remarks, “The truth of the Gospel’ is repeated from 2:5, and in 2:5 it carries the sense of God’s impartiality in his dealings with humanity. Such

indication that they are anything but deliberate in their actions: they are acting hypocritically by choice. This time, Paul has no choice but to make another confrontation with Peter, but this time ἐμπροσθεν πάντων. Who comprised the group gathered is unclear, but it may have been a gathering of the congregation. With his question, Paul zeroes in on the hypocrisy of Peter. Peter *had* been living ἔθνικῶς, which means that he was no longer obeying all the ceremonial laws of the Jews. His drastic switch in lifestyle indicates his return to living Ἰουδαϊκῶς. That was wrong in itself, but the wrong was compounded when he, by his actions, was compelling the Gentiles to live like Jews.

Application points:

- Blatant hypocrisy has a tendency to spread, especially if it goes unchecked.
- Public sin may very well require public repudiation of that sin.

Verses 15–16

Paul continues his confrontation with Peter¹⁶ with a statement that, if taken in the wrong way, could sound like an insult to the Gentiles. However, his statement is best taken as a way that Jews used to differentiate between themselves and Gentiles. Since the Gentiles did not have God's law they could be nothing but "sinners" in the strict sense of the word. To paraphrase, "We are Jews who have the law, not Gentiles who do not, (16) and even so we know that we are not declared righteous by obeying the law..." It is no wonder that Luther devotes over twenty pages of his commentary to the treatment of verse 16, so full it is of pure gospel and so lacking in works-righteousness. The *Formula of Concord* (Ep. III, 7) references the *particularas exclusivas* Paul uses here; three times in verse 16 Paul emphasizes we are not declared righteous by "works of law."¹⁷ The only way that a man is declared righteous by God is διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ...ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ. In Galatians as a whole, Paul uses a form of δικαιοῶ eight times. In verse 16 occur three of these uses. The forensic nature of God's action is emphasized here,

impartiality is precisely what is at issue when gentile believers are marginalized with respect to a truth that is for *all* people!"

¹⁶ Some translations indicate the direct quote of Paul ends with v. 14 (e.g., HCSB, ESV), and some indicate the direct quote continues to the end of the chapter (e.g., NKJV, NIV). The latter is preferable.

¹⁷ There is debate whether or not the anarthrous uses of νόμος here should be translated as "the law" (as in the Mosaic law) or simply "law" (any and all law). The latter is the preferable way.

and thus the best translation is “declared righteous.” Paul’s contrast of Jew/Gentile is also seen when he says *καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν, ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ*. In other words, “Even we Jews who have the law have put our faith in Jesus; *that* is how we are declared righteous.” Paul is quite explicit in these verses regarding how any person (*πάσα σάρξ*) is declared righteous.

Application points:

- Good works do not gain a person entrance into heaven.
- God is the one who alone declares anyone righteous and thus saves him.
- Any person is saved eternally *sola fide*.

Verse 17

In this verse it is vital to keep in mind what Paul is doing: he is addressing a possible objection to what he has stated in vss. 15–16. The false notion he addresses in v. 17 is that “Christ [is] a [willing] {servant/agent} of sin.” This would be true if, because salvation is entirely by grace apart from law, Christians were free to *live* apart from law altogether. So while it is true that before someone becomes a Christian apart from God’s law (“seeking to be declared righteous in the sphere of Christ”) they are indeed a sinner, it is not true that Christ encourages sin. Paul’s *μὴ γένοιτο* forcefully makes it clear that such a supposition is ridiculous. He is speaking in the realm of justification, not sanctification.

Application points:

- Apart from Christ, all are sinners, even those who “have” God’s law.
- In no way does Christ ever condone sin.

Verse 18

Paul employs another first-class conditional to explain (*γάρ*) what he has just stated. Why would Paul want to return to the law as a basis for being declared righteous when grace in Christ is abundantly sufficient to achieve that goal? If Paul begins preaching again a return to the law, he is not only contradicting himself but also rebuilding what he has worked so hard to tear down (note the aorist tense of *κατέλυσα*). Through the law comes the knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20); it does not and cannot aid in man’s salvation. Paul bolsters his point by going so far as to say what this about-face in teaching would mean for him: he would unequivocally demonstrate he is a *παραβάτην*. Such a status has

divine consequences; Paul would not simply be giving a wrong impression to men.

Application points:

- Proper teaching of God's truths is not self-contradictory.
- Improper teaching of God's truths has serious consequences.

Verse 19a

Paul again gives an explanation, this time of why v. 18 is correct. His personal approach (the use of the first-person singular) differs slightly from v. 18. In v. 18, Paul's words could have application to any Christian, but are more appropriately understood as referring to Paul. His clarification of v. 19a has definite universal application, an application of which Paul makes himself a prime example. When a person becomes a Christian, they definitely have no relationship (aorist of ἀπέθανον) to the law; they have "torn it down" as v. 18 explicated. That is, they do not rely on it for their eternal salvation. Interestingly enough, this death to the law takes place by means of that very law (διὰ νόμου). This specification is enigmatic. Luther believes Paul is using "law" in a twofold sense here, that διὰ νόμου actually refers to the law in the wide sense (including and especially the saving work of Christ). It is possible to understand this statement as a parallel thought to v. 19b.¹⁸ It is also possible to understand this expression in this way: through the law showing me my sin (second use), I was killed since I was shown my inability to keep the law. Thus I also died *to* the law since I cannot rely on it for salvation (since it only kills). Once a person has died to the law, they have a relationship with God instead. In fact, this is the purpose (ἵνα) of dying to the law.

Application point:

- Christians do not have a relationship with the law since it does not give life.

¹⁸ Das (268) states, "The Law orchestrated Christ's death and now no longer holds sway over those who share in that death." Lenski comments, "The right, the first and foremost use of law is to use it so as never to respond to it again, so as to die to it. Let law bring you to the realization of sin (Rom. 3:20), to despair that any and all work of law can ever do even the least toward securing God's verdict of righteousness. ... Let law make you give up all hope in law and by faith place all your hope in Christ Jesus. The moment you do that you are rid of law forever unless you blindly return to it as Peter was doing. You are dead to law." R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Epistles to the Galatians, To the Ephesians, and to the Philippians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 114.

Verses 19b–20

Since there is no connective, *Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι* is best seen as an appositive to the foregoing. Paul's words in Romans 6:3–11 provide the best understanding for his brief statement here, especially vss. 6–8.¹⁹ The union between the believer and the Savior is such that Paul speaks of Christ taking up residence in the believer. This union of Christ and the believer is not a distant hope but a present reality. Paul's personality has not been eliminated but altered. Previously, only the sinful ἐγώ existed. Once a person is declared righteous, a new man is created which is inextricably joined with Christ. This new person still resides in a human body (ἐν σαρκί), but lives through faith (ἐν πίστει) in Christ. Paul uses two attributive participles to describe Christ (who is, not unimportantly, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ): he most assuredly acted in the best interest of the Christian (ἀγαπήσαντος) as demonstrated by his real handing himself over into death as my substitute (παραδόντος). Eternal salvation is quite clearly by grace alone since Christ Jesus did everything necessary to attain it.

Application points:

- The Christian's relationship with their Savior begins with Christ's crucifixion, a death in which the Christian shares.
- True life for a person only comes about when Christ lives in them.
- Christ Jesus is the perfect, loving substitute.

Verse 21

Paul closes this chapter by providing a concise summary statement of the main argument of the passage (vss. 11–21). A return to the law would mean that God's grace would be superfluous and unnecessary; such action would effectively nullify it. This is not Paul's intent by any means. Any return to seeking righteousness through means of the law would have the unintended consequence of making Christ's substitutionary sacrifice an effort in futility (δωρεάν). If man could save himself, there was absolutely no reason for the Son of God to die.

¹⁹ Schmeling summarizes, "Our old sinful flesh was nailed to the cross, crucified with Him, and we died to sin. We were crucified through the killing word of the Law." Gaylin R. Schmeling, "Lutheran Spirituality and the Pastor," *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (December 2014): 286.

Application points:

- Adding anything to *sola gratia* in the realm of salvation shoves Christ out of the picture.
- The grace of God is more than sufficient for the salvation of mankind.

Conclusion

Luther's commentary on these first two chapters of Galatians and the author's commentary on 2:11–21 make it very clear why Paul wrote 1:6—"I am astonished that in this way you are hastily turning from the one who called you in connection with the grace of Christ to a different gospel...." The pure grace of God and salvation through the law cannot stand as equals. Paul's message had remained the same from the time he was converted from a legalistic Pharisee to a powerful apostle to the Gentiles. In spite of what was said about him and against him, Paul always preached God's grace through Christ Jesus as the only sure and certain way of salvation. This is why Paul was not reluctant to confront even Peter when Peter's practice belied his beliefs. The law has its proper place and function, but it is not to save. Only Christ Jesus saves by joining people together with him in his crucifixion so that thereafter he lives in them. God declares people righteous only through faith in his Son.

A Relatively Literal Translation of Galatians 1–2

Galatians 1

(1) Paul, an apostle not from men nor {by way of/through} a man but through Jesus Christ and God the Father the one who raised him from the dead,

(2) and those with me—all the brothers—to the churches of Galatia,

(3) grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

(4) the one who gave himself {on behalf of/for the sake of} our sins, in order that he might rescue us out of the present evil age according to the will of our God and Father,

(5) to whom [be] the glory forever and ever, Amen.

(6) I am astonished that in this way you are hastily turning from the one who called you in connection with the grace of Christ to a different gospel,

(7) which is not another, except some are {trying/beginning} to throw you into confusion and wishing to alter the gospel of Christ.

(8) But even if we or an angel from heaven were to preach the gospel to you contrary to the one which we preached to you, let him be anathema.

(9) As we have already said even now I say again, if someone preaches the Gospel contrary to [to the side of] the one which you received, let him be anathema.

(10) Certainly now am I trying to win over men or God? Or am I seeking to please men? If still I were trying to win over men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

(11) For I make known to you, brothers, the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not according to man;

(12) for neither did I myself receive it from man nor was I taught but rather through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

(13) For you heard [of] {my way of life/behavior} when [I was] in Judaism that to an extreme degree I was [always] persecuting the church of God and trying to destroy it,

(14) and I was {advancing/making progress} in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among [my] people, because I was far more {a zealot/devoted} for the traditions of my fathers.

(15) But when God, the one who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through his grace, considered [it] good

(16) to reveal his Son in me, in order that I might preach him in the sphere of the Gentiles, right away I did not confer with flesh and blood

(17) nor did I go up to Jerusalem to the apostles before me, but I went to Arabia and again returned to Damascus.

(18) Next after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit in order to {get to know/make the acquaintance of} Peter and stayed with him fifteen days

(19) But I did not see {another of/someone other than} the apostles except James the brother of the Lord.

(20) But that which I am writing to you, behold before God [in the eyes of God] (that) I am not lying.

(21) Next I went into the regions of Syria and of Cilicia.

(22) But I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea the ones in Christ.

(23) But they only kept on hearing, "The one who was persecuting us once now is proclaiming the faith which once he was trying to destroy."

(24) And they were glorifying God {in my case/because of me/for me}.

Galatians 2

(1) Next after fourteen years again I went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas having taken along Titus also;

(2) and I went up right in line with a revelation; and I explained to them the Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who are publicly recognized as leaders, so that I am not running in vain nor have run in vain.

(3) But not even Titus who [was] with me, although he was a Greek, felt compelled to be circumcised;

(4) but on account of the false brothers who joined under false pretenses, {who/the kind which} slipped in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus in order that they might enslave us,

(5) to whom not even for a short time did we yield submission, in order that the truth of the gospel might remain {with/by/at/near} you.

(6) But {from/about} the ones who are publicly recognized as leaders—of whatever kind they were once it makes no difference to me; God does not receive the appearance of a man—for the ones who are publicly recognized as leaders contributed nothing to me,

(7) on the other hand, rather, after they had seen that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised just as Peter for the circumcised,

(8) for the One who worked (through) Peter in an apostleship {for/of} the circumcised also worked through me in [an apostleship for/of] the Gentiles,

(9) and because they came to understand the grace which had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were recognized to be pillars, gave Barnabas and me right hands of fellowship, namely that we [would work] among the Gentiles and they [would work] among the circumcised;

(10) only that we be mindful of the poor, which even I was[/have been] eager to do this very thing.

(11) Now when {Peter/Cephas} came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he {was/stood} condemned.

(12) For before certain {ones/men} came from James he {was/went on} eating together with the Gentiles; but when they came he began withdrawing and separating himself because he was fearing the ones of the circumcision.

(13) And the rest of the Jews [also] joined in hypocrisy with him so that even Barnabas was carried off along with [them] by their hypocrisy.

(14) But when I saw that they were not {walking/living} uprightly toward the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before {all/everyone}, “If you yourself a Jew live existing after the manner of the Gentiles and not according to Jewish custom, how do you compel the Gentiles to live according to Jewish customs?”

(15) “We ourselves [are] by nature Jews and not sinners from the Gentiles;

(16) “who know that a man is not declared righteous {out of/by} works of law but only through faith in Jesus Christ, and even we came to believe in Christ Jesus in order that we might get to be declared righteous out of faith in Christ and not out of works of law, because each flesh will not be justified out of works of law.

(17) ”But if while seeking to be declared righteous in the sphere of Christ also we ourselves were found to be sinners, then is Christ a [willing] {servant/agent} of sin? May it never be!

(18) “For if that which I demolished, these things I {build/restore} again, I {demonstrate/establish} myself [as] a transgressor.

(19) “For I myself died through the law to the law, in order that I might live to God. I have been crucified together with Christ;

(20) “and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me; and that which I now live in the flesh, in the sphere of faith I am living, [the faith] which is of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up in behalf of me.

(21) “I am not declaring the grace of God invalid; for if righteousness [is] through the law, then Christ died for no reason.” LSQ

Bibliography

Das, A. Andrew. *Galatians*. Concordia Commentary. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014.

Lenski, R.C.H. *The Interpretation of the Epistles to the Galatians, To the Ephesians, and to the Philippians*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961.

- Luther, Martin. *Lectures on Galatians 1535, Chapters 1–4, Luther's Works* Volume 26. Edited and translated by Jaroslav Pelikan. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963.
- . *Lectures on Galatians 1535, Chapters 5–6; Lectures on Galatians 1519, Luther's Works* Volume 27. Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan. Translated by Jaroslav Pelikan and Richard Jungkuntz. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964.
- Schmeling, Gaylin. "Lutheran Spirituality and the Pastor." *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (December 2014): 279–319.
- Wallace, Daniel. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996.
- Walther, Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm. *Law and Gospel: How to Read and Apply the Bible*. Edited by Charles P. Schaum. Translated by Christian C. Tiews. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010.

In the World But Not of the World: Engaging a World of Sinners Without Engaging in Ecumenism

*Edward L. Bryant
Pastor, St. Timothy Lutheran Church
Lombard, Illinois*

LSQ Vol. 55, Nos. 2–3 (June–September 2015)

THE APPROACH I HAVE TAKEN TO THIS PAPER IS first to recognize that what I offer here is part of a larger discussion that we in the ELS will be conducting in order to achieve the vision of a synod (pew, pulpit, circuit, institutions, staff) that has learned how to engage others, unlike ourselves, with Jesus. This paper follows on the heels of that excellent paper on a very similar subject given in 2010 by Pastor Mark Bartels, “Connecting with the Lost”; his paper bears re-reading.

The assigned topic raises a question that we have all been struggling with—“How do we do a better job of getting out of our own circles to meaningfully interact with (engage) our world with the gospel?” I chose not to seek the answer in books that I could quote and footnote. I suppose then I could be satisfied that I had done my scholarly duty and we would all have another paper to file away. The books have been there for a while, so clearly there must be something else we are to do, and figuring that out may serve to be instructive in itself.

Framing the Question

The assigned topic, “In the World but Not of the World: Engaging a World of Sinners without Engaging in Ecumenism” appears to set some things in tension:

In the world	but not	of the world
Engaging the world	but not	participating in joint worship

In the world but not sharing the world's values
 Engaging the world but not sharing its religion

I take the question to ask how we can engage an audience without getting too close to it, to ask how we can engage an audience without being part of it. The question implies that engaging a world of sinners is a dangerous business, possibly leading us to share the values of the world and to engage in unionistic or syncretistic teachings and practices; it asks how we can engage without getting so very close. It occurs to me that we need to think a lot about our audiences and our relationship to them. Some audiences we relate to well enough; we engage them sufficiently to impart the law and gospel. Other audiences we do not.

My observation in writing this paper is that in bringing the gospel to the lost we encounter a reluctant audience, with the result that we try to or tend to engage it in ways that make us comfortable and that (hopefully) make the audience less reluctant. My assertion is that what we need to do if we are to engage the audience meaningfully and yet be true to our confession is to be distinctive and polemical toward the lost while communicating as fully and as meaningfully as we can. The first part of the paper is a brief review and commentary upon how we commonly engage our reluctant audience. This isn't to find fault with what we do, necessarily, but to find a sort of baseline on which to build. The second part of the paper is to provoke thinking about how we can build on this to reach at least parts of the reluctant audience that we aren't reaching now.

Common Current Themes in Communicating the Gospel

Our Task Is to Bring the Word to People

We confess in AC V,

Article V: Of the Ministry.

1] That we may obtain this faith, the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. *For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments,*
 2] *the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear* 3] *the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake.*

4] They condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that the Holy Ghost comes to men without the external Word, through their own preparations and works.¹

We thereby acknowledge our obligation to bring the gospel to all creatures (Mark 16:16) possessed of an immortal soul in order that they might believe and be saved. This should be enough motivation for us to think and to plan and to exert ourselves so that the word is proclaimed far and wide and people are brought into the kingdom of God and kept in the faith. But currently there is another motivation for us to look at what we are doing to spread the gospel, because what we are doing is “not working;” the numbers of souls leaving the church through apostasy is greater than the number being brought in. But hold it! We confess that the Holy Spirit creates faith where and when he pleases. Growth in numbers isn’t the measure of faithfulness or success on our part, as Paul reminded the Corinthians, “What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow” (1 Corinthians 3:5–7; NIV).

The Audience Is Reluctant

While we know and acknowledge this, the fact is that we are affected by the prevailing belief that conversion is at least partly the result of man’s cooperation with the Holy Spirit. In short, “It depends upon us,” and “We must do whatever it takes” to bring people into the church *or at least to make sure they listen!* We need to appeal successfully to our audience! This mindset shifts the emphasis in the church from faithfulness to the Word to appealing to the world of possible converts in order to gain that audience that is so reluctant to listen to the gospel. Granted, in the ELS we are resisting this descent into Arminianism on several fronts and therefore coming to the realization that *while there may not be more that we can do than faithfully proclaim the gospel, we can perhaps proclaim it on new fronts.* That is where we will ultimately focus our attention in this paper.

On the one hand the audience for the gospel is eager in some ways. The hopeless are seeking hope, as Peter indicates when he says, “But

¹ Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, *Concordia Triglotta–English: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, electronic ed., trans. W.H.T. Dau and F. Bente (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997), 45 (emphasis mine).

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. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15; NIV). Paul implies much the same in his address to the Lystrians: “Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy” (Acts 14:17; NIV). But for all this, the human heart is resistant to faith; “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14; NKJV). Even to seek the true God requires faith, as we read in Hebrews, “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him” (Hebrews 11:6; NIV). Even the least reluctant audience doesn’t know what it is looking for.

In the World—What World?

I think we would do well to consider what world we think we are in. Are we in a world like that of the first century that was universally unbelieving and hostile to the gospel, or are we in a world like Southern Minnesota? When you throw a rock, do you hit a Christian or a mission prospect? Are we participating and active in one of these worlds and not in the other?

This confusion affects the way we reach out to the world—or it should. We must understand that there are many “CHINOs,” Christians In Name Only, otherwise known as nominal Christians, who have a form of godliness, but deny its power and seek what their itching ears want to hear. Many who live with the trappings of Christianity are secularist, rationalist, and/or postmodern in their faith and view of the world. The categories in which people think are sociological, not theological, pertaining to identity and not to faith. This is a spiritually perilous world, and we sometimes have to ask ourselves whether we live in this world or in a cloister.

The Audiences in Churches²

With this in mind, what about looking for the unbelieving audience in our churches? There is a problem if we accept the assumption that

² This subject begs the question, “Are we seeking the lost or seeking members?” Studies have shown that many of the larger and more “popular” churches have grown not from reaching out to the lost, but by attracting Christians from existing Christian

most people are first confronted by the gospel in the Sunday worship service (often correct), and that if what they find there is distasteful and not attractive, it will drive them away (also often correct). The problem comes when we, in response, try to achieve a style of worship that is attractive to those who may be seeking something spiritual even though they may not be Christian; such worship easily changes until it appeals to some sort of cultural common denominator and ceases to be distinctively Lutheran or even Christian. I call it “vaguely spiritual.” Worship becomes something for the unbaptized and unbelieving, and therefore not worship at all.

At least in the Midwest, the fact is that our first opportunity to engage many unbelievers will be when they attend a church service. The difficulty is that most are raised in a quasi-Christian (nominally Christian) culture and whether believers or not they come to church with a set of expectations, both positive and negative. On the positive end they look for something that is “genuine,” “real,” “relevant,” “meaningful,” and that “meets my needs.” On the negative end they are put off by what they do not understand, by what seems to be intellectual or non-emotional, and by what is perceived as “formal” or “dead formalism.” They may be looking for a particular emotional response. The casual visitor may be put off by the fact that things “aren’t the way they were when I grew up,” or because the cultural idiom of Christian worship is unfamiliar to them. What we are dealing with is a “consumer mentality” in which the church and worship service must meet some sort of inchoate constellation of felt needs before a person is attracted to it.

The attitude is contagious and affects believers as well. Ask delinquent members why they don’t attend church and they may say, “Well, I just don’t find what I’m looking for in my life right now.” They can’t tell you what they are looking for. Ask them whether they see value in the forgiveness, life, and salvation poured out for them through the means of grace, and they might ask, “What’s that got to do with it?” Gone is the idea that the pastor does the best he can to communicate the gospel faithfully and articulately in ways relevant to our people today, and the

congregations who are looking for a different religious experience in their new church. The literature tends (perhaps necessarily, because we cannot look into the heart) to speak of those coming to churches in sociological terms such as “churched,” “unchurched,” “previously churched,” “de-churched,” and so on. When we look at the numbers of adult baptisms in our congregations compared to the number of new members, we see that our work is largely with people who have had experience within the church. What does this mean for our seeking this audience?

people do all they can to hearken to the word and to learn, cherishing the sacramental realities of forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Many hope that we can approach people with a medium and a message and a constellation of appeals to their needs that will overcome their reluctance while not removing the gospel from the mix. But the gospel is the problem. Fundamentally, man according to his old Adam is going to be offended by the cross that is at the heart of true Christian worship, even when every other possible obstacle is removed.

Logically, we cannot expect to get past this without appealing to the “felt needs” of those who show up in our churches. But the Holy Spirit can and does. He did in Corinth, as Paul explains:

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written:

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;
the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”

Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength.

Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore,

as it is written: “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.”
(1 Corinthians 1:18–31; NIV)

It would be easier if it were universally recognized that the worship service is especially for the baptized and that others would expect to find something frankly otherworldly. There are things in the worship service that are foolish and offensive to the unbeliever and to remove them for the sake of appeal is to undermine the sacramental nature of Christian worship. The offense of the cross in our worship is something we have to accept if we are to remain faithful to the gospel, and when we do, we start looking for an audience in additional venues.

The Audience Among Our People in Their Vocations

For good reason there is a great focus on witnessing to the lost/unchurched in the midst of their and our vocations. This was my experience serving in a traditionally unchurched part of the country; prospects might be several classes into adult instruction before they attended, or were interested in attending, a Christian worship service. Their expectation was that this was not going to resemble what they were used to in their daily lives—the rock concert, the motivational speech, the appeal to emotions, or the group dynamics session.

The ELS synodically and ELS churches have done well starting with the assumption that the witness to the gospel occurs first with our people in their vocations. In our foreign mission work we haven't built the mission compound and attracted the unbelievers with offers of food and other material needs, but have gone out into the barrios or into the neighborhoods and followed the connections of friends and families within their vocations. In the most unchurched areas of the United States also the connection has been primarily through friends and relatives within their vocations. Another very important element in reaching out into the community has been education, both on the foreign mission field and in home mission work. Schools provide an opportunity to bring the gospel to children and through the children to the parents without being dependent upon their expectations regarding spiritual things. I don't know of a better way to get a hearing for the gospel than by teaching the children in the school and their parents in some kind of required parents' class.

The Cultural Isolation of Christianity

But apart from those circumstances, where we are clearly stepping across a cultural divide to engage the lost where they are, we seem to be struggling. It seems to be easier sometimes to engage the lost in Peru “on their own ground” than in suburban Chicago. We observe that our pastors and people are isolated from the culture in which they live, at least so far as the witness to the Christian faith is concerned. There are a number of factors that I have observed that may play a role in this.

- In “mature” congregations, where the proportion of new members is small, the circle of friends and family is limited to people who are already churching or who have at least been brought the gospel repeatedly.
- The assumption (contrary to fact) is that “everybody I know is a Christian,” so the sense of urgency for sharing the gospel with others is diminished. (One must ask why we must know that someone is unchurched before sharing the gospel with them. How can we judge their “need” for it?)
- A corollary to the previous point is what I call “incipient universalism,” the unstated belief that most people are going to heaven anyway, without regard to their faith. It may very well be that a general abandonment of church discipline and excommunication of those who impenitently neglect Word and Sacrament contributes to this belief, even among our own people.
- Sharing the gospel with “just anyone” is culturally and sometimes legally discouraged. Sharing the gospel within our vocations is discouraged by the social mores that we “just don’t talk about religion or politics.” It is further discouraged by the principle of political correctness that says that personal faith is well and good, but it is never to be “foisted” upon others. It is still further discouraged by workplace rules that make “proselytizing” a basis for discipline or termination. Our society is even flirting with making expressions of God’s law a “hate crime” in certain cases.
- The same social mores that operate in the workplace also influence behavior in our other vocations, including in the neighborhood and among friends.
- Beyond the connections with friends and relatives Lutherans have limited their connections with the community and culture. To generalize:
 - Elementary schools have often been “for our own.”

- Church, not community, tends to be our social focus, especially for pastors and teachers.
- Many pastors and teachers have never taken a class outside of a Lutheran school and have not had to answer or even face challenges to the faith that their fellow Christians face in other schools or in their vocations.
- We tend to write and publish books for “our own,” rarely venturing into the wider world of peer-reviewed scholarship. It might not gain a review, much less be favorably reviewed, so we quit the field.
- Many espouse views of fellowship which prevent them not only from joining with others in worship, but from engaging in debate or challenging other beliefs on their ground, or in the marketplace of ideas.
- Many espouse views of fellowship which prohibit taking advanced degrees in fields which impinge upon the faith.
- When some do pursue advanced degrees, there is little or no support for them from within our confessional circles, so that they are discouraged or more easily misled.
- We select for introverts among our pastors.
- We train shepherds, not missionaries, apologists, or polemicists.

Let's Find another Audience

So ...

If we are doing what we can to faithfully preach the gospel in the divine service, to communicate in the language of the people and still preserve the otherworldly and sacramental nature of the service, and ...

If we are preparing our people to be witnesses in the vocations in which they live and serve, and ...

If we still find that we are isolated culturally and otherwise from those among whom we live, particularly the lost, then ...

How shall we find, identify, and engage “others,” those not like us, with the gospel of Jesus Christ? Put another way, let's provoke thought about how as confessional Lutherans we can break out of the cloister in which we have walled ourselves and engage with the gospel this hostile world.

Paul's Adventures Seemingly Beyond the Pale

As we look at the New Testament church, especially through The Acts of the Apostles and the epistles of Paul, we definitely see

Christians, notably Paul, engaging the lost in the world around them. Let's look at some aspects of this engagement. I'm not going to look at the usual things, like Andrew leading his brother to Jesus, but rather at some of the things that may be less discussed or more problematical.

They Engaged Those of Whom They Had Recently Been a Part

One thing we see early in the history of the church is that even when they gathered together in communities, the early Christians, including the leaders, had close connections with the universe from which they had come. Paul reminded the Ephesians, "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath" (Ephesians 2:1–3; NIV).

Likewise, Paul spoke of his connection with the sect of the Pharisees in this way: "...circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless" (Philippians 3:5–6; NIV). He used this connection also, often going first to the synagogue in any new area he entered.

- "At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God." (Acts 9:20; NIV)
- "When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper." (Acts 13:5; NIV)
- "From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue rulers sent word to them, saying, 'Brothers, if you have a message of encouragement for the people, please speak.'" (Acts 13:14–15; NIV)
- "At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed." (Acts 14:1; NIV)

This brings up two points for us. The first I have made in other venues, that while we *say* we want our churches to become "mission churches," in actual fact mission churches have new converts in them, usually still connected to the unconverted in their community, thus providing a connection to "those of whom they have recently been a

part.” This is not always the case in our mature congregations, so blithely saying “we will all be mission congregations” cannot be true in every way.

They Entered “Unfriendly Territory”—Synagogue, Agora, and Meeting Place

The second point is the willingness of Paul and others to involve themselves in religious discussions with people with whom they are not in fellowship. It wasn’t just with the Jews, either. Consider Lystra, where Paul and Barnabas were worshipped as Hermes and Zeus respectively. Paul responded, “Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. In the past, he let all nations go their own way. Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy” (Acts 14:15–17; NIV).

There is also the famous occasion in Athens, where Paul used the altar to “an unknown god” as a departure point for his oration. It wasn’t just a single incident, for Luke records, “While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there” (Acts 17:16–17; NIV).

And there are still other circumstances where Paul entered presumably unfriendly territory, such as his approach in Philippi, recorded by Luke. “On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message” (Acts 16:13–14; NIV).

Did Paul get into trouble this way? Yes indeed, but that too was put to good use as we see in his witness to King Agrippa and others.

They Engaged Those They Encountered in Their Vocations

The importance of our people connecting with others in their vocations is a given, and yet we do well to look at Peter’s encouragement every once in a while. He emphasizes the good works that Christians

undertake as part of their vocation. “Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. ‘Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.’ But 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. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:13–15; NIV). Missionary Pieter Reid explains that in Indonesia where it is illegal to initiate a discussion about Christ and His gospel, the people concentrate on expressions of love to their neighbors, thus prompting the questions they are so ready to answer.

Pastors with growing congregations will often tell you, as I have experienced, that they rarely make a cold call, but rather follow up on a connection made by one of their members with a friend, relative, or acquaintance. Often this connection rises out of acts of Christian kindness.

They Engaged over Issues of the Day Touching the Gospel

When we think of Paul in the Areopagus, we often think of the object lesson of the altar to an unknown god, but really Paul’s connection to the people was much broader than that, as we can see by looking at the whole section, Acts 17:16–34:

¹⁶While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with him. Some of them asked, “What is this babbler trying to say?” Others remarked, “He seems to be advocating foreign gods.” They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we want to know what they mean.” ²¹(All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

²²Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very

religious.²³For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.

²⁴“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands.²⁵And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.²⁶From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.²⁷God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.²⁸For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

²⁹“Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by man’s design and skill.³⁰In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.³¹For 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 all men by raising him from the dead.”

³²When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.”³³At that, Paul left the Council.³⁴A few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others. (NIV)

Here we see Paul engaging in some of the philosophical issues of the day, and making the case for the Christian understanding of such things. He exhibited what we would call a liberal arts education and put it to good use.

They Were Polemical

Still another characteristic of the early Christians was that they engaged in sometimes fierce polemics. Think of Peter’s Pentecost sermon. Rather than try to say nice things to make the good people of Jerusalem come and join the apostles’ new church, he called out the people of Jerusalem for their sin.

Acts 2:29–41 (my emphasis)

²⁹“Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.

³⁰But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. ³²God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. ³³Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. ³⁴For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

“The Lord said to my Lord:

“Sit at my right hand

³⁵until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet.’

³⁶*“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”*

³⁷When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

³⁸Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

⁴⁰With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”

⁴¹Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. (NIV)

How Shall We Venture Beyond the Pale?

“Save yourselves from this corrupt generation,” Peter preached. He engaged the lost and warned them they were going to hell with their neighbors. How’s that for an evangelism template? It gives one to think that there might be some ways to engage a different audience than we have heretofore. It doesn’t change what we have been doing:

- Being friendly to Lutherans looking for a church, including those disaffected by what has happened in their own church body.

- Making “Minnesota Nice” to people from other churches that are “trying out” our church.
- Honing our community outreach efforts so that people will look our way when they discover that they need God.
- Examining our congregation and conduct for elements that are unnecessarily alienating: the use of jargon, cliques, a “cloister mentality,” or a preoccupation with peculiar aspects of our culture.³
- All the usual stuff.

In addition to this, we have to ask how we are prepared to engage those who aren’t Christians looking for a church, who don’t have children in our school, or who aren’t a friend or relative of one of our members. Let me lay out some general ideas and then perhaps stimulate all of us together to think of ways and means of engaging this world of sinners in our communities and in the larger marketplace of ideas. As indicated in the introduction, we are probably going to leave our comfort zone and experience plenty of the tension hinted at in the beginning. Consider this a bit of brainstorming.

General Ideas to Break Out of Isolation

Synodical/Institutional/Auxiliary Organizations

Engage in the marketplace of ideas. Unbelievers wax authoritative all the time about matters the Bible covers definitively. Why don’t we? Let’s have a *real* diversity day, or put a float in the gay pride parade. Are we out of our comfort zone yet? The liberal churches grind out press releases by the bushel on every subject in play. Some have nothing to do with scriptural truth, but many do. Do you remember Walther’s publications on trade unionism, communism, and socialism? Polemics is the discipline of refuting error in order to proclaim the truth. Guess what: When some of our representatives ignorantly ridicule evolution, that isn’t polemics.

Use the college and seminary. The college and seminary already address their role in engaging others—or do they? The seminary particularly does this through the preparation of the students. The college does this both in the preparation of students and in dealing with the “others” that come as students onto the campus. While acknowledging that both institutions jealously guard their autonomy, they might both find

³ At one of the strategic planning discussions at the convention in Mankato a Spanish-surnamed participant explained how little he was attracted by an emphasis upon “our” Norwegian Heritage.

it interesting to conduct some study sessions to find ways to purposely influence the world outside their cloister, so to speak. This is not their current mission. By contrast, examination of a number of mission statements of colleges and universities both public and private shows that these institutions specifically intend to influence the world in support of ideologies including “diversity,” “social justice,” “social responsibility,” and other euphemisms for a secular humanist agenda.

Provide the Experts. Have you ever noticed that around Christmas and Easter each year major news magazines, newspapers, and even local electronic media will present some coverage or other on Christianity, and always from a rationalist perspective? Have you ever noticed that whenever a matter involving bioethics or the right to life comes up there is an immediate release from NARAL, Planned Parenthood, and NOW? There is often also a response from the Roman Catholic Church and sometimes from “the Lutheran Church,” meaning the ELCA. These organizations all make sure that they are on the contact list of those in the media when journalists are looking for information. With the number and breadth of staff in our ELS/WELS institutions we have the potential to do the same, making connections possible through our local congregations. This offers opportunities to direct public discourse that creates opportunities to witness to the gospel.

Publish for peer review. To be considered a legitimate “expert” in academe and in much of our society, it is thought that one must have published on the subject in peer-reviewed journals. When we do not encourage our scholars to make the effort to publish in peer-reviewed journals in areas particularly impinging on the Christian faith we turn the field over to the unbelievers. Of course, the objection raised is that such an attempt is academic suicide, as witness the experience of those supporting intelligent design, the scandals surrounding global warming orthodoxy, or the recent studies in the bias among sociologists and the social sciences in general.

While it is true that the unbelieving world uses our integrity against us, there is something to be said for the promotion of our own voices in the intellectual marketplace through publishing, bestowing awards, and other efforts at bestowing due recognition.

Serve the military and veterans. One very large group that we have not engaged historically is the military and veteran community. With only a few exceptions, our pastors have not been members of the armed forces. Furthermore, we have very little connection with the chaplaincy service of the armed forces, mainly because of the conviction that it

would inevitably lead to a violation of fellowship principles at least. Without being part of the chaplaincy corps, we are relegated to the role of pastors staying in contact with our members, rather than influencing others, particularly in a deployment setting.

There are rumors that things may be getting worse in the chaplaincy corps, with syncretism becoming the official policy, even to the point of forbidding prayer in the name of Christ. Others report that this is not yet the case. The question is what we can do to connect with a significant population in our communities, because it is often post-deployment that the need for spiritual care becomes more apparent. Shall we just consign them to go without the true Word?

Prepare for chaplaincies. There are a number of chaplaincy opportunities that do arise for which we might be prepared. These include nursing homes, retirement homes, police, emergency response, veterans' groups etc. A chaplain is someone who temporarily serves the spiritual needs of someone who is away from his or her spiritual home. Generally it is with the understanding that they will be encouraged to return to their own flock, so it is not necessarily a way to add members to a congregation. But often one discovers that the person being served is not part of any flock, and then we may very well bring them into one of our congregations, as happens with the chaplain at Bethany. What can we do to help our pastors become chaplains and do so in a way consistent with our confession?

Sponsor missionaries, polemicists, and apologists. We often consider the importance of home and foreign missionaries. Do we give similar consideration to the support of polemicists and apologists? What might the impact be of someone speaking in our congregations on Islam? On issues in bioethics? On origins? How might our congregations work with local colleges where such symposia are frequent? When I was in college there were a number of "students" who took classes just for the purpose of connecting with students and building networks of like-minded students. What use might we make of that model?

Outreach and Evangelism

This is as good a place as any to comment on the distinction between outreach and evangelism. Evangelism may be thought of as the witness to the gospel, the actual administration of the means of grace, while outreach may be thought of as activity that creates the opportunity for evangelism. This is why we use the word "engage" a great deal. We don't just advertise to the lost, we seek to proclaim the law against their sins

and the gospel for the forgiveness of their sins. As we talk of ways to break out of our isolation it is understood that the ultimate purpose is more than just to become known to a community, but also to engage a given community with the gospel.

We can think of communication as occurring on multiple levels (say five). Level one might consist of expressions like “How’re you doing today?” when that really isn’t asking for an answer. Level five might consist of the most deeply personal feelings or beliefs, guilty or shameful memories, or deep-seated fears. Matters of sin and grace are hardly on a superficial level, which is why, even though we understand the gospel is a proclamation, it is at a level three at least. Because of this, we seek more than trivial or superficial connection with people, such as most attempts at “outreach” accomplish. We see a wonderful example of moving the conversation to a deeper level in the story of Jesus at the well with the Samaritan woman.

On the Congregational Level

Schools (Including Preschools). One of the most efficient means of reaching the lost with the gospel is through the school. The importance of schools in reaching children *and their parents* can hardly be overstated. While the Egyptians sought permanence in their monuments, God through Moses directed the parents to teach their children, so that they would remember the Lord forever. Those seeking to change the fabric of society like Marx, Lenin, Dewey, and others always emphasized the importance of the schools. So did Luther.

The reason that the schools provide such an efficient means to communicate the gospel is that they provide the opportunity for communication on a deep and meaningful level. There is much more that can be said about the role schools can play, so I urge you to consider the first two appendices to this paper. Having a school does not automatically mean engaging the lost; it has to be done purposefully.

Hosting Home-Schoolers. When congregations cannot afford to open a school and when state rules permit it, one activity that has been proposed has been the opening of the church buildings for use by home schoolers and offering them a chapel service or Bible classes. It is understood that we would teach strictly according to Scripture and the Confessions while those using the facility might be of any faith or be unbelievers. One interesting aspect of this suggestion is that it emphasizes how important it is to be proficient in dealing with people of diverse backgrounds.

Community Involvement. Joining the local ministerial association was one of the possible strategies mentioned in the brief given with the topic for this paper, along with concern lest this lead to ecumenism. Granted, that might be a hotbed of the lost in a community, considering the state of the churches, but community involvement can mean many other things done with a view either for outreach or evangelism. It may mean Rotary or Kiwanis or the Jaycees. It may mean becoming a “regular” at the local coffee shop. The opportunities probably depend on the degree of extroversion of the pastor as well as the choice of involvement.

Center for Community Activities. The flip side of being out in the community is inviting the community in for everything from day care to voting to rummage sales to soccer camps. Community activities do not guarantee that anybody hears the gospel. Probably many of us have participated in a community activity at a church without it meaning any more to us than a useful space. I was made aware of a church with a community service building, soccer fields, and a soccer camp over a number of years without ever bringing the gospel to anybody, much less gaining any members.

Coffee Shop/Debating Society/Symposia. Occasionally churches are able to cultivate the mystique of being a sort of Areopagus, where ideas are exchanged or, better yet, where one can go if he or she really wants to find out what the Bible teaches. The obvious pitfalls include the cultivation of the notion that any opinion is just fine and that it is just an open forum for the philosophically inclined. The evident opportunities include the use of the means of grace.

Veterans’ Services. As indicated earlier, there are many returning veterans who have no connection to a church but are in need of services that will help them reintegrate into the community. Connection with local veterans groups may provide opportunities to connect with these veterans and their families, especially if we have become adept at providing or facilitating the services that they require.

So Why Haven’t We Done These Things?

Well, actually we have. At least some of us have. These aren’t such original ideas after all. The question is really whether we will pursue some of these suggestions when we appear to have run out of opportunities to engage others with the gospel. None of us can do them all, or very many of them. Some of us are more extroverted; some are better at writing; different opportunities are available in different communities;

we all have different talents and abilities, and so forth. And then, of course, there is inertia. Inertia is resistance to change in motion. We all have a schedule full of things so that we are in motion all the time; we aren't lazy. What is difficult is changing the form and scope of that motion, especially when it means dropping some things we are doing and adding other things with which we are uncomfortable and unfamiliar.

Synod leadership has committed itself to fostering a cultural shift through an ongoing program of strategic planning that will help us overcome our inertia by comparing experiences, by providing opportunities to consider ways and means of approaching new audiences, by adjusting attitudes about what it means to be in this present evil age as it gives way to the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. But ultimately it is our task and our calling. May the Lord of the church richly bless us in this endeavor! [LSQ](#)

Discussion

1. What is the “world” in which we live and are active? Is it the same world as our flock? Is it the same world as those whom we seek?
2. What additional ways can you think of to create a “beachhead” outside of our cloister and likely to engage others?
3. Who are the “others” that you can engage in your community? Put another way, who are those folks that you just wish you could connect with, but haven't been able to?
4. What are the biggest obstacles to reaching outside of our comfort zone?
5. What should the relationship be between our call as shepherd, as evangelist, and as polemicist—addressing the lost and erring?

Appendix I

(This is an article from Rev. Tony Pittenger when asked to outline how he was using Bethany Lutheran Church's school for evangelism.)

They came out of the town and made their way toward Him.—John 4:30

This little verse is found after Jesus' discussion with the woman at the well. She went into town to tell others. Curious, they came to see and hear for themselves.

In many respects, these words describe the place where the Church finds herself in modern America: the people have heard "something" about this Jesus of Nazareth, but that is all they've heard—*something*.

How do we get close to them, create opportunities to speak with them, so that they might say with the woman of Samaria, *Now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this Man really is the Savior of the world*.

A Lutheran Elementary School provides some unique ways to do just that. A school means you have a facility, a visible *tangible* proof of your congregation's concern for children. A school also means you have a teacher; someone who is called to teach those children; but the call isn't from the school as if it were a separate entity. The call is from the congregation who now has someone whose passion and formal training has to do with children.

With that training and with their experience we have teachers who are experts in such things as: Early Childhood Development, Children's Literature, Music Education, Discipline, Children's Sports, etc.

Here in Port Orchard we've figured that one way to get close to those people who have heard *something* but not much about Jesus, is to use the experts God has placed in our congregations. Not that our teachers do all the work but we do rely on their expertise and direction.

For example, we are just coming off of a "Literacy Day" and "Literacy Celebration." What started as a celebration for our school's library breaking through the 10,000 book-ceiling grew into an event where the city mayor and two published authors read their favorite books to the children. Where authors are always looking to sell their books, that evening we invited one back for a reading and book signing. Over 130 people were in attendance, some were families we had not yet met. They came into our facility, saw an obvious love of children and concern for their education, and left with information about our worship services, Sunday School, and Lutheran Elementary School.

Another activity which is new to us this year is our Preschool Power-Hour. This is a 90-minute session with stay-at-home parents. One hour is spent with certified teachers as parent and child explore letters, math concepts, books, and of course Bible stories together. Then the parents leave the children for "work time" (play *is* a child's work) to meet with pastor for 30 minutes of Bible study.

This program grew out of something similar to what our local public school district is offering. At least four of our staff volunteer to lead those classes because as you introduce yourself you get to say "And I teach/am pastor over at Bethany Lutheran." Again the people hear and see an interest in kids

and education. If they are looking to wander into a church, now they know someone at ours.

Our Early Learning Center is fast approaching two-years old now. This all-day preschool is run by an MLC graduate with her bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education. Open from 6:30am to 6:00pm this puts us into contact mostly with two-income families who we were not meeting with our part-time preschool. One family found us this way and now have three children enrolled at our school. Mom and all three children have been baptized.

The Early Learning Center is a part of our Lutheran Elementary School. In addition to our faculty here we are blessed to have very involved parents who understand the church's role in this world. The Boosters especially always have outreach on their mind, as they plan activities for our school and for our community. One example here is our pizza/popcorn/movie night ending in a flashlight egg-hunt. Most of the children of the congregation attend but this year we had at least ten other families join us. On October 31st we host our Autumn Fest, a "family-friendly" alternative to trick-or-treating at which families work their way through the entire facility playing games, getting treats, etc. Meanwhile pastor, principal, faculty, and Evangelism Committee wander the halls looking for new faces to introduce themselves to. This has become a community tradition at which over 200 people pass through our doors!

This summer we are planning various "mini-camps," multiple events intended to draw the community in. A pair of dads will host basketball shooting-camps for a few hours on Saturdays, one teacher will use the church kitchen to teach a three-hour cooking class for children, one family will be teaching adults how to make lumpia, while an artist in the congregation will teach a painting class.

Christmas for Kids has become another community tradition. Essentially a "one-day-Vacation Bible School," parents drop their kids off and spend the day shopping while we teach the Christmas story, decorate Christmas cookies, have birthday cake in Jesus' honor, and of course learn a hymn to be sung at church the next day.

Vacation Bible School is the more "traditional" outreach effort. Here we've found that a number of families in the community will send their children to our VBS as well as a few others in the area. While they may not be hearing Law and Gospel properly divided at these other places, we make every effort to ensure that here they will. We've also been finding that it usually takes a couple of years of VBS attendance before they wander in on a Sunday morning. But some do wander in, and they wander in here because they've been here before and they've seen a commitment to teaching the children about their Savior.

Space doesn't allow for a fair summary of the outreach done through and by our Lutheran Elementary School. Every year families come to us, not certain what they're looking for, but looking for something they can't find in the secular world. Typically, what begins as the enrollment of a student grows into another family joining ours.

When Christ spoke with the Samaritan woman that afternoon beside the well, she went back into the village to tell others. They came to the well, not certain about what they would find. This account ends with a beautiful confession of faith from the villagers. In verse 42 they say to her: *We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this Man really is the Savior of the world.*

God bless your efforts at reaching out into the world around you that more, more, and *more* souls would say the same.

Appendix II

The following is a copy of the “Harvest Strategy,” a purposeful plan to take advantage of the opportunities provided by a church school to reach the lost with the gospel.

“Harvest Strategy”

Introductory Remarks

Using Lutheran schools as a means to reach those people who are not connected to Christ is no longer a unique or new idea. Many congregations in the WELS and ELS are quite interested in this concept and have attempted to use their Lutheran elementary school (LES)/preschool for such a purpose with mixed results; some have been successful and many have not. This outline is intended to assist congregations in developing a purposeful, formal plan of outreach using their educational agencies.

Demonstrate Excellence

The first step in this Harvest Strategy is the school itself. Parents are looking for schools that are safe, teach moral values, and are excellent. Schools that do not give the appearance of being safe, nor are attractive, nor appear to have a well-structured curriculum, nor are well-equipped, nor have well-qualified personable teachers will not attract parents who will be interested in enrolling their children. Those schools will fail. The schools that have the “curb-appeal” mentioned in the previous paragraph will get inquiries which lead to the next steps of the Harvest Strategy.

Step One: First Visit

Office appointments should be made in the initial contact with anyone who wishes to enroll a child. This office visit is critical to the whole process. Parents should meet with the principal/director/pastor for this visit and should follow this plan.

1. Tour the facility with the parents and child, possibly observing the school in action.
2. Return to the office where brochures about the school can be discussed. At that time emphasize the Christian element of the school.
3. Ask the parents if they have a church home
 - A. If the answer is “no”...
 - ... take the opportunity to tell the parents what the child will learn about sin and grace; tell them about Jesus’ victory won for us.
 - B. If the answer is “yes, but don’t attend” ...
 - ... take the opportunity to tell the parents what the child will learn about sin and grace; tell them about Jesus’ victory won for us.
 - C. If the answer is “yes, and I am active in my church” ...
 - a. ... take the opportunity to share with parents the confessions which we have that differ with their church stating it positively: “We believe (this) rather than, ‘here’s where you are wrong.’”
 - b. ... ask the parents if they are willing to submit their children to our teachings.
 - i. if “Yes” continue with the plan
 - ii. if “No” wish them well because there is no need to go further.
4. Indicate what activities are required as a part of the entire school experience. These will include:
 - A. participating in the whole church service when the children sing for church;
 - B. agreeing to support what is taught in the school;
 - C. agreeing to allow the child to attend all religion classes;
 - D. agreeing to attend (parent) a BIC class; **
 - E. agreeing to comply with Parent Handbook requirements including tuition and fees payments.

** The Bible Information Classes (BIC) could be mandatory, optional, or a combination. They could also be the entire BIC (16 week) set of classes or divided into three separate units:

 - a. Basic teachings of the Bible: 5–6 weeks (optional or mandatory)
 - b. Church Membership: 5–6 weeks (optional)
 - c. Church Membership: 5–6 weeks (optional)
5. Fill out all necessary forms and sign necessary papers.

Step Two: Classroom Teacher

1. The classroom teacher makes a home visit (after making an appointment) before the child begins attending the school. During this visit the teacher will:
 - A. introduce him/herself to the parents and chat about her background and theirs;
 - B. explain all relevant information regarding the classroom and its operation and present the information in writing to them;
 - C. explain the curriculum and at the end ask ...
 - a. "... May I share with you what we will teach your child in religion class?"
 - b. Emphasize the sin/grace evangelism message the child will hear.
 - D. Get a commitment from the parents to participate in singing for church as well as other school-related programs (e.g. volunteering, Open House, PTO, parenting classes, special school day programs, etc.).
2. The classroom teacher writes a note of thanks to the parents for allowing him/her to visit them in their home.

Step Three: the Pastor

The Pastor makes a home visit after the school year begins. During this visit the pastor will:

1. introduce himself to the parents and get acquainted with the parents;
2. inform the parents about the BIC classes that will be offered (note: policy will determine whether these are mandatory or optional—see page one notes);
3. encourage (require) the parents to participate in these classes by explaining that their purpose is NOT for mandatory membership, but for information concerning what the child is learning in the school;
4. leave information concerning the church for them to read; and
5. write a note of thanks for allowing him to visit them.

Step Four: Evangelism Committee

The Evangelism Committee (preferably a parent with children in the school) makes a home visit to those parents who have no real church home (i.e. "unchurched" or "uncertain churched"). At this meeting the evangelism committee will:

- a. present the "Great Exchange" to the parents;
- b. invite the parents to church and to BIC classes.

Parent School Visitation Activities

The school should encourage active parental participation in the educational process. Many activities should be ongoing as the steps of the Harvest Strategy are being implemented. These activities are not necessarily carried out in sequential order but are important to do in the overall strategy. The basic idea is to get the parents into the school and church as often as possible so that they can be assimilated into the culture of your Christian community. By the grace of God and through the work of the Holy Spirit this exposure might lead some to be saved. The following are suggested activities to accomplish this purpose.

1. school open houses;
2. driving for field trips;
3. volunteering in the classroom (some make that a requirement);
4. parent/teacher meetings;
5. participating in parent support groups;
6. participating in parenting classes offered by the church;
7. participating in family night activities;
8. helping child memorize "Scripture gems;"
9. attending special programs put on by the children (Mother's Day, Father's Day, Valentine's Day, Christmas, Easter, etc.).

Parent Church Visitation

It is important to tie the work of the school to the ministry of the church. If parents see the two as separate entities they are less apt to believe that the children's ministry is an important part of the entire church's ministry. Therefore, the church must make a strong effort to show this connection by doing the following.

1. Allow the school children to sing for church regularly. (Do not sing at the very beginning of the service and then excuse the children to their parents so they can leave!)
2. Provide a form of worship that might be more appealing to the culture you serve yet retains Lutheran character and confessions.
3. Hold a weekly "Children's Service" during the school day and invite the parents to attend.
4. Print the entire worship service in a bulletin for ease of participation.
5. Place school parents on the mailing list of the congregation.
6. Position the pastor visibly and regularly at school when parents drop off children and pick them up in order to facilitate informal conversation with parents.
7. Pastor offers coffee and rolls for parents once a week as he visits with them.
8. Pastor regularly visits the classrooms to get to know the children.

Connecting the Preschool Program to the Lutheran Elementary School (LES)

Many congregations have a preschool as well as a Lutheran Elementary School but often find that non-member parents will leave after the preschool experience and send their children to the public school. There are two practical reasons for that:

1. parents can get a free education in the public school but not a free preschool education; and
2. we do not do well at connecting the preschool to the LES.

Connecting the preschool to the LES should be a major focus of your educational practice. The following may help to do just that.

1. Have one head of the preschool-eight program.
2. Do monthly joint activities with the kindergarten program.
3. Provide all-day kindergarten.
4. Put the preschool in the same building as the K–8 and locate the room in such a way that parents bringing in their children to preschool must pass the other classrooms (especially the early grade classrooms).
5. LES and the preschool do joint activities with the preschool (Christmas, Easter, Mother’s Day, secular programs).
6. Do not give a separate name to the preschool. Tie its name to the name of the LES and church (e.g., Little Lambs of St. Paul’s Lutheran School).
7. Send school mailings to all parents.
8. Have a kindergarten recruitment week where the preschoolers spend the week in kindergarten.
9. Have school-wide open houses and invite preschool parents.

Note: This “Harvest Strategy” concept was created and implemented by Dr. George E. LaGrow during his years as a Lutheran school principal. In his most recent years of service, Dr. LaGrow served as a Parish Assistance Consultant within the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. He prepared and submitted this documented refinement of his “Harvest Strategy” in February of 2006, only two months prior to God calling him to his eternal rest. May God bless this legacy of love for the ministry of Christian education.

Christian Witnessing with Natural Law

*Allen J. Quist
St. Peter, Minnesota*

LSQ Vol. 55, Nos. 2–3 (June–September 2015)

THE ONLINE *FREE DICTIONARY* DEFINES NATURAL law as: “A body of principles that are considered to be inherent in nature and have universal application in determining whether human conduct is right or wrong.”¹ In Romans, Paul expanded on this basic definition of natural law when he said:

When Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them. (Romans 2:14–15; NKJV)

Martin Luther called Romans “the chief part of the New Testament,”² and it is apparent from this statement in Romans that natural law holds an important place in Christian theology. Understanding natural law is especially important in the relativistic age in which we live.

Sadly, however, there is a dearth of contemporary materials on natural law. Reformed theologian J. Daryl Charles commented on this lack of good materials by saying, “What is conspicuous to the theologian

¹ www.thefreedictionary.com/natural+law

² *Luther's Works*, AE 35:365.

and moral philosopher is the disappearance of this conviction [that natural law is real and important] in modern Protestant thought....”³

In marked contrast to the inadequate study of natural law today, Martin Luther and the other reformers displayed a clear and thoroughly biblical understanding, as well as appreciation, of natural law. This doesn't mean, however, that they devoted a large amount of time and attention to this doctrine. The reformers focused their speaking and writing largely on those issues of theology where there was serious dispute. For the most part, the Reformers did not take issue with the Roman church, nor with each other, on natural law, and consequently they said relatively little about it.

In our time, however, the former agreement on natural law no longer exists. The Roman Church and many Protestant churches now subscribe to theistic evolution, the view that God used evolution to create life on this earth. Theistic evolution, if taken to its logical conclusions, allows no room for natural law. All worldviews, whether held individually or collectively, will seek consistency, and Darwinism in some form is a primary factor, if not the primary factor, for the denial of natural law in our time. This means that accurate information in apologetics is a useful component for restoring a basic understanding of natural law.

Natural law is directly denied by the most influential worldviews of Western culture in our time. Whether we speak of secular humanism, postmodernism, logical positivism, materialism or behaviorism—all of which have their roots in Darwinism—the contemporary and non-biblical ideologies of today typically reject all moral law including natural law. For this reason, an adequate understanding of natural law will benefit from accompanying familiarity with the pagan worldviews to which we are all exposed every day.

We have come a long way from scholasticism and the Enlightenment where natural law was recognized and valued. Today natural law is not just distorted, it is denied. It is assaulted. Those who subscribe to natural law are commonly subjected to persecution and personal attacks including being called “hateful” and “bigots.” When Justice Clarence Thomas was appointed to the U. S. Supreme Court in 1992, those who opposed his nomination did so primarily because of his adherence to natural law. In direct contrast, relative morality is embraced and aggressively promoted in our schools, in the cinema, and all too often in our

³ J. Daryl Charles, Foreword in *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011), xiii.

churches. The popularity of *Fifty Shades of Grey* provides stark testimony to the grotesque perversion of the moral law in our time.

The need for accurate instruction on natural law is everywhere evident. Ask almost any group of people this question: “How many of you believe that morality is universal and absolute?” Not many will raise their hands. But ask, “Do you see right and wrong as being that which is right and wrong for you?” Most people in most groups will agree that such is the case. The dominant position of our culture is, “Morality is a personal choice,” and “Who are you to judge?” “Tolerance” is the God-word of our time. And in the field of education, for instance, any distinction between “diversity,” “tolerance,” and relative morality is hazy at best and nonexistent at worst.

But to our relativistic world, Romans 2:14–15 speaks with clarity, truthfulness, and power. It speaks of a reality that has been continually vilified, but at the same time is easily observable and has actually now been substantiated by brilliant and repeatable scientific research. When Romans speaks of natural law, it describes an integral part of our nature as human beings—a part of our nature that is indispensable for civilized life and is arguably essential for the continuation of human life itself in that we would likely kill one another off without it. And it speaks of a reality that enables mission work to be successful—even among those who on the surface deny its existence.

We will now turn to Romans 2:14–15 and allow it to speak for itself on natural law. We begin with verse 14:

When Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves.

All the fundamental principles of natural law are clearly stated in Romans 2:14–15. The first such precept is this:

1. Natural law is instinctive.

Paul here said that the Gentiles, who do not have the revealed moral law, nevertheless follow the principles of the moral law and do so “by nature.” From this verse we get our theological term, “natural law.”

It is commonly said that the precepts of natural law are known by logic. While there is some truth to that statement, Paul clarified in verse 15 that God’s moral law has been “written on their hearts.” Today we would say the moral law is instinctive; it is part of the genetic code of human beings. We don’t need to use logic to understand something that

is instinctive; the knowledge is just there, although we may use logic to apply and better understand this instinctive knowledge.

Consider, for example, the intricate nest of a Baltimore oriole. It is woven together from grass or string or other material in a way that forms a warm and secure pouch within which the eggs are laid and the young are kept warm and secure and are fed until they fledge. The nest will be located on the slender outer branches of a tree making it difficult for a predator to find or access. It will be anchored from three attachment points for its overall structure and stability and will be lined with soft, insulating material such as down or the floating seeds from a cottonwood tree.

How did the orioles learn how to make this marvelous nest? They never observed such a nest being built themselves. The answer, of course, is they didn't learn it. The knowledge to build the nest is written in their genetic code. The knowledge is instinctive.

Reasoning from the lesser to the greater, if God can put the knowledge of how to build this nest into the genetic code of an oriole, he can certainly put the knowledge of the moral law into the genetic code of a human being.

Similarly, we marvel at the complexity of the DNA molecule which makes up the genetic structure of all life. At the same time, however, the DNA molecule only stores and transmits information. The most extraordinary thing is the information, the knowledge, itself. In the case of a fertilized human egg, for instance, the knowledge contained in the genome of this single cell is the knowledge of how to construct a particular human being. The creator God who put the knowledge of how to build a human being into a small part of a single cell can easily include the knowledge of the moral law in that same cell. This knowledge is part of what Genesis means by stating that we have been created in God's image, broadly defined.

2. Natural law is singular and universal.

Notice that Paul, even though he is speaking of both the revealed law and natural law, is treating the moral law as being one, singular entity. The Gentiles do not have a fundamentally different moral law from the Jews who have the revealed law. The content of the moral law, whether known by revelation or by instinct, is one and the same.

This truth is essential to a proper understanding of natural law. There are not two moral codes, but only one. You can no more say there

is more than one moral law than you can say there is more than one law of gravity. All laws of nature, be they moral or physical, are singular.

For this reason it is highly misleading to speak of “Christian morality” or of “Judeo-Christian ethics.” Such language implies that Christian people have a different moral code than other people or groups. This is not true. You could just as well speak of “Christian gravity.” Such talk stands in the way of proclaiming the whole counsel of God. This language additionally provides fodder for those who would deny natural law by saying, “Don’t impose your moral values on me.” Morality is not relative. It is not the possession of a particular culture. It is not self-chosen. Morality is not analogous to deciding which color socks to put on in the morning. Morality is universal and absolute. The moral code is not affected by the degree to which we recognize it, try to rationalize it away, or even attempt to deny it. The moral law is, and we are powerless to change it in any way.

In addition, Postmodernism is given credibility by the language of “Christian values” or “Christian morality.” Postmodernists see all truth, moral or otherwise, as being defined by, and being a product of, a particular culture. This careless talk facilitates their feeling comfortable with their false worldview. We will hopefully want to challenge postmodernists by showing them the reality of natural law and applying it to their lives, not enabling them in their error and salving their conscience so they feel better about their state of being lost sinners.

No one understood the singularity and universality of natural law better than Martin Luther. In his usual provocative style, Luther emphasized this singularity and universality when he said, “Where [Moses] gives the commandments, we are not to follow him except so far as he agrees with natural law.”⁴

Luther later explained that the Ten Commandments are in complete agreement with the law of nature, and, for that reason, all the people who lived before Moses also had the moral code and have no excuse for having broken it. The Lutheran Confessions similarly state that “natural law, which agrees with the Mosaic law or Ten Commandments, is innate in the heart of all men and is written on it.”⁵

Even though the moral law has been there in the hearts of all people for all time, it must also be recognized that everyone has the propensity to distort it, rationalize it away, or in various ways deny it. Paul said in Romans 1:21, “Their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts

⁴ *Luther's Works*, AE 35:173.

⁵ Apology, IV.7.

were darkened.” Luther described this denial and distortion of the moral law by saying they are “like people who purposely stop their ears or pinch their eyes shut to close out sound and sight.” But Luther added this clarification, “They do not succeed in this: their conscience tells them otherwise.”⁶

We conclude, then, that all people have the knowledge of the singular and universal moral law of God. And even though this knowledge is darkened by sin, it is, nevertheless, still there in the human heart, and it will have a significant impact on how people think and conduct their lives. The conscience can be seared; it cannot be eliminated.

3. Natural law includes both tables of the law.

C.S. Lewis explained that if a moral law exists, then a lawgiver must also exist.⁷ Lewis used this observation in making the “moral argument” for the existence of God. Said Lewis, it can easily be observed that all people groups adhere to a moral code that has much more in common with the moral code of other groups than it has differences. This universal moral code implies a lawgiver. This lawgiver is God.⁸

The Lutheran Confessions say the same, acknowledging that even after the fall, there exists in all people a “dim spark of the knowledge that there is a God, and also of the doctrine of the law,” such that even “the heathen to a certain extent have a knowledge of God from the natural law.”⁹

This means that the natural knowledge of God is both instinctive and is, at the same time, a logical conclusion based on observing the natural world. Paul said in Romans, “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse” (Romans 1:20; NIV).

We should not be surprised, then, that most people believe that God exists. When a 2011 Gallup poll asked Americans, “Do you believe in God?” 92% said “yes.”¹⁰ It should be noted, however, that 98% had said “yes” to the same question as recently as 1967.¹¹ And it should also be noted that the number of “yes” answers in 2011 dropped to 84% for

⁶ *Luther’s Works*, AE 19:54.

⁷ See *Mere Christianity* by Lewis as well as several of his other books.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ FC SD II.9, V.22.

¹⁰ <http://www.gallup.com/poll/147887/americans-continue-believe-god.aspx>.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

persons 18–29 years of age.¹² It would appear that the ongoing indoctrination in Darwinism and relativism in our time is having an effect.

When the existence of God is denied, we once again see the connection between the law and lawgiver, as Dostoevsky's Ivan, the atheist, said, "If God does not exist, then everything is permitted."¹³ Those who want no moral constraints on their lives are inclined to deny God's existence for that reason.

Nevertheless, as Luther said, the knowledge of God and his moral law is still there in all people¹⁴ and, in many cases at least, can be accessed in preparation for their hearing the good news of Jesus the Christ.

We now turn to Romans 2:15 which reads:

...who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them.

4. Natural law is observable.

Paul said they "*show* the work of the law written in their hearts" (emphasis added). We can readily observe evidence of natural law all around us. For example, when we hear of murders, rapes, and terrorist acts on the evening news, how many of us view such acts as morally defensible behavior? Do the newscasts put up some authority figure to say that such actions are wrong? Or do they assume that the viewers will naturally reach that conclusion on their own?

When people conclude that such behavior is wrong, they are unconsciously appealing to a moral standard. The standard to which they appeal is not a standard just for Americans, or just for themselves, or just for Christians. They appeal to a universal standard of right versus wrong. That is the only way that "crimes against humanity" make sense. But a real standard of right versus wrong cannot exist in a materialistic world. Such a standard only makes sense in a world where God exists and where his existence implies moral expectations.

We should take note that such examples do not require references to the Ten Commandments or the right to life or property or any such written or commonly described standard. The standards are an inherent part of the worldview of the viewers. This is not to say that interpretation is never needed—it often is. But the point is simply this, that

¹² Ibid.

¹³ *Brothers Karamozov* by Dostoevsky. Jean Paul Sartre says the same thing.

¹⁴ *Luther's Works*, AE 19:54.

everyone has the basic moral standards imbedded in their mind, and they reveal these standards all along.

Even in cases where people say they subscribe to some kind of relativistic morality, it can quickly be seen that they don't actually believe it. The author once had a conversation with a pastor manning a Planned Parenthood booth. This pastor, obviously quite liberal in this thinking, began his pitch by saying that all morality was situational and relative.¹⁵ The author asked this pastor what he would think of someone approaching the woman sitting next to him, taking out a gun, and killing her on the spot. The pastor said, "That would be terrible." When asked why it would be terrible, he exclaimed, "Because that would be murder." When asked why murder was terrible, he declared, "Everyone knows that murder is wrong!" The words had barely left his lips when he realized he had just contradicted his view that "all morality is situational and relative" and was, instead, appealing to a universal moral code—he was appealing to natural law—the existence of which he had just moments ago denied.¹⁶

No one can function in a civilized society and follow relativistic morality. The humanists found that even they couldn't do so. Humanist Manifesto II, 1973, said that "Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction."¹⁷ By the time the Humanists revised their belief statement in 1980, however, they had changed their mind and said, "We maintain that objective [moral] standards emerge, and that ethical values and principles may be discovered, in the course of ethical deliberation."¹⁸ This means there are universal moral standards. The standards specified by the humanists in 1980 leave much to be desired, but, nevertheless, they demonstrate that even the humanists couldn't long defend their view that morality is strictly relative and self-chosen.

¹⁵ Situation ethics was popularized some 50 years ago by philosopher Joseph Fletcher.

¹⁶ C. S. Lewis put it this way: "...the most remarkable thing is this. Whenever you find a man who says he does not believe in a real Right and Wrong, you will find the same man going back on this a moment later. He may break his promise to you, but if you try breaking one to him he will be complaining 'It's not fair' before you can say Jack Robinson...." In *Mere Christianity*, Part 1, Chapter 1, *The Law of Human Nature*, 1943.

¹⁷ American Humanist Association: "Good without God," http://americanhumanist.org/Humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_II.

¹⁸ <http://www.secularhumanism.org/index.php/11>, "A Secular Humanist Declaration," written in 1980. This statement parrots the view of Lawrence Kohlberg strongly suggesting that his work was instrumental in the humanists being required to revise their views.

5. Because natural law is observable, it is subject to scientific evaluation and description.

Not many people who write on natural law appear to recognize that the reality of natural law has been scientifically verified. This scientific verification has been repeated by various members of the scientific community and has been described in considerable detail in scientific journals and other publications.

Going back to the words of Romans 2:15, Paul said, they “*show* the work of the law written in their hearts” (emphasis added), that is, Paul said that the effects of natural law are observable. This means that the effects of natural law are available for scientifically-based description and verification.

We are speaking here primarily of the ground-breaking research of Dr. Lawrence Kohlberg (1927–1987) of Harvard University. Kohlberg has commonly been described as one of the most influential scholars in the field of psychology in the 20th century, and he has consistently been recognized as the best authority world-wide in the social sciences on the subject of morality.

Kohlberg’s research focused on how persons of different ages and from different cultures make moral decisions. His method was that of confronting people with moral dilemmas and asking for their solution to the dilemmas. (He found many of these dilemmas in theological discussions of casuistry.) The most famous such dilemma is known as the “Heinz dilemma.”

A woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost him to produce. He paid \$200 for the radium and charged \$2,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman’s husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about \$1,000 which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said: “No, I discovered the drug and I’m going to make money from it.” So Heinz got desperate and broke into the man’s laboratory to steal the drug for his

wife. Should Heinz have broken into the laboratory to steal the drug for his wife? Why or why not?¹⁹

Kohlberg's interest in how people responded to the dilemmas did not focus primarily on their answer of "yes" or "no," but rather on how they defended their answer. Kohlberg recognized that people could defend their solution to a moral conflict only by appealing to a moral standard of some kind.

One of Kohlberg's most important observations, in using this methodology, was that people from all cultures appeal to the same moral standards in defense of their answers. That is, moral values are essentially the same in all cultures and nations throughout the world. Kohlberg also determined that people from various religions similarly hold to largely the same moral standards.

This means that morality is universal and absolute, not relative. It also means that Christianity is not unique with regard to moral standards, as we know, but rather is unique regarding how we can satisfy these standards.

Kohlberg additionally found that as people grow and mature, they pass through different developmental moral stages. He determined there are six such stages:

Stage one (*avoid pain*): A person might say, "Heinz should not steal the medicine because he will consequently be put in prison if he does." Or, "Heinz should steal the medicine because his wife will die if he doesn't and who will cook for him then?"

Stage two (*meet your needs*): "Heinz should steal the medicine because he will be happier if he saves his wife." Or, "Heinz should not steal the medicine because prison would be worse than his wife's death." (Moral stages one and two describe the moral reasoning of very young children, although some people never progress beyond this elementary view of morality.)

Stage three (*conformity: "what will people think?"*): "Heinz should steal the medicine because people will think ill of him if he lets his wife die." Or, "Heinz should not steal the drug because people will view him as a criminal if he does."

Stage four (*law-and-order, follow the rules*): "Heinz should not steal the medicine because the law prohibits stealing." Or, "Heinz should steal the drug for his wife but also take the

¹⁹ Lawrence Kohlberg, *Essays on Moral Development, Vol. I: The Philosophy of Moral Development* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981).

prescribed punishment for the crime as well as paying the drug-gist what he is owed.”

Stage five (*social contract*): “Heinz should steal the medicine because our nation recognizes that everyone has a right to life, regardless of the law.” Or, “Heinz should not steal the medicine because the scientist has a right to fair compensation. Even if his wife is sick, it does not make his actions right.”

Stage six (*universal moral standards*): “Heinz should steal the medicine, because saving a human life is a higher value than the property rights of another person.” Or: “Heinz should not steal the medicine, because others may need the medicine just as badly, and their lives are equally significant.”²⁰

Kohlberg said that the highest level of moral reasoning, stage six, is summarized by the Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Emmanuel Kant put it this way: “Do as you would be done by.” The Golden Rule can also be stated, he said, as, “Love your neighbor as yourself.”²¹

Jesus described the highest level of morality this way:

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?”

Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:35–40; NKJV)²²

This same universal moral code is stated in Leviticus 19:18.

You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* the Lord. (NKJV)

²⁰ Interactive YouTube videos are available that will attempt to tell you what moral stage you have adopted.

²¹ Kohlberg concluded that level six moral reasoning consists of the Golden Rule and justice.

²² Mark adds: “with all your strength” (Mark 12:30).

The Apostle Paul stated this universal moral code the same way.

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Galatians 5:14; NKJV)

It is evident, therefore, that Kohlberg is largely in agreement with the Scriptures, and Jesus himself, in describing morality. Kohlberg came to his conclusions about morality by scientific observation. He was observing the effects of the moral law as known by nature. These moral precepts, as is evident from Kohlberg’s research, are real and universal. That is, they amount to what we know as natural law.²³

Kohlberg said it this way: I will present evidence that the factual assumptions made by theories of ethical relativity are not correct; that there are in fact universal human ethical values and principles.²⁴

It is unfortunate, however, that Kohlberg did not recognize love for God as being an essential part of the universal moral code. This is a major inconsistency on his part since there can be no genuine morality without including recognition of God’s existence and love for him.

Kohlberg was also wrong in viewing the Ten Commandments as being stage four morality. Some interpret the Commandments that way, but doing so is superficial and incorrect. The Ten Commandments and the law of love are two ways of describing the same moral code. The Commandments say by application and rule what the law of love says in principle. How is it that we love our neighbor? We do so, as Luther pointed out in his explanation of the Commandments, by protecting his life, property, marriage, good name and so forth.²⁵

Kohlberg’s research also added some useful detail to how natural law operates. He determined, for example, that only one-third of the population reaches stage six moral reasoning. Most people never get beyond stage four. Perhaps these two-thirds of the people need the specific rules and applications found in the Commandments because they cannot fully understand the law of love—stage six. The specific Commandments additionally make it more difficult to rationalize away or distort the law of love for those who are at stage six.

There are a multitude of practical applications of this research, but for our purposes here, we wish to emphasize that Kohlberg’s research

²³ Regarding justice a part of stage six moral reasoning, see Acts 17:31 and Luther’s comments on justice as included in the Appendix.

²⁴ Brenda Munsey, ed., *Moral Development, Moral Education and Kohlberg* (Religious Education Press, 1980), 26.

²⁵ As clarified in Luther’s Large and Small Explanations to the Commandments.

demonstrates that the moral standards are real, singular, and universal. Sadly, almost no one in theological circles appears to know that this verification has happened. At the same time, however, it is evident that the humanists were forced to accept the reality of the universal moral code because of Kohlberg's research—as evidenced by the change of position in their 1980 statement of faith.²⁶

In addition, Kohlberg's research provides us with detail on natural law that can be useful in evangelism as well as in other endeavors. (It is useful in child-rearing, for example, by showing parents that they should not expect a two-year-old to respond well to merely being told he should act in a loving way. Two-year-olds understand pain much better than they understand the Golden Rule.)

Kohlberg's work can also help us better understand some of the verbal exchanges between Jesus and his antagonists. These antagonists consistently confronted Jesus with moral judgments based on stage four moral reasoning. Jesus responded to them with stage six moral principles. As a consequence, Jesus' antagonists typically appeared quite dazed; they were never sure what had hit them. Jesus explained the doctrinal dynamic behind these dialogues in John 7:23–24:

“Now if a child can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing the whole man on the Sabbath? Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment.” (NIV)

That is, Jesus' antagonists were judging him based on stage four moral reasoning—no work is allowed on the Sabbath. Jesus responded by showing them that they were, first of all, inconsistent in their use of stage four moral reasoning, but, most importantly, they were incorrect in their conclusions—an act of mercy toward someone is a higher moral value than following a superficial interpretation of the Mosaic Law. They were at stage four in their morality, Jesus was following stage six, and he told his listeners that they should do the same.

6. Natural law is attested to by our conscience.

Webster's Online Dictionary defines “conscience” as “the part of the mind that makes you aware of your actions as being either morally right or wrong.” This secular definition of conscience is right on the money.

²⁶ A Secular Humanist Declaration, 1980, in the ethics section, reads like Kohlberg.

The reality and importance of conscience is widely acknowledged. Arthur Schopenhauer, Immanuel Kant, John Locke, Adam Smith, and Henry David Thoreau all wrote about our conscience, as have numerous other prominent authors. Untold numbers of artists have attempted to paint it. And each year the American Society of Journalists and Authors (ASJA) presents the “Conscience-in-Media Award” to journalists whom the society deems worthy of recognition for demonstrating “singular commitment to the highest principles of journalism at notable personal cost or sacrifice.”

Luther made numerous references to conscience, the following being one of the best known: “My conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen.”²⁷

We additionally see frequent references to conscience and/or its effects in our daily life. Model and actress, Jennifer O’Neill, for example recently gave evidence of the work of her conscience when she said, “I had the abortion and paid for it all my life.”²⁸

In Romans, Paul said that conscience bears testimony to the reality of natural law. So it does. Just as in secular courts, there can be no crime unless some law has been broken, so with the conscience there can be no awareness of having done right or wrong without some moral law to provide a reference point. Similarly, we constantly evaluate our position—how far we have traveled, how much we have eaten, the time of day, etc. by making reference to a standard of some kind. In the same way, the reality of conscience, either approving or condemning our actions, requires the existence of a moral standard by which moral judgments are made.

How is a correct understanding of natural law useful in evangelism and mission work?

As a first principle, we can engage others with Jesus with the confidence that the person to whom we are speaking already knows the moral law, whether by nature (instinct) or instruction of some kind. We normally do not need to spend our time convincing someone that the moral law exists.

Secondly, however, people will commonly have rationalized their behavior or distorted the moral code in a way that prevents them from seeing that they have personally violated this moral code. Our

²⁷ Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand*, 185.

²⁸ www.prolife.com/celeb.htm.

proclamation of the law should focus primarily on the conclusion that the person to whom we are speaking has violated it.

For some people it is only necessary to use biblical quotations such as Romans 3:23, “All have sinned and fall short of the kingdom of God” (NIV). Others, however, may not regard the Scriptures as being authoritative. Are there ways to proclaim God’s law to them without quoting the Bible?

To answer that question, let us look at several examples of how the moral law was proclaimed in real-life evangelism as recorded in the Bible itself. We begin with the parable of the “Good Samaritan” in Luke 10:25–37:

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

²⁶ “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

²⁷ He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

²⁸ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

³⁶ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

³⁷The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.” (NIV)

There are numerous significant features of how Jesus evangelized this expert in the [Mosaic] law. First of all, we observe that the expert in the law described the moral code by using stage six terminology. As a consequence, Jesus knew that he could speak with him on that level, which he clearly did. Doing so established significant common ground with this individual.

We notice, secondly, that the expert in the law apparently did not see himself as being in violation of the moral law (a view typical of the leaders of Judaism at that time) since he was not looking for a solution to his guilt but rather was testing Jesus. Consequently, Jesus didn't need to explain to this man the nature of the moral law, or prove that it was real, but rather needed to show him that he hadn't kept it.

How did Jesus accomplish this feat? Notice the identity of the person who showed love toward the man who had fallen into the hands of the thieves. He was a Samaritan. Would the expert in the law have identified himself with the Samaritan? No. Jews detested Samaritans, and when Jesus asked the expert in the law who was neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of thieves, he couldn't even bring himself to utter the word “Samaritan,” so he said, “The one who had mercy on him.” Now notice the identity of the two men who looked the other way—they were both respected Jewish religious leaders like the expert in the law himself. The expert in the law would have identified with them. So as Jesus told the story, the expert in the law should have been reminded of the many persons in need to whom he had turned a blind eye and a deaf ear throughout his life. The expert in the law should have seen himself as being convicted by the moral standard he had just stated, “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

So Jesus indirectly, but skillfully, proclaimed the law to this man in a way that addressed the real issue. Jesus showed him that he hadn't kept it. Consequently, Jesus showed him that he needed a Savior.

Notice, thirdly, that Jesus followed his law exposition with the gospel proclamation, which is also indirect. Who is this Samaritan, the outcast, who came to the stranger's rescue and wrote a blank check for his healing? The Samaritan pictures Jesus himself, and Jesus' ultimate goal was to point the sinner to the salvation won by himself, Jesus the promised Messiah.

And notice, before we leave this example, that Jesus was here answering two questions at once: “Who is my neighbor?” and “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” The parable answered both questions. The reason the answers were indirect likely relates to the fact that the questions were not asked in seriousness, but rather as a test. Non-serious questions often require indirect answers.

We now turn to a second example of evangelism by Jesus himself. It is recorded in John 4:7–42:

⁷When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” ⁸(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

¹⁰Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

¹¹“Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? ¹²Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?”

¹³Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

¹⁵The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

¹⁶He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”

¹⁷“I have no husband,” she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. ¹⁸The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

¹⁹“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

²¹“Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²²You Samaritans worship what you do not

know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”²⁵ The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

²⁶ Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.” ...

²⁸ Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people,²⁹ “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?”³⁰ They came out of the town and made their way toward him. ...

³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.”⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days.⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers.

⁴² They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.” (NIV)

As was true in the example of the expert in the law, Jesus saw no need here to explain the moral code. The woman already knew the moral law. (Natural law was likely in play.) Jesus did, however, as was true in the first example, show her that she was in violation of this moral law. He said, “The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband.”

The woman apparently understood what Jesus had said. She told the people in the town, “He told me everything I ever did.” This hyperbole strongly suggests that she was convicted of her sin.

Secondly, as Jesus proclaimed the law to her, he also provided evidence of his being the Messiah (apologetics) by demonstrating that he had supernatural knowledge. Once again, the woman understood immediately what he had said as she responded by saying: “I can see that you are a prophet,” and later by asking the town people, “Could this be the Messiah?”

(It should be emphasized that every missionary sermon recorded in the New Testament contains three major points. They are: *the law, the gospel, and evidence that the message is true—apologetics.*)

Thirdly, we observe, in contrast to his conversation with the expert in the law, that Jesus spoke with the woman in the language of stage four morality. He pointed out to her that she was guilty of adultery. We recall that most people do not get past stage four moral reasoning. We do well to talk with them in terms and concepts they can understand.

And, fourthly, we again observe that Jesus' goal in this conversation was to lead the woman to himself, the Savior. In doing so, he knew he had common ground with her as evidenced by her words, "I know that Messiah (called Christ) is coming." She was ready to hear the good news, and he could not have been more direct. He said, "I who speak to you am he." She, in turn, held no ulterior motive as was the case with the expert in the law, and Jesus could not have been more explicit in giving her the message of salvation.

The woman apparently became a believer because she immediately began to evangelize those whom she knew. As a result, John told us, "They said to the woman, 'We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.'"

Our third example is recorded in Acts 17:22–34:

²² Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. ²³ For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

²⁴ "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. ²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. ²⁶ From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. ²⁷ God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ²⁸ 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

²⁹ "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an

image made by human design and skill.³⁰ In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹ 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.”

³² When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” ³³ At that, Paul left the Council. ³⁴ Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others. (NIV)

We see some striking similarities between this example and the other two. First of all, Paul established common ground with his listeners. He did so by saying that he is going to speak to them about the God they acknowledged (natural knowledge of God) as being there—the “Unknown God.”

We notice, secondly, that Paul did not spend any more time talking about the moral law (which they would have known by nature); they already understood that, but rather focused once again on their violation of it. He explained that the real God is the creator God and that images of gold, silver, and stone are false gods. That meant that his listeners were practicing idolatry. Paul further told them that they needed to repent of their idolatry because judgment was coming. Another detail we should observe here is that Paul did not speak merely in terms of everyone having sinned, but in addressing this particular audience, he was explicit in making it clear that they, personally, had sinned. The other New Testament examples of mission work follow this same principle.

In summary, we should observe that this example, along with the example of the woman at the well, shows the evangelist proceeding with the knowledge that the listeners already knew the moral law. They knew it because it was written on their hearts. We usually don't need to inform people about what the law is. They already know the moral law from nature.

And, thirdly, Paul included evidence for the truth of his message—apologetics—by saying, “He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.” Apologetics is used not only to verify the truth of the gospel message, but also to establish the truth of the moral law.

We observe, fourthly, that in this mixed audience Paul used language that is part of moral reasoning stages four and six. The forbidding of idolatry is stage four. While Paul's statement that Jesus will "judge the world with justice" is stage six. The philosophers that made up much of Paul's audience would have been likely to be largely stage six in their reasoning.²⁹

We see again, last of all, that Paul's ultimate goal was leading his listeners to Christ. Proclaiming the law is necessary, but the power of salvation is only in the gospel message of Christ. As Paul said, "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" (Romans 1:16; NKJV). Our work as evangelists is effective for one reason and one reason only: it connects lost sinners with the power of God in the glorious message of Jesus the Christ. This gospel message is the same power of God that called the universe into existence out of nothing. We can never overestimate this word's amazing ability to bring lost souls into the kingdom of the Christ.

It is because of God's saving power in this message of the Savior that we are successful in evangelism. (LSQ)

Appendix

Martin Luther, like Kohlberg, saw stage six moral principles as taking priority over stage four moral rules. Luther also saw justice as being part of the highest level of moral reasoning according to natural law. Both observations are evidenced by his comments recorded below:

This story is told of Duke Charles of Burgandy. A certain nobleman took an enemy prisoner. The prisoner's wife came to ransom her husband. The nobleman promised to give back the husband on condition that she would lie with him. The woman was virtuous, yet wished to set her husband free; so she goes and asks her husband whether she should do this thing in order to set him free. The husband wished to be set free and to save his life, so he gives his wife permission. After

²⁹ See the Appendix for Luther's comments on justice as being included in the highest moral reasoning.

the nobleman had lain with the wife, he had the husband beheaded the next day and gave him to her as a corpse. She laid the whole case before Duke Charles. He summoned the nobleman and commanded him to marry the woman. When the wedding day was over he had the nobleman beheaded and gave the woman possession of his property, and restored her to honor. Thus he punished the crime in a princely way.

Observe: No pope, no jurist, no lawbook could have given him such a decision. It sprang from untrammelled reason, above the law in all the books, and is so excellent that everyone must approve of it and find the justice of it written in his own heart. St. Augustine relates a similar story in *The Lord's Sermon on the Mount*. Therefore, we should keep written laws subject to reason, from which they originally welled forth as from the spring of justice.³⁰

³⁰ Luther, *On Temporal Authority*, 2:318–19.

Jericho: A Place with a Past That Won't Go Away

Adolph L. Harstad
Professor, Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary
Mankato, Minnesota

LSQ Vol. 55, Nos. 2–3 (June–September 2015)

Editor's Note: *Reprinted from Kenneth A. Cherney, Jr., ed., Heritage and Hope: Essays in Honor of the 150th Anniversary of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (Mequon, WI: Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Press, 2013). Used by permission. This volume of essays is available from Lutheran Seminary Bookstore at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, on Lulu.com, and on Amazon.com.*

THE CITY OF PALMS, SCENTED CITY, AND MOON Place: those three names refer to the same celebrated site, Old Testament Jericho. It is a place with an ancient past that doesn't want to go away.

Enduring Reputation

After thousands of years of existence, the name and fame of Jericho lives on today. Even though Joshua son of Nun caused its walls to tumble down almost 3500 years ago, the reputation of Jericho has not fallen. On a list of biblical cities with name recognition, Jericho may sit below only Jerusalem and Bethlehem in renown. The celebrity status of Jericho is linked largely to the book of Joshua. There we hear about the spies of Israel, the prostitute Rahab who lived within Jericho's walls, those famous falling walls, and the unusual method of conquest under Joshua. The account of Achan illegally taking and hiding some booty of Jericho is another enduring association with this city which was taken

first in the conquest of Canaan. The spiritual song “Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho” both testifies to the site’s popularity and has enhanced its fame in popular culture. This lasting link of Jericho with Rahab, spies, Joshua, Achan, hymns and songs underscores that although this tel has at least twenty-five different phases of habitation, one level with a unique history holds special interest for most people.

Have archaeologists unearthed the level at Jericho from Joshua’s time? “Biblical minimalist” scholars today claim that the book of Joshua is simply a work of fiction that seeks to glorify Israel by inventing a glorious past. If that is the case, then an archaeological level at Jericho that is associated with Joshua cannot be found because it never existed. Contrasting views and heated arguments in the pages of archaeological journals thus continue to keep the fame of Jericho alive. Jericho, Joshua, Bible and archaeology unite to make for stimulating study and discussion, and sometimes confrontation.

The Strategic Site of Jericho

More than one level of Jericho has contributed to its ancient and lasting notoriety. Deep in antiquity, Jericho’s high reputation and broad appeal rested on its geographical location. Its low elevation, at about 800 feet below sea level in the Rift Valley, provided Jericho with a pleasant winter climate—scorching hot as its summers can be. No wonder that more than a millennium after Joshua and Rahab, Herod the Great built his winter palace in the area but stayed away during the summer. Added to its pleasing winter temperatures was Jericho’s strategic importance. Its location as a gateway into central Canaan to the west gave it control of the major passes into the central highlands. It is close to the fords across the southern Jordan River to the east and could guard them. It also controlled the nearby fresh spring water that the whole area desperately needed.

Still a Site with Controversy

Today some of the interest in Jericho is associated with conflicting interpretations of excavations at its tel (mound of ruins) and also with modern politics involving Israelis and Palestinians. It is curious how modern politics and the archaeology of an ancient site can converge, but that is the case with Jericho and other sites. Present-day Bible-related archaeology thus finds Jericho a fascinating place not just because of its strategic location, storied history, or its relationship with Joshua 2

and 6, but also because of its current challenges, the clashing views of archaeologists, and the politics of the Middle East.

In this *Schrift* we are using Jericho as a kind of exemplar for sites named in the Bible that archeologists have pierced, scraped, brushed, documented, and interpreted. With this site in primary focus, we are addressing questions such as the following: What is archaeology? What are its traditional and present-day tools? What is “biblical archaeology,” and why have some scholars scrapped the term? What can archaeology contribute to biblical studies? What does archaeology *not* have the ability to do? Can we be certain that we are dealing with the same site as the one named in the Bible when we speak of “Jericho” or other biblical sites? How can an “innocent” field like biblical archaeology become so controversial?

I have visited Old Testament Jericho many times over a period of 40-plus years, a number of times with Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary students and graduates. The first time was in 1972 with my mentor, Dr. Menahem Mansoor, whose mentor in turn was “the father of modern biblical archaeology,” William Foxwell Albright. The next time I visit, *deo volente*, will be in May 2014 accompanied by seminary and college students and others with an interest in biblical archaeology. In the intervening years and long before, archaeologists have repeatedly moved the earth of the tel. In the process, not only the soil but also assessments of the many levels at the site have shifted.

What is Archaeology?

Definitions of “archaeology” are legion. A short but workable definition of “archaeology” might read something like this: “The recovery of material from the past and critical analysis of that material.” Archaeologists agree that the field of archaeology involves a combination of science and art, scientific calculation and creative explanation. To emphasize the point, Dr. Anson F. Rainey —the late Tel Aviv University linguist, historical geographer, and archaeologist —liked to speak of archaeology as “the science of digging a square hole and the art of spinning a yarn about it.” While Dr. Rainey offered that as a kind of “tongue-in-cheek” definition to us amateur archaeologists at a tel in Israel, his point is obvious. Archaeology is not a pure, objective science without dispute. Rather, archaeology is part science and part interpretation. The latter is associated with presuppositions, biases, judgments, opinions, speculation, creativity, and subjective conclusions. Because archaeology involves personal construal, it naturally leads to lively

debate, controversy, and even bruised egos and rancor. This is true also of so-called “biblical archaeology” and the archaeology of Jericho.

The Greek-based term “archaeology” itself allows for a subjective aspect to the field. The word is made up of *archaios* (ancient) and *logos*. The word *logos* has carried a variety of nuances over the centuries, but a central idea is “discourse or spoken and written argument.” An archaeologist not only recovers and observes something ancient—hopefully in a systematic, scientific way—but after recovery, observation, and consulting with other branches of study, he/she must also *assert something* about those ancient things. What is it? How did it get there? When did it get there? How does it relate to other stuff around it and to similar stuff at other sites? How does it fit in the broader context of a region or an era? What does this discovery prove or disprove, if anything? What does it mean for us today? Uncovering and analyzing is one thing. Publishing and offering credible ideas about significance is another. What is true of archaeology in general applies to Jericho in particular. Conclusions concerning the site vary because interpretations and objective science are different entities.

“Biblical Archaeology”

“The lands of the Bible” constitute a wide geographical area for archaeology to cover. The field stretches from Egypt to the Black Sea and from Persia to Italy. The annual meetings of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) regularly contain sessions on archaeology carried out in Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Cyprus, Iraq, Greece, and more. The special studies that relate to “biblical archaeology” are also legion. For example, at the next annual meeting of ASOR I can attend sessions on Ancient Inscriptions; Maritime Archaeology; Archaeology of the Natural Environment; Bioarchaeology; Archaeology of Gender; Myth, History, and Archaeology; and many more. In all of these studies from all of these lands I may be able to find some enlightenment on life in Bible times from the era of Abraham in southern Mesopotamia to the time of John’s revelation on the Island of Patmos.

It was the great discoveries in the Near East during the nineteenth century that began to build a strong tie between archaeology and the Bible. During that century various organizations sent out men such as Edward Robinson, Charles Warren, and Sir Flinders Petrie to survey, explore and uncover locations named in the Bible. Many cities named in the Bible were identified and partially excavated. They include Nineveh, Babylon, and sites in Palestine, such as Jericho in 1869 by Charles

Warren. “Biblical sites” in Turkey, Egypt and other “Bible lands” were also identified. A list of significant writings that have some connection with the Bible that were found in the nineteenth century include these: the Sennacherib Cylinder, the Mesha Inscription, the Siloam Inscription, the Amarna Tablets, Codex Sinaiticus, and the Merneptah Stele.

Archaeology had opened new windows for biblical studies. Added to this were the great discoveries of the first half of the twentieth century, which included the finding of the Ugaritic writings, the Nuzi tablets, the Mari tablets, the Lachish letters, and then in 1947 the Dead Sea Scrolls. It was a natural occurrence that “biblical archaeology” should become a distinct discipline with this wealth of discoveries that had a clear connection with the Bible and the times of Bible events. In the United States it was William F. Albright who especially influenced “biblical archaeology” as a field that could take on a life of its own alongside archaeology in general.

Today in some circles, the term “biblical archaeology” is considered outdated and unsatisfactory, or even unacceptable. To some minds it carries a nuance that goes beyond serving as a name for archaeology conducted in areas of the world associated with events narrated in the Bible. In the view of some, the term “biblical archaeology” is opposed to archaeology as a purely scientific enterprise. Many want to widen the space between Bible/Religion and archaeology/science in an attempt to appear as ideologically or religiously neutral as possible. They may see conclusions of some “biblical archeologists” as skewed by acceptance of the Bible as a legitimate historical record. To some extent the name change of the publication of ASOR from *Biblical Archaeologist* to its current name *Near Eastern Archaeology* is related to these ideas. The latter name was adopted in 1998 after sixty years with the former name. Other organizations and their publications have maintained a direct name connection between Bible and archaeology. One of them is *Bible and Spade*, the publication edited by Dr. Bryant Wood. Another is BAS (Biblical Archaeology Society) and its publication *Biblical Archaeology Review*. At the same time BAS has changed the abbreviations B.C. (Before Christ) and A.D. (Anno Domini) to B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) and C.E. (Common Era). It thus keeps the focus on “biblical archaeology” even while it removes from its style policy the names “Dominus/Lord” and “Christ” in its dating system.

In the final analysis, the debates will continue between those advocating “objective” science and history and those turning to the biblical

text for added insights. Archaeologists on both sides, meanwhile, will continue to pursue knowledge and understanding and exist side by side with consequent tension.

Modern Tools of Archaeology

Archaeology today has at its disposal scientific tools that can answer some questions more definitively and eliminate some speculation on the part of archeologists. The modern tools complement the traditional ones. A list of traditional “tools” of the archaeologist for dating and analysis includes disciplines such as these: pottery analysis, radiocarbon testing, dendrochronology, palynology (study of dust, mostly pollen, spores, fungi, etc.), determination of magnetic north for things found *in situ*, the law of superposition (older things lie below newer things unless unnaturally jumbled), comparison of artifacts with like things of a known age, etc. The site of Jericho has had the benefit of these traditional disciplines as well as more modern analytical tools.

Two discoveries in Europe, both of them in the news in early 2013, demonstrate the advantages that modern science brings to present-day archaeology. The first find involves perforated clay pots excavated at sites along the Vistula River in Poland where early farmers lived. These ancient sieves reportedly date back about 7,200 years, a time when Jericho was already a settlement. For what did these early European farmers use these strange clay tools? The question long puzzled archaeologists. A University of Bristol geochemist recently performed tests on the objects. He discovered unique carbon isotopes of milk in fatty acids that had soaked into the unglazed vessels. The conclusion is that the old sieves were used in the cheese-making process to separate curds and whey. Without the ability to do chemical analysis of milk-fat residue, speculation about the use of the tools would have continued. Now there is not much question, unless this was only a secondary use for the sieves.

The second discovery relates to more recent history. King Richard III was killed at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485 in the English Midlands a hundred miles north of London. That was well documented. There were also tidbits of information and speculation about the king, some coming via William Shakespeare’s play, “Richard III.” Shakespeare presented him as a hunchback. It was known that Richard’s body was taken to a castle near the battlefield. Archaeologists acted on a hunch that the hunchback king was buried under a parking lot in the area. Their excavation uncovered a skeleton with a curved spine and injuries to the skull compatible with wounds by a sword or axe. Could this

actually be Richard himself? An unambiguous “yes” was sealed through DNA evidence from the teeth and a femur of the skeleton. Scientists compared that DNA with that of two of Richard’s last living relatives, who are known to be directly descended from King Richard’s mother. It was a match with both descendants.

When it comes to the lands of the Bible, archaeology—or if we prefer, “biblical archaeology”—is likewise able to exploit new scientific tools and thereby remove speculation in at least some areas. Today at archaeological sites in lands of the Bible, including Jericho, the director of excavations is less likely to appear with a pick, trowel, brushes, and drawing board. More commonly today his/her face and fingers are on an iPad with software developed for archaeology. The archaeologist can upload and back up data while on site and instantaneously share archaeological data with colleagues at other sites. Mobile computing also gives the archeologist quick access to past information about his site, old photos saved digitally, modern GPS etc.

Even as more data from past excavations at Jericho are entered digitally and new disciplines are brought to bear, we can be sure that the last word on that site that has carried several names has not yet been spoken.

The Ancient name: Jericho or Jerecho?

The name “Jericho” occurs in the Old Testament fifty-six times but with two different spellings. The spelling “Jericho” (יְרִיחוֹ) appears thirty-five times, including all twenty-nine of its occurrences in the book of Joshua and appearances in Samuel and Kings. The form of the name in the Septuagint and in the New Testament is always Ἰεριχώ, which corresponds with the spelling “Jericho.” The other spelling, “Jerecho” (יֶרְחוֹ) occurs twenty-nine times in the Old Testament. Our English spelling “Jericho” is thus based on the Hebrew form that occurs in the book of Joshua.

The two different spellings suggest two separate derivations—one associated with aroma and the other with a heavenly body. “Jericho” יְרִיחוֹ seems to derive from יָרִיחַ, which means “scent, fragrance, aroma.” The name probably relates to the sweet smell of the palm trees, balsam wood, and roses in the area. In fact, the site carries the name “The City of Palm Trees” (עִיר הַתְּמָרִים) four times in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 34:3; Judges 1:16; 3:13; 2 Chronicles 28:15). The same verse in Deuteronomy that calls Jericho “The City of Palm Trees” uses the spelling “Jerecho” (יֶרְחוֹ) when it speaks of “the valley of Jerecho”

in which “The City of Palm Trees” is located. That spelling implies a meaning other than “aroma.” “Jerecho” (יֶרֶחוֹ) suggests the word for “moon,” which in Hebrew is יָרֵחַ.

We think that the two spellings for the site can be explained in the following way. The wording of Deuteronomy 34:3 is the key. The portion of the Great Rift Valley in which the city of Jericho sits carried the name “the Valley of Jerecho” בְּקַעַת יֶרֶחוֹ / “The Valley of Moon Place”), while the city proper was called Jericho (“Sweet-scented City”) and was also designated by the scent-related name “The City of Palm Trees.” By metonymy and because of its association with “The Valley of Moon Place,” the city itself could also be called Jerecho (Moon Place), as it is twenty-nine times in the OT. Thus the two spellings for the city, with their different derivations, could occur contemporaneously in usage from ancient times together with the third name, “The City of Palm Trees.” All of the names reflect an outstanding sight or a characteristic scent of the area.

Luminary Site

It is not surprising that both ancient people and modern inhabitants could apply the name “The Valley of Moon Place” to this portion of the Rift Valley in which Jericho sits. The area has been “luminary” since ancient times, and not just in the sense of “celebrated.” Visitors to the area today can observe for themselves the phenomenal light of the celestial body that rules the night and holds sway at Jericho with impressive wattage.

On a wet and chilly winter day, a group of us left Jerusalem to explore the wilderness of Judea from the open back of an all-terrain lorry. With the drizzle turning to steady rain, we were heading east toward the northern portion of the Dead Sea. Our conversation soon turned to questioning whether we should push on or return to Jerusalem before the cold rain utterly soaked our clothes and our teeth began to chatter. Then late in the afternoon a brilliant sun broke through the clouds and painted for our gaze a spectacular rainbow at our vantage point high above the caves of Qumran. With evening setting in, the rainbow faded. The approaching darkness, however, raised the curtain on another scene—a spellbinding view of the moon rising over the Kikkar portion of the Great Rift Valley. As we looked north toward ancient Jericho, the sight of the huge-looking luminary was dazzling. There was something about the Rift Valley cradling the moon that gave it special focus and an almost hyperbolic appearance.

I have observed a full moon in many other picturesque settings. Notable are the big ball of the moon rising over the valley of my ancestors at Valle, Setesdal, Norway; a dazzling moon over the Parthenon in Athens; and the moon at Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe with its lunar light interacting with the spraying waters of the Zambezi River to create a rare moonbow. The view of the full moon at Jericho, however, has persisted in my mind as extraordinary. The geographic setting at the Rift Valley over Jericho highlights the moon there as a dramatic feature of God's creative handiwork.

Along the extended Great Rift Valley, which stretches from Turkey deep into Africa, settlements with names relating to the moon have appeared from antiquity. Many people must have been as impressed by the appearance of the moon as were we travelers. About eight miles south of Moon City/Jericho is the site of Khirbet Qumran where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in nearby caves. The name "Qumran," according to our guide Saliba Dunho, refers to "two moons," since the Dead Sea provides a striking reflection of the moon there and creates a seeming duplicate luminary. The problem with many of the ancients living at the Rift Valley in ancient times is that they confused the Creator with the handiwork of his creation and misplaced their adoration. Moon-related worship activities were practiced in the area, judging by the moon-named settlements and the testimony of the Old Testament about the moon as an object of worship. Moses was aware of the worship practices of the people of the area and the temptations that would face Israel. See Deuteronomy 4:19, where Moses stands across the Jordan River from Jericho and warns Israel about bowing in worship before the moon, as well as before the stars and sun, impressive as they all might be at that site. For other Old Testament references relating to the moon as an object of worship, see Deuteronomy 17:3; 2 Kings 23:5; Jeremiah 8:2.

City of Palms

It is natural that both ancients and moderns should also describe Jericho as "The City of Palm Trees" (Deuteronomy 34:3; Judges 1:16; 3:13; 2 Chronicles 28:15). The copious waters from the adjacent Ain es-Sultan, also known as the Spring of Elisha, allows palm groves to flourish in the area today. It is obvious from the old name given in three books of the Old Testament, "The City of the Palm Trees," that it was the same in ancient times.

Jericho, Jerecho, or The City of Palms. It is not unusual for ancient cities to carry several names as does Jericho. Sometimes that is the case because a new people began to inhabit an old site and the new inhabitants wanted to attach their own name to the place. For example, the city of Laish or Leshem, both meaning “lion,” began to be called “Dan” when the tribe of Dan migrated to that site. No doubt some people continued to use the old names together with the new. In other places with two or more names, one name may be related to a man or a people, another name to the god they worshipped, and a third name may be descriptive of the location. Thus we have one city with three names: Jebus (city of Jebusites), Shalem (a god), Jerusalem (“foundation of peace/security”). Another example of a biblical site with three levels of names is Hebron. That name means “union, league” and refers to a league of several cities. It was earlier called Kiriath-arba = City of Arba. Arba was a man, but the Hebrew word *arba* also means “four,” evidently referring to the city consisting of a federation of four towns in close proximity. Thus the site is named City of Arba, City of the Four, and Confederacy City (see Joshua 14:15, et al.). Another example is Bethel, which formerly carried the name Luz. These and other examples demonstrate that it is not unusual that the one site Jericho/Jerecho/City of Palms and other biblical cities carry several names.

Jericho and Joshua 2 and 6

Many people associate Jericho with Joshua 2, where we have the account of the spies of Israel and Rahab the harlot, and with Joshua 6, which is the narrative of the extraordinary capture and destruction of the city. The accounts offer some description of Jericho as it existed about 1406 B.C. at the time of the conquest under Joshua. Thus we *can* know from the ancient inspired text something of what existed at one of the city’s twenty-five or more levels, provided that we accept as historically accurate the Bible account.

What do we learn from those accounts? We can glean the following. A road led from the fords of the Jordan River to the city. In the opposite direction from Jericho was the hill country where people could hide. Jericho was a city-state with a king and with walls and a gate to protect its royalty and its citizens during times of threat. At least one of its houses was an edifice built into the construction of the city wall (lit. “her house was in the wall of the city wall,” Joshua 2:15). It was probably a casemate wall-house structure. That house had a roof on which people could walk and that was used for drying flax. It had a window big

enough for men to go through, and it had more than one door. Jericho had at least one house of prostitution. One house was big enough to contain a woman, her parents, her brothers and sisters, and even more extended family. We assume that this house was not unique to Jericho and that there were others like it. At the time of its destruction, the wall of Jericho did not lean and topple on its side but fell down under itself, like a building imploded so that it does not fall sideways but falls straight down. The people did not die from starvation but by the swords of Israel, so that it is likely that plenty of food remained in the city when it was destroyed. Joshua burned the city and its contents except for the precious metals. Israel did not rebuild Jericho at the time of Joshua. See Joshua 2 and 6 for all of these details.

Now, wouldn't we delight in finding at Jericho a level from about 1406 B.C. that displays all this, with collapsed walls everywhere, except for one small section that also served as a house? Wouldn't it be great if that "safe house" would have a window big enough for two spies to exit the house? And how about a roof with some residue of drying flax, and maybe even a scarlet cord somewhere in the area? We could do radio-carbon testing on the flax, rope, and cord and hopefully come up with a date of 1400 B.C., give or take fifty years. Of course there would have to be the char of burning throughout the level. Some silver trumpets stamped with "property of Levites" would be fun to find too. But such "snap shots" of time seldom occur in the real world of archaeology.

There have been some remarkable "frozen in time" discoveries, such as the "iceman" found in 1991 still literally frozen in the Alps some 5,000 years after his death. And of course there is the city of Pompey "frozen in time" by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius on August 24, in A.D. 79. But such "perfect discoveries" with remarkable preservation are rare, and the Jericho of Joshua's time is not one of them. Instead at the tel archaeologists have to deal with such realities as erosion from rain and wind, mixing of levels, and contamination of evidence from earlier unscientific activity at the site.

What Archaeology Can and Cannot Do

It is important to keep in mind that archaeology can never prove or disprove the Bible and should not be used for a role it does not have. The Bible speaks of itself as standing on its own witness and does not rely on anything that man can provide to "prove it." The Word authenticates itself. Exposed is a very weak faith in what the Bible says when someone must rely on archaeology to dig out the real truth. Those of us

who hold without reservation to the authority of Scripture will not be alarmed by claims that “archaeology has disproven the Bible at Jericho” or at any other biblical site. When that claim is made, often the best procedure to follow is simply to wait a bit. There may well be new finds, better analysis through better science, and fresh interpretations that are in harmony with an account of Scripture. Many long-held presuppositions and interpretations of Bible critics have been discarded because of new archaeological evidence.

So what is the role of “biblical archaeology” if it cannot be called into service to prove the Bible right or wrong? What *can* it do?

Archaeology can certainly help to illuminate life in the various eras of “Bible times.” In other words, it brings light to the things of “Bible background.” How were cities laid out? What were houses like at the time of Isaiah or Jesus? How did people grow, store, and cook food two thousand or three thousand years ago? What did a winepress or olive press look like? What tools, weapons, and jewelry did they use? What were their writing materials? What did they do with the bodies of their dead? Yes, we even have many examples of ancient toilets, as evidenced in the City of David, Beth Shean, Philippi, et al. Many aspects of life in Bible times have been brought to life through archaeology, and students of the Bible have gotten the advantage from it for an understanding of “Bible background.”

Biblical archaeology can also serve to “melt the time” between Bible events and us. When you uncover a mud-brick wall from the time of Moses, or sit on the excavated stairs where Jesus walked and taught, or jog down an uncovered portion of a cobblestone Roman road where Paul probably walked, then the biblical world does not seem very distant at all. When walking down the *cardo* and *decumanus maximus* of an unearthed colonnaded ancient city named in the Bible, look at the shops, mosaic floors, pools, statuary, and other artwork. It may strike you that life in Bible times could be anything but “backward.” In fact, your own hometown might seem quite dowdy in comparison. Exposing the things of Bible background, shrinking the distance to the world of the Bible, “connecting” with life in Bible times, and sometimes shedding light on the meaning of biblical words or expressions—these are some of the services that biblical archaeology can provide. It cannot, however, “prove” the message of Bible. Saving faith has never arisen through the tools and methods of archaeology. God exercises that power through his Word, as the Scriptures testify.

It is true that the Scriptures themselves do indeed invite its early readers to inspect the remains of certain sites to see evidence of what the Bible has declared. But this is not for the purpose of creating faith or proving its message. Rather, observing things left from the past can satisfy curiosity about certain lingering phenomena. In that connection, Israelites could go and see the huge bed of King Og of Bashan, because the bed was still extant in Rabbah, part of modern Amman, Jordan (Deuteronomy 3:11). Remains from the past could also serve as a teaching tool for future generations. Thus Israel is invited to use the still-visible memorial stones at Gilgal as a device for teaching children of the miraculous act of God at the Jordan (Joshua 4:19–24). Preserved ruins could serve to impress the reality of God’s victory over enemies and his saving power for Israel. Thus the city of Jericho is to be preserved in its post-Joshua status for all to see (Joshua 6:26). Destroyed cities could continue to serve as stark warnings against sinful complacency and false security. Therefore the people of Zion are encouraged to go and take a look at the ruins of Calneh, Hamath, and Gath. Archaeological sites in Bible lands might likewise be used for each of those purposes today, especially when reading the sections of Scripture connected with the site.

Site Identification and Old Testament Jericho?

Site identification is a key concern of biblical archaeology. Can we be sure that a given tel is actually the biblical place which we are associating with it? Or is the biblical site actually somewhere else? The answer to those questions relates to the frequent charge that “archaeology has disproved the Bible” at various places. It goes too far to say that the only site identification we can be sure of is Jerusalem, as some used to say. A number of locations simply have no other worthy candidates, such as the formidable tels of Hazor or Lachish. At Gibeon (el-Jib) archaeologists have even found handles of ancient wine jars with the letters of the name of the city stamped on them. Now we can add biblical Gath (Tel Safi) to such lists of certain or nearly certain site identifications.

A classic case of critics declaring that archaeology has disproven the Bible is the case of the city of Ai. The charge may well relate to wrong site identification. According to Joshua 7, Ai was the next city after Jericho that Joshua attacked. Mentioned in connection with Ai are Beth Aven and Bethel (Joshua 7:2). The general area where Ai must be located seems clear. The name “Ai” means “ruin.” It thus has the same basic meaning as the word *tel/tell*. Ai has traditionally been

identified with et-Tell (the ruin), which is about twelve miles west of Jericho. The problem is that there is no archaeological evidence that the site was occupied during the Late Bronze Age (1550–1200 B.C.), the time of Joshua and the conquest. Site identification is a problem that archaeologists often face. Wrong identification can result in the claim that archaeology has shown a Bible account to be wrong. In the case of Ai, the reality may well be that the Bible is right and et-Tell is the wrong site. There are a number of other worthy candidates for Ai. One of them is under the modern village of Deir Dibwan, which is near et-Tell. Another site is a few miles southwest of et-Tell. Perhaps the best candidate is Khirbet el-Maqtir, just northwest of et-Tell. The site fits well with other information from Joshua, namely, a city gate and nearby quarries. Both have been uncovered.

When the charge is made that archaeology has disproven the Bible, sometimes the best policy is to leave the “problem” unresolved for the time being. It is interesting when archaeology can unearth material evidence that is in harmony with a Bible account, but trust in its reliability does not hang on what a spade can uncover. In time a solution may emerge. Sometimes the solution is simply to admit that we had been “barking up the wrong tree” for a long time when we should have been digging at another spot.

How about Old Testament Jericho? Do we have the right place in Tell es-Sultan?

Thus far we have been assuming that what we today call “Old Testament Jericho” is the very site called Jericho/Jerecho/City of Palms in the Bible. We are assuming that it is the site now called Tell es-Sultan, which is NW of the Dead Sea, about 4.5 miles west of the Jordan River by road, about 18 miles NE of Jerusalem, and about 1.25 miles NW of present-day Jericho. But what if an archaeologist declares that there is nothing or little at the location that could relate to the account of Joshua 2 and 6? Can an archeological interpretation disprove a Bible account? Conversely, can the Bible disprove an archaeological interpretation? Is there another possibility that does not bring into conflict an account of the Bible and the report of an archaeologist? Namely, could our site identification be wrong? Is biblical Jericho actually at another place within the same general area?

Early identifications associate Tell es-Sultan with Old Testament Jericho. A traveler in the 4th century A.D. associates the site with biblical Jericho. A long history of agreement among archaeologists connects Old Testament Jericho and Tell es-Sultan. The reality is that there simply is

no other worthy candidate in the area. There is no question about the area where Jericho has to be located according to Bible narratives. It is across the Jordan River from the Plains of Moab and Abel Shittim, where Israel is gathered at the end of Deuteronomy and start of Joshua. And there stands the ancient mound of Tell es-Sultan, now about 8.5 acres in area, with no other candidate in view.

So it appears that claims of erroneous site identification cannot settle the conflict between those who say that archaeology has disproven the book of Joshua because there is nothing there from the time of Joshua and those who say “not so at all.”

The history of excavations at Tell Es-Sultan

It is impossible to know how many amateurs with a tool have dug into Jericho (Tell es-Sultan) over the centuries. The site certainly must have seemed inviting to treasure-seekers. The earliest known reference to at least some sort of investigation there comes from the 4th century A.D. account of “the pilgrim of Bordeaux.” The man is anonymous. It seems that he hailed from Bordeaux in Gaul, because that is the starting point of his journey that takes him to Palestine. He writes in Latin in about A.D. 333, two decades after Constantine legalized Christianity. The four extant copies of his work were prepared between the 8th and 10th centuries. The *itinerarium* of the traveler from Bordeaux lists many biblical sites and sometimes associates them with biblical events, although not always accurately. Here is what he recorded about his journey from Jerusalem to Jericho.

From Jerusalem to Jericho (Ariha) – 18 miles.

On the right hand side, as one descends from the mount, behind a tomb, is the sycamore tree into which Zacchaeus climbed that he might see Christ (Luke 19:4). A mile-and-a-half from the town is the fountain of Elisha. Formerly if any woman drank of it she did not bear children. Beside it lies an earthenware vessel. Elisha threw salt into it, and came and stood over the fountain and said, “Thus saith the Lord, I have cleansed these waters, and if any woman drink of this fountain she shall bear children.” (2 Kings 2:19–22).

Above the same fountain is the house of the harlot Rahab, to whom the spies came, and she hid them, and alone was saved

when Jericho was destroyed. Here stood the city of Jericho, round whose walls the children of Israel circled with the Ark of the Covenant, and the walls fell down (Joshua 2:1–21; 6:1–25). Nothing is to be seen of it except the place where the Ark of the Covenant stood, and the twelve stones which the children of Israel brought out of Jordan (Joshua 4:20–24). There Jesus, the son of Nave (Joshua the son of Nun), circumcised the children of Israel and buried their foreskins (Joshua 5:2–9).

Note that the distance and direction that “the pilgrim” gives between Jerusalem and Jericho fits well with the distance between Jerusalem and Tell es-Sultan. So even 1,700 years ago that tel, namely, Tell es-Sultan, seems to be the site recognized as Old Testament Jericho.

Many centuries passed before the first excavation took place at Tell es-Sultan under Charles Warren in 1869. He cut a number of trenches and also vertical shafts down to bedrock. Interesting from his dig was that he just missed discovering the famous stone tower (later discovered by John Garstang) that is a highlight of the site today because of its antiquity and mystery. Some date the tower as early as about 7,500 B.C. Like its precise date, its use is uncertain. Warren recorded that very little was found at Jericho except pottery and some stone mortars. His work took place in the early era of “biblical archaeology” when modern scientific methods were not yet applied to the tels.

Somewhat more “scientific” were the efforts of German excavators Ernst Sellin and Carl Watzinger, who dug at Tell es-Sultan starting in 1907. Initially the two Germans thought they had uncovered remains from the time of Joshua’s destruction of Jericho from about 1400 B.C. Later they revised their conclusions. What they had found was actually much earlier than the time of Joshua’s conquest. In fact, some of the walls they observed were from the Early Bronze Age in the 3rd millennium B.C. They also unearthed houses and other debris from the Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian eras.

Even today the name of John Garstang of the University of Liverpool is commonly associated with Jericho because of his work there before the Second World War in 1932–1936. He did not agree with the evaluations of Sellin and Watzinger and wanted to conduct his own independent work. This was still before the era of sophisticated scientific methods. Consequently some of his conclusions about strata and dates at Jericho are not reliable. He uncovered and investigated a number of Middle and Late Bronze Age tombs, as well as much earlier

material from Mesolithic and Neolithic periods. The reason Garstang became well known at the time was his contention that certain mud brick walls, which had been burned, were from Joshua's destruction of the city.

Next on the list of the archaeologists of Jericho was the British scholar, Dame Kathleen Kenyon. Together with Sir Mortimer Wheeler, Kenyon had developed a stratigraphic procedure of excavation that she now applied to the tel between 1952 and 1958. Her work on the tel concentrated on digging three main trenches on the west, northeast, and south ends of the mound and also digging various squares reaching to bedrock. Such squares are now ubiquitous at the archaeological sites throughout Israel/Palestine. The news at the time of the publication of her conclusions was that John Garstang's dating was flawed and that there was nothing at the site that could be associated with destruction under Joshua. According to her, the site was abandoned for an extended time after 1550 B.C. and suffered badly from erosion during the vacant period.

Digging and evaluation at Jericho did not end with Dame Kenyon. Bryant G. Wood took a fresh look at the evidence from Tell es-Sultan and has questioned many of Kenyon's interpretations. He sees strong evidence for a destruction level at the tel from about 1400 B.C. Wood is an expert in pottery analysis and noticed that Kenyon had drawn conclusions based on a lack of imported pottery at the site and had not considered all of the local pottery from the Late Bronze Age found there. He noted also the presence of Egyptian scarabs from the same era. Carbon-14 testing of debris points to a date of around 1400 B.C. for a level of destruction. There is, according to Wood, clear evidence of leveled walls and destruction by burning consistent with a dating of about 1400 B.C. He has concluded that, while Garstang had erred in some of his dating, the collapsed mud-brick wall that Garstang associated with Joshua's destruction is indeed from the Late Bronze Age and not from centuries earlier, as per Kenyon. Of special interest for Wood was the discovery of large stores of grain in the houses destroyed at the same time. This is in harmony with the Joshua 6 account in which the destruction was sudden. According to the Bible account, there were not months of siege in an attempt to starve the population – a typical tactic of ancient warfare in the case of walled cities. Jericho still had plenty of food when it succumbed. The analysis of Bryant Wood will not be the final word on the site of Jericho. Objections to his analysis continue even as Italian archaeologists carry on their work at the site. Archaeological

guide Stephen Langfur is among those who object to Wood's dating. His main argument is that settlement patterns in the highland suggest that Israel did not arrive until two centuries later.

What all of the excavations at Tell es-Sultan have revealed is that there are at least twenty-five layers of habitation there. Remains of buildings are evident from Mesolithic times into the Iron Age. There is also some evidence of Roman era presence in tombs and graves; and there is an item or two from the Byzantine period (a bowl and an iron nail).

Jericho and Politics

Who are the Israelites? Was there an exodus under Moses? Was there a conquest under Joshua? How much credibility does the Bible have when it purports to relate history? How someone answers these questions and the conclusion they draw often can be traced back to a person's presuppositions.

For a long time critical scholars assumed that there could not have been an exodus and conquest during the Late Bronze Age because there were no nations settled east of the Jordan at that time to challenge Israel, as the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy say there were. That assumption now has to be abandoned in light of finds in recent decades. Major sites in Transjordan have been investigated with clear evidence of appreciable occupation. Villages and cemeteries are evident. The Merneptah Stele (also called the Israel Stele) further demonstrates that Israel was already a recognized nation in the Late Bronze Age.

At this point in the discussion modern politics, archaeology, and the Bible converge in an interesting way. Some in the modern State of Israel like to point to the ancient past to justify a continuing right to the area once called Canaan. They accept the narrative of the Bible of a divine promise of the land to Abraham, the exodus under Moses, and a conquest under Joshua that included Jericho. Their argument, however, is disputed by other Israelis, including leading archaeologists such as Israel Finkelstein, who reject the Bible account and say that there never was an exodus and conquest in real history. They say these things were only inventions to create a glorified past for Israel. Many Palestinians and enemies of the State of Israel also prefer that latter idea. They favor archaeological interpretations that say there is no evidence of a conquest and a fully formed nation of Israel during the Late Bronze Age or even later; and thus there is no justification from archaeology and history for the claims of those on "the right." In Palestinian controlled areas, there

would obviously be an interest in allowing only archaeologists who favor their interpretations of the past and their political ends. According to our recent guide in Israel, that is the case with Jericho, which is under the Palestinian Authority.

Political tension is obvious in a number of archaeological sites, as attested by the sign we read at the location of recent excavations in Jerusalem. The sign read: “DANGEROUS ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE SERVICE OF A DANGEROUS IDEOLOGY.” At other locations, archaeology has simply been stopped to avoid political problems and jeopardizing the prospects of peace talks. We were surprised recently to see the condition of the site at Samaria/Sebastia. For two decades the one-time major archaeological location related to both the Old Testament and New Testament has been neglected by both Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Moving in to take advantage of the neglect are weeds, unauthorized diggers, and thieves. There are reports that at another site, this one in Judea, a major discovery of a palace, supposedly from the time of King David, has been kept quiet for political reasons.

We hope that at Jericho/Tell es-Sultan excavations can continue and that significant finds, should there be any, will be published.

The mound of ruins that was Old Testament Jericho still speaks. Because it is a “tel” or “ruin,” it speaks of the destruction of all things earthly and all forces that are opposed to God. Through its association with the book of Joshua, it shouts about God’s gracious victories for his people. And it continues to provide fodder for debate related to Scripture, archaeology, and politics. Jericho is a place with an ancient past that just will not go away. [LSQ](#)

Compassion Fatigue: A Problem for Pastors

Jerome T. Gernander
Pastor, Bethany Lutheran Church
Princeton, Minnesota

LSQ Vol. 55, Nos. 2–3 (June–September 2015)

IN ACTS 20:28–29, WE LEARN THAT PASTORS ARE singled out and targeted for attack by the devil. This is from St. Paul’s sermon to the pastors who would continue the work in Ephesus. It includes the exhortation, “Shepherd the church of God,” which is repeated at so many pastoral installation services. But then Paul utters the shock, his prophecy: “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among *you* [the pastors], not sparing the *flock*.”¹ This is Satan’s way: destroy the flock by striking the shepherd.

From this passage we zero in on St. Paul’s words about the divine call: “Take heed to the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.” But as you may have noticed, I left out three words which I believe are often left out in our consciousness as we go about our daily pastoral work. All your thought is of the divine call and the flock; often that is where you begin in your thinking about what you must do as a pastor. But actually St. Paul said: “Take heed *to yourselves and to the flock...*”

When the apostle Paul tells pastors to whom or what they must “take heed” or pay attention, this is the order: *first* oneself, *then* the flock. Why? “Savage wolves will come in among you [pastors].” One thing Satan is counting upon is that the pastor, who enters a selfless vocation, will think that paying attention to himself equates to selfishness, and

¹ Scripture citations from the *New King James Version of the Holy Bible*, Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1982.

so will not “take heed to” or be watchful in things that could reduce his capacity to shepherd. Nor is Acts 20:28–29 the only passage that says this. Divinely inspired St. Paul tells young pastor Timothy as a representative of all Christian pastors, “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine” (1 Timothy 4:16), again “to yourself” being stated first—perhaps because the Lord knows what the pastor will neglect? Hmm. So this is not simply an historical, episodic description of what happened in the first century A.D.

The landscape is littered with the pastors who have broken down in some way. According to a book published this year, *Fail: Finding Hope and Grace in the Midst of Ministry Failure*, 1,500 pastors leave the ministry each month. No matter what survey you read, you will find statistics such as these: 80 percent of pastors report a general feeling of discouragement in their work; 70 percent report experiencing major distress; 33 percent report feeling burned out within the first five years of ministry; 33 percent say they have considered leaving the ministry; 45 percent report experiencing depressive or “burnout” symptoms to the degree that they believe they need a leave of absence (of which, very likely, they have no possibility due to institutional limitations).²

When you consider that these are only the *reported* responses, it is reasonable to assume these percentages even may be a bit low. It also is a snapshot of those who may be on their way out of the ministry, or who continue in the ministry filled with hopelessness and discouragement. This leads in one direction toward clinical depression; in another direction toward malfeasance (such as pornography use or adulterous behavior, borne out by a statistic from the same source that 37 percent surveyed confessed to having been involved in inappropriate sexual behavior with someone in the church); and in yet another direction toward conflict in the congregation between a discouraged, guilt-laden pastor and his church members. Yet the same surveys show that, while a significant percentage of pastors surveyed might think they are failing or falling short in competency, at least three-fourths of the members in the congregations would give their pastor an A or a B in job performance, and only 4 percent would give a failing grade!

² These statistics are quoted from two sources: (1) The internet article “A Big Place For Small Churches: Statistics,” quoting from the book *Pastors at Risk* by H.B. London and Neil Wiseman (Victor Books, 1993), accessed on September 19, 2014, at <<http://www.smallchurch.com/resources/statistics>>; and the internet article “Pastor Burnout Statistics,” accessed on September 19, 2014, at <<http://pastorburnout.com>>. The first source cites surveys from 1991 and 1992; the second source cites a survey published in the *New York Times* in 2010.

Compassion Fatigue, a Battlefield Diagnosis

One explanation for the dismal situation reflected here is *compassion fatigue*, an informal term for a diagnosis that has been around only since the mid-1990s: *Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder (STSD)*. It sounds awfully similar to a diagnosis that has become all too familiar from evaluations of soldiers returning from the World Wars of the last century, and the war zones of the present-day wars against terrorism: *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)*. These terms come from the field of psychotherapy.

In this paper it is not my desire to leave theology behind and to put psychotherapy into the driver's seat. Professor John Pless' historical observation serves as a good warning for us today: "Attempting to integrate psychological insights into Christian theology and pastoral practice resulted in a theology that was forced to fit into the categories of current psychological theories."³ The social sciences should not drive theology. However, while we might be tempted cynically to dismiss *Compassion Fatigue* or *STSD* as an intrusion from psychology, I prefer to think of it as a contribution from the battlefield. We have no problem accepting the terms *Shell Shock*, *Combat Exhaustion*, *Survivor Syndrome*, and *PTSD*, all of which came from observing returning soldiers from World Wars I and II.⁴ As Acts 20 teaches us, pastors are on a battlefield.

Holy Scripture testifies to this: If the evil foe is at war with the Shepherd and attacks the flock to scatter and destroy it (John 10:11–12; Luke 10:3); if the Dragon is at war with the woman (the Church, Revelation 12:1–6); and if our adversary the devil is seeking to devour the brotherhood of those who have fellowship with and are co-heirs with Christ (1 Peter 5:8–9); then would he not begin with those who are on the front lines in this battle, the pastors and shepherds? Not only does Holy Scripture testify to this, but experience and sanctified common sense testify to this as well, especially when we look at the research of compassion fatigue and its applications to the life of the church.

The diagnosis of *Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder* came into being as a direct result of therapists' observations of those who were caring for

³ John T. Pless, "Your Pastor Is Not Your Therapist—Private Confession: The Ministry of Repentance and Faith" (paper presented at *Seventh Annual Symposium on Catechesis*, Sussex, WI, 2000).

⁴ Charles Figley, ed., *Compassion Fatigue: Coping with Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder in Those Who Treat the Traumatized* (London: Brunner-Routledge, 1995), 10, 22.

victims of trauma: for instance, in the 9/11 terrorist attack, school shootings, Hurricane Katrina, and the many present-day soldiers who have numerous deployments. A brain scan of a person who found himself in sudden danger on 9/11—which revealed the brain to be suffering a maximum amount of trauma—was found to be virtually identical with the brain scan of the coordinator of the first responders, showing that the brain’s level of trauma rises to its maximum when participating in the sufferings of others.⁵ The symptoms of a person suffering *primary* traumatic stress disorder at every stage are identical to the symptoms of a person suffering *secondary* traumatic stress disorder.

This is one reason there are so many casualties among pastors. Simply put, there is a cost to caring. Absorbing information about suffering often includes absorbing the suffering as well. This is why it is also known as *secondary victimization* in psychology.⁶

As Christian pastors we would not speak the language of victimization. Or would we? We begin with Jesus, who entered into our suffering and made it His own.

For Us the One True Man Doth Fight

“[God] made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us. ... We do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet [was] without sin” (Galatians 2:21, Hebrews 4:15). Christ also endured the temptations that come to pastors when they are worn out and weak, depleted, and heavy laden. He came to share this suffering. The descriptions by which the Father calls Christ “My Servant” in Isaiah 42 and 53 are such that they cause Him to be named “the *Suffering* Servant.” He is the Paschal *Victim*. Not content that people remain victims of the evil foe, He took upon Himself our victimhood that He might turn it into victory by His atonement, which we call *vicarious*, or substitutionary. The Substitute Victim.

This says something about the pastoral office. The holy ministry is incarnational. The eternal Word who became flesh sends out His Word not to be disseminated by angels (disembodied spirits), but spoken from the physical mouths of flesh-and-blood men who can be hurt and wounded. As Christ Himself took on human flesh that included emotions, and as He showed compassion, His ordained servants in administering the Word as medicine to wounded sinners, in showing

⁵ Dr. Beverly Yahnke, *Doxology* lecture, July 21, 2014.

⁶ Figley, 1, 9.

compassion, enter into the emotions and suffering of people they are sent to serve. We are not substitutes, but there is an undeniable sharing in the suffering of others. “As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you” (John 20:21; KJV).

In the gospels we see examples of what this sharing in the suffering of others did to Christ. After Jesus’ so-called “long day” in Capernaum, in which first He confronted the forces of hell in expelling the demon in the synagogue service, then proceeded from there to Peter’s house to heal his mother-in-law of a burning fever, and finally healed a long line of sick and demon-possessed people well into the night, “He went out and departed to a solitary place, and there He prayed” (Mark 1:35). Nor was this the only time, for St. Luke summarizes His ministry of teaching and healing in Galilee with the words, “So He Himself *often* withdrew into the wilderness and prayed” (5:16).

We get the picture that the need to be alone and pray was not optional for Jesus, the care He was giving necessitated that He receive care, and His need was not only spiritual but physical. Likewise, Jesus’ healing of the woman with the previously incurable flow of blood—taking away her ritual uncleanness—and His words, “I perceived power going out from Me” (Luke 8:46), show that such entering into the pain of others took something out of Jesus. In some way He was depleted.

Pastors experience this too. The apostle Paul spoke of his “deep concern for all the churches” (2 Corinthians 11:28), a concern by which the individual churches’ and individual Christians’ needs, temptations, struggles, and troubles became his own, something he shared. He entered into it. He says in the same breath that it “comes upon me daily.” When St. Paul writes, “Weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:15), it is something that undoubtedly he himself first experienced and modeled as a pastor. We can categorize this as a fruit of the Spirit and part of the sanctified life; it is admirable and recommended. But we should recognize the other side of this for a pastor who is called to do this at any time: empathy such as this affects the pastor and drains him.

Compassion Stress, or Secondary Traumatic Stress

As pastors we realize at times that we are depleted or drained. The study of compassion fatigue provides a way to understand the underlying cause. But before we consider compassion fatigue, which is an informal term for the disorder (STSD), comes *Secondary Traumatic Stress* (minus the disorder), or more informally, *compassion stress*.

This stress is unavoidable, and even psychology recognizes this: “Trauma workers, who intentionally put themselves into daily disorganization and disequilibrium, often find it difficult to limit crises in their lives.”⁷ “Sensitivity has two distinct meanings. One is emotional awareness and accurate perception. The second meaning of sensitivity is vulnerability to pain. Often these two forms of sensitivity exist side by side in us. We are good outreach workers [and] therapists [*and pastors!*] because we are sensitive. And, because we are sensitive, we pay a price.”⁸ Another name given to compassion stress is *vicarious traumatization*. Again, this is the human cost of caring for others.

Entering the pastoral office, you know this is unavoidable. You are prepared to shepherd sinful people, who have sinners in their lives, and live in a sinful world. You *want* to provide peace to the troubled sinner, relief for the wounded and hurting, comfort for the sick and suffering, and hope for the grieving. The fact that God sends you, a sinner, to minister to them is assurance that you will empathize with what they face. As pastors, we strive to be more and more empathetic. However, the very empathy the Lord intends you to have will make you vulnerable to being adversely affected, over time, by all this participation in the suffering of others. “STS in itself cannot be prevented since it is a normal and universal response to abnormal or unusual events. The enduring or negative effects of this response, however, can be prevented from developing into a disorder (STSD).”⁹ At least, that is the goal.

When I first heard of compassion fatigue, I assumed it must be something pastors experience in relation to the *amount* of empathizing they do. For instance, this fatigue must be higher after performing all the ministry tasks related to a death and funeral; or it must be higher in the case of pastors at larger churches, where they have more members to tend, and the number of sick, shut-in members, and deaths would be higher. But this is not necessarily the case. For example, a research experiment in a hospital emergency room setting changed the number of patients per ER nurse from the usual load of 12–15 during a shift to two or three; with more opportunity to be better acquainted with the patient and his/her family members, and being closer to the emotions experienced by everyone affected, the nurses’ emotional stress skyrocketed with fewer patients.¹⁰

⁷ Ibid., 101.

⁸ Frank M. Ochberg, “When Helping Hurts,” <<http://giftfromwithin.org>>.

⁹ Figley, 178.

¹⁰ Yahnke, *Doxology* lecture.

A pastor at a small church, who may only have one funeral per year, actually may be more vulnerable to compassion fatigue. The stress that comes from knowing his people's constant worry whether the congregation will survive; the internal strife that comes when one member gets upset at something, and how a potential loss of a member or family will drastically affect the attendance numbers, the offerings, and the mood in the congregation; the pastor's reminding himself of his call, that even so-called difficult members are not the enemy but are sheep, and that "the congregation is not the pastor's topic of conversation, but rather the flock of Christ to which he has been commissioned by Christ,"¹¹ combined with the fact that the pastor is often without a friend in the congregation, distant from family and thus lacking a support system that members of the congregation have, bring to the pastor of a small congregation a heightened level of compassion stress. He cannot help it. It is the environment in which he lives and works. Such pastors need prayer and support from brothers in office, not pressure!¹²

Compassion stress is not simply in reaction to a specific event of providing counsel to a person in distress. Pastors' constant involvement in the lives of those they serve has a cumulative effect. Those in secular fields of work with trauma recognize clergy to be "trauma workers," the National Organization for Victim Assistance listing clergy among the "crisis intervenors."¹³ As Christian pastors, our definition of crisis is a little different. Not only are we called upon to help in the "extreme"

¹¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Spiritual Care*, trans. Jay C. Rochelle (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 40.

¹² Sometimes attendance numbers and percentages are mentioned as a warning about the future of the synod's existence; an unintended consequence of this may be to add to the bad conscience of the pastor of a smaller congregation who likely is already pointing at himself, carrying a burden of insecurity and struggling with feelings of failure. Lloyd Rediger, who conducted surveys of Minnesota and Wisconsin clergy in the early 1990s, found that, when pastors rated their support system, "denominational officials rank near the bottom while seminary professors rank last. This is sad because both these categories of persons are very close to clergy during their training years and transitions. Both types of supporters are typically ordained themselves and would be expected to understand clergy needs. But pastors often regard them as privileged defectors from the ranks of everyday pastors. And they consistently report that they do not trust the motives of such persons, nor find them helpful in times of crisis or transition. Their lack of support is discouraging also because these persons are dominating influences in the church, who claim to care about the needs of clergy. Their influence and claim is viewed negatively by the majority of pastors." (G. Lloyd Rediger, "The State of the Clergy," *The Clergy Journal*, March (1995), <<http://home.comcast.net/~glrediger/columns/survey.html>>, accessed September 14, 2014).

¹³ Figley, 102.

crisis such as the diagnosis of cancer, addiction, divorce, abuse, suicide, terminal illness, and death, but we are also called to help people with these so-called lesser “crises” with which they struggle daily: guilt and shame, loneliness, anger and bitterness, sadness and discouragement, impatience and discontentment in their vocations, and doubts and fears. Pastors in modern times have been labeled “a quivering mass of availability.”¹⁴

While these do not get the headlines or the attention, or make it into the special intercessions in the church service, the cumulative effect is *secondary traumatic stress* or *compassion stress*. Add to this the stressors of declining attendance, budget deficits, apostasy in the world at large and its effect on the church’s members, divorces and cohabitation that divide families within the congregation and make closed communion difficult; and the fact that pastors live in a culture of criticism, often measuring their “success” through the eyes of others, tempted to think they must answer why there is declining attendance and offerings. Does this qualify as compassion stress? It certainly does, when the pastor’s heart is bleeding for the people he is called to serve. This is Paul’s deep concern for the church, and his weeping for those who weep. Or, as another brother pastor has said, the pastor is the one person whom God has placed in this people’s midst to stay up at night worrying about them and praying for them.

Lloyd Rediger, a retired pastor who has worked as a clergy consultant and conducted surveys of clergy in Minnesota and Wisconsin, agrees with this broader view of what is included in compassion stress, simply from judging responses from pastors:

Through working with hundreds of clergy over the years, as well as through my own experience, I have learned that there are enormous energy drains associated with being a clergyperson. One of these is the loneliness of the pseudo-intimacies common to pastoring. This is the curious experience of being available to parishioners in caring, intimate, and confidential ways. Ways which are not typically reciprocated. Another drain is the pervasiveness of the role. The expectations of this role (both the parishioners’ and ours) never seem to go away. In addition, our profession is the only one in which personal identity, professional identity, and religious faith are all wrapped up in

¹⁴ Lucas V. Woodford, *Great Commission, Great Confusion, or Great Confession? The Mission of the Holy Christian Church* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 8.

the same package. Another drain is the image of success. How do we know when we are “successful” if the usual indicators—money, fame, and power—are not legitimate goals for us? Our striving, therefore, may not always rejuvenate us with tangible rewards. Yet another drain is the sheer weight of other people’s problems and pain, which we are expected to carry. It is much easier to imagine we do not allow caring and dependencies to drain us, than to actually set limits on such drains.¹⁵

Compassion stress, or secondary traumatic stress, which is unavoidable for pastors, can develop or deteriorate into PTSD, or compassion fatigue. These are the casualties of the battlefield that we are trying to avoid.

Whoever takes the office seriously must cry out under the burden. One has to make visits, listen to and bear the needs and sorrows of many people; one has to carry on numerous conversations with those one accompanies on life’s way and always with those who encroach on one’s time. One should make intercession for not a few people and, in order to do that properly, has to stay informed. One has to find the right word with the dying, at the graveside, for a wedding. One should—and here is the heaviest responsibility of all—preach out of genuine certitude in order that others are led to certitude. One should read and meditate upon Scripture. Where can a pastor find rest and recollection for all this work? We have to recognize that there are mortal dangers for the office and those who exercise it. Even the responsible, serious, and faithful pastor may be driven to external or internal perplexity. This can be a pure lack of faith. In the end, perplexity leads to insensitivity.¹⁶

Compassion Fatigue, or Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder

Those who have researched compassion fatigue in the field of psychotherapy were motivated to do so partly because of “dismay about seeing so many colleagues abandon clinical work or research with traumatized people because of their inability to deal with the pain of

¹⁵ Rediger.

¹⁶ Bonhoeffer, 67. This little book grew out of Bonhoeffer’s Finkenwalde experiment in 1935, from which he wrote the excellent *Life Together*.

others.”¹⁷ We too have dismay about seeing many colleagues, fellow pastors, leave or contemplate leaving the ministry. But that is not all. It may not be that the pastor is contemplating leaving the ministry. He may be ministering while feeling hopeless or discouraged. He may feel emotionally spent, have little energy for the tasks of the ministry, and go about his work mechanically. He may find himself operating daily under a burden of guilt for all that he does not do; this may manifest itself in self-loathing, bitterness and anger, and feeling trapped in the ministry. He fears that he will be found out, that church members will begin to ask questions and to disapprove of him or that a synod official will be called in. This is the picture of compassion fatigue.

This is not the picture of one who does not care or does not want to care; it is the picture of one who is *not able* to care, because of the cumulative effect of all the care one has given. Often it is the very one who is good at caring and empathy who is the victim.

Although the following comes from a psychology source, see if these actual statements of “trauma workers” (therapists) could be spoken by pastors:

- How can I work if I’m always going to have this response?
- I have to be strong for others, so I need to hide my feelings.
- Am I in the wrong line of work?
- Why does helping others carry such a big emotional price tag?¹⁸

Compassion fatigue is similar to burnout. It was in the late 1970s and early 1980s that *burnout* received official diagnosing of its stages. But there are key differences between compassion fatigue and burnout:

1. Burnout can take place in any workplace, regardless of whether it is in a “helping” vocation; compassion fatigue is the emotional fallout from providing care.
2. Burnout takes place gradually, while compassion fatigue can come on suddenly and rapidly, almost without warning—especially when pastors’ daily work continually involves them in compassion stress, numbing them.
3. A victim of burnout loses interest in doing the work and may despise the burden, while a victim of compassion fatigue still feels responsibility for providing care for

¹⁷ Figley, 6.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 113.

people, and even still experiences “compassion satisfaction” along with compassion fatigue. He simply feels helpless with regard to finding relief. A guide for knowing whether it is burnout or compassion fatigue is to answer the question: “Do I love my work?” If the answer is no, it is probably burnout; if the answer is yes, it probably is compassion fatigue (if the vocation involves providing care for others, as the pastoral office does).¹⁹

What does compassion fatigue look like in pastors? Here is an example:²⁰

Burnout Stages

1. Compulsion to prove
2. Intensity
3. Subtle deprivations
4. Dismissal of needs
5. Distortion of values
6. Heightened denial
7. Disengagement

Clergy Version: Compassion Fatigue

1. Beginning of call—desire to exceed expectations
2. At end of stage 1—rearranging expectations
3. Parish trumps personal priorities (postpone personal or family needs; overeating, less exercise, etc.)
4. Loss of sleep, exercise, and nutrition; give yourself pep talks for basic duties
5. No energy for friendships; family outings are made without you, at your suggestion
6. Small frustrations make you crazy; intense resentment, festering anger, feeling unappreciated; “nobody understands me besides my wife”
7. Disillusionment; difficulty cultivating a spirit of thanksgiving; subtle paranoia; the ministry a joyless progression of to-do’s

¹⁹ Charles Figley, “The Art and Science of Caring for Others Without Forgetting Self-Care,” <<http://giftfromwithin.org>>.

²⁰ Yahnke, *Doxology* lecture.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 8. Observable behavior changes | 8. Feeling trapped: "If I <i>weren't</i> a pastor, what else could/would I do?"; avoiding people; emotionally resigned |
| 9. Depersonalization | 9. Letting personal care go; "getting through the day"; elevated blood pressure |
| 10. Emptiness | 10. Emotional pain; guilt and shame; "failure"; panic about the future; self-loathing |
| 11. Depression (clinical) | 11. "I can't do this!" |

(This is just an example, borrowed from an experienced psychotherapist who has worked with pastors; a confessional Lutheran who now teaches psychology at Concordia University-Wisconsin. A pastor may find items in various stages that apply and are warning signs.)

Compassion Fatigue = Acedia

The irony that through providing spiritual care the pastor can become incapable of caring is perhaps best revealed in the ancient category of temptations known popularly as the "seven deadly [or cardinal] sins." The sixth of these, *acedia*, in the popular shorthand translation is usually known as "sloth," but actually it is Greek for "lack of care" or "absence of care." A most colorful description of this sad condition is given by the English writer and essayist Dorothy Sayers:

The sixth deadly sin is named by the Church *acedia* or *sloth*. In the world it calls itself tolerance; but in hell it is called despair. It is the accomplice of the other sins and their worst punishment. It is the sin that believes in nothing, cares for nothing, seeks to know nothing, interferes with nothing, enjoys nothing, loves nothing, hates nothing, finds purpose in nothing, lives for nothing, and remains alive only because there is nothing it would die for.²¹

It looks like laziness, only it isn't. It feels like depression, but if it is to be treated only clinically, and treated as a chemical imbalance, something important may be missed, a real spiritual dimension. Separating this issue from depression may be a way to protect against the errant

²¹ Dorothy Sayers, *The Other Six Deadly Sins* (London: Methuen, 1943), 97-98.

opinion that depression is some kind of sin or fault. *Acedia* may be part of depression, or may lead to depression, but it is not equivalent with depression. It is a spiritual condition. Certainly it is sin, or a vice; but it is the result of a specific way the devil attacks Christians. Pastors especially may be susceptible to it. “The greatest difficulty for the pastor stems from his theology. He knows all there is to be known about sin and forgiveness. He knows what the faith is and he talks about it so much that he winds up no longer living in the faith but thinking *about* faith.”²² It is possible for the pastor to work so closely with the holy things that he becomes desensitized to them; especially if he suffers from some form of *acedia*, or compassion fatigue/pastoral burnout, and is operating mechanically, he learns to say the words but receives no comfort from them himself. There is a hardening of the heart that grows worse and worse.

Kathleen Norris, a Christian writer who has written about her lifelong struggle with this vice in her memoir *Acedia and Me*, explains this well: “The boundaries between depression and acedia are notoriously fluid; at the risk of oversimplifying, I would suggest that while depression is an illness treatable by counseling and medication, acedia is a vice that is best countered by spiritual practice and the discipline of prayer. ... At its Greek root, the word *acedia* offers a kind of spiritual morphine: you know the pain is there, yet can’t rouse yourself to give a damn.”²³ When pastors feel “burned out,” it is persistent, they struggle to be motivated to do even basic aspects of their work, when “pastors are no longer willing or able to rouse themselves to tend the spiritual needs of the people entrusted to their care,”²⁴ very likely they are suffering from *acedia*.

Rev. Harold Senkbeil summarizes it as “disappointment with and spiritual disaffection from God’s divinely ordained gifts. ... Its deadening and deadly effect can be easily inferred, for when Christians are numb to Christ’s saving work and the Father’s gracious gifts by which He makes us and preserves us, they sink deeper and deeper into boredom, apathy and subsequent despair.”²⁵ From her research of *acedia*,

²² Bonhoeffer, 68.

²³ Kathleen Norris, *Acedia and Me: Marriage, Monks, and a Writer’s Life* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2008), 3.

²⁴ Harold Senkbeil, “Lead Us Not into Temptation: Acedia, the Pastoral Pandemic,” in *You, My People, Shall Be Holy: A Festschrift in Honour of John W. Kleinig*, ed. John Stephenson and Thomas M. Winger (St. Catherine’s, Ontario: Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, 2013), 269.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 267–268.

Norris highlights a picturesque summary of it by one of the fourth-century desert monks, Evagrius Ponticus, who called it “the noonday demon” because it would afflict monks in the middle of the day, when they were hungry and fatigued:

He spoke clearly of the inner devastation caused by the demon of acedia when it “[made] it seem that the sun barely moves, if at all, and that the day is fifty hours long.” Boredom tempts him “to look constantly out the windows, to walk outside the cell, to gaze carefully at the sun to determine [the lunch hour].” But Evagrius soon discovers that this seemingly innocuous activity has an alarming and ugly effect, for having stirred up a restlessness that he is unable to shake, the demon taunts him with the thought that his efforts at prayer and contemplation are futile. Life then looms like a prison sentence, day after day of nothingness.²⁶

Calling it a demon is an important insight. This is not just some condition that comes on; it is a demonic affliction, in which the devil tempts (in our case) pastors to despise their calling, to grow restless, to call good “evil” and evil “good.” In the example from Evagrius, do you see how the restlessness leads (by way of idleness or, in the parish context, unproductiveness) to self-loathing? It would lead a pastor rather easily to doubt whether he should continue to hold a divine call. Of course this is the devil’s intent to begin with. Acedia is one of his most potent weapons against a pastor! His goal is less to burn out the pastor completely than it is to have the pastor continuing in office with a mindset of hopelessness and failure, to make him the walking wounded.

Sayers (who published her essay in 1943) adds to her description a statement which shows why acedia is so prevalent in our modern age with technology everywhere beckoning one away from his work and duties of his various vocations:

It is one of the favorite tricks of this sin to dissemble itself under cover of a whiffling activity of body. We think that if we are busily rushing about and doing things, we cannot be suffering from sloth.²⁷

²⁶ Norris, 5.

²⁷ Sayers, 97-98.

Therefore *acedia* thrives in the nervous activity of the “busy pastor” who has too much to do and too many distractions. “Not getting things done” is not always a result of bad time management; often it results from undergoing the attack of *acedia*. It is not too hard to guess how this may develop in one direction into depressive symptoms, or in another direction into malfeasance.

What to Do (and What Not to Do)

It is the purpose of this paper to provide an introduction to compassion fatigue and start the conversation. I feel inadequate to tie it up neatly with solutions. A struggle is a struggle. I do not want to make it sound like something easy. But there are some ways of dealing with this that are not advisable, such as:

- When behind, **WORK LONGER AND HARDER!** Or in other words: the Type A Behavior Response. This increases the strain and pressure on the pastor in his work, and it also takes him away more from family and other positive coping mechanisms, increasing the stress in multiple ways simultaneously.
- Withdraw by placing your name on a call list. This is attempting to run from the problem by running with it to another place, while not dealing with the problem.
- Withdraw by staying away from the assemblies of other pastors, or by staying away from interactions with church members.
- Withdraw by cutting short pastoral visits with the neat trick of “Let’s have a Bible verse ... Now let’s pray ... Now I will give you the blessing. Depart in peace.” If a pastor is at this point in his compassion fatigue or pastoral burnout, his level of energy is so low that sometimes he must do this. It is better than imploding and exploding. But if this is the case, he needs professional help.

The most important thing for the pastor suffering from compassion fatigue is to **NOT BE ALONE**. This is a difficult prospect for one who has an introverted personality, because social interaction is stressful. But at the very least, this means that the pastor needs to have a pastor. The pastor needs to receive pastoral care. The pastor who is suffering in this way often does not speak with kindness to himself, so he especially needs to hear the words of ultimate kindness spoken from the mouth

of our Lord. The pastor needs to have a confessor, someone to whom he may unburden himself and especially so that he may hear the true voice of the Gospel being directed to him. "The load is too heavy to bear alone. We need someone who will help us use our powers in ministry correctly. ... Everyone who cares for the soul needs a person who will care for his soul."²⁸ The chief goal of such pastoral care is for the pastor to receive a good conscience; not produce, but receive. Then a further goal of this pastoral care is to return the pastor to the joy in Jesus that will help him recover joy in the ministry and joy in all of his daily callings, especially in home and family. Hearing his brother pastor pray for him is also a great help.

The second most important thing that the pastor needs is daily ordered prayer and meditation upon the Word of God. This is especially true when the demon afflicting the pastor is *acedia*. Recall that this is what Norris wrote from her own experience: "Acedia is a vice that is best countered by spiritual practice and the discipline of prayer." Here is the Lutheran version: "The life of the pastor completes itself in reading, meditation, prayer, and struggle. The means is the word of Scripture with which everything begins and to which everything returns."²⁹ This thought from a 20th-century Lutheran theologian reflects what first was taught by blessed Martin Luther, whose famous instruction about the "making of theologians" prescribed *oratio* (prayer growing out of the hearing of God's Word), *meditatio* (meditation upon God's Word), and *tentatio* (spiritual testing and affliction that drives a person back to the external Word and prayer).

The third part, *tentatio*, describes what we have been discussing: the struggle. Our flesh does not want to struggle. Nobody wants to be "the walking wounded." But the wounds of a hurting pastor drive him to Christ, who is present for the pastor in the Word and Sacraments. This struggle does not do the devil's work but the Lord's work in the end. The pastor is helped by it, and so is the church, if the pastor will *receive* the help he needs. Recent resources to help the pastor are *Grace Upon Grace* by John Kleinig and the *Grow in Grace* study by WELS Prof. Richard Gurgel titled "Reclaiming Our Christ-Centered Lutheran Devotional Heritage,"³⁰ divided into four separate papers: Drawing Our Devotional Life From the Gospel; Growing in the Gift of Meditating on the Word;

²⁸ Bonhoeffer, 66-67.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 68-69.

³⁰ <<http://wlsce.net/content/reclaiming-our-christ-centered-lutheran-devotional-heritage>>.

Growing in the Gift of Word-Focused Prayer, and Growing in the Gift of Testing.

A final word of encouragement: When Spalatin wrote to Luther while experiencing troubles in the parish at Altenburg, downcast and wondering if he should even remain in the ministry, Luther responded that he himself mistrusted overconfident pastors, and the fact that Spalatin was driven to this self-doubt and despondency must mean he was so preaching the Gospel that the devil viewed him as a threat; it should be seen as confirmation of his divine call. So should we be heartened to realize in the midst of compassion stress and compassion fatigue that it results from faithfully carrying out our soldier duties on the battlefield; if we are wounded, we know enough to cry out for our Good Samaritan, Jesus, and seek the care that He gives in His inn, the Church, in His precious Word and Sacraments which are the healing balm. LSQ

Works Consulted

- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Spiritual Care*. Translated by Jay C. Rochelle. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985.
- Briggs, J.R. *Fail: Finding Hope and Grace in the Midst of Ministry Failure*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2014.
- Figley, Charles R., ed. *Compassion Fatigue: Coping with Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder in Those Who Treat the Traumatized*. London: Brunner-Routledge, 1995. (Chapters consulted are written by Charles R. Figley, Paul Valent, Chrys J. Harris, and Janet Yassen, but attributed in the notes under Figley's name as editor, with page number listed.)
- London, H.B., and Neil Wiseman. *Pastors at Risk*. Wheaton: Victor Books, 1993. Quoted in "A Big Place for Small Churches: Statistics." <<http://www.smallchurch.com/resources/statistics>>.
- Norris, Kathleen. *Acedia and Me: A Marriage, Monks, and a Writer's Life*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2008.
- Pless, John T. *Martin Luther: Preacher of the Cross*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2013.

———. “Your Pastor Is Not Your Therapist—Private Confession: The Ministry of Repentance and Faith.” Paper presented at *Seventh Annual Symposium on Catechesis*, Sussex, WI, 2000.

Sayers, Dorothy. *Letters to a Diminished Church*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., 2004.

———. *The Other Six Deadly Sins*. London: Methuen, 1943.

Senkbeil, Harold. “Lead Us Not into Temptation: Acedia, the Pastoral Pandemic.” In *You, My People, Shall Be Holy: A Festschrift in Honour of John W. Kleinig*. Edited by John Stephenson and Thomas M. Winger. St. Catherine’s, Ontario: Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, 2013.

Woodford, Lucas V. *Great Commission, Great Confusion, or Great Confession? The Mission of the Holy Christian Church*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2012.

Yahnke, Beverly. *Doxology* lecture, July 21, 2014.

Internet Articles:

Barkin, Laurie, RN. “Nurses and Compassion Fatigue.” <<http://giftfromwithin.org>>.

Figley, Charles. “The Art and Science of Caring for Others Without Forgetting Self-Care.” <<http://giftfromwithin.org>>.

Gentry, J. Eric. “Compassion Fatigue: A Crucible of Transformation.” <<http://giftfromwithin.org>>. (Article originally appeared in *Journal of Trauma Practice* 1, no. 3–4, [2002].)

Ochberg, Frank M. “When Helping Hurts.” <<http://giftfromwithin.org>>.

“Pastor Burnout Statistics.” <<http://pastorburnout.com>> (accessed September 19, 2014).

Rediger, G. Lloyd. “The State of the Clergy.” *The Clergy Journal*, March 1995. <<http://home.comcast.net/~glrediger/columns/survey.html>>.

Journey of the Resolute

*Matthew W. Crick
Pastor, Faith Lutheran Church
Medford, Oregon*

LSQ Vol. 55, Nos. 2–3 (June–September 2015)

Looking back on it now,
It all seems so clear—
The journey we took unto death,
 From Capernaum,
 To Jerusalem,
 Journey of descent—
 Looking back on it now.

That Samaritan “would’ve-been-a-ghost-town”
But for the Lord who stayed the wrath of our “Thunder,”
The healing of the Samaritan leper
Who fell at the Lord’s feet in solitary thank you,
The physical restoration of blind Bartimaeus
(The beggar, who, by faith, could already see),
The salvation reaching out to that wee-little man
In the sycamore-fig tree: “Zacchaeus,
 I must stay at your house today,”
The calling of our friend Lazarus from the grave,
(Even though his body was emanating decay),
The grand Davidic entry of our Lord into the city,
 Gentle king,
 Riding peace.

How resolute he was.
 We prepared ourselves to die.
 But so much we had presumed about that.

We had all seen death;
 We had learned how *much* death touches all.
 We thought we knew how to die—
 That is, till we saw him die.

His life was like death,
 And his death, so unlike life,
 (The eternal wormwood and the gall),
 What good could ever hope to rise from it?
 That's what we thought we saw.
 Of course, death is death,
 But his was something else.
 (This seems so clear to us now.)
 Death beyond death;
 The death of death in us all.

Indeed, he, alone, knew how to die:
 Resolving to know nothing but
 Christ crucified,
 Only then to arise.

So our journey is marked out
 To the skies. L50

Author's Notes on Poem: *A retrospective. From the perspective of the disciples looking back on the events leading up to Jesus' suffering and death on the cross and his resurrection.*

Jesus "resolutely" set out for Jerusalem to die and to rise (Luke 9:51).

The "wrath of our Thunder" refers to the brothers James and John. They were known as the "Sons of Thunder." Apparently they were hot-headed: When a Samaritan town rejected Jesus they asked him if he wanted them to call fire from heaven to destroy the town. Jesus said no.

Jesus, gentle king, riding "peace": Refers to the colt he rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. The donkey was considered a royal animal of peace, not war.

Book Review

LSQ Vol. 55, Nos. 2–3 (June–September 2015)

Book Review: A Commentary on 1 & 2 Peter, Jude

Kuske, David P. *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Peter, Jude*. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2015. 473 pages. \$41.99.

Former Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Prof. David Kuske has certainly not been inactive in his retirement. Among his writings after the close of his formal teaching years is a two-volume commentary on the book of Romans (2007 and 2014). Close on the heels of that second volume on Romans comes another commentary on 1 & 2 Peter and Jude. This newest publication certainly does not disappoint.

In his introductory words to 1 Peter, he includes a general theme of the letter (“We have a *sure* hope,” 9), a basic outline of the letter, and

the usual isagogical information about the letter (author, date, place, etc.). Refreshing in many respects is how Kuske does not spill ink with extended speculation regarding, for example, the authorship of 1 Peter. (One commentary on my shelf includes five pages on authorship alone.) Instead, he states his thoughts concerning isagogical matters in short order, showing an eagerness to get to the Greek text itself. Kuske does include in the introductory material an explanation of the method of exegesis he employs in his commentary. Because 1 Peter is part of the Bible, which is “God’s inspired Word” (12), Kuske maintains the importance of examining *every* word in the text. Concurrently, the well-known principle of “Scripture interprets Scripture” is followed, allowing the context—both immediate and extended—to help determine the meaning of words, clauses, sentences, etc. Kuske also explains particular

challenges encountered when doing “exegesis-based interpretation,” such as the proliferation in Greek of long sentences strung “together with multiple conjunctions and/or the use of many adjectival or adverbial modifiers” (14). In order to assist the interpreter with these challenges, throughout his commentary Kuske provides diagrams/schemas of the verses to be treated which show the connections between the various parts of sentences and phrases. Included in this section of challenges, Kuske notes three: (1) that Greek verb tenses tend to stress the type of action (aspect) rather than the time of the action, (2) that one must pay attention to the inclusion or omission of the definite article before nouns, and (3) that Greek uses a plethora of participles in a multitude of ways.

The introduction to 2 Peter that Kuske provides is understandably shorter than that to 1 Peter: the letter itself is shorter and some of the same material applies to Peter’s second letter. Kuske does provide a slightly extended examination of the authorship of 2 Peter, especially since the letter is counted among the antilegomena of the New Testament canon. He successfully countermands four primary arguments against Petrine authorship: (1) that the literary style of Greek in 2 Peter is beyond a simple fisherman’s capabilities, (2) that 2 Peter’s vocabulary and general tone are too different from 1 Peter’s, (3) that 2 Peter is too similar in content to Jude, and (4) that the church fathers of the second century do not widely cite 2 Peter. Kuske maintains the purpose of 2 Peter “is

to remind God’s people of the truth (chapter 1) against false teachers (chapter 2) who might rob them of their salvation (chapter 3)” (266).

In his introduction to Jude, Kuske lays out a brief argument that the letter’s author is indeed a brother of the Lord, since the author claims to be a brother of James who must be the James of Acts 15. The purpose of this brief letter Kuske believes to be primarily an encouragement for the readers to guard themselves against an attack on their faith (coming from false teachers who advocated immorality and denied the lordship of Jesus). Thus, the readers of Jude should grow in their faith and remain in God’s love to protect themselves. Kuske argues that Jude was written after 2 Peter since Peter wrote about the false teachers in the future tense and Jude writes about them in the past tense (v. 4). He places the date of writing in the 70s A.D., and believes that Jude writes to the same recipients as Peter’s letters.

Kuske’s methodology of expounding on these epistles is painstaking and precise. After a translation is given of the verse(s) being treated, a schema is presented of the verse(s), followed by lexical, grammatical, syntactical, and exegetical comments regarding each word or phrase. At the beginning of these comments, Kuske provides an “interlinear” of the Greek and English so as to assist the reader in following his train of thought. At the close of each section is a “summary and application” of the verses being considered. In this latter section, Kuske makes frequent reference to “us” and “we,” emphasizing the

modern-day applicability of Peter's words. For example, in his application of 1 Peter 3:18-22, Kuske states,

Making Baptism a commitment on our part to Christ places the emphasis on what we do rather than on the forgiveness that Christ won for us and that he gives and seals to us in Baptism. In this way, it robs us of the great comfort and assurance that these words were meant to give to Peter's readers and to believers of all time. (194)

At Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, a semester of detailed study is dedicated to the two epistles of St. Peter. I am not aware of how long this exegetical course has been a part of the curriculum, but its inclusion is no accident. Christ's

saving work as our redemption (1 Peter 1:18-19), the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9-10), Christ's descent into hell (1 Peter 3:18-19), Noah's ark as a type of baptism (1 Peter 3:20-22), the Devil as a "roaring lion" (1 Peter 5:8), the inspiration of Scripture (2 Peter 1:20-21), and the fall of the angels (2 Peter 2:4) are but a few of the major themes or doctrines that God recorded in these letters. Having taught the course on 1-2 Peter a number of times, I am quite pleased to have this new excellent resource to aid in the study of these letters. (Having the commentary on Jude is also a benefit!) Anyone who enjoys detailed study of the Greek of the New Testament will make good use of this helpful volume.

— Michael K. Smith

LSQ



Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary
6 Browns Court
Mankato MN 56001

PRINTED MATTER