

LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY



VOLUME 59 • NUMBERS 2 & 3
JUNE & SEPTEMBER 2019

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of Theological Personalism**

**Old Testament and New Testament
Texts Pertaining to Election**

**Our Preaching: With Special
Reference to Law and Gospel**

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The journal of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary

LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY

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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: rtaed@rtabstracts.org;
Website: www.rtabstracts.org).

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Foreword

LSQ Vol. 59, Nos. 2 & 3 (June & September 2019)

DR. TIMOTHY SCHMELING OFFERS A PERSONALIST reading of Psalm 51 in his “Miserere Mei, Deus: Psalm 51 In Light of Theological Personalism.” When read in light of the rest of the Old Testament, Psalm 51 affirms the personhood of all human beings by referring to the psalmist as an “I” already at conception. Even though his lifelong sinful disposition has perverted that personhood already in the womb, he is the “I” who alone through God’s gracious address is re-created, restored to relationship with God, and enabled to live humanely. Not surprisingly, Christians have effectively marshalled this psalm against the commoditization of human life, especially against abortion. Dr. Schmeling is a professor at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.

The most significant conflict among Confessional Lutherans on the American continent was the Election Controversy (*Naadevalgstrid, Gnadenwahlstreit*). It had a devastating effect on the Norwegian Synod, and it was the primary cause for the reorganization of the synod in 1918. True Orthodox Lutherans maintained on the basis of Scripture that one is elected to salvation not on the basis of anything in him—works, deeds, faith, or non-resistance of the Spirit—but alone by God’s grace in Christ. The essay entitled “Old Testament and New Testament Texts Pertaining to Election” explicates the main passages concerning election in Scripture. The essay was produced by the Rev. David Hauuser, a retired missionary and pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS).

The Law–Gospel dialectic is one of the hallmarks of the Lutheran church. Its emphasis is found both in the writings of Martin Luther and C. F. W. Walther, the father of Confessional Lutheranism in this country. The Law must be so preached that the most self-righteous person feels the fires of hell, and the Gospel must be so preached that the most burdened sinner experiences the joys of heaven. This is the point of the paper entitled “Our Preaching—With Special Reference to Law and Gospel,” written by Dr. S. C. Ylvisaker, who was president of Bethany Lutheran College from 1930–1950.

The Gospel will predominate in all Lutheran preaching and in every aspect of pastoral care. This is also the case in the Lutheran elementary and high school classroom. Here the motivation for learning and behavior will always be the Gospel. The Rev. Alexander Ring speaks to these truths in the essay, “The Gospel and Goodness: Letting the Gospel Predominate in our Classroom.” The Rev. Ring is pastor and teacher at Christ Lutheran Church in Port St. Lucie, Florida.

As part of the one hundredth anniversary of the reorganization of the ELS, the Rev. Donald Moldstad presented an essay, entitled “Born Amid War, Born of War,” at the ELS General Pastoral Conference. This paper gives many interesting insights into the Norwegian Lutheran merger of 1917 and the formation of our church body in 1918. It offers a personal touch to the history of the reorganization. The Rev. Moldstad is the chaplain at Bethany Lutheran College.

The ELS began in 1918 as a predominantly Norwegian Lutheran church body. However, this essay, entitled, “An American Synod: A History of the ELS as a Post-Ethnic Body,” indicates that each decade of our church body’s existence included efforts to share the life-giving message of Jesus Christ the Savior with people from varied social and ethnic surroundings. Every tribe and nation is precious in the sight of the Redeemer. This essay was prepared by the Rev. John Moldstad, who is president of the ELS.

In 1968 the ELS began international mission work in earnest when it established its own world mission in Lima, Peru. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the mission work in Peru, the Rev. James Olsen produced this personal history of certain aspects of the work in Peru entitled, “Messages From Peru.” The Rev. Olsen is a retired missionary and pastor of the ELS.

– GRS

Miserere Mei, Deus: Psalm 51 in Light of Theological Personalism

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LSQ Vol. 59, Nos. 2 & 3 (June & September 2019)

A SORT OF THEOLOGICAL PERSONALISM UNDER-
girds the Masoretic Text's (MT) Psalm 51 (Septuagint's [LXX]
Psalm 50).¹ This acknowledgement is by no means a rejection
of propositional truth, but a recognition that God is a personal God
who relates to human beings in far more than just abstract ways. The
psalmist cannot stand before the *Deus Absconditus* on the basis of any
philosophical justification of himself. Instead, he must address himself
to the *Deus Revelatus* of the Sacred Scriptures. He does so by appealing
solely to God's self-sacrificing steadfast love and compassion.

The psalmist goes on to confess that he suffers from a lifelong
dehumanizing condition (i.e., he was brought to birth in iniquity; and
in sin, his mother conceived him). In fact, his condition's distortion
of love (i.e., self-love above all other things) has so grossly objectified
another that he is now guilty of bloodshed. By failing to love God above
all other things, he has ironically not only attempted to depersonalize
the personalizer (Psalm 14), he has actually dehumanized and enslaved
himself (Psalm 49:12).

¹ Henceforth all references and abbreviations conform to Billie Jean Collins et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*, 2nd ed. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2014). This study is based on the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* because the *Biblia Hebraica Quinta's* Psalms fascicle is not yet available. Other ancient texts are discussed as they bear on the study of this psalm. Since there is no such thing as a purely neutral stance, it is impossible to function without some presuppositional framework. In full disclosure, the author of this paper comes from the Confessional Lutheran tradition that functions with an inerrant view of Sacred Scripture.

Therefore, the repentant psalmist needs God to re-create a faith relationship with him so that as God's creature he can once again live out his God-given personhood in freedom from the slavery of sin and in humane love for others as ends in themselves (rather than mere means to ends). No one else can bestow personhood on human beings and maintain it through relationship than the Creator God who graciously brought man into being in order to engage with him in love. Furthermore, the psalmist recognizes that the new life that God has enabled and modeled for human beings through his Word and Spirit is the natural effect, but not the cause of the faith relationship that the psalmist asks God to re-create on account of his steadfast love and compassion.

When read in light of the rest of the Old Testament, the psalmist affirms the personhood of all human beings by referring to himself as an "I" (as opposed to an "it") already at conception. Even though his lifelong sinful disposition has perverted that personhood already in the womb, he is the "I" who alone through God's gracious address is re-created, restored to relationship with God, and enabled to live humanely. Not surprisingly, Christians have effectively marshalled this psalm against the commoditization of human life, especially against abortion.²

Thesis

The Psalm 51 expresses a theological personalism that not only provides an important hermeneutical key to unlocking the full meaning of Psalm 51, but is also foundational for a Lutheran theological anthropology (i.e., a proper understanding of the human person).

Form

The Hebrew classification for Psalm 51 is a **מְזִמֹּר**. In light of its root, this seems to refer to a song with musical accompaniment.³ More focused on content-based classification, the church quickly came to regard it as the fourth penitential psalm (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143). In his *Summary of the Psalms*, Martin Luther classified psalms

² A reception history of the psalm is beyond the scope of this study. Suffice it to say, few psalms have so profoundly shaped Jewish and Christian theology, liturgy, and piety like this psalm. For instance, it has helped formulate the doctrine of original sin. Both propers and ordinaries have been derived from it. The psalm has taught the faithful how to confess their sins and live re-created lives in the Holy Spirit for centuries. For an extensive discussion of Psalm 51's reception history, see Susan Gillingham, *Psalms Through the Centuries*, BBC (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012–), especially 2:304–16.

³ Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, "מְזִמֹּר," *HALOT* 1:566.

into five categories (prophesy, instruction, comfort, prayer, and thanks), sometimes relating them to the Ten Commandments and the petitions of the Our Father. He spoke of Psalm 51 as the chief instruction psalm because it not only explains the nature, origin, and effects of sin, but also how to overcome sin, live as God's new creation, and offer true sacrifices.⁴

Hermann Gunkel significantly altered the landscape of Psalms studies with his "form criticism" (*Gattungsgeschichte*).⁵ Despite scholarly modification, his basic approach has continued to shape research to the present. Gunkel fleshed out four to six main psalm genres/forms (and a number of mixed types) that guided the interpretation of the psalms and revealed the distinct "situation in life" (*Sitz im Leben*) from which they emerged (albeit he believed that many of the psalms were literary replicas not artifacts). He classified Psalm 51 as an "individual complaint psalm."⁶ Sigmund Mowinkel and Erhard Gerstenberger would refine his work, but they maintained that cultic (i.e., liturgical) festivals or post-exilic domestic worship were the actual historical settings for most of the psalms respectively. Still both seem to agree that Psalm 51 is an individual psalm of lament.⁷

Claus Westermann took a new approach to form criticism. He objected to the use of forms as means of discovering a psalm's original situation of life. Some hymns simply did not originate in worship (e.g., Exodus 15). Instead, Westermann contended the focus should be on the forms themselves as theological categories. He reduces the forms to praise and petition/lament as well. He classifies Psalm 51 as the latter.⁸ Walter Brueggemann unites this approach with the hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur. He situates the psalms into three types of theological situations (orientation, disorientation, and reorientation) that the forms

⁴ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, Helmut Lehmann, and Christopher Brown (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia and Fortress, 1955–), 65: Forthcoming.

⁵ The subsequent overview relies on Nancy deClaisse-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth LaNeel Tanner, *The Books of Psalms*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 13–19.

⁶ Hermann Gunkel, *An Introduction to the Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyrics of Israel*, ed. Joachim Begrich, trans. James D. Nogalski (Macon: Mercer University Library, 1998), 1–21, 121.

⁷ Sigmund Mowinkel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, trans. D. R. Ap-Thomas (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 2:17, 20; Erhard Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, FOTL 14 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 1:211, 214.

⁸ Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, trans. Keith R. Crim and Richard N. Soulen (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), 30–35, 64.

inhabit. He treats Psalm 51 under songs of disorientation.⁹ However, a problem with this approach is that the forms do not always express a hymn's content (e.g., Jonah's Hymn of Praise [Jonah 2]).

Most contemporary scholars agree that Psalm 51 falls under the general category of an individual psalm of lament, but they disagree about its further classification. Ernst Würthwein and some others (e.g. Gunkel) regarded Psalm 51 be a psalm of a sick person.¹⁰ Erich Zenger makes four points against this interpretation. First, the psalm explicitly develops the sin theme, but no passage (not even 10b) explicitly speaks of sickness or begs for recovery from illness. Second, the creation language is inspired by Ezekiel 36 and therefore cannot be reduced to sickness. Third, the sickness interpretation does not account for the justification and righteousness language grounded in God's steadfast love and mercy. Fourth, the distinctive features of a genuine psalm of sickness (e.g., Psalm 38) are not borne out in this psalm.

In contradistinction, Zenger argues that the psalm is a penitential psalm or better a "prayer petitioning for forgiveness of sins and new creation."¹¹ Marvin Tate agrees with Zenger that it is a distinctive kind of lament psalm (or lament in the broad sense): The lament targets the speaker's own sinfulness. There is a very distinctive confession. In addition, there is no prayer for the defeat of enemies, protestation of innocence, and motivational appeal to God for action.¹²

There is no doubt that psalm classifications have helped Christians down through the ages interpret the meaning of various psalms. Still one wonders if the classifications themselves have just as much limited the full meaning of psalms as they have helped explicate them. Regardless, this study agrees that Psalm 51 is an individual prayer for forgiveness and new creation.

⁹ Walter Brueggemann, *The Psalms: The Life of Faith*, ed. Patrick D. Miller (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 3–32; Walther Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 98–102.

¹⁰ Ernst Würthwein, "Bemerkungen zu Psalm 51," in *Neue Wege der Psalmenforschungen für Walter Beyerlin*, ed. Klaus Seybold and Erich Zenger (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1994), 381–88.

¹¹ Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005–), 2:15.

¹² Peter C. Craigie, Marvin E. Tate, and Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms*, 2nd ed., WBC 20 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 2:8

Structure

Table 1. Comparative Structure of Psalm 51

MT Verse	Kraus ¹³	Gerstenberger ¹⁴	Tate ¹⁵	Clifford ¹⁶
1	Title	Superscription - Musical-technical		
2		- Historical		
3		Initial Plea	Interlocking Structure I -Prayer for Forgiveness	Appeal for Forgiveness
4				
5	Acknowledgment of Guilt	Confession of Sin - Recognition of Sin	-Confession of Sin	
6		- Confession of Sin - Acknowledgment of God	-Rightness of Divine Judgment	
7		- Confession of Sin	-Confession of Sinfulness	
8		-Acknowledgment of God		
9	Plea for Deliverance from Sin	Petition - Petition for Absolution	-Prayer for Forgiveness	
10			Interlocking Structure II -Prayer for Restoration	
11				Effects of Forgiveness
12	A Prayer for a Clean Heart and a Willing Spirit	- Request for Renovation		
13				
14				
15	Vow to Praise and Teach	Vow	-Vow to Teach Sinners	

¹³ Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms*, trans. Hilton C. Oswald, CC (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988–89), 1:500.

¹⁴ Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, 1:211. Dalglish, Goldingay, Brug, Zenger, de Claiseé generally conform to his basic outline.

¹⁵ Craigie, Tate, and Allen, *Psalms*, 2:12.

¹⁶ Richard Clifford, *Psalms*, AOTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002–3), 1:249–53.

16	Petition		-Prayer for the Ability to Praise	
17	Prayer to Make Praise Possible			
18	Thoughts about Right Offering	Abrogation of Sacrifice		
19				
20	Intercession for Jerusalem	Intercession for Jerusalem - Petition	Addendum	Prayer for Jerusalem
21		- Prophetic Announcement		

Gerstenberger's outline has generally been followed by commentators. The analysis of Hans-Joachim Kraus, Richard Clifford, and even Tate is not dissimilar, though Tate references Artur Weiser on the struggles outlining the psalm because of the distressed prayer from which the latter posits the psalm was eventually formulated. Tate's own outline attempts to flesh out a chiasmic structure for the psalm suggested by previous scholars. This study follows Gerstenberger's basic outline, but it does not regard vv. 18–19 to be an abrogation of sacrifice. Regarding meter, Kraus thinks the psalm follows 3 + 3 meter, except for vv. 1 and 11 (3 + 4) and v. 17 (4 + 4).¹⁷

Setting

Psalm 51 introduces what is now often called the Second Davidic Collection (51–65; 68–70), which is found within the so-called Elohist Psalter (42–83). The superscriptions of this collection (except for Psalm 63) include “To the director of music. A psalm of David” (לְמִנְצַח מְזִמֹּר לְדָוִד) and many provide a historical setting. This psalm's superscription has a very specific psalm setting in mind: “A psalm of David, when Nathan the Prophet came to him after he had come in to Bathsheba.”

Traditionally, the second לְ preposition of מְזִמֹּר לְדָוִד has been understood as a “lamed of authorship” (*lamed auctoris*). When read in light of the rest of the superscription and especially the highly personal first person singular language of the psalm, the natural reading of this לְ is the *lamed auctoris*. The superscription indicates that the psalm should be read as description of King David's inner world when confronted by the Prophet Nathan for his sins, just as 2 Samuel 12 is a description of

¹⁷ Kraus, *Psalms*, 1:500.

the concomitant unfolding of external events surrounding this admonition. The specific sins rebuked are his adultery with Bathsheba, the cover up, the murder of Uriah the Hittite, and David's persistent unrepentance (2 Samuel 11–12). Some have suggested that the similar Psalm 32 may even be a further reflection on this incident.¹⁸

At the same time, the לְ preposition of דָּוִדֵּךְ could be read “for David,” “to David,” “with reference to, concerning, about David,” or “for the use of David” without disputing the historical veracity of the superscription.¹⁹ The fact that the preposition of מְנַצֵּחַ is typically rendered “To/for the director of music” provides syntactical support for reading דָּוִדֵּךְ as a psalm in honor of/for the use of David. The New Testament never claims that David authored Psalm 51. Moreover, a song can be composed in the first person without implying that the song writer and the song singer are the same individual.²⁰

With notable exceptions, like Diodore of Tarsus, pre-modern theologians generally did not dispute the historical reliability of Psalm 51's superscription.²¹ Today many critical scholars limit the value of its superscription largely to redaction criticism, canonical criticism, and reception history. They think psalm superscriptions are generally late additions that are historical unreliable. With this in mind, suggested alternative historical settings for the psalm include the court of David (albeit composed by a contemporary priest writing in his honor),²² the royal cult during the Josiah's reign,²³ the exile,²⁴ or the postexilic era (as synagogal rite for the restoration of a penitent).²⁵

Still, it must be recognized that there is no good reason to reject Davidic authorship of Psalm 51.²⁶

¹⁸ H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms* (Columbus: Wartburg, 1959), 401.

¹⁹ Craigie, Tate, and Allen, *Psalms*, 1:33–35; Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms,” in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 18–20.

²⁰ Craigie, Tate, and Allen, *Psalms*, 2:20.

²¹ Diodore of Tarsus, *Commentary on Psalms 1–51*, trans. Robert C. Hill (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 165–66.

²² Michael Goulder, *The Prayers of David: Psalms 51–72* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 9, 11–30, 51.

²³ Edward R. Dalglish, *Psalm Fifty-One In the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Patternism* (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 209–32.

²⁴ James Luther Mays, *Psalms*, IBC (Louisville: John Knox, 1994), 199.

²⁵ Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, 1:214–15.

²⁶ Craigie, Tate, and Allen, *Psalms*, 2:8–12; Derek Kidner, *Psalms*, TOTC (Downers Grove: IVP Press, 1973), 1:47–63; John F. Brug, *A Commentary on Psalms* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 2004), 1:33–36, 501–2. Note that Tate ultimately leans towards a late

First, David was a capable musician (1 Samuel 16:16–23). He made instruments (Amos 6:5). David is considered to be the founder of Israel's cultic life in 1 Chronicles 15–16 and 22–29 (cf. also Ezra 3:10; Nehemiah 12:24). The New Testament and Babylonian Talmud (*Baba Batra*, 14b–15a) regard David to be the author of psalms.

Second, the books of Samuel and Chronicles think King David authored psalms. David sang a lament psalm in 2 Samuel 1:17–27. The “last words of David: the oracle of David, the son of Jesse,” is attributed to David by two construct constructions in 2 Samuel 23:1 (וְאֵלֶּה דְבָרֵי דָוִד הָאֶחָדִים נֶאֱמַר דָּוִד בֶּן-יִשָׁי). This same verse closes, calling David “the sweet psalmist of Israel” (וַיִּנְעָם זִמְרוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל). In 2 Chronicles 29:30, Hezekiah also calls the Levites to praise “with the words of David” (בְּדַבְרֵי דָוִד).

Third, there is evidence that the לְ of דָּוִדֶּךָ could be understood other than the lamed of authorship, but no evidence that it must be so understood. In contrast, there is evidence that David was not only understood to be the speaker of דָּוִדֶּךָ psalms, but even the author of such psalms (rather than merely the benefactor or benefiter of them). 2 Samuel 22 states, “David spoke to the LORD the words of” the דָּוִדֶּךָ Psalm 18 “on the day when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.” To be sure, the New Testament understands the Psalter to be Davidic in the wide sense (Luke 24:44), but it does not claim that David wrote each psalm. It also never cites any psalm attributed to another as one of David's psalms. However, the synoptic Gospels (e.g. Mark 12:35–36; Matthew 22:43 “David in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying” [Δαυιδ ἐν πνεύματι καλεῖ αὐτὸν κύριον λέγων]; Luke 20:42 “For David himself says in the Book of Psalms” [αὐτὸς γὰρ Δαυιδ λέγει ἐν βιβλῳ ψαλμῶν]), Acts 1:16–20, and Acts 2:25–28 do interpret Psalm 110's דָּוִדֶּךָ, Psalm 41's דָּוִדֶּךָ, and Psalm 16's דָּוִדֶּךָ to mean that David is the original speaker/author of these particular psalms respectively. What is more, modern lexicographers and grammarians continue to cite דָּוִדֶּךָ and similar occurrences of the preposition as examples of the *lamed auctoris*, lamed of possession, or a genitival lamed.²⁷

date for the psalm because of the literary parallels with Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. See also Brueggemann, *The Message*, 102.

²⁷ David J. A. Clines, “לְ,” *DCH* 4:479–85; Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, trans. and rev. Muraoka Takamitsu, 2nd ed. (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2016), 130b; Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 11.2.10d; Ronald Williams, *William's*

Fourth, the superscriptions should not be categorically dismissed as late or historically unreliable. There are ancient near eastern hymns with superscriptions that are older than the Hebrew psalms. The superscriptions are found in other parts of the Hebrew Bible (2 Samuel 22:1 [Psalm 18:1]; 23:1; Isaiah 38:9; Habakkuk 3:1, 19b). LXX adds superscriptions, but it does not reduce the MT's superscriptions. LXX sometimes misunderstands the superscriptions, which may suggest that they are early.²⁸

Fifth, individual prayers of confession are not limited to later Biblical literature (Joshua 8:20–21; 2 Samuel 12:13. Cf. also Psalms 32:3–5 and 41:5).²⁹

Sixth, Psalm 51 is intensely personal. The psalm proper (i.e., superscription excluded) certainly makes no specific mention of David, his adultery, or murder, except for v. 14 which implies the psalmist is guilty of bloodshed (albeit such language is also used in Isaiah 4:4; Ezekiel 18:13, 22:1–16; and Hosea 2:14 for Israel). The psalmist calls for the creation of a clean heart which coincides with David's persistent unrepentant sin described in 2 Samuel 11:14–15, 25, 27; 12:7–12. Some scholars even argue that the language of the psalm is at least about a leader or a king. The call to build the walls, they note, would have been the repentant response of a public figure. They also note that the psalmist is concerned about losing the Spirit of the LORD (Psalm 51:11; 1 Samuel 16:1, 13, 14), which is often associated with the kingly and priestly office.³⁰

Seventh, 2 Samuel 12's narrative account of David's restoration and Psalm 51's poetic account should not be deemed incongruent because they do not slavishly offer exactly the same details. Rather the two can be read as providing different perspectives on the same event, much like the Synoptic Gospels provide different perspectives on the same event.³¹

Eighth, the psalm's many verbal parallels with Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel need not suggest the psalm is borrowing from these books, but

Hebrew Syntax, 3rd ed., ed. John C. Beckman (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 270.

²⁸ Bruce K. Waltke and Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 872–74.

²⁹ Craigie, Tate, and Allen, *Psalms*, 2:9.

³⁰ John Goldingay, *Psalms*, BCOTWP (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006–8), 2:125.

³¹ Walther Brueggemann and William H. Bellinger, Jr., *Psalms*, NCBC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 238 provides an overview of these two different perspectives.

may suggest that all are drawing on a common source.³² Besides, the psalm has verbal parallels with 2 Samuel 12:9 and 12:13, not to mention a number similarities with 2 Samuel 12 and Psalm 32.

Ninth, the seemingly postexilic reference to “build up the walls of Jerusalem” in vv. 20–21 could be read as a later editorial addition to the psalm,³³ David’s call (prompted by spiritual renewal) “to complete” (cf. בְּנֶה in Psalm 89:3) the walls of Jerusalem (which were finished by Solomon in 1 Kings 3:1),³⁴ or David’s metaphorical call for God to heal the damage his sin caused the kingdom.³⁵

Tenth, the reference to sacrifice in v. 21 need not be read as a later mythological/cultic rebuttal of an emerging ethical Judaism, but rather a recognition that sacrifice must be accompanied by repentance and faith.

Verses 1–2

Text and Translation

לְמַנְצֵחַ מְזֻמֹּר לְדָוִד: בָּבוֹא־אֵלָיו נָתַן הַנְּבִיא כַּאֲשֶׁר-בָּא אֶל-בֵּית-שֶׁבַע:

To the director of music. A psalm of David, when Nathan the Prophet came to him after he had come into Bathsheba.

Textual Notes

The verb נָצַח means “to oversee,” but the exact meaning of v. 1’s לְמַנְצֵחַ (found in fifty-five psalm titles and Habakkuk 3:19) is unclear. *DCH* proposes that the piel participle, governed by a לְ of benefit, should be rendered, “director of music” or “the famous one.”³⁶ The LXX and Vulgate (*Psalmi Iuxta Hebraicum*) capture another facet of its meaning with εἰς τὸ τέλος and *victori*. In contrast, the Lutherbibel 2017’s *vorzusingen* preserves Luther’s retention of the verbal quality of this construction.

The next verse opens with an infinitive construct governed by the preposition בְּ.³⁷ It should be translated temporally. The verse plays on

³² Craigie, Tate, and Allen, *Psalms*, 2:9–10, 12–13. For verbal parallels, see also Dalglisch, *Psalm*, 224–25.

³³ Leupold, *Exposition*, 408; C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, trans. James Martin et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 5:142.

³⁴ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary*, 5:142.

³⁵ Leupold, *Exposition*, 407–8.

³⁶ David J. A. Clines, “נָצַח,” *DCH* 5:738. For a more extensive discussion of this phrase, see Craigie, Tate, and Allen, *Psalms*, 2:4–5.

³⁷ Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction*, 36.2.2b.

different meanings of the verb **בוא**. Dynamic equivalent translations (e.g., GWN and NIV 2011) spell out the sexual connotations of the verb.

Commentary

The superscription provides a striking interpretative framework for the psalm (2 Samuel 11–12). It regards it to be an extensive introspective reflection on the overwhelming moment David fully realized his guilt. In the spring when kings and their armies go out to wage battle, David sent his army, but remained behind. One afternoon, he was walking on his roof when he spied Bathsheba, the beautiful wife of Uriah the Hittite, bathing. David inquired about her, and then he summoned her to the palace. He had intercourse with her, and she conceived his child. Repeatedly unable to get noble Uriah to sleep with his wife, David next attempted to cover up his sin by placing him at the front of a battle. Soon after Uriah fell in the conflict, David took Bathsheba as his wife.

Nine months later, David had still not repented (2 Samuel 11:14). Therefore, the Lord sent the Prophet Nathan to him. Recognizing the delicacy of the situation, the prophet used a parable of injustice to get David to convict himself. At that moment, Nathan dramatically declared, “You are the man,” and then tallied his offences and their consequences. Cut to the heart, David confessed his sin. The prophet did absolve him, saying, “The Lord has also put away your sins; you shall not die.” Nevertheless, Nathan reported his illegitimate child would die.

Verses 3–4

Text and Translation

חַנּוּנֵי אֱלֹהִים כַּחֲסֶדְךָ כָּל־בְּרַב רַחֲמֶיךָ מַחַה פְּשָׁעַי: (הַרְבֵּה) [הַרְבַּ] כְּבִסְנֵי
מַעֲוֹנַי וּמַחֲטָאֹתַי טַהַרֵּנִי:

Be gracious to me, God, according to your steadfast love; according to the abundance of your compassion, blot out my rebellious sin. Wash me thoroughly from iniquity; and from my sin, cleanse me.

Textual Notes

Since the imperatives in vv. 3–4 are addressed to God, they are best understood as pleas, just as the contrite disposition of the psalmist indicates. This thought unit opens with the qal imperative from **חנן**. This verb chiefly occurs in the qal binyan (i.e., stem or conjugation), typically

with God as its subject. When used as such, it means, “be gracious” or “show favor.” *NIDOTTE* adds, “God’s grace is thus finally rooted, not in what people do, but in his disposition to be gracious in ways beyond any human formula or calculation.”³⁸ The two subsequent prepositions are both בְּ , which denotes agreement in manner or norm.³⁹ In both instances, the בְּ spells out the basis for this plea as well as the standard for his grace or mercy. (A few manuscripts read בְּ for the very similar first בְּ . The LXX and Peshitta add a conjunction before the second בְּ .) The first standard is God’s חֶסֶד . The covenantal aspects of this central Old Testament concept has received extensive scrutiny over the years. The noun means “loyalty,” “faithfulness” (steadfast love), or “goodness.” With respect to God’s חֶסֶד with human beings, *NIDOTTE* continues, “We discover the same strong relational aspect that was noted on the human plane, as well as the importance of a prior commitment or bond. Though that prior commitment is usually on the part of God towards human kind, there is an expected exercise of *hesed* in return.”⁴⁰ Moreover, חֶסֶד “is regarded as the basis or motive for petition or approach to God,” in cases like v. 3 where “sinners seek forgiveness on the basis of God’s *hesed*.”⁴¹ The foundation for God’s חֶסֶד , it must be remembered, is the atoning work of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Some Hebrew manuscripts make בְּחֶסֶדֶיךָ plural to amplify it, or make a stronger parallel with רַחֲמֶיךָ .⁴² The LXX makes the same move with its μέγα ἔλεος. The second standard for God’s grace is the plural of רַחֲמִים . When plural, it means “compassion,” but its singular form (which means “womb”) provides a helpful insight into the unconditional character of God’s parental compassion.⁴³ The qal imperative מַחֵה introduces a number of different pleas in this psalm for God to deal with sin in one way or another. The nuance of this verb is “wipe out,” “blot out = obliterate from the memory,” or “blot = exterminate,” the second being *BDB*’s translation of choice.⁴⁴

The last noun in v. 3 and two found in v. 4 introduce three words for “sin.” When these three words for sin are used together (13x in the

³⁸ D. N. Freedman and J. R. Jundbom, “חֶסֶד,” *TDOT* 5:22–36; Terence E. Fretheim, “חֶסֶד,” *NIDOTTE* 2:203–6.

³⁹ Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction*, 11.2.9.b.

⁴⁰ D. A. Baer and R. P. Gordon, “חֶסֶד,” *NIDOTTE* 2:211–18.

⁴¹ Baer and Gordon, *NIDOTTE* 2:211–18.

⁴² Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 2:11–12.

⁴³ Mike Butterworth, “רַחֲמִים,” *NIDOTTE* 3:1093–95.

⁴⁴ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles Briggs, “מַחֵה,” *BDB* 562. See also Artur Weiser, *The Psalms*, trans. Herbert Hartwell, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 402; Kraus, *Psalms*, 1:501.

Hebrew Bible), they seek to convey in a formulaic fashion the “multifaceted nature of sin” as well as the “completeness of God’s forgiveness.”⁴⁵ The first and most narrow of the three is פֶּשַׁע, which means “offense,” “rebellion,” or “crime.” (In contrast to the MT, LXX renders it singular in vv. 3 and 5.) *NIDOTTE* adds, “Seebass (*TWAT* 6:799) concludes that the basic meaning for the nom. *peša’*, legal offense (*Rechtsbruch*), serves as an overarching concept for various offenses.... Unlike *ḥt’* (which can connote an inadvertent mistake ...), *peša’* signifies a willful, knowledgeable violation of a norm or standard.”⁴⁶ Further study has shown, “The Mosaic covenant provides the theological backdrop for the primary significance of *peša’*.... [It] deepens the concept of the legal offence.... [It] entails ... a revolt (a deliberate act of disloyalty and disobedience).... In all of this, in a fundamental sense *peša’* represents covenant treachery.... Although ‘transgression’ or ‘legal offence’ may adequately serve as a translation for *peša’* in Ps. and Prov., it falls short in most historical and prophetic contexts.”⁴⁷ The second word for sin, עוֹן, has a chiefly religious and ethical function. It means, “iniquity” or “guilt,” for the latter is concomitant with the former. Its related verb (which means “pervert”) provides additional insight into the noun. In the plural, it serves as a summary of sins against God. It is also the key term for confessing sins in Leviticus 16:21–22.⁴⁸ The third word for sin and the broadest is חֲטָאָה, which means “miss,” “fail,” or “sin.” *NIDOTTE* notes further, “Despite the objections of K. Koch (*TDOT* 4:311), it is possible to see in this term a basic and nontheological meaning for miss/fail existing alongside its familiar meaning of sin.”⁴⁹

The Hebrew v. 4 printed above sets the kethib (hiphil infinitive absolute of רבה) in parentheses and the qere (its hiphil imperative) in brackets. The second word for describing how God should deal with sin, כבס, follows. It means, “to clean cloths by treading, kneading, and beating them,” in qal and takes on the metaphorical meaning, “to wash off (guilt)” in the piel.⁵⁰ When the adverbial function of the kethib is coupled with the piel imperative of כבס, the meaning is “wash me, much thoroughly.” When the manuscript supported qere is joined with this piel imperative, the meaning is “increase, wash me.” Zenger and

⁴⁵ Alex Luc, “חֲטָאָה,” *NIDOTTE* 2:87–93.

⁴⁶ Eugene Carpenter and Michael A. Grisanti, “פֶּשַׁע,” *NIDOTTE* 3:706–10.

⁴⁷ Carpenter and Grisanti, *NIDOTTE* 3:706–10.

⁴⁸ Alex Luc, “עוֹן,” *NIDOTTE* 3:351.

⁴⁹ Luc, *NIDOTTE* 2:87–93.

⁵⁰ Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, “כבס,” *HALOT* 1:459.

most English translations prefer the former.⁵¹ With respect to the latter, *GKC* notes the “second verb ... represents the principal idea ...” when “attached *without the copula* in the same mood.”⁵² The third word for describing how God should deal with sin טהר closes this thought unit. *DCH* suggests that this piel imperative, meaning, “purify,” “cleanse,” or “declare purified,” has both cultic and moral cleanness connotations.⁵³

Commentary

The initial plea of the psalm expresses its central theme: “Be gracious to me, God.” The rest of the psalm builds off this theme. The psalmist wastes no time getting to his plea because sin has alienated him from God, and no other form of isolation can compare to it. The psalmist comes to God because he recognizes no one else can free him from his sin and re-create him. He makes no excuses for his actions. He recognizes no basis in himself for grace or mercy. He casts himself entirely on the steadfast love and compassion of God. This God is always referred to as אֱלֹהִים (vv. 1, 12, 16) except in v. 17 where he is called אֲדֹנָי. Perhaps this psalm was the prayer of the tax collector in Luke 18:13.

Some have questioned the penitential nature of the psalm. The psalmist approaches God, disparaging everything within himself. He make no plea on the basis of penance or satisfaction. Still he neither comes before God without divinely-facilitated repentance (v. 8), nor will his clean heart and steadfast love be able to refrain from performing fruits of faith out of gratitude to God.

The psalmist makes his plea for grace on the basis of something located in God. To be sure, God’s covenantal steadfast love and compassion naturally (necessarily) affects new life in the believer. But notice that the psalmist appeals to God’s steadfast love and compassion despite the fact that he clearly has failed to live out the natural covenantal effect of them. The psalmist recognizes that just as Christ taught a dead tree cannot become a good tree by trying harder to bear good fruit, so too a fallen believer cannot be restored by trying harder to produce (i.e., cause) the natural effects of God’s steadfast love and compassion.⁵⁴ The psalmist clearly realizes that his unrepentant sin against the second table of the law had severed his faith relationship with God. This is why the psalmist, who had been called to repentance and faith, now asks

⁵¹ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 2:11–12.

⁵² E. Kautzsch and A. E. Cowley, eds, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, trans. A. E. Cowley, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 120g.

⁵³ David J. A. Clines, “טהר,” *DCH* 3:344–47.

⁵⁴ Luther, *Luther’s Works*, 31:361–62.

God to graciously re-create a new heart in him and renew a steadfast spirit within him (v. 12).

The psalmist confesses his sin using a triadic formula. This repentance is necessary on the psalmist's part, though he does not claim his repentance affected God's grace. God's steadfast love and compassion do that as indicated by **בְּ** of manner or norm. With such abasing language, the psalmist acknowledges he has no means to justify himself before God and that his sin has far-reaching consequences. Each word for sin further concretizes the psalmist's plight. His sin was a rebellious act against God. It was a perversion that has racked the psalmist with guilt. Finally, it was a sin or transgression that his significantly missed the mark of holiness.

A number of expressions describing how God should deal with sin are now invoked. The psalmist asks to have his sins blotted out from God's memory (Psalm 69:28). He wants to be washed clean of them by treading, kneading, and beating, if you will. He requests to be cleansed. While all of these words ask that the guilt and punishment of sin be thoroughly dealt with, not all suggest that the sinful disposition is ever removed from the psalmist. Moreover, the third word has a cultic or sacramental connotation, suggesting that only God can deal with sin, albeit through cultic or sacramental means. This is because sin is like contact with death and impurity, which separates one from God.⁵⁵

Verses 5–8

Text and Translation

כִּי־פָשַׁעִי אָנֹכִי אָדַע וְחַטָּאתִי נֶגְדִי תָמִיד: לֵךְ לְבַדְּךָ | חַטָּאתִי וְהָרַע
 בְּעֵינַיִךְ עֲשִׂיתִי לְמַעַן תִּצְדַּק בְּדַבְרֶךָ תִּזְכֶּה בְּשִׁפְטֶיךָ: הֲזִבְעוּן חוֹלְלֵתִי
 וּבִחְטֵא יַחֲמֵתֵנִי אָמֵן: הוֹאֲמֵת חַפְצֶת בְּטָחוֹת וּבְסֵתֶם חֲכָמָה
 תוֹדִיעֵנִי:

Yes, indeed, my rebellious sins, I, I know; and my sin is continually before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and the evil in your eyes, I have done; so that you may be justified when you speak, (and) stand blameless when you judge. Behold, in iniquity I was brought to birth (through pains); and in sin, my mother conceived me. Behold, you desire fidelity in/about what is inward; and in/about what is secret, you have caused me to know wisdom.

⁵⁵ Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:126–7.

Textual Notes

Zenger argues that v. 5's כִּי means both “for (reason)” and “yes, indeed (emphasis).” The peculiar word order (object-subject-verb) and use of the pronoun אֲנִי are emphatically expressing the psalmist’s recognition of guilt before God. Zenger notes further that נִגְדִי means either “in my consciousness” or “‘opposite me, against me’ (as accuser).”⁵⁶ (Some manuscripts add לְ to נִגְדִי.)

The subsequent verse’s לִי לְבַדֶּיךָ is another emphatic construction, stressing all sin is idolatry. This is also confirmed by the limited number of times (18x in the Hebrew Bible) חַטָּא is used for sinning against man. Still, even then such sinning is not without implications for the divine-human relationship (Leviticus 5:21).⁵⁷ The לִמְעַן should be understood consecutively, rather than purposefully.⁵⁸ The qal infinitive construct of דָּבַר is found only here, perhaps to parallel בְּשִׁפְטֶיךָ. The former could be rendered more dynamically with “when you sentence.” Many manuscripts, the LXX, and Symmachus revocalize this unique form to read “in your words.” LXX, Peshitta, and Jerome add a conjunction after this phrase. The LXX has “you might overcome when you are judged/when you go to law” (νικήσης ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε) for the last phrase of this verse (cf. NETS).

Two words are used to describe the generation of the psalmist within the context of sin in v. 7. The first one, חֵיל, can speak of any stage in the birthing process, and in polal, it means “to be brought to birth [through pains].”⁵⁹ In fact, the LXX translates this “I was conceived” (συνεληγήμφοθη).⁶⁰ The second, חָם, is uniquely used here “to conceive” a human being. The LXX translates it “[she] desired to conceive” (ἐκίσσησέν),⁶¹ though NETS prefers to render it “[she] did crave.” NIDOTTE opines, “The use of this [Hebrew] term used elsewhere only for animal conception may be intentional, designed by the psalmist to underline the baseness of the human condition in contrast to the purity of God.”⁶² The Hebrew itself could suggest that the psalmist was sinful from his conception, or his mother did something sinful in his conception, or

⁵⁶ Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 2:11–12; Kautzsch and Cowley, *GKC*, 142f.

⁵⁷ See also Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 2:11–12.

⁵⁸ Joüon, *A Grammar*, 169g; Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:122. For a more extensive discussion of this verse, see, Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms*, 2:11, 13.

⁵⁹ Victor Hamilton, “חֵיל,” *NIDOTTE* 2:116.

⁶⁰ Takamitsu Muraoka, “συλλαμβάνω,” *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* 645.

⁶¹ Takamitsu Muraoka, “κισσάω,” *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* 398.

⁶² Anthony Tomasino, “חָם,” *NIDOTTE* 2:436–37. See also Craigie, Tate, and Allen, *Psalms*, 2:18–19 on this word.

there was state of sinfulness when the psalmist was conceived. However, the **בְּ** preposition governing “iniquity” and “sin” favors the former. This author was not able to find a grammar or dictionary that classified the preposition’s syntactical function in this specific verse. That said, based on parallel uses of the preposition in grammars and dictionaries (e.g. Genesis 1:26: “Let us make man in our image and after our likeness” [וַנַּעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ בְּדְמוּתֵנוּ]), it seems best to classify it under the locus of the so-called **בְּ** of essence (*beth essentiae*), but not as denoting essence or substance (for lack of a better word or concept) rather as “mark[ing] the capacity in which an actor behaves.”⁶³ Just as “Let us make man in our image” speaks of a disposition and does not say that the image of God in the strict sense is substantial (Genesis 5:3; Ephesians 4:24); so too “my mother conceived me in sin” speaks of disposition and does not say that sin is substantial.

Verse 8 can be rendered in different ways, depending on how one translates two rather obscure words and the preposition, **בְּ** (*beth locale* or *beth* of specification), governing them.⁶⁴ The first word, **תְּהוֹת**, is here a feminine plural noun, probably meaning either “innards” or “darkness.”⁶⁵ Note that *DCH* also suggests the text could be emended to read “more than darkness” (**מִתְהוֹת**). The second word, **תַּמְרָה**, is a qal singular passive participle, likely meaning either “secret place,” “secret thing,” or perhaps a “secret way.”⁶⁶ Given the penitential nature of the verse and the parallelism, this study provides a translation that can be understood like *ESV*’s more typical rendering of the verse: “Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart,” but one that could also allow for *NJPS*’s: “Indeed you desire truth about that which is hidden; teach me wisdom about secret things” (cf. also *Lutherbibel* 2017). Note that the *LXX* renders the verse as follows: “For, behold, you loved truth; the unclear and secret things of your wisdom you revealed to me” (ἰδοὺ γὰρ ἀλήθειαν ἠγάπησας τὰ ἀδήλα καὶ τὰ κρύφια τῆς σοφίας σου ἐδήλωσάς μοι).

⁶³ Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction*, 11.2.5.b; 11.2.5.e; David J. A. Clines, “**בְּ**,” *DCH* 2:82–86. See also the description of the **בְּ** of manner in Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles Briggs, “**מחה**,” *BDB* 88–91.

⁶⁴ Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction*, 11.2.5.b; 11.2.5.e. For a more extensive discussion of this verse, see, Craigie, Tate, and Allen, *Psalms*, 2:6.

⁶⁵ David J. A. Clines, “**תְּהוֹת**,” *DCH* 3:362.

⁶⁶ Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, “**תַּמְרָה**,” *HALOT* 2:771.

Commentary

This thought unit is a confession of sin (see Psalm 32:5). The psalmist expresses his guilt-ridden recognition of his treachery against God. The panoply of deferential emphatic constructions conveys the gravity of the psalmist's situation. The psalmist certainly recognizes that sin has ramifications for other people, not to mention the earth itself (Genesis 3–4, 5, 8). He does admit that he has greatly wronged another person (v. 16). However, the psalmist fervently maintains that he has sinned against God alone (see also 2 Samuel 2:13). The reason for this is all sin is fundamentally a breach of the First Commandment. This is not only borne out in the usage of אֱלֹהִים noted above, but by the First Commandment itself: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3).⁶⁷ Joseph expresses the same notion to Potiphar's wife in Genesis 39:9.

The psalmist's confession is a vital antidote to the contemporary notion that one's sins against the second table of the law have no impact on one's faith relationship with God. The assumption is that a person can still "believe" in God and refuse to repent of their second table of the law sins. In personalist terms, this turns the striving to live out the second table of the law into an impersonal abstraction rather than an expression of one's fidelity to God above all else. In other words, this is a confusion of what the theologians call "knowledge" (*scientia*) and "trust" (*fiducia*). One can certainly know that God exists and is gracious, but never trust in him. Even the demons have such "belief" according to James 2:19. The psalmist rightly begins his confession with a recognition that his sin is rebellion (עֲשָׂה) against God.

Even though the psalmist now confesses that the real problem is not what he has done but what he is, he offers no excuses for his lifelong sinful disposition. The psalmist certainly does not make God the author of sin. He does not claim that sin was divinely predetermined. He does not even reference his mother with the intention of shifting blame to her. Rather the psalmist amplifies his personal responsibility. Before and after v. 7, he says "my iniquity," "my sin," and "my rebellious sins." If his sinful disposition was predetermined by God, he surely would not say, "Against you, you alone, have I sinned" (v. 6). Instead, he humbly acknowledged that God's sentence and judgment against him are just and blameless (v. 6).

⁶⁷ Kraus, *Psalms*, 1:502–3.

Three potential misconceptions about v. 7 must now be dealt with: First, the text could be understood to suggest there was a general state of sinfulness when the psalmist was conceived. Contextually, it is hard to understand why the psalmist would confess this to God. How would this factor into the actions of the psalmist? Moreover, the psalmist has taken total responsibility for his actions in the previous verses. Second, the text might be understood to suggest that the psalmist was born out of wedlock. The Old Testament never suggests that illegitimately conceived children are somehow more intrinsically prone to sin. Besides, there is no evidence that David was born outside of wedlock. Furthermore, what Davidizing editor, from a critical perspective, would let this stand, if it were thought to mean such? Third, the text could be read to suggest that even marital intercourse is somehow sinful. To be sure, there were cultic or purity situations when God asked the faithful to refrain from marital relations for a time (Exodus 19:15; Leviticus 15:18; 18:19; 1 Samuel 24:5–6). At best, this suggests marital relations might make one unclean in certain contexts, but this is not the same thing as saying they are sinful. The Old Testament, likewise, never suggests that the marital relations themselves are sinful. In fact, husband and wife are commanded by God to be fruitful and multiply as part of his good created order (Genesis 1:28). For this reason, a couple of translations (GWN; NIV 2011; NRSV) have translated v. 7 in a way that preempts any notion that marital relations are in and of themselves sinful.

A number of commentators warn against dogmatizing original sin in v. 7. It is true that the verse does not specifically universalize the sin the psalmist received from his mother. However, Genesis 6:5's "Every intension of the thoughts of [man's] heart was only evil continually" (וְכָל-יֵצֶר מַחְשְׁבַת לִבּוֹ רָק רָק כָּל-הַיּוֹם:) and 8:21's "The intension of man's heart is evil from his youth" (יֵצֶר לֵב הָאָדָם רָע מִנְעֻרָיו) does universalize mankind's sinful disposition before and after the deluge respectively. The notion of a sinful inherited disposition that does not become the essence or substance of the believer seems to be substantiated by the syntactical function of the כִּי preposition governing "iniquity" and "sin" as shown above. The fact that human beings lose the image and likeness of God in the strict sense (Genesis 1:26; 5:3; albeit not in the wide sense Genesis 9:6) without ceasing to be human or a person (i.e., "I" not an "it") even at the moment of conception, but begin to regain it in faith (Ephesians 4:24) helps explicate the function of this preposition. When all this is coupled with the hereditary expressions

of sin found in Job 25:4: “How then can man be in the right before God? How can he who is born of woman be pure?” (see also Job 14:4, 15:14–16, 25:4; Psalm 143:2), it is no stretch of the imagination to infer that the sin of v. 7 is further evidence of a universal sinful disposition passed down from parent to child (see also Isaiah 43:27, 48:8, 50:1; Ezekiel 16:3, 20, 23 on the sinful disposition of cooperate Israel). Finally, Romans 3:4 cites v. 6 in support of the universal sinfulness of mankind.

The subsequent verse has caused problems for translators. Based on the progressive parallelism, it indicates God’s joy over human fidelity (relational truth) or a human being that is upright to the core of his being. The second colon means that God has revealed wisdom to the psalmist’s heart, awakening and facilitating the psalmist’s current repentance and desire for renewal.⁶⁸

Verses 9–14

Text and Translation

תְּחַטְּאֵנִי בְּאַזְוֵב וְאַטְהַר תְּכַבְּסֵנִי וּמְשַׁלֵּג אֶלְבִּיִן: תְּשַׁמְעֵנִי שְׁשׁוֹן
 וְשִׂמְחָה תִּגְלֶנָּה עֲצֻמוֹת דְּבִית: הַסֵּתֵר פְּנֵיךָ מִחַטָּאֵי וּכְל־עֲוֹנֹתַי מִחַה:
 לֵב טְהוֹר בְּרָא־לִי אֱלֹהִים וְרוּחַ נְכוֹן חֲדָשׁ בְּקִרְבִּי: אֶל־תְּשַׁלֵּכֵנִי
 מִלְּפָנֶיךָ וְרוּחַ קֹדֶשְׁךָ אֶל־תִּקַּח מִמֶּנִּי: הִשִּׁיבָה לִּי שְׁשׁוֹן יִשְׁעֶךָ וְרוּחַ
 נְדִיבָה תִּסְמְכֵנִי:

Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones (which) you have broken rejoice. Hide your face from my sins; and all of my iniquities, blot out. A clean heart, create in me, God; and steadfast spirit, renew within me. Cast me not away from your presence; and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation; and (with) willing spirit, uphold me.

Textual Notes

“In Ps 51 the occurrences of *yiqtol* in vss. 9–10 practically have the same value as that of the imperatives in vss. 3–4.”⁶⁹ Given the inferior’s relationship with the superior in these verses, Waltke and O’Connor further explain that the “non-perfective of injunction expresses the psalmist’s will in a positive request or command.”⁷⁰ Note also the

⁶⁸ Brug, *Psalms*, 1:509, 513–14.

⁶⁹ Joüon, *A Grammar*, 113m.

⁷⁰ Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction*, 31.5.b.

imperatives in vv. 11–14. The fourth word for describing how God should deal with sin comes up in v. 9. Interestingly enough, the verb “to sin,” **הטא**, in the piel means “to unsin” like the German *entsündigen*, but it is typically rendered “purify from sin.” The **אזוב** translated “hyssop” probably refers to a small bush called *Origanum Maru* rather than *Hyssopus officinalis*.⁷¹

In v. 10, the Peshitta reads, “Let me be satisfied/filled” instead of **תִּשְׂמִיעֵנִי**. But such emendation is not necessary. The relative pronoun “which” is inserted into the translation to show that the second colon is an asyndetic relative clause.⁷²

The fifth word for describing how God should deal with sin is the hiphil imperative of **סתר** found in v. 11. It means “to conceal” or “to hide” in the sense of not observing sin.⁷³ What is particularly interesting about this verb is that it suggests the psalmist’s sinful disposition is not actually removed. *BDB* has a similar understanding of **מָחָה** in vv. 3 and 11.

In v. 12 the same verb used for God’s creative work in Genesis 1–2 is used by the psalmist to bring his clean heart and “steadfast” (niphil participle from **בּוֹן**) spirit into being.⁷⁴ If the homographic root **ברא**, “to cut,” is a different root from **ברא**, “to create” (rather than a piel use of the very same root), then “creation” is limited to God alone.⁷⁵ Note that *DCH* and *HALOT* both distinguish these roots.⁷⁶ Its parallelism with the piel imperative from **חדש**, “to renew,”⁷⁷ moreover, shows that the **ברא** here means “to re-create” rather than “create” for the first time.

The “Spirit of God” can be found in a number of places in the Old Testament, but “Holy Spirit” can only be found v. 13 and Isaiah 63:10–11. Given the creation language, the psalmist hopes that the very same Spirit of God that brought creative energy to the creation in Genesis 1:2 will not be taken from him.

⁷¹ Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, “אזוב,” *HALOT* 1:27.

⁷² Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction*, 19.6.a.

⁷³ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles Briggs, “סתר,” *BDB* 711.

⁷⁴ Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, “בּוֹן,” *HALOT* 1:464–66.

⁷⁵ Jan Bergman, Helmer Ringgren, Karl-Heinz Bernhardt, and G. Johannes Botterweck, “ברא,” *TDOT* 2:242–49; Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, “ברא,” *NIDOTTE* 1:728–35; Kraus, *Psalms*, 1:504–5.

⁷⁶ David J. A. Clines, “ברא,” *DCH* 2:258–59; Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, “ברא,” *HALOT* 1:153–54.

⁷⁷ Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, “חדש,” *HALOT* 1:293–94.

In v. 14, “with” is added to “willing spirit” because the verb “expresses an influence upon the object through some external means.”⁷⁸ The LXX translates this “leading spirit” (πνεύματι ἡγεμονικῶ).

Commentary

A petition follows the confession of sin. It intensifies the initial plea of vv. 3–4, reasserting the request to be “cleaned” and “washed.” The psalmist begs God to undo his sin, or even to “de-sin” him with a hyssop, and he shall be clean. He pleads with God to wash him, and he will be made whiter than snow. The hyssop recalls the man healed of leprosy in Leviticus 14:4ff and the man purified after he had defiled himself touching a dead body (Number 19:18). Both images associate sin with death and the need for supernatural cleansing. The ritual sprinkling of holy water, asperges, is intended to convey this same idea in Roman Catholicism today. The snow likewise signals the killing of sin and the atonement of the person. The psalmist expresses his eager anticipation for a word of absolution with these words: “Let me hear joy and gladness.” As the superscription indicates, God gave David such a word through the mouth of Nathan in 2 Samuel 12:13: “And Nathan said to David, ‘The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.’”

God’s killing letter uttered through the prophet crushed the psalmist to the heart (2 Corinthians 3:6). In fact, the psalmist describes the effect of the letter in terms of broken bones. Lest he despair, the psalmist gives ear to the spirit that gives life. Then he will hear joy and gladness, and even his broken bones will rejoice.

Shifting from optatives to imperatives the psalmist shows his confidence and hope in God. Rather than hide his face from the sinner, the psalmist actually says to God, “Hide your face from my sins.” This rather striking request makes explicit the idea latent in its parallel “all my iniquities, blot out.” *BDB* suggests “blot out” in vv. 3 and 11 should be understood as “obliterate from the memory.” In other words, the verse indicates that psalmist’s guilt and punishment can be removed, but that his sinful disposition remains (cf. Psalm 32:1, 7). This conception of sin as part of the fallen human condition is further confirmed by v. 7. Since this cannot be the psalmist’s first transgression, all previous absolutions did not remove his sinful disposition, otherwise he would not have confessed that he was sinful from conception. Later, Luther would capture the Pauline expression of this idea with the theological axiom

⁷⁸ Kautzsch and Cowley, *GKC*, 117ff.

“same time saint and sinner” (*simul iustus et peccator* [Romans 7:18–25; Galatians 5:17]).

Having fallen from faith, the reconverted psalmist asks God to re-create a clean heart in him. The language evokes Genesis 1–2. Just as God brought the world into being through his declarative and creative Word (Psalm 33:6); so too he re-creates the repentant through his forensic and re-creative Word. Luther recognized that this idea likewise undergirds Paul’s forensic and re-creative teaching of justification (2 Corinthians 4:6; 5:17–19; Galatians 6:15; Ephesians 2:5) and appropriated it as his own.⁷⁹ All of this goes to show that a re-creative word of absolution was necessary.

At the same time, the parallel “renew” shows that God’s re-creative act of justification does not create an entirely new substance. While sin totally corrupts the human condition, man’s substance did not become sin. The resurrected believer will still see God with the very same substance he had at his conception, albeit glorified (Job 19:26–27). This re-creative and renewing Word cleanses or purifies the heart, and it makes steadfast or fortifies the spirit. The former refers to the center of the human intellect and will. The latter, its parallel, refers to the psalmist’s personal spirit as it is reordered for fidelity with God and neighbor.

It is not only God’s Word that the psalmist cannot live without, but also God’s Holy Spirit. Some have seen this as reference to the “Spirit of the LORD” that rushed on King David when he was anointed king (1 Samuel 16:13). Thus, David may be afraid that God might reject him by removing his presence and Spirit from him as happened to Saul (1 Samuel 16:1, 13, 14). Nevertheless, it need not ultimately be limited to the Spirit’s presence with David, other kings, and clerics. Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Joel foresaw a time when God will pour out his Spirit on his restored covenant people (Isaiah 32:15; 44:3–4; Ezekiel 36:26–28; 39:29; Joel 3:1–2). Moreover, if the Old Testament assumes the sinful disposition of the psalmist is universal, and Psalm 51 argues that sin drives the Holy Spirit away; this psalm could simply be saying that God’s Holy Spirit has always been present in some way with the faithful (cf. Psalm 104:29–30). After all, he imparted creative energy to everything at creation and even provides providential care to all (Genesis 1:2; 6:3). In the American Lutheran tradition, vv. 12–14 were seen as such a powerful prayer of renewal that they became a sort of fixed offertory.

⁷⁹ Robert Kolb, *Martin Luther and the Enduring Word and God: The Wittenberg School and Its Scripture-Centered Proclamation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 35–76. See also Kraus, *Psalms*, 1:506–7.

Verses 15–17

Text and Translation

אֶלְמִדָּה פְּשָׁעִים דְּרַכֵּיךָ וְחַטָּאִים אֲלֵיךָ יָשׁוּבוּ: הַצִּילֵנִי מִדְּמַיִם | אֱלֹהִים
 אֱלֹהֵי תְּשׁוּעָתִי תִרְנֵן לְשׁוֹנֵי צְדָקָתְךָ: אֲדַנִּי שְׂפָתַי תִּפְתָּח וּפִי יִגִּיד
 תְּהִלָּתְךָ:

I will teach rebellious sinners your ways, so that sinners will return to you. Deliver me from blood-guilt, God, God of my salvation; (and) my tongue will sing joyfully of your righteousness. Lord, my lips, you will open, that my mouth shall declare your praise.

Textual Notes

In v. 15, several manuscripts and the Peshitta have “your way” instead of “your ways.”

In the subsequent verse, the psalmist pleads to be delivered from the plural of דָּם, (i.e., “blood”). The plural in this context refers to bloodshed by the psalmist. Hence *HALOT* suggests it be translated “blood-guilt.”⁸⁰ Mitchell Dahood does not find this satisfying. He reprints it and relates it the verb דָּמַם, which means “to weep.”⁸¹ One manuscript and the Peshitta have “from blood” instead of “from bloods.” The *BHS* editors think אֱלֹהֵי תְּשׁוּעָתִי was added to the text on the basis of meter, but this is tenuous at best. The Peshitta adds a conjunction before תִּרְנֵן.

Commentary

The psalmist continues with a vow. While the new life of the believer does not cause God’s covenantal steadfast love and compassion, the psalmist’s vow clearly recognizes that the new life is the natural fruit of steadfast love and compassion. Even so, this necessary effect is not something coerced. Rather it springs forth from the clean heart and steadfast spirit of the psalmist.

The vow promises to teach other high-handed sinners the ways of the Lord (so that they “be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding” [Psalm 32:8–9]). The psalmist made good on that claim. The text of Psalm 51, its preservation, and its influence evidences fulfilment of that vow. The traditional viewpoint that King David is the speaker of the psalm makes this psalm even more powerful. David shows that not

⁸⁰ Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, “דָּם,” *HALOT* 1:224–25.

⁸¹ Mitchell Dahood, *The Psalms*, AB 17 (Garden City: Double Day, 1965–70), 2:8–9.

even God-elected kings are free of rebellious sins, nor are they exempt from repenting. Moreover, David's model of repentance and renewal also shows that even grave offenses can be forgiven, though not without consequences. The icing on the cake of this vow is that the psalmist teaches others God's way while singing joyfully of God's righteousness and praising him. It is not hard to understand then why v. 17's absolution-inspired praise has long opened matins.

Once again overcome by his sin, the psalmist begs for deliverance. Some translations like the GWN and NIV 2011 use the dynamic equivalent "guilty of murder/bloodshed" to get the idea of מִדְּמַיִם across. This is the most specific detail the psalm proper gives about the psalmist. The psalmist regards himself to be guilty of murder, a crime that merits death (Numbers 35:31–32). Note also that King David has been concerned about bloodguilt before (2 Samuel 3:28). To be sure, murder is a grave sin. The Scriptures call it one of the sins that cry out to God (Genesis 4:10). Yet, "many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the LORD" (Psalm 32:10). "The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love" (Psalm 145:8). Thus, his fear quickly subsides and shifts to praise.

Verses 18–19

Text and Translation

כִּי לֹא־תִחַפֵּץ זָבַח וְאַתָּנָה עוֹלָה לֹא תִרְצֶה: זָבַחַי אֱלֹהִים רוּחַ נִשְׁבָּרָה
לִב־נִשְׁבֵּר וְנִדְדָה אֱלֹהִים לֹא תִבְזֶה:

For you do not delight (in) sacrifice, or (else) I would give it; (with) a burnt offering, you will not be pleased. The sacrifices of God are broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart; God, you will not despise.

Textual Notes

The cohortative, וְאַתָּנָה, is found in the apodosis of v. 17. It signals that the action is conditioned by the protasis.⁸² John Goldingay thinks it is more natural to understand the cohortative as signaling the protasis of the sentence.⁸³ The LXX reads the first לֹא as לֵא, resulting in a contrary-to-fact conditional construction that can be translated: "For if

⁸² Kautzsch and Cowley, *GKC*, 108f.

⁸³ Goldingay, *Psalms*, 2:123.

you wanted sacrifice.” The *BHS* editors suggest transposing the ’atnah to smooth out the meter, but unbalanced colons are not uncommon.

Verse 19 exhibits an interesting use of morphological parallelism. The participle based on שָׁבַר is feminine in the first colon and masculine in the second colon. This parallelism is further evidenced by sound pairs.⁸⁴ The objective genitive, זִבְחֵי אֱלֹהִים, should be understood as “sacrifices (pleasing to) of God.”⁸⁵ The *BHS* editors propose revocalizing זִבְחֵי to smooth out the meter. The Peshitta omits נִשְׁבַּר and the subsequent conjunction. The *BHS* editors, therefore, recommend that both should be deleted on the grounds of dittography. However, the current verse structure matches v. 16. The niph'al participle from דָּכָה, rendered “contrite,” really means “crushed.” The LXX and Peshitta render תִּבְּזָה as third singular.

Commentary

With renewed spiritual clarity, the psalmist states that the greatest sacrifice that he could offer to God is contrition and faith. In truth, the psalmist really has nothing to offer God that he does not already possess. His life, health, abilities, etc., likewise, are all God-given. Nevertheless, God does delight when sinners turn from their wayward ways and repent (Ezekiel 18:23).

Often scholars have interpreted the psalmist's claims as evidence for a late date for the psalm. In a hyper-protestant fashion, some have even judged it to be an ethical evolution away from a more mythological and cultic religion. Read in light of the subsequent verses, vv. 18–19 do not diminish the validity or effect of the divinely-instituted sacrificial system. Instead, they claim that the sacrifices will do no good without repentance and faith.

Tate offers another interesting explanation of these verses that does not undermine the integrity of the sacrificial system of the Old Testament:

Sins such as adultery or murder are not provided for in sacrificial instructions, and the execution of the adulterer or the murderer is required. If Ps. 51 was composed with David in mind (which is certainly possible), the writer may have had the nonsacrificial situation of David in view (note also in 2 Sam 12:13 forgiveness is given to David without mention of sacrifice, on the basis

⁸⁴ Adele Berlin, *The Dynamic of Biblical Parallelism*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 43, 123.

⁸⁵ Joüon, *A Grammar*, 129g.

of his confession). If this is the case, v. 18 is postulated on the assumption that the sin confessed is beyond ritual atonement.⁸⁶

Verses 20–21

Text and Translation

הִיטִיבָה בְּרִצּוֹנְךָ אֶת-צִיּוֹן תְּבַנֶּה חוֹמוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם: אֲזַ תְּחַפֵּץ זְבַח־יֶצֶדֶק
עוֹלָה וְכֹלִיל אֲזַ יַעֲלוּ עַל-מִזְבִּיחֶךָ פָּרִים:

Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; may you build up the walls of Jerusalem. Then you will delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Textual Notes

Some manuscripts and the Peshitta add a conjunction before v. 20's תְּבַנֶּה. The LXX renders it as an imperative. The *BHS* editors think v. 21's עוֹלָה וְכֹלִיל may be a gloss.

Commentary

These verses are an intercession for Jerusalem. They are often interpreted as a later postexilic addition to the psalm. The first reason for this is the reference to building up the walls of Jerusalem. As noted in the setting section above, vv. 20–21 could also be David's call, prompted by his own spiritual renewal, "to complete" (cf. Psalm 89:3) the walls of Jerusalem, which were not completed until the reign of Solomon in 1 Kings 3:1. It may even be a metaphorical call for God to heal the damage his sin caused the kingdom. The second reason for regarding these verses to be a postexilic addition is their sacrificial theology is deemed to be in tension with the theology of vv. 18–19. The commentary on the previous thought unit shows that vv. 20–21 need not be understood as a later redactor's correction of the psalmist's theology. A careful reading of the psalm will notice that cultic purification language is imbedded in the heart of the psalm (v. 7). Therefore, the sacrificial language in these verses is not foreign to the spirit of the psalm at all. In fact, commentators that posit a post-exilic origin for the psalm naturally see little inner tension between these verses and the rest of the psalm.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Craigie, Tate, and Allen, *Psalms*, 2:28.

⁸⁷ Dahood, *The Psalms*, 2:2.

Conclusion

Clearly Psalm 51 expresses a theological personalism that not only provides an important hermeneutical key to unlocking the full meaning of Psalm 51, but is also foundational for a Lutheran theological anthropology (i.e., a proper understanding of the human person). It concretizes its doctrine into language that translates doctrine into the life of the faithful. The Prussian Lutheran divine Abraham Calov once said, “Theology is a practical disposition” (*theologia est habitus practicus*).⁸⁸ The psalmist’s prayer, meditation, and experience of God’s Word as expressed in Psalm 51 illuminate Calov’s point. LSQ

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⁸⁸ Abraham Calov, *Systema Locorum Theologicorum ... exhibens* (Wittenberg: Andreas Hartmann, Johann Röhner, Michael Wendt, Christian Schroedter, and Johann Wilcke, 1655–77), 1:1.

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Old Testament and New Testament Texts Pertaining to Election

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LSQ Vol. 59, Nos. 2 & 3 (June & September 2019)

THE ASSIGNED TOPIC OF THIS ESSAY IS THE OLD Testament and New Testament texts pertaining to election. A reading of the entire chapter of Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics* on the doctrine of election shows that he discusses no Old Testament texts in his presentation of the Scripture doctrine on the election of grace. A quick perusal of Hoenecke's dogmatics shows the same thing. Pieper does, however, mention God's choice of Israel to be his people as an Old Testament type of the New Testament doctrine of election. In view of this, the primary emphasis in this paper will be the exegesis of the principal *sedes doctrinae* of the New Testament on the doctrine of election, Romans 8:28–30 and Ephesians 1:3–14.

Romans 8:28–30

We begin with Romans 8:28–30. The context is an extended passage dealing with the suffering of the believer. In vv. 15–17, Paul addresses the Roman Christians, those who have been justified by faith in Christ, and thus have been made children of God:

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we

share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory (NIV84).

So Paul mentions both their glory, their status as children of God, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, and in the same breath speaks of the suffering of believers in this life, suffering which is a shared experience with their Redeemer so that they will also share in his glory.

That is the jumping off point for the discussion of suffering in the life of Christians, of which Paul says that he considers that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. In this world, the creation groans, and we groan, as we await the final redemption of our bodies. It is to those who often suffer like this that Paul directs the words of our passage, Romans 8:28–30.

V. 28 Οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν, τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὖσιν.

We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Paul begins this text appealing to the knowledge of the believers to whom he is writing. Οἶδαμεν δέ. The question is how this fits into the context. The particle δέ can be used either in an adversative sense or a continuative sense. Stoeckhardt mentions Godet and Hofmann among those who take it in an adversative sense. Nearly all the other commentators take it as continuative. Stoeckhardt argues in favor of this by describing the δέ with the term μεταβατικόν, saying that this verse adds a second ground for comfort for the believers in their suffering, by continuing the description of the glory which belongs to the believers. Besides its greatness, it is also certain.

What do we know, οἶδαμεν? Just this, ὅτι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν. "Ὅτι is "a marker of narrative or discourse content, direct or indirect" (*BDAG*); the clause gives the content of what we know. The principal question in this clause is what the subject is. There are three main possibilities, the traditional view that πάντα as a neuter nominative is the subject, or that God is the subject and the neuter accusative πάντα is the object. Finally, some have suggested that the subject of the last several verses prior to this verse, τὸ πνεῦμα, is the subject, also with πάντα as the object. Regarding the three possibilities, David Abernathy writes:

In Greek neuter plural nouns use a third person singular verb, so either πάντα "all things" or "he" (that is, God) could be the subject of the singular verb συνεργεῖ. In addition, the neuter

plural nominative and accusative have the same form, so πάντα “all things” could be either the subject or the object of the verb: “all things (subject) work together” or “he works all things (object) together.”¹

There is also a textual variant that would affect the decision. A few manuscripts (P46 A B 81 sa) add ὁ θεός after συνεργεῖ, which would explicitly make “God” the subject and “all things” the object, or possibly an accusative of specification, “in all things.” The textual evidence does not seem sufficient to consider this the original text, but many who accept the text as given in our editions still believe that God should be taken as the subject. Among other arguments, they point out that the subject of the verbs in the rest of the section (προέγνω, προώρισεν, ἐκάλεσεν, ἐδικαίωσεν and ἐδόξασεν) is indisputably God. In addition, many have been convinced by C. H. Dodd that to take πάντα as the subject implies an “evolutionary optimism” that did not characterize Paul or the ancient church. Yet, as Cranfield says,

It seems doubtful whether “evolutionary optimism” can at all credibly be attributed to either Jerome or the English translators of 1611. That “evolutionary optimism” is foreign to Paul is of course true, but there is no need to understand the statement according to interpretation (v)² in any such sense. What is expressed is a truly biblical confidence in the sovereignty of God.³

Another objection to taking God as the subject and “all things” as the object is that there is no evidence otherwise of συνεργέω as a transitive verb in a context like this. *BDAG* gives the meaning of the word as “to engage in cooperative endeavor, work together with, assist, help.” Those who are helped are (in the dative case) τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεόν, “those who love God.” This is a description of Christians (see 1 Cor. 2:9; Jam. 1:12; 2:5). That these are not a special subclass of the Christians is indicated by the appositional phrase, also in the dative, τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὖσιν.

¹ David Abernathy, *An Exegetical Summary of Romans 1–8*, 2nd ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2008), 558.

² C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols., International Critical Commentary (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 1:425: “to accept the shorter reading and take πάντα as the subject of συνεργεῖ.”

³ *Ibid.*, 1:427.

These Christians have been called. In the Pauline Epistles, the word *καλέω* and the substantival adjective derived from it, *κλητός*, are never used to indicate merely the invitation, but rather they are used of those in whom the call by the gospel has worked faith. But this coming to faith is neither accidental nor is it a result of their own will and decision, but rather it is *κατὰ πρόθεσιν*, according to [his] purpose. *BDAG* gives as the second meaning of the term “that which is planned in advance, plan, purpose, resolve, will,”⁴ and specifically refers to the divine purpose, “those who are called in accordance with (God’s) purpose.” Balz in the *EDNT* states, “*Κατὰ πρόθεσιν* in Rom 8:28 refers to God’s purpose/decreed in the sense of a divine decision for salvation that transcends history.”⁵ I believe Stoeckhardt is right when he states, “The term *πρόθεσις* simply means that God has decided something. What he has decided, must be revealed by the context. In our passage *κατὰ πρόθεσιν* is connected with *κλητοῖς οὖσιν*. God has decided to call, to convert, to lead to Christ and through Christ to save, with Christ to glorify just those persons who now love God, who are now Christians.”⁶ Thus the *κατὰ πρόθεσιν* is the first direct reference in our passage to the eternal election by God of the believers. When believers reflect on the fact that their being Christians rests on an eternal counsel of God to bring them to salvation and glory, their comfort in tribulation and confidence that all things must work for their good will be increased. “The certainty of the hope, of which Paul has spoken, rests on nothing less than the eternal purpose of God.”⁷

V. 29 ὅτι οὓς προέγνω, καὶ προώρισεν συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνος τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν πρωτότοκον ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς·

For those whom he chose, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers.

The verse begins with the conjunction ὅτι. The function of the ὅτι appears to be explanatory. Though some limit it to explaining the final phrase of v. 28, it seems better to include the entire thought of v. 28 as explained by v. 29, though with special emphasis on the phrase, “called according to his purpose.”

οὓς προέγνω. The verb is an aorist third person singular form of the verb *προγινώσκω*. In the election controversy of the nineteenth century,

⁴ Frederick Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 869.

⁵ Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990–1993), 3:155, Logos.

⁶ Georg Stoeckhardt, *Commentar über den Brief Pauli an die Römer* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1907), 392–393.

⁷ Cranfield, 1:431.

much of the discussion centered on this verb. Schmidt takes it simply as knowing beforehand, as an expression for the divine prescience. For instance, in his essay titled “Intuitu Fidei” in *The Error of Modern Missouri*, Schmidt writes:

Although this faith was then not actually present as it is now, it was by no means absent in the eyes of God. He lives in a changeless present; all things are before Him without a difference in time; and nothing can escape His foreknowledge (if we may be permitted to employ a word referring to ourselves who live in time). For this reason election is said to have taken place (Rom. 8, 29) according to the foreknowledge of God, that is according to His foreknowledge of faith and of perseverance; for His foreknowledge is always such when applied to things in time.⁸

Foreknowledge, or knowing ahead of time is certainly in some contexts the meaning of the expression, as for instance in 2 Peter 3:17 (NIV84): “Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.” Here, however, in a context which is to assure believers of their salvation, it is best taken in the second meaning of the word given in *BDAG*: “choose beforehand.”

Bultmann’s article in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* develops especially the relationship of the Hebrew word **יָדַע** and the use of *γινώσκω* to translate it. Very often the word **יָדַע** is used in the sense of a choice or election of God. Bultmann writes:

Finally, the element of will in **יָדַע** emerges with particular emphasis when it is used of God, whose knowing establishes the significance of what is known. In this connection **יָדַע** can mean “to elect,” i.e., to make an object of concern and acknowledgment.⁹

Consider Amos 3:2, translated in the NIV84: “You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for

⁸ George H. Schodde, ed., *The Error of Modern Missouri* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1897), 195–196.

⁹ R. Bultmann, “γινώσκω, γνῶσις, ἐπιγινώσκω, ἐπιγνώσις, καταγινώσκω, ἀκατάγνωστος, προγινώσκω, πρόγνωσις, συγγνώμη, γνώμη, γνωρίζω, γνωστός,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, and G. Friedrich, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–1976), 1:698, Logos.

all your sins.” LXX: Πλήν ὑμᾶς ἔγνων ἐκ πασῶν φυλῶν τῆς γῆς. MT: הַאֲדָמָה מִשְׁפָּחוֹת מִכָּל יְדַעְתִּי אֶתְכֶם רַק אֶתְכֶם. Here γινώσκειν cannot mean simply intellectual knowledge. God knows all peoples in that sense. Rather, as the NIV84 translates, it refers to the loving choice of the God of Israel to be his people. Since that choice is despised and the guilt is thus multiplied, the hardened people will be punished for their sins.

When Bultmann comes to discuss the verb in our verse, προγινώσκειν, he writes, “In the NT προγινώσκειν is referred to God. His foreknowledge, however, is an election or foreordination of His people (R. 8:29; 11:2) or Christ (1 Pt. 1:20).”¹⁰ Louw and Nida write concerning προγινώσκειν: “προβλέπομαι; προγινώσκειν: to choose or select in advance of some other event—to choose beforehand, to select in advance.”¹¹ While they allow for the possibility of a translation of προγινώσκειν with to foreknow, they suggest the translation: “οὓς προέγνω, καὶ προώρισεν συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνης τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ ‘those whom he had chosen beforehand, he had already decided should become like his Son’ Ro 8:29.”¹²

Cranfield, in the International Critical Commentary, in light of this research, concludes:

οὓς προέγνω. Compare 11:2; 1 Pet 1:2. The -εγνω is to be understood in the light of the use of *yādaʿ* in such passages as Gen 18:19; Jer 1:5; Amos 3:2, where it denotes that special taking knowledge of a person which is God’s electing grace. The thought expressed by the προ- is not just that God’s gracious choice of those referred to preceded their knowledge of Him, but that it took place before the world was created (cf. Eph 1:4; 2 Tim 1:9).¹³

Lenski, though he also recognizes the aspect of “affectionate and effective knowing,” still essentially insists on the cognitive aspect, and then must ask what it is that God foreknows:

“Foreknew” ever remains eternal advance knowledge, a divine knowledge that includes all that God’s grace would succeed in working in us. It has been well called “the eye of predestination.” God did not close his eyes, then reach into the *massa*

¹⁰ Ibid., 1:715.

¹¹ J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 1:363, Logos.

¹² Ibid., 1:362.

¹³ Cranfield, 1:431.

perdita to will the appropriation of a few, then open his eyes again and see them finally saved in heaven.

The older dogmaticians interpreted: *quos credituros praevidit*, “whom he foresaw as believers.”¹⁴

Godet and a few others take this in the same way. It is the approach that Lenski inherited from his Ohio Synod predecessors such as Stellingma and Schmidt, whose essay on “Intuitu Fidei” Lenski translated. John Stott nicely answers this position:

First comes a reference to *those God foreknew*. Since the common meaning of “to foreknow” is to know something beforehand, in advance of its happening, some commentators both ancient and modern have concluded that God foresees who will believe, and that this foreknowledge is the basis of his predestination. But this cannot be right, for at least two reasons. First, in this sense God foreknows everybody and everything, whereas Paul is referring to a particular group. Secondly, if God predestines people because they are going to believe, then the ground of their salvation is in themselves and their merit, instead of in him and his mercy, whereas Paul’s whole emphasis is on God’s free initiative of grace.¹⁵

Armin Panning in *The People’s Bible, Romans*, writes:

The sequence of events referred to here covers the time from eternity past to the present and on into the eternal future. Paul opens the series with the statement, “Those God foreknew, he also predestined.” ... the Greek verb *know* is not restricted merely to having information. It implies much more. It implies an intimate knowledge gained by personal experience, reflecting approval and acceptance of the thing or person known....

They are his own, his chosen ones. But Paul is saying something more significant than merely that God knows his own. Rather, God “foreknew” us from eternity, that is, by his grace God chose us in advance, from eternity, before we ever had

¹⁴ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1936), 558–559.

¹⁵ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans: God’s Good News for the World*, *The Bible Speaks Today* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 248–249.

a chance to lift a finger or do anything to win his favor and approval. That's grace!¹⁶

Martin Franzmann in *Romans*: “He foreknew, not that something would happen but in order that it might happen. God foreknew us in order that we might be His own and serve Him.”¹⁷ After discussing the Old Testament passages we have already mentioned, such as Amos 3:2, Franzmann says, “Foreknow, then, expresses not primarily the omniscience of God but a motion of the heart of God; when faith says, ‘He foreknew me,’ faith says, ‘He has chosen me.’”¹⁸

The Lutheran Study Bible, published by Concordia, also adopts the same meaning for προγινώσκειν: “foreknew. Not referring to God’s advance knowledge of what will happen to good and evil people alike (which indeed He has), but to His gracious choice of those called, i.e., the elect (cf 1Pt 1:1–2).”¹⁹

Finally, Middendorf in the new Concordia Commentary states concerning προγινώσκειν:

Of course, God, in his omniscience, knows all things before they occur, whether good or evil. But “know beforehand” (προγινώσκω) is used in a more profound sense in the NT. The other two uses of the verb (Rom 11:2; 1 Pet 1:20), which have God as their subject, mean not “know before”—in the sense of intellectual knowledge, or cognition—but “enter into relationship with before” or “choose, or determine, before.”²⁰

God chose us before the foundation of the world, and as a result of this choosing, he also predestined us. οὐδὲ προέγνω, καὶ προώρισεν. This verb, προορίζω, when used of God, means “decide upon beforehand, predetermine.”²¹ On the usage in Romans 8:29, *BDAG* says that it means to decide “someone as something” or to determine someone “to be something” beforehand. Louw and Nida, who assign the meaning “to come to a decision beforehand—‘to decide beforehand, to determine

¹⁶ Armin Panning, *Romans*, People’s Bible Commentary (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1999), 140.

¹⁷ Martin H. Franzmann, *Romans* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 153.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 154.

¹⁹ Edward A. Engelbrecht, ed., *The Lutheran Study Bible* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009), 1925, Logos.

²⁰ Michael P. Middendorf, *Romans 1–8*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House 2013), 691.

²¹ Danker, 873.

ahead of time, to decide upon ahead of time,”²² translate the expression in this verse: “Those whom he decided upon ahead of time, these he called.”²³ According to *TDNT*, ὀρίζω, derived from ὄρος, a boundary, later developed the figurative meaning “to fix,” ‘to appoint.’²⁴ Regarding προορίζω, *TDNT* says, “This comparatively rare and late word is used in the Gk. Bible only 6 times in the NT in the sense ‘to foreordain,’ ‘to predestinate.’ Since God is eternal and has ordained everything before time, προορίζειν is a stronger form of ὀρίζειν.”²⁵ The *EDNT* makes the observation:

Divine predestination aims at the concrete historical revelation of what was previously hidden and is thus spoken of by Paul in statements regarding salvation, i.e., doxologically; this is the case in reference to the predestination of the chosen to be conformed to the image of God’s Son, i.e., to the eschatological destiny of suffering and glorification (Rom 8:29).²⁶

This doxological form of expression reflects the general context which shows that the reference is not to the lost, but to those who are believers, to encourage them in the difficulties of this life until God’s eternal purpose is fully realized in them.

The goal of this appointment or predestination is συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνης τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, that those who are chosen and predestined beforehand are to be “in the same form as” or “conformed to” the image of his (God’s) son. The *EDNT* discusses the structure here:

In Rom 8:29 Paul constructs a rhetorically polished *gradatio* (often called the “golden chain” and considered pre-Pauline) in four members: v ... w / w ... x / x ... y / y ... z; at the beginning of each successive syntactical unit he repeats the vb. from the previous one (on this rhetorical figure see Demosthenes *Cor.* 179 [in Lausberg]). In an insertion interrupting this sequence (von der Osten-Sacken 68; Paulsen 136) Paul asserts that believers, who are elect according to God’s salvation purpose, are also predestined “to be *conformed* to the image of his Son.” This conformity with Christ is not yet realized in its ultimate

²² Louw and Nida, 1:359.

²³ Louw and Nida, 1:360.

²⁴ K. L. Schmidt, “ὀρίζω, ἀφορίζω, ἀποδιορίζω, προορίζω,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 5:452.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 5:456.

²⁶ Balz and Schneider, 3:159.

form (*contra* Käsemann 245: an “enthusiastic baptismal tradition” that overlooks the eschatological reservation), but must be understood rather in the context of Rom 8:18–30 as an eschatological assertion. Barrett (170) interprets it in a purely futuristic sense: We will be conformed to the image of the resurrected Christ in his δόξα, just as at present we are conformed to his death (cf. Phil 3:10: συμμορφιζόμενοι). Since the overall context of Rom 8:18–30 addresses the theme of future glory, much suggests that Paul expects this conformity to the image of Christ in his δόξα to take place in the future.²⁷

This seems to be in accord with the context, in which Paul has declared: “Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:17–18 [NIV84]).

That which the elect are to be conformed to is τῆς εἰκόνος τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ. εἰκῶν, in the third meaning given in *BDAG* is “that which represents someth. else in terms of basic form and features, *form, appearance*,”²⁸ and where they translate this verse: “conformed to the appearance of his Son.” *TDNT* begins its lengthy discussion of εἰκῶν in the metaphorical sense in the New Testament by saying, “In the NT the original is always present in the image. What is depicted is here given visible manifestation.”²⁹ The *EDNT* says concerning Romans 8:29: “In contrast to 2 Cor 4:4 and Col 1:15, εἰκῶν in Rom 8:29 does not mean ‘copy,’ but rather ‘original’: The concern is with the relationship of Christ to believers, not with his relationship to God.”³⁰ Thus the pattern is Christ, the one who suffered, died, and is now glorified. This is what is to happen to those whom God has chosen and predestined (see Rom 8:17).

The final purpose of all this is εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν πρωτότοκον ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς. Εἰς τὸ εἶναι is a frequent substitute for ἵνα, used to introduce a purpose clause. The great goal of our predestination and being conformed to the image of Christ, God’s Son (αὐτὸν), is that Christ might be πρωτότοκον ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς. Πρωτότοκος is the firstborn, often in a literal sense of the oldest son, but here used metaphorically, in the sense given in *BDAG*, of Christ as “having special status associated

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 3:287–288.

²⁸ Danker, 282.

²⁹ G. Kittel, “εἰκῶν,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 2:395.

³⁰ Balz and Schneider, 1:391.

with a firstborn, *firstborn*, fig.”³¹ It goes on to say that this is used of Christ “as the firstborn of a new humanity which is to be glorified, as its exalted Lord is glorified.”³² Christ is the model, the original, in this glorification, having this special status ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς, “among many brothers.” Again, the elect whom God has chosen and predestined to glory have already been described in v. 17 as “God’s children” and “heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.”

But what is this being conformed to the image of God’s Son, the firstborn among many brothers? A few writers think it refers to a Christ-like life, or sanctification. Others think it means either both sanctification and glorification, or both suffering with Christ in this life and finally being glorified with him. Perhaps the most frequent position is that it refers to the future glorification at the end of time. A good argument can be made for that position. From the beginning of the section in v. 17, sharing in the glory of Christ is a major focus. Also, the climax of the chapter is the exclamation: “In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (v. 37 [NIV84]). On the other hand, sanctification is not foreign to the context; there is a definite reference to it in vv. 12–14. And there is reference not only to the glorification with Christ in v. 17, but also a reference to sharing Christ’s suffering. Nevertheless, I think the primary reference is to the future glorification of the elect, those who are the called, those who love God, in other words, the Christians.³³

V. 30 οὓς δὲ προώρισεν, τούτους καὶ ἐκάλεσεν καὶ οὓς ἐκάλεσεν, τούτους καὶ ἐδικαίωσεν· οὓς δὲ ἐδικαίωσεν, τούτους καὶ ἐδόξασεν.

The two verbs which began the four part series in v. 29, προέγνω and προώρισεν, took place before history began. The first new verb in v. 30 brings us to an action which takes place in history in this world. Picking up the thought of v. 29, the verse begins with God’s action in eternity, before the world began (Eph. 1:4–5), οὓς δὲ προώρισεν, those who were predestined, those who were designated beforehand, τούτους, precisely those individuals, καὶ ἐκάλεσεν, he also called. We have heard in v. 28 of those who were called according to God’s purpose. Here we see how God was carrying out his purpose. Those whom he had chosen

³¹ Danker, 894.

³² Ibid.

³³ Among those who seem to take this view are Moo, Schreiner, Lenski, UBS Handbook, Tholuck, Kruse, Keener, Barrett, Middendorf, and Panning. Those who seem to take the position that it refers to the life of sanctification include Morris and Mounce. Those who see it as a combination would be Cranfield, Bruce?, Stott, Luther, Johnson, Hodge, Harrisville, Jacobs, Calvin, Franzmann, and Stoeckhardt.

beforehand and predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in time he also called through the gospel, by this means working faith in their hearts, since “faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17).

καὶ οὗς ἐκάλεσεν, τούτους καὶ ἐδικαίωσεν. “And those whom he called, these he also justified.” Paul has affirmed earlier that “this righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe” (Rom. 3:22 [NIV84]). In accordance with God’s eternal purpose to save and glorify his elect, he calls them, by his grace alone he brings them to faith through that call, and thus these very persons whom God has chosen and predestined are also justified (ἐδικαίωσεν).

Δικαίω is used of God’s declaration that people are righteous before him. While in secular Greek the predominant forensic use is in the context of condemnation, the Septuagint uses it especially as the translation of the forensic decree of acquittal in the hiphil of קָטַף. The Septuagint usage greatly influences the New Testament, and particularly the Pauline use of δικαίω. Schrenk writes in the *TDNT*:

In Paul the legal usage is plain and indisputable. The opposite of δικαιοῦν is κατακρίνειν (R. 8:34). For Paul the word δικαιοῦν does not suggest the infusion of moral qualities, a *justum efficere* in the sense of the creation of right conduct. It implies the justification of the ungodly who believe, on the basis of the justifying action of God in the death and resurrection of Christ. To be sure, the δικαιοῦσθαι is an act of grace rather than of retribution according to works. Yet this act of grace in the cross can be called forensic because in the ἰλαστήριον judgment is executed on all sin in the Substitute. The original Pauline usage envisages δικαιοῦσθαι as an act of God in the saving present.³⁴

This judicial decree by God that the people under consideration are righteous before him presupposes the call by the gospel (“those whom he called”) and the divinely worked response, faith, for as Paul has said earlier in the letter, “For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law” (Rom. 3:28 [NIV84]). The reference is clearly to the subjective reception of justification through faith by the elect.

With οὗς δὲ ἐδικαίωσεν, τούτους καὶ ἐδόξασεν we reach the climax of this sequence which began in eternity and culminates in eternity. “Those

³⁴ G. Schrenk, “δίκη, δίκαιος, δικαιοσύνη, δικαίω, δικαίωμα, δικαίωσις, δικαιοκρυσία,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 2:215.

whom he justified, he also glorified” puts the capstone on the comfort and assurance that the believers have as they face suffering and persecution in the present age. As their Savior was glorified after the cross, so God will glorify them with his Son.

The action is presented in the aorist tense, just as the other three actions have been presented in the aorist. There are various ideas on the reason for the aorist here, usually based on the expectation that a future action should be in the future tense. Godet, for example, claims that since Christ has been glorified, and we are in him, the use of the aorist is justified as a past action. Cranfield agrees. Moo states:

This verb is in the same tense as the others in the series. What makes this interesting is that the action denoted by this verb is (from the standpoint of believers) in the future, while the other actions are past. Most interpreters conclude, probably rightly, that Paul is looking at the believer’s glorification from the standpoint of God, who has already decreed that it should take place.³⁵

Mounce thinks it might be explained by this, that God has in fact “given his splendour [glory]” (NEB) to those whom he has justified, something that we partially enjoy now in participating in the spiritual benefits of God’s redemptive work. Lenski explains it thus:

This final aorist distresses the commentators and will always trouble them until they realize that there is a gnomic aorist, R. 837. All of these aorists are *alike*. This last aorist is not proleptic, neither are the other five. ‘These’ means all the saved down to the last one to the end of time. How many of them are as yet not born! Why, then, are not also the other aorists, ‘he called,’ ‘he declared righteous,’ proleptic in regard to those who will yet be called and justified? Past, present, and future are not to be considered in this connection.³⁶

Much of the problem comes from seeing the aorist as essentially a past tense. Many modern linguists, however, such as Stanley Porter, deny that the Greek tenses signal time by themselves, but rather the perspective from which the writer views the action of the verb, which they call aspect. “In Greek, *verbal aspect is defined as a semantic (meaning)*

³⁵ Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 535–536, Logos.

³⁶ Lenski, *Romans*, 563.

category by which a speaker or writer grammaticalizes (i.e. represents a meaning by choice of a word-form) a perspective on an action by the selection of a particular tense-form in the verbal system.”³⁷ Porter goes on to say:

Verbal aspect is a semantic feature which attaches *directly* to the use of a given tense-form in Greek. Other values—such as time—are established at the level of larger grammatical or conceptual units, such as the sentence, paragraph, proposition, or even discourse (see Chapter 21). The choice of the particular verbal aspect (expressed in the verb tense-form) resides with the language user, and it is from this perspective that grammatical interpretation of the verb must begin.³⁸

The three verbal aspects which Porter lists are perfective, imperfective, and stative. Of the three, perfective is the characteristic of the aorist tense. This is described by Porter: “*Perfective aspect is the meaning (‘semantics’) of the aorist tense: the action is conceived of by the language user as a complete and undifferentiated process.*”³⁹ Imperfective aspect “*is the meaning of the present tense, including the so-called imperfect form...the action is conceived of by the language user as being in progress.*”⁴⁰ As for the stative aspect, he says, “*Stative aspect is the meaning of the perfect tense, including the so-called pluperfect form (not always augmented but with secondary endings): the action is conceived of by the language user as reflecting a given (often complex) state of affairs.*”⁴¹ According to this discussion, (and Porter gives numerous examples of the use of past, present, and future times for each tense), the relevant issue is not whether the action of the verbs takes place in timeless eternity, in the past in historical time, or is yet to take place in the future. Nor is it necessary to justify the use of the aorist by conjecturing a partial glorification which has already occurred in the coming to faith or in justification and a growing sanctification which will culminate in the future. Paul’s choice of placing the four verbs in the aorist tense reflect his decision as an author to view the four actions as parallel, on the same plane, as something viewed as complete. The context, then, is what leads us to see in the final action which Paul wrote in the aorist tense as focusing at least primarily on the future glorification. Both before our passage (vv. 17, 21, 23), in our passage (v. 29), and

³⁷ Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1999), 20–21.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 21–22.

after our passage (v. 34, vv. 37–39), the focus is on being glorified with the glorified Christ as a comfort and encouragement to a sure hope for believers who are often subjected to suffering and persecution in this life. Porter's own translation of our verse is: "Whom he justified, these he is also going to glorify,"⁴² but he admits that this is not the only possible explanation of the verse.

Thus we have seen in this passage that God's eternal election is proclaimed to believers presenting God's eternal plan which he is already carrying out and will surely take to completion. It is presented not to satisfy our speculative impulses, but to encourage and strengthen the faith of those of the called who are being severely tested. They are reminded that the end of what they are experiencing will be the sure glorification through and with Christ that God has determined for them from eternity.

Ephesians 1:3–14

We turn now to the other extensive passage dealing with election in the New Testament, Ephesians 1:3–14. This is a much longer passage and it will not be possible to treat every aspect of the passage in as much detail. I am treating it after the Romans passage only because it was written later, not because it is less forceful or clear on the teaching of election.

Whereas the Romans passage in its context is an encouragement to Christians undergoing trials to assure them of God's eternal purpose for them and its realization, this initial passage in the body of Paul's letter to the Ephesians is joyful praise to the God who formed his eternal purpose in Christ to save us for eternal glory.

V. 3 Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ εὐλόγησας ἡμᾶς ἐν πάσῃ εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις ἐν Χριστῷ,

Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places for Christ's sake.

This entire passage, vv. 3–14, one of the fundamental passages on the doctrine of election, in Greek is one long sentence filled with subordinations to make evident the progression of the thought, the so-called periodic style.

The passage begins with a *Beracha*, a blessing, an exclamation of praise, characteristic of Jewish worship up to the present. The God who has elected us and in conformity with his purpose has called us to faith and will lead us to our eternal inheritance is to be praised. The initial

⁴² Ibid., 37.

word, εὐλογητός, when describing the act of human beings toward God refers to praise for benefits received or for the attributes of God. When it is used of God blessing human beings, it refers to actively conferring benefits. In this verse, both senses are used. Here the God who is praised is explicitly called “the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ.” As in Romans, Paul is writing to believers, to those who form the Christian congregation. He and they share their faith in Christ, so he writes of “our Lord Jesus Christ.” Ὁ θεός here is obviously a reference to God the Father, since he is distinguished from Christ. He is called two things in his relationship with Christ; he is Christ’s God and Christ’s Father. As Christ was born true man of the Virgin Mary, God the Father is Christ’s God (see v. 17); as the Son eternally begotten of God, God is his Father.

The reason for immediately referring in this doxology to God the Father’s relationship with the Son is that Christ is the mediator of all the spiritual blessings we have as believers in him. Paul continues: ὁ εὐλογήσας ἡμᾶς ἐν πάσῃ εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις. Εὐλογέω when used of God acting toward humans means “to bestow a favor, provide with benefits” (*BDAG*). Those who receive the benefits are ἡμᾶς, “us,” precisely those who have Jesus Christ as their Lord. The benefits consist in πάσῃ εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ, “every spiritual blessing.” The blessings are spiritual, that is, they have their origin in the Holy Spirit. Ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις, a prepositional phrase expressing an adverbial idea, gives the idea of place or sphere: “In the heavenly places.” Ἐν Χριστῷ—in Christ, that is, by his merits, in connection with him, because of him.

God is the author of every spiritual blessing. We now have those spiritual blessings already in the heavenly places through Christ and because of him, since he is now our Lord. For that reason God is also “our” Father, v. 2.

V. 4 καθὼς ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτῷ πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ,

Since he chose us in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him in love,

This is the first of the spiritual blessings. He chose us through or in connection with Christ. Καθὼς when it begins a sentence can have a causal meaning, *because, since*, rather than a comparative meaning. *BDAG* cites *BDF* §453:2 in support of this. What God did in order to provide every spiritual blessing to us “in Christ,” is ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς. Ἐκλέγομαι is to select from a larger group. As *BDAG* puts it: “to pick out someone

or someth., choose (for oneself)."⁴³ Here, according to chapter 2, the greater mass is the mass of condemned humankind. The middle voice stresses the personal interest of the one choosing. "The Greek middle voice expresses more direct participation, specific involvement, or even some form of benefit of the subject doing the action."⁴⁴ The use of a middle voice verb emphasizes the deep love and concern involved in God's choice of the elect. It is not an impersonal, arbitrary decree, but one in which God looks with care and concern on the one chosen.

Those who are chosen are ἡμᾶς, "us," Paul and his readers, the Christians, that is, those who are believers now on the basis of this choice. This election took place πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, before the foundation of the world, that is, in eternity, before creation and the beginning of time. The fact that God made this choice "before the foundation of the world" eliminates every idea of merit on our part that could have motivated this election. The choice was made "in him," ἐν αὐτῷ, that is, in Christ, or because of Christ, the mediator of all the blessings included in v. 3. Just as God in his eternal love for mankind chose Christ in eternity to be our Redeemer (Isa. 42:1), he chose us "in him," through him to receive the blessed results of his redemption. Note that the phrase ἐν αὐτῷ, as is usual in prepositional phrases in Greek, is adverbial, that is, it is stating how God chose, not adjectival, "us-in-him" as Schmidt insisted to try to find a basis for the *intuitu fidei* here.

The goal of this choice is εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ, "that we should be holy and blameless before him." The infinitive, εἶναι, introduces a purpose clause, as εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν πρωτότοκον ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς in Romans 8:29 was given as the purpose of the predestination. The meaning of "holy and blameless" will differ depending on whether we take ἐν ἀγάπῃ with "holy and blameless before him," as Stoeckhardt does, in which case the reference would be to sanctification, or we take ἐν ἀγάπῃ with προορίσας that follows in v. 5, in which case our phrase would be a reference to justification. Koehler, Lincoln, O'Brien, Lenski, and Foulkes take the first position. On the other hand, Best, Panning, the UBS Handbook, Stott, Winger, and Hendrickson take "in love" as God's love, and consider that phrase to modify "having predestined us" in v. 5. Either interpretation would be acceptable, but structural arguments lead me to favor the first option. The major themes seem to be marked by the use of aorist participles introducing the section. Besides, προορίσας already has a modifier in "according to the good pleasure of his

⁴³ Danker, 305.

⁴⁴ Porter, 67.

will.” Also, Colossians 1:22, which also combines ἀγίους and ἀμώμους, adding ἀνεγκλήτους, irreproachable, speaks of sanctification. The contrast is with the former state “alienated from God and ... enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior” (v. 21). It may be worth noting that the Formula of Concord (FC, SD, XI, 19) interprets v. 4 in this sense.

V. 5 προορίσας ἡμᾶς εἰς υἰοθεσίαν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς αὐτόν, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ,

Having predestined us to the status of sons through Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Προορίσας ἡμᾶς: We have already discussed this word in connection with Romans 8:29. The particular purpose for which “we” are predestined is εἰς υἰοθεσίαν. Louw and Nida define the word υἰοθεσία: “to formally and legally declare that someone who is not one’s own child is henceforth to be treated and cared for as one’s own child, including complete rights of inheritance—‘to adopt, adoption.’”⁴⁵ *TDNT* states, “The term is used only for placing in sonship towards God and occurs only in Paul (including Eph.). The choice of the word shows already that the sonship is not regarded as a natural one but as a sonship conferred by God’s act.”⁴⁶ Those chosen are predestined to be sons. Stoeckhardt correctly observes that if God predestined us to be sons, he predestined us to receive faith, since it is only through faith that people become sons of God. This occurs διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, “through Jesus Christ.” Jesus Christ, the Son of God by nature, is the means through which sonship becomes ours. “It is the all-transforming act of the Son that changes bondage into sonship. Eph. 1:5 backs this with a reference to God’s foreordination which rules out all the boasting of man with his natural or acquired qualities.”⁴⁷

All this is done εἰς αὐτόν, “for him” or “for himself.” The pronoun must refer to God the Father since the Son has just been mentioned as the means or agent by which the adoption as sons becomes ours. This brief phrase once again highlights the personal interest of God in having us as his children. The final phrase of the verse seems to confirm this, for all this happens κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, “according to the good pleasure of his will.” Εὐδοκία is a word that especially reveals the emotional side of election, the love and favor with which God elects. *TDNT* says:

⁴⁵ Louw and Nida, 1:463–464.

⁴⁶ E. Schweizer, P. W. von Martitz, G. Fohrer, E. Lohse, and W. Schneemelcher, “υἰός, υἰοθεσία,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 8:399.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

It is thus that the divine will is described as εὐδοκία in v. 5. The term cannot be separated from the βουλή (→ I, 635) which in the προορίζειν (1:5, 11), προτίθεσθαι (1:9) and πρόθεσις (1:11) is described as a pre-temporal purpose. But the aim of this cumulative description demands that εὐδοκία should be seen as expressing a special side of this pre-temporal resolve of the divine will. What is brought out is not merely the προαίρεσις. It is more than the determinate will and counsel as such. It is the content of this counsel as the free good-pleasure which, grounded in God alone and influenced by none else, is His gracious resolution to save.⁴⁸

Spicq translates “such was the good pleasure of his will (*kata tēn eudokian tou thelēmatos autou*).”⁴⁹

V. 6 εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ἧς ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ.

For the praise of the glory of his grace which he mercifully gave us in the Beloved.

This verse forms the conclusion of the first division of our passage, giving a goal of the divine election, and it forms the transition by introducing the theme of the second division, Christ, the Beloved. Εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ, “for the praise of the glory of his grace.” Εἰς indicates purpose or intended result. God is to be praised. People have been chosen and predestined to be God’s own, purely by his unmerited grace and favor. The Mediator of the salvation, the status of sons in which we are placed, is Jesus, “the Beloved.” Some translate the phrase “for the glorious praise of his grace,” others choose “for the praise of his glorious grace.” I think it is better to give its own emphasis to each of the genitives; grace is to be praised, and for us who are saved by this grace, grace that was God’s undeserved favor toward us from eternity, when we were no more than one more person in the mass of condemned sinners, that grace is supremely glorious.

This grace “has been poured out on us,” ἧς ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς. *BDAG* gives the meaning “bestow favor on, favor highly, bless” for the verb χαριτώω. It translates our phrase “God’s great favor, with which he favored us through his beloved (Son).”⁵⁰ Those who have received this great favor, are ἡμᾶς, those who in time have effectively become believers

⁴⁸ G. Schrenk, “εὐδοκέω, εὐδοκία,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 2:747.

⁴⁹ Ceslas Spicq and James D. Ernest, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, 3 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 2:106, Logos.

⁵⁰ Danker, 1081.

through the gospel message. This favor has come to us in Christ, here denominated “the Beloved,” ἐν τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ.

Everything in this section has indicated that our election did not depend on us, on any quality or action of ours. The election was because of Christ, it was before the foundation of the world, it was so that we who were dead in trespasses and sins would become his children, and it was due solely to the good pleasure of his will.

In the light of this superabundant grace which we have received, all our being should now praise the glory of this grace which has brought such great benefits (blessings, v. 3) to us.

V. 7 opens the second principal division in our passage. God the Father, the one who chose and predestinated those who would be saved in eternity, has been the focus of vv. 3–6. With v. 7, we come to the working out of God’s eternal plan in time through the Son.

V. 7 Ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν παραπτωμάτων, κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ

In whom we have the redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of the trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.

Ἐν ᾧ—the antecedent of the pronoun is τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ, “the Beloved,” Christ. Christ is the one who in time redeemed mankind from their sin and guilt. This obviously implies that part of God’s eternal plan to save precisely us is that Christ would be incarnated; he would take our flesh and blood, and then would be sacrificed in payment for our sins. In Christ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, “we have the redemption.” With the present tense verb, Paul is picturing this as an ongoing condition. ἀπολύτρωσις, “orig. ‘buying back’ a slave or captive, i.e. ‘making free’ by payment of a ransom, can also mean the ransom itself” (*BDAG*). While the *EDNT* states, “Even more than the redeeming event, the word designates in the NT the effect of this event, the (hoped-for) human *state of being redeemed*. It must be asked whether and to what extent the element of the payment of a ransom, suggested by the basic meaning of the word, is preserved in NT usage.”⁵¹ At least in this passage, where the price of redemption is explicitly named in the phrase διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ, it appears undeniable that redemption includes the payment of a price to gain freedom for us.

On the other hand, the status gained by that payment is emphasized when “the forgiveness of the trespasses, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν παραπτωμάτων” is placed in apposition to ἀπολύτρωσις. Christ’s blood, shed on the cross, is the payment, the sacrifice required by our sin, to restore us

⁵¹ Balz and Schneider, 1:138.

to God. What hindered us from being children of God and members of his family has been forgiven by Christ's work. Is there any special stress indicated by the use of *παραπτωμάτων* in place of the more usual *ἀμαρτιῶν*? Probably not, since the parallel passage, Colossians 1:14 says: ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν.

Κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ, "according to the riches of his grace." Our redemption was acquired in time through Christ's sacrifice which paid the full price of our sins and restored us to God. All this happened without any contribution or merit on our part, and therefore by God's abundant grace. Christ also shows us pure grace, unmerited favor.

V. 8 ἧς ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς ἡμᾶς, ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ φρονήσει,

which he made to abound toward us, in all wisdom and understanding

Ἡς ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς ἡμᾶς, "which he made to abound toward us." Ἡς is genitive by attraction to the case of its antecedent, *χάριτος*. It functions as the direct object of the verb. God has made his grace abound toward those who are now believers.

Ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ φρονήσει, "in all wisdom and understanding" is treated in various ways by the commentators. A few apply it to the wisdom and understanding of God, and consider it to modify *γνωρίσας* in v. 9. While many newer translations choose this option, most commentators prefer to take the phrase with what precedes and consider it another gift of God's grace to men. Both Koehler and Stoeckhardt take this option. Another is Lincoln: "God's lavish grace not only provides redemption but also supplies, along with this, all necessary wisdom and insight to understand and live in the light of what he has done in Christ and its implications (elaborated in vv 9, 10)."⁵² Both words include the idea of knowledge and intellectual and practical discernment. They are additional gifts of grace which will be essential also to receive what will be highlighted in vv. 9 and 10.

At this point Stoeckhardt aptly says:

If we now compare vv. 3b and 6b–8 with vv. 4–6a, we shall clearly see the exact relation between the blessing which we now possess and our eternal election. The possession of redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sin, is synchronous with the adoption as children of God. Our sins and transgressions have separated us from God. Since now

⁵² Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary 42 (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 29.

our sins have been removed from between God and us, since we now have received forgiveness of our sin, we now joyfully and with confidence raise our eyes to God above just as dear children to their dear father. This wisdom and prudence which God has bestowed upon us enables us now and empowers us to walk in love and to live a holy and blameless life, as becomes the children of God. This present blessing which we now possess is the very treasure which God according to His eternal counsel of election intended us to have; it is, in fact, the consequence and the effect of our election. That which we Christians now have and what we are is all the gracious gift of God. It is the fruit of God's gracious choice and election alone.⁵³

V. 9 γνωρίσας ἡμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ ἦν προέθετο ἐν αὐτῷ

Having given us to know the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him.

God has revealed to us, to the believers, the mystery of his will. Μυστήριον "is something which has formerly been kept secret in the purpose of God but has now been disclosed."⁵⁴ Here the mystery which has been revealed, the plan which God had formed before but now revealed "*according to his good pleasure which he purposed*", will be described in v. 10. This purpose also is "in him," in Christ.

Once again, God's complete sovereignty is highlighted with "according to his good pleasure." At the same time God's purpose is carried out only in relation with Christ, "in him."

V. 10 εἰς οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν, ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐν αὐτῷ.

For the administration of the fullness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, those in the heavens and those on the earth, in him.

This verse is not easy to explain. Does εἰς express purpose, or is it equivalent to ἐν with a temporal sense "in the administration of the fullness of the times"? What does the fullness of the times mean here? Is it the age of the New Testament, or perhaps the end of the world? What does ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι mean? What does τὰ πάντα mean? I take εἰς as expressing purpose, that the action implicit in οἰκονομία should take

⁵³ Georg Stoeckhardt, *Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952), 57.

⁵⁴ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), 261, Logos.

place. Οἰκονομία in the first meaning in *BDAG* is “the responsibility of management,” the duty or activity of the management of a household, the administration of a responsibility, etc. In the second meaning, it gives the “state of being arranged, arrangement, order, plan.” “Administration” seems to give the best sense in this verse. What is to be administered is τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν, probably as Stoeckhardt and Koehler take it, the direct object in the genitive case of the action implicit in οἰκονομία.

“The fullness of the times” seems to point to the culmination of the successive ages. The plan which God has been working out through the entire history of the world is to lead to ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, “to sum up all things in Christ.” Ἀνακεφαλαιώ is derived from κεφάλαιον, a word which was used of summarizing or obtaining a mathematical sum. It is used in Romans 13:9, where it says that the commandments are summed up, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” What will be summed up or brought together is τὰ πάντα. The expression frequently means “the universe,” and that seems especially likely to be the meaning here when the passage continues: τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, “those in the heavens and those on the earth.”

But what is τὰ πάντα? Stoeckhardt refers to “all the elect in the world, all the elect children of God.” He makes the ἐπὶ τοῖς οὐρανοῖς the holy angels. Koehler prefers a much broader reference. Referring to Colossians 1:9–20, he states, “According to the Colossians passage, it will not do to tailor the reference to the universe exclusively to the church of God.”⁵⁵ Others also have mentioned the reference to the creation itself groaning and waiting to share the glorious liberty of the children of God in Romans 8. In the Gospel of Matthew, Christ states, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” Thus here God reveals that his plan is that Christ should be revealed as the focal point of his dealing with the entire universe. This seems to be more likely to me, but whether τὰ πάντα is taken in the sense of the universe or the church, all is to be gathered ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ ... ἐν αὐτῷ, in Christ, in the one who redeemed a lost mankind and obtained for it the forgiveness of sins which the elect receive through faith.

V. 11 Ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐκληρώθημεν προορισθέντες κατὰ πρόθεσιν τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐνεργούντος κατὰ τὴν βουλήν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ

In whom also we were made heirs, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the one who works all things according to the counsel of his will.

⁵⁵ John Philip Koehler, *A Commentary on Galatians and Paul's Rhapsody in Christ: A Commentary on Ephesians* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000), 221.

This is the third principal division of this long Greek sentence. Ἐν ᾧ once again refers to Christ. Καὶ ἐκκληρώθημεν can mean to be made or designated as heirs, or may simply mean, “we were chosen,” or it can mean, “we obtained by lot,” or, “we obtained an inheritance.” The word originally referred to being chosen by lot, but the idea of casting lots was frequently lost, and only the result of the process, being chosen or elected, remained.

Once again, the election or choice goes back to divine predestination, προορισθέντες κατὰ πρόθεσιν τοῦ τὰ πάντα ἐνεργούντος κατὰ τὴν βουλήν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, “having been predestined in accordance with the purpose of him who continually works all things according to the counsel of his will.” What God purposed cannot fail.

V. 12 εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης αὐτοῦ τοὺς προηλπικότας ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ.

So that we, those who have placed their hope in Christ beforehand, would be to the praise of his glory.

Εἰς τὸ εἶναι expresses intended result, “so that we would be.” The major question here is to whom Paul is referring in the first person plural verb ἐκκληρώθημεν in v. 11 and in the pronoun ἡμᾶς here. While many commentators take the “we” as referring to all the believers, or all the elect, as has been the case in the earlier portion of our passage, here the “we” is placed in direct contrast with ὑμεῖς, “you,” in v. 13. It seems best to take it as Koehler and Stoeckhardt do, that in this case the “we” who “placed our hope beforehand in Christ,” are either the Old Testament believers or the Jewish Christians, and the “you” are the Gentile Christians. In this way, one of the major themes of Ephesians is presented in this opening hymn of praise, this overture of the epistle, the union of the Jewish and Gentile believers in the New Testament church.

What is the goal for these elect Jewish believers who have placed their hope in Christ? They should be “for the praise of his glory.” The greatest glory for which God can be praised is his glory as the Savior of sinners. Christ came to be the “glory of his people Israel” (see the Benedictus).

V. 13 Ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν, ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ,

In whom also you, having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also having believed, you were sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise.

Ἐν ᾧ refers once again to Christ. He is the Mediator of salvation also for the Gentiles. Ὑμεῖς, “you,” is the subject, and ἐσφραγίσθητε is the verb. The καὶ with ὑμεῖς makes it improbable that the ἡμᾶς in v. 12 and the ὑμεῖς in v. 13 refer to the same group of people, the church, all the elect, all the Christians. “You also” seems like the most natural translation of καὶ ὑμεῖς. What this verse is presenting is the unexpected, that also you, the Gentiles, have been sealed as belonging to God. There is further commentary on the matter in Ephesians 2:11–3:6.

Σφραγίζω was used figuratively of identifying someone or something as one’s possession. The article in the *TDNT* describes this use of the word:

In 2 C. 1:22, in a passage in which Paul refers again to the certainty or reliability of the promise and to its establishment, Paul says: “God has sealed us for himself and given us the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts.” In sealing believers—the apostle and the church in Corinth—God has made them His own inviolable possession; the pledge of this is the Spirit of God in the heart, cf. R. 5:5. There is a variation on 2 C. 1:22 in Eph. 1:13 f. and 4:30. The Holy Spirit as the pledge of the inheritance is now the seal with which the believer is marked, appointed and kept for the redemption. It shows that he is God’s possession to the day of redemption.⁵⁶

There are two descriptions of these Gentiles who are addressed by Paul here. The first is: ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, “having heard the word of truth.” The people were sealed as God’s through hearing the word of truth. In apposition to this phrase, we have the further description of this word of truth, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν, “the good news of your salvation.” Thus the objective means of grace, the preaching of the gospel, the truth in the highest sense, occurred according to God’s plan to bring also these Gentiles to himself as his children. The second participial phrase is ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες, “in whom also when you believed.” This is a description of conversion, of the subjective reception through faith of the salvation objectively proclaimed. These are the people who are sealed, those who have heard the gospel of salvation and have believed in the Christ who was proclaimed in that gospel.

The sealing takes place τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ, “by the Holy Spirit of promise.” Is this equivalent to “the promised Holy Spirit”

⁵⁶ G. Fitzer, “σφραγίς, σφραγίζω, κατασφραγίζω,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 7:949.

(Hoehner, Taylor, Lincoln, O'Brien, Lenski, UBS Handbook, Westcott, Thielman, Koehler, Stoeckhardt, Muddiman, Winger)? Is it the Holy Spirit who brings the promise of glory yet to come (Bruce, Best, Foulkes)? The first option seems better. See Acts 2:16–18.

V. 14 ὁ ἐστὶν ἀρραβῶν τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν, εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως, εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ.

Who is the down payment of our inheritance, for the redemption of the possession, for the praise of his glory.

The ὁ which begins this verse refers back to the Holy Spirit, mentioned in the previous verse. Here he is described as ἀρραβῶν, the down payment or deposit, that which guarantees the rest of the things which Jesus has won for us. Regarding the similar use in 2 Corinthians 1:22 and 5:5, *TDNT* comments: “The Spirit whom God has given them is for Christians the guarantee of their full future possession of salvation.”⁵⁷ That which Jesus won for us and the presence of the Spirit guarantees us is τῆς κληρονομίας ἡμῶν, “our inheritance.” According to God’s purpose, Christ’s sacrifice has made us sons, see υἰοθεσία, v. 5. But as Romans 8:17 (NIV84) assures us, “Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.” This down payment is “ours,” which here must once again refer to Paul and the Jewish believers together with Paul’s readers, the Gentile Christians. Both Jews and Gentiles have been elected for sonship, and thus made heirs. They have the status of sons, and therefore standing as heirs, but the full realization of all that is to be theirs is not yet in their possession. Therefore the Holy Spirit functions as the deposit, that which guarantees the full possession of the inheritance.

Εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως. Εἰς once again is best taken as indicating purpose, “for.” Ἀπολύτρωσις can mean the price paid for a slave or prisoner to be freed, or it can emphasize the state resulting from the payment, or, as here and in Romans 8:23, it can mean the full final liberation which results from Christ’s redeeming death. Περιποίησις, the thing acquired, the possession. The elect children of God, redeemed by Christ, converted by the work of the Holy Spirit, have become the special possession of the God who chose and saved them. In the day of final redemption all the believers in Christ will be shown to be the possession of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Εἰς ἔπαινον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ, “for the praise of his glory.” Since all this is purely a result of God’s grace, his totally undeserved favor, this too redounds eternally to his glory.

⁵⁷ J. Behm, ἀρραβῶν, in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 1:475.

A brief consideration of God's call of Israel in the Old Testament, the type of the antitype, the New Testament election of grace.

There are frequent references in the Old Testament to God's election of the people of Israel as God's own people. For example, in Psalm 135:4 (NIV84) it says, "For the LORD has chosen Jacob to be his own, Israel to be his treasured possession." The basis of this was God's promise to Abraham concerning his seed. "The LORD appeared to Abram and said, 'To your offspring I will give this land'" (Gen. 12:7 [NIV84]). When Abraham remained childless, the Lord told him many years later, "'This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir.' He took him outside and said, 'Look up at the heavens and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your offspring be.'" (Gen. 15:4–5 [NIV84]). This promise was repeated in the course of the Patriarchal period, until at the time of the Exodus, when he established his covenant of the law with them, God promised his people Israel, "Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession" (Exo. 19:5 [NIV84]). Note the conditional phrase here, **וְעַתָּה אִם-שָׁמְעוּ תִשְׁמְעוּ בְקוֹלִי וְשָׁמְרֶתֶם אֶת-בְּרִיתִי**, "And now, if you will indeed obey my voice, and will keep my covenant."

In Deuteronomy, Moses highlights that the choice of Israel was of grace, not by merit. For example, Deuteronomy 7:6–7 says:

For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples (Deut. 7:6–7 [NIV84]).

Nor was the cause of God's choice the superior morality of the people of Israel.

After the LORD your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, "The LORD has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness." No, it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is going to drive them out before you. It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations, the LORD your God will drive them out before

you, to accomplish what he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Understand, then, that it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people (Deut. 9:4–6 [NIV84]).

A verse we have already cited in our exposition, Amos 3:2 (NIV 84) brings out the conditionality of the choice of Israel: “You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins.”

רק אתכם ידעתי מכל משפחות האדמה על-כן אפקד עליכם את כל-עונותיכם

The privileges of Israel, despised and rejected, result in a more severe judgment. Moo, in his commentary on Romans in the NICNT, reflects on the way in which Paul develops this thought as follows:

Paul does not deny that ethnic Israel remains God’s people, in some sense (cf. 9:4–5; 11:1–2, 28). But he denies that this corporate election of Israel means the salvation of all Israelites; and he insists that salvation has never been *based* on ethnic descent (see 2:1–29; 4:1–16). Therefore the people of Israel cannot look to their birthright as a guarantee of salvation. This is the point that Paul makes by asserting that “all those who belong to Israel (in a physical sense) do not belong to Israel (in a spiritual sense).”⁵⁸

What are we to make of these promises to Israel, in light of the wholesale rejection of their Messiah on the part of most of the Jewish people at the time of the New Testament? Paul dedicates a portion of the Book of Romans, chapters 9–11, to this theme.

Romans 9⁵⁹

The main theme of chapter 9 is presented in the first five verses. There Paul presents his profound concern for the people of which by birth he forms a part, the Jews. It introduces a new section, which includes chapters 9–11.⁶⁰ He even expresses the desire that he himself

⁵⁸ Moo, 573.

⁵⁹ This section is a slightly revised version of a paper I presented to the pastoral conference of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Peru a few years ago.

⁶⁰ Moo, 555: “Paul signals a break in his argument by the abrupt transition from chap. 8 to chap. 9. No conjunction or particle connects the two chapters, and the tone

would be condemned, if that would mean that his “kinsmen according to the flesh” would be saved. Then he lists many privileges that the people of Israel have enjoyed. The last item in the list is where the lines are drawn. He cannot say of Christ simply that the Messiah, the Christ, belongs to them, since the majority of them have rejected the Christ whom God sent. He can only say that, as far as physical descent is concerned, the Christ whom Paul, in distinction from his people, praises is the one who is God over all, blessed forever.

But what about Israel’s situation? If God has chosen this people, but the majority of them are lost, doesn’t this put God’s faithfulness and the reliability of his words and promises in doubt? That is what Paul needs to deal with in this whole section which consists of chapters 9 to 11 of Romans. The second part of v. 6 names the main consideration: οὐ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐξ Ἰσραὴλ οὗτοι Ἰσραὴλ (“not all those who are of Israel are Israel”). Essentially, Paul denies that the physical Israel, “those who are of Israel,” are identical with the elect Israel.⁶¹ As evidence of this (particularly the statement: “Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children,” v. 7), he presents a quote from Genesis 21:12, ἐν Ἰσαὰκ κληθήσεται σοι σπέρμα. When the blessing of the seed of Abraham is mentioned, perhaps one might think only of all those who descended physically from him. Nevertheless, Genesis itself, in the words Paul cites, indicates that the decisive factor is not physical descent from Abraham, which would include Ishmael and the children of Keturah, but rather the promise and election of God which determine who are the heirs of the promise. Paul’s conclusion is τοῦτ’ ἔστιν, οὐ τὰ τέκνα τῆς σαρκὸς ταῦτα τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας λογίζεται εἰς σπέρμα “That is, not those who are the children of the flesh are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as seed.”

Τοῦτ’ ἔστιν, in this way Paul presents his interpretation of the meaning of the quoted words. οὐ τὰ τέκνα τῆς σαρκὸς ταῦτα τέκνα τοῦ

shifts dramatically from celebration (8:31–39) to lamentation (9:1–3).”

⁶¹ Ibid., 573: “Paul now introduces his first justification for the denial that Israel’s unbelief nullifies God’s promises to Israel, a justification that gets to the heart of the matter: Who constitutes the ‘Israel’ to whom God’s promises of salvation have been given? The standard view among Paul’s Jewish contemporaries was that this Israel was made up of all those physically descended from Jacob, the heir of Abraham and Isaac, who was himself named ‘Israel.’ Only those who had refused their inheritance by outright apostasy would be excluded from this Israel to whom the promises belonged. Paul does not deny that ethnic Israel remains God’s people, in some sense (cf. 9:4–5; 11:1–2, 28). But he denies that this corporate election of Israel means the salvation of all Israelites; and he insists that salvation has never been *based* on ethnic descent (see 2:1–29; 4:1–16).”

θεοῦ—“not those who are the children of the flesh are the children of God.” He puts the negative first in a position of emphasis, and denies that by being engendered in a purely physical way people like Ishmael were the heirs of Abraham.

The strong contrast that follows, marked with ἀλλά, identifies what characterizes the true children of God, which are the same thing as the seed, σπέρμα. Ἀλλά τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας λογίζεται εἰς σπέρμα, “rather, the children of the promise are considered seed.” It is true, Isaac had a mother and father just like any other human being, but what distinguished him is that he was born only due to the promise of God, in circumstances that required the supernatural intervention of God, since Sarah, his mother, no longer was of childbearing age. This is what Paul highlights when he continues by quoting the specific promise he had in mind in v. 9. Ἐπαγγελίας γὰρ ὁ λόγος οὗτος, “this is the word of promise,” κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον ἐλεύσομαι καὶ ἔσται τῇ Σάρρᾳ υἱός. The quote is from Genesis 18:10, 14. The expression κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον is an idiom, a way of saying, “in a year.” The dative τῇ Σάρρᾳ could be a dative of possession or a dative of personal benefit. But the situation he emphasizes is this, when ordinarily it would be impossible, Sarah would have a son due to the faithfulness of the Lord’s promise. Paul sees this as emblematic of the situation of all those whom God counts as children of Abraham, or the spiritual children of God.⁶²

But perhaps one could say that the Jews are the children of the promise, since they descend from Isaac, in whose name people would be reckoned Abraham’s seed. Paul then considers another case, that of Isaac’s physical descendents. Here Paul says: Οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ Ῥεβέκκα ἐξ ἑνὸς κοίτην ἔχουσα, Ἰσαὰκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν· μήπω γὰρ γεννηθέντων μηδὲ πραξάντων τι ἀγαθὸν ἢ φαῦλον, ἵνα ἢ κατ’ ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ μένη, οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἀλλ’ ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος, ἐρρέθη αὐτῇ ὅτι ὁ μείζων δουλεύσει τῷ ἐλάσσονι, καθὼς γέγραπται· τὸν Ἰακώβ ἠγάπησα, τὸν δὲ Ἡσαὺ ἐμίσησα (vv. 10–13).

Οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ. Once again Paul presents a strong contrast. It appears that what he is saying is that even though what he has already

⁶² Colin G. Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 337, shows how this quote fits into Paul’s argument: “Paul’s point is that God did indeed exercise his sovereign choice in determining who would be his children—it was to be the children born in accordance with his promise to Abraham and by divine intervention, not just those born by natural means as in the case of Ishmael. The corollary is that people should not think the word of God has failed if only some Jews enjoy the blessings of the gospel while others do not. This is in accordance with the way God has always operated.”

said is evidence that the word of God has not failed, he has another even stronger proof. He presents the case of Rebecca and her two sons, Jacob and Esau. The structure of the sentence is somewhat complex. Rebecca is the subject, the passive verb ἐρρέθη (a form of εἶπον) in v. 12 is the verb of the sentence, and the first quote forms the object, giving the content of what was said, and the other quote corroborates what God had already indicated to Rebekah in the words ὁ μείζων δουλεύσει τῷ ἐλάσσονι. All the rest between Ῥεβέκκα in v. 10 and the verb in v. 12 presents the circumstances in which Rebecca was told that “the elder will serve the younger.” These circumstances are what present the force of the evidence for Paul’s thesis.

Ἐξ ἑνὸς κοίτην ἔχουσα, “having conceived of one.” Κοίτην ἔχειν is presented in *BDAG* as meaning “conceive” from one father. This one (ἐξ ἑνός) by whom the two sons of Rebecca have been engendered is Ἰσαὰκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν, “our father Isaac.” Another thing that Paul highlights is the time in which Rebecca was told that the elder would serve the younger. It was μήπω γὰρ γεννηθέντων μηδὲ πραξάντων τι ἀγαθὸν ἢ φαῦλον, “when they were neither born nor had done anything good or bad.” The decision or the election of the younger for the more significant role in the plan of salvation was made before the birth of either of the two sons, and therefore before there was anything in the two sons which could motivate God’s merciful action that he determined for the younger son. Paul sees a purpose in this, indicating it with the particle ἵνα. ἵνα ἢ κατ’ ἐκλογὴν πρόθεσις τοῦ θεοῦ μένη, “so that the purpose of God in conformity with his election might remain.” We have two important terms here that require our attention. Πρόθεσις is “plan, purpose, resolve, will” according to *BDAG*. Romans 8:28 uses the word in the context of the doctrine of election where he says that for those who love God, people that he describes as οἱ κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοὶ ὄντες, “those who are called according to his purpose,” all things work together for their good. *BDAG* suggests as the meaning in the passage we are studying, “God’s purpose that works by selection.”

This leads us to consider the meaning of ἐκλογή. *BDAG* gives us “a special choice, selection, choice, election.”⁶³ Here it is important to see Paul’s purpose in presenting all this. He is not in the first place presenting the case of eternal election, as he does in what is really the classic passage for election, Romans 8:28–30. Nygren rejects that this section is intended to present the doctrine of election as its *locus classicus*. “The *locus classicus de praedestinatione* is in 8:28–30. There we learn what

⁶³ Danker, 306.

was Paul's view of God's eternal election, of its accomplishment in time, and of its consummation in glory. If one uses chapters 9–11 as his point of departure in studying Paul's view of predestination, he ends with a false picture of it."⁶⁴ God's decision here is to work with one nation rather than another. Even though he uses the name of individuals in the quote from the prophet Malachi: "I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated" (Mal. 1:2–3 [NIV84]), the manifestation of the hatred of Esau does not deal with him as an individual, but with the destiny of the nation which he engendered: "And I have turned his mountains into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals."

God's choice and the circumstances of this choice, before either of the two were born, before they had done anything at all, good or bad, makes it evident that the choice of Jacob had nothing to do with any special merit on his part. Οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦντος, "not by works, but by him who calls."⁶⁵ That Jacob received preference, that God had a special role for this people in his plan of salvation, depended only on the will or good pleasure of God, the one who calls. As far as v. 13 is concerned, many interpreters have indicated that "I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated" is simply to express an absolute contrast where what is indicated is a preference. Some point out Luke 14:26 (NIV84) as a parallel: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple." What Christ means is that no one can have first place over him in the heart of those who will be his disciples.

The point of the discussion of Jacob and Esau is that, even though God announced to Abraham that "it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned," God could still choose some in particular of the descendants of Isaac for the fulfillment of his purposes. And in view of the fact that "not all who are descended from Israel are Israel," it should not be surprising that God left aside some of the Jews who now reject Christ. God has always proceeded in this manner.

This permits Paul to respond to the objection that God was acting unjustly, a conclusion that Paul soundly rejects with μή γένοιτο, "Never!" Once again, Paul does not argue according to some external norm of human reason. He simply quotes the Scripture: τῷ Μωϋσεῖ γάρ λέγει·

⁶⁴ Anders Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1949), 354.

⁶⁵ The expression "not by works" was used when Paul spoke of justification in chapters 3 and 4. Nevertheless, the contrast here is different. There works were in contrast with faith. Here the contrast is with God's free will.

ἐλεήσω ὃν ἂν ἐλεῶ καὶ οἰκτιρήσω ὃν ἂν οἰκτιρῶ, “For he says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.’” Since God chose Jacob purely by his grace, without any merit in Jacob, since he did not exist when God made his choice, God tells Moses, when he asks for mercy for the people who had sinned with the golden calf, that the answer will be only by the free grace of the Lord. One thing we ought to note here is that the two phrases only express the positive side; they speak of the mercy which God shows to those to whom he in his good pleasure has decided to give it. It is about this decision to show mercy that Paul continues by saying, ἄρα οὖν οὐ τοῦ θέλοντος οὐδὲ τοῦ τρέχοντος ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἐλεῶντος θεοῦ, “Thus, it is not of him that wills nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.” Stoeckhardt comments that in its form this is a general truth, which expresses “that the mercy and compassion of God is based only on God, in his grace and mercy, that the grace of God is its own cause, and that God sends his grace, his compassion to whom he wishes to send it. He doesn’t owe it to anybody.”⁶⁶

Then Paul presents a negative example, one to whom God ends up not showing mercy. λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφή τῷ Φαραῶ ὅτι εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἐξήγγειρά σε ὅπως ἐνδείξωμαι ἐν σοὶ τὴν δύναμιν μου καὶ ὅπως διαγγεληῖ τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐν πάσῃ τῇ γῆ (v. 17). “For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, for this reason I have raised you up, that I might show in your case my power and that my name should be proclaimed in all the earth.” Pharaoh also saw great demonstrations of God through Moses. But rather than abandoning his rebellion and opposition to God, we hear over and over that he hardened his heart. The more evidence he saw, the harder he made his heart and refused to obey God and free his people. Only after this do we hear that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart. That means that in judgment he made him incapable of responding positively, he removed his Spirit. Now he had a different purpose. He would only show how futile it is to oppose God and he will increase the glory of God when God shows his full power against him. So this resistance and his punishment will also glorify God and will serve his plan of salvation for his chosen people, “and that my name should be proclaimed in all the earth.”

Thus Pieper is correct in calling the choice of Israel in the Old Testament a type of the New Testament election of grace. While both share the characteristics of God freely making the choice, and the choice is a matter of grace and not merit, the election of Israel did not mean that all the individual persons that belonged to that chosen people

⁶⁶ Stoeckhardt, *Commentar über den Brief Pauli an die Römer*, 433.

would be saved. “For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel” (Rom. 9:6). Compare that with Romans 8:29–30, where those who are called, justified and glorified are all those who are chosen and predestinated. While the election of Israel was for the purpose of sending Christ to redeem the world, and faith in the coming Christ was the means of salvation of the elect among God’s Old Testament people, the election of God’s people revealed in the New Testament passages we have studied, both Jews and Gentiles, specifically takes place “in Christ” (Eph. 1:4–5). In Romans 11 Paul asks whether God’s promises to Israel failed. His answer is “By no means!” (v. 1). He himself is an example as a believing Israelite. He mentions the 7000 whom God assured Elijah were still the faithful remnant in his day. He then states (v. 5): “So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace.” What of those of Israel who had abandoned the Lord and his covenant? Paul says, “The others were hardened” (v. 7). The result was that God took gentiles and engrafted them into Israel. He indicates that despite the general hardening and rejection of the Jews, some would still return and believe: “And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again” (v. 23). In conclusion, he says, “Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so (οὕτως, in this way) all Israel will be saved” (vv. 25–26). In this way, that the fullness of the Gentiles, all the elect among the Gentiles, and the believing remnant of Israel, the elect Israel within the physical Israel, will be the complete number of the elect, those who are chosen, predestinated, called, justified, and glorified in Christ. LSQ

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Our Preaching: With Special Reference to Law and Gospel

Sigurd Christian Ylvisaker

LSQ Vol. 59, Nos. 2 & 3 (June & September 2019)

This paper was read at the Northwest Pastoral Conference of the Norwegian Synod (ELS) April 4–5, 1945 in Mankato, Minnesota, and printed in the Clergy Bulletin, April 16, 1945. The material printed served as a guideline for an informal and more extensive presentation. S. C. Ylvisaker (1884–1959) was president of Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minnesota, from 1930 to 1950. It has been edited for this reappearance.

1. It is our great commission, privilege, and opportunity to preach the gospel.
2. If our private visits were as they should be—frequent, searching, consoling and admonishing—they, too, would stand side by side with public preaching, as in the case of Christ.
3. Since they are not, we should 1) improve the private, 2) lay the more stress on the public.
4. What is public preaching? Why is it so important? It is instruction, convincing, convicting, comforting, saving, exhorting, explaining, elevating, edifying, confessing, and praising.
5. There is no better preacher than the pastor himself, because he knows his sheep.
6. Each sermon is a holy responsibility.
7. Each time and occasion presents new opportunities and needs.
8. In private preaching, it is possible to consider individual needs.

9. In public, the needs of the whole congregation are to be considered, but as these become apparent through the individual. In so far as each public preaching must at the same time be addressed as to the individual, so it must be governed by individual needs.
10. No preaching is effective that is addressed to a nation, a church, a congregation, a mass—for the mass cannot *hear, consider, repent, believe, do the works of faith*.
11. Considering the individual, then: what is his need? According to the commission of Christ, it is the gospel—in every case, at all times, above all else.
12. The preacher must know and realize the need of the gospel from his own case and from that of his members. This can and dare not be superficial knowledge—but vital, deep, sincere knowledge.
13. This can be brought only through the Holy Spirit in the law. Therefore the study of and the preaching of the law is self-evident and necessary.
14. How much law is needed can be determined only by the study of individual cases.
15. Law can predominate only where members are in real danger of hypocrisy and rejection of Christ.
16. But when Christ himself says, preach the gospel, we have a right to suppose that this is the supreme need and the supreme concern of our preaching.
17. What is gospel preaching? We need to study this continually, examine and re-examine ourselves and our preaching, and strive toward ever higher accomplishments in this divine art.
 - a) By contrast, the preaching of the law is a terrible thing, for the law terrifies, drives us away from God, destroys hope, kills without mercy, demands its cruel pound of flesh, leads us to the brink of hell, and thrusts us down into eternal despair. The law puts before men an impossible perfection; it reveals the holiness and justice of God, and robs us of every merit and worthiness. It reveals God in his glorious majesty, but leaves us in that dark night out from which we see as from a deep pit of misery and defeat. The law does not bring God close, but intensifies the infinite distance and eternal abyss which separates man from God. Read again the account of the rich man in hell and know what the law effects. To man in his fallen estate the law breathes damnation and a curse. So far as fallen man is concerned, the law is as the lightning and thunder which played on Mt. Sinai,

wreaking vengeance, striking terror, causing fear. There is no pity there, no love as from God to men, no hope that man can reach, no gladness to cheer. The law is in itself a bright light, but it only reveals the darkness which is man's and does not rescue him from it.

- b) We do not forget when we say this that there is a law spoken by a loving God to his loving children—cf. even Mt. Sinai: “Thou *wilt* not kill.” And Luther was not wrong when he explained: we should *fear, love, and trust* in God, revealing the relationship of loving trust which should exist as the very basis or foundation for a proper keeping of the law. But the situation is still the same: the law demands this loving trust, does not produce it; it curses and condemns if it is not there; and it can only show the bitter fruits of disobedience.
- c) Then consider what the gospel is and does: the gospel makes glad, cheers, gives hope, saves forgives, shows mercy, and extends pity. The gospel binds up what is broken, heals what is sick, washes what is unclean, raises up what is faith, and brings new life where death reigns. The gospel is the voice of the Good Shepherd to bring back what was lost. It is the power of God to erect that temple in the heavens where the weary and heavy laden, the hungry and thirsting, and the despised and despairing may find rest and safe refuge. The gospel brings God very near, draws us to him, and reveals him in ever new and startling beauty, loving compassion, and tender grace. The gospel holds out to the most unworthy the rich mercy which only he knows to give. The gospel opens wide the glory of heaven and clothes the lowliest sinner with the righteousness which Christ has wrought as a heavenly garment—unsullied, seamless, pure, bright, and fit for heaven. The gospel breathes hope as a life-giving breath, and causes the water of life to spring forth among men to refresh and renew to eternal life.
- d) To *preach* the law and the gospel means more than to speak of them, describe them, and point to them. Then any half-hearted mentioning of law and gospel would be *preaching* the same. It is *not*, and we say that to the great discomfiture of many, even ourselves. It means *disciplining-teaching-preaching-evangelizing*. It means *witnessing-entreating* etc., words and expressions by which God describes, and so fills the office of gospel preaching with meaning and responsibility that the preacher is tempted to

cry: "Woe is me, for I cannot." We do not blame a Moses and other prophets for hesitating when called to this serious work, and yet, when we consider the contrast between this and the preaching of the law, who would not greatly desire and long for it?

To *preach* the gospel, then, is more than talking about it. It is more than an objective statement of the doctrines involved, no matter how carefully exact, orthodox, and biblical such statements may be. The gospel *is* that green pasture of which the Bible speaks; it *is* that banquet table of Christ, that living water with which Christ identifies himself. In other words, to preach the gospel is to preach Christ. In this preaching we are to be the very mouthpiece of God—to convince, to invite, to confess, and to urge. We are the servants to place the heavenly food of the gospel before our hearers, the ambassadors sent by Christ to bring the greatest news of all. We come as physicians to the dying, on an urgent errand of mercy; we come as undershepherds to save the lost. We cannot imagine Jesus saying listlessly those life-giving words to the malefactor, to Zacchaeus, and to Peter. Nor can we imagine a Sermon on the Mount delivered as a dry doctrinal discourse. There is an earnest intensity about the sermon of Peter on Pentecost and of Paul in his discourse before Festus. We may say as much as we please that it is not a man's voice, effort, demeanor, or style that lends effectiveness to the preaching—but it must be said that the preacher, by his person, speech, lack of serious effort, etc., can lay many a stumbling block in the way of preaching to reduce its effectiveness and even render it fruitless. Let us emphasize this only more and more that the preaching must be preaching indeed in the sense of the expressions used in Scripture itself.

18. The question of the right proportion between law and gospel will be decided by many considerations.
 - a) As for the pastor, if he is a gospel preacher—and that is the only true pastor—the preaching of the law will be as a foreign and a dread work even as it was to Christ. He knows it is necessary, but he will show in every sermon that his anxious concern is to reach his main goal, to preach Christ, to evangelize, and to comfort.
 - b) As for the congregation, the preacher has a right to consider that the great need there, too, is the comfort and saving grace

of the gospel. The law kills; the gospel alone saves. A Christian congregation, so long as it may be looked upon as Christian (i.e., made up of Christians), presents the picture of those who hunger and thirst after the gospel, who are weary and heavy laden with the burden of sin, and whose cry goes up to high heaven: "How long?" And we dare not, for the sake of Christ who redeemed them, hold back from them the riches of God's grace. Why invite them to church as to a banquet table, if we come to serve only sparingly? It is God who has provided for all the abundance of his blessing. Should we not give as freely and richly as God has provided?

- c) It is disturbing to note that some preach the law as if they loved that law preaching, as if they found it easier to preach, and as if they made it a greater concern. Before they know it, they have so filled their sermon with law that there is barely time and space for a perfunctory mention of the gospel—they must not forget to slip that in, so that it may be said that they preached law *and* gospel. This is but a first step toward modernism which has made of Christ a forgotten man.
- d) No matter how important it may be to include in every sermon the threat of the law as the directive of the law—even to the extent that it may be necessary that the bulk of the sermon, counting words, lines, minutes, be an expounding of the law—a sermon is not truly biblical which fails to preach Christ. The hearer should in every case, without exception, be forced to admit and rejoice to exclaim: "Today I have seen Christ." LSQ

The Gospel and Goodness: Letting the Gospel Predominate in our Classrooms

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LSQ Vol. 59, Nos. 2 & 3 (June & September 2019)

LUTHER HAD HIS MOMENT STUDYING Romans 1:17, I had mine studying Luke 2:41–52. In my sophomore year of college, I took a class called Foundations of Christian Education. As part of this class, one of the seminary professors was brought in to teach a couple classes on teaching religion. This was near the end of the class, so he introduced himself as Prof. Erling Teigen and then gave some homework: Prepare a lesson on the story of the Boy Jesus in the Temple. This was right up my alley, because I was pre-sem and so had a leg up on all those mere education majors. So I dutifully prepared my lesson, neatly typed and organized. Never was I so ready to hand in a homework assignment.

The next week Prof. Teigen began by going through our homework from last week because he said there was much to be learned from it, and I was delighted my homework was the first example he projected on the screen. He pointed out how I had identified the lessons about the third and fourth commandments found in the story. I don't remember if he commented on my insights from the Greek. Then after a quick overview of my homework, he summed up my work by saying: "So this is an excellent example of a traditional approach to this story. However, there is a problem with it. This lesson has no Gospel. So in the end, this is really an example of how not to teach this story." He then salved my feelings a bit by pointing out that none of the lessons handed in were actually good examples of how to teach that story, since none of them

had any Gospel in them. We had all presented the story of the Boy Jesus in the Temple as a morality lesson. Jesus went to church as a child, so should you. Jesus loved to hear God's Word, so should you. Jesus obeyed His parents, so should you. "These lessons are certainly in the story," said Prof. Teigen, "but when we only teach this lesson we are only teaching the Law, and this is not what we are about. We are about the Gospel, the message of how Jesus fulfills the Law for us and dies to pay for our sin. Our task is to bring out *that* message in these stories and make sure it is the primary message heard by our students."

I don't expect this presentation to be a tower experience for any of you, but I do want it to be a chance to emphasize our role as Lutheran teachers in Lutheran schools. Every Christian school sees the promotion of goodness as part of its mission, and Lutheran schools are no different. What is different is how we define that goodness, and how we see it being imparted to our students. This is important not only as a theological distinction, but as a pragmatic one as well.

Contrary to every other Christian denomination—and every other major religion as well—Lutherans do not define goodness by behavior, but by Jesus. When an Evangelical school or even public school says they want their students to "be good" what they mean is they want them to behave well. We want our students to behave also, but when we say we want our students to "be good" what we mean is we want them to have faith in Jesus as the One who is their Good. We understand the Law must be used to curb bad behavior and guide good behavior, but we also understand that the Law has no power to effect true goodness. Only the Gospel can do that, which is why, as C. F. W. Walther says, we are not doing our job as Lutheran teachers when the Gospel does not "have a general predominance in [our] teaching."¹

Which perhaps leads to the question I'm supposed to answer: How does the Gospel predominate in the classroom?

In Your Devotions

Most Christian classrooms begin the day with a devotion of some sort. The nature of the devotion varies from the reading of a lesson and singing of a hymn, to the use of brief liturgies, to daily all-school chapel. What should not vary is the message of Jesus' forgiveness as the primary message of the devotion.

¹ C. F. W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*, trans. W. H. T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 403 (Thesis XXV).

This requires vigilance on the part of the teacher because the default mode for teachers tends to be: Make the children behave. When you spend six hours a day, five days a week with children, you see a lot of sin. And so, when one of your tasks is delivering a brief message from the Word of God to those children at the beginning of the day, the temptation becomes very great to use that as another *make them behave* tool, to moralize (i.e., to address specific sins among the students and “fix” them by having a devotion on them). It is not always wrong to use devotional time to address a particular sin students are struggling with, but a teacher should realize that every time they do this they are in danger of departing from the primary purpose of their devotion. The primary purpose of your devotion is not to be a lesson or a lecture explaining how good children behave. The primary message students should be hearing in a devotion is not what they should be doing for Jesus, but what Jesus has done for them (i.e., how He was good for them and forgives them their sin).

Nor should we ever assume that the Gospel is so well-known by our students that they don’t need to be told, or that we can have a devotion based on “sanctification” and they will insert the Gospel into the devotion themselves. The Law is written on our heart but the Gospel is not, and so it needs to be declared. It needs to be declared constantly and consistently so that it is heard at those times when a particular student especially needs to hear it.

So just as you plan your curriculum for the year, you should also give some thought to the devotions you will use. Examine devotional material the way you would examine any other curriculum to make sure your students are getting what they need from it. Watch out for material that is heavy on moralization or never expounds the Gospel clearly. A good rule is that if you never or rarely see the words “Jesus died for you” or “Jesus forgives you,” the material is not worth using.² Especially beware of anything that makes Jesus into a new Moses, a teacher who gives us new rules to live by. All the sin you see should tell you that those students are real sinners, and so they need a real Savior.

² I was warned in seminary about “fuzzy Gospel”; a proclamation where some of the elements were there but it was either incomplete or unclear if it was meant for me. Phrases like “We all know what Jesus did,” or “We have comfort because of the work of Jesus,” or even “Jesus died on the cross” are meaningless by themselves since they doesn’t tell me what this means for me; they don’t *apply* the Gospel.

In Your Religion Class(es)

Your opening devotion may not be a lesson, but your religion class is. The very fact that we refer to it as a class and give it its own line on our report cards says we look upon this in a similar way to other subjects like math or literature: It is part of an academic discipline, and it has a body of knowledge we want to impart to our students.

We are also quick to see that religion straddles two worlds. On the one hand, it is a class that does have a body of knowledge we want students to learn. We want them to have a basic grasp of biblical chronology, to be able to identify major biblical characters, and be familiar with important stories in the Bible. We want them to have a basic understanding of church history and Lutheran doctrine. On the other hand, we especially want religion to be a place where they are learning about Jesus and a tool to strengthen their faith.

This tension sometimes makes teachers uncomfortable. Every so often I will encounter teachers and pastors who are uncomfortable treating religion as a “class” and would like to see it in its own special category. Their argument is usually that learning about Jesus should be more than a class, that we want students to be focused more on learning about Jesus than learning facts and getting a good grade. If they’re getting a bad grade, it makes them not like the class and want less to do with religion. Or on the flip-side, we want to avoid giving the impression that religion is simply an academic exercise, that my relationship with Jesus is mostly in my head, not my heart.

My first response to this is an academic one: As a rule, when you don’t grade a class, you are not sending the message it is special, but that it is unimportant. You probably already have students from non-member families in your population who are not convinced this religion stuff—or at least this Lutheranism stuff—is all that important. When you then decide to spend class time on it but not grade it, you only reinforce that idea.

Secondly, this problem is not unique to religion. Math teachers want their students to love math, and they have a body of knowledge students need to learn. Reading teachers want their students to love reading, and they have a body of knowledge students need to learn too. Teachers need to learn methods to both impart the body of knowledge and try to instill a love—or at least an appreciation—for the subject. And when push comes to shove, they remember they are dealing with children, who may not be mature enough to love or appreciate what they are currently learning, and so the teacher focuses on imparting

the knowledge. They fall back on the most important principles of the subject, hoping their work will bear fruit later when the students are more mature and have some perspective.

Lutheran teachers need to do that in religion too. But the most important principle in religion isn't the facts, or worse, morality. It is Jesus. There is a reason Jesus calls Himself the Cornerstone. Cornerstones provide a foundation for buildings, not simply in support, but also in guidance and direction for the structure of the building. Just as important, cornerstones are visible. Jesus should be the cornerstone of your religion classes, visible in every lesson. Students should see how each story ties into the whole narrative of Scripture, how the Bible is more than a collection of stories but is *the* story of Jesus the Messiah.

That said, remember you are teaching a class, and a class lies within a curriculum. This means that not every lesson needs an exposition on all these truths. I doubt you take time in each reading class to tell how your current story relates to its broader place in its genre and in literature as a whole. But you do keep it in mind when planning and teaching your lesson, and part of that planning is knowing this will come up again as they progress along the curriculum. The same thing will happen in religion. That said, here are the things I would suggest you keep in mind:

- While teaching stories of the Old Testament, keep in mind you are telling the story of the how God makes, then keeps His promises, especially the promise to send the Messiah.
- The story of the People of Israel is the story of how God deals graciously with sinful, rebellious people, but people who have His promise. Who should that remind you of?
- While teaching stories of the New Testament, keep in mind Jesus' Active Obedience. Jesus does the good that we don't do, and He does it for us. This will especially help you avoid turning Bible stories into morality tales, (i.e., my mistake).
- If you are having trouble finding the Gospel in a story, ask yourself, "How does this story show God's grace to His people?" or "How does this move along the story of the Messiah?"

You should also keep in mind that the hymns and religious songs you learn are an extension of your religion class. We often classify sacred music by which article of the Creed it emphasizes, and as a rule, most of our music should find their focus in the Second Article. This especially makes sense when you think about why we want students

to learn hymns: It is another way for them to learn about Jesus, and it gives them a foundation for their prayer life. So keep that in mind when choosing hymns and hymn stanzas for students to learn and to sing. As morbid as it sounds, a good question to ask is “Would singing this give a person comfort on their deathbed?” If the answer is “No,” then you should ask why you are spending time on it. There may be very good reasons, “Praise to the Lord the Almighty” by Neander is very much a First Article hymn. It has no Gospel in it, but probably should be a part of a Lutheran hymn curriculum.³ But the ratio of Second Article hymns in your curriculum should probably match the ratio in your hymnal.

In Your Discipline

One of my seminary professors told us that we should not be surprised when we discover there are sinners in our congregations. The same could be said to teachers. We should not be surprised to discover there are sinners in our classrooms. I’ve visited with more than a few teachers who *do* seem surprised that their students were not behaving, or that simply telling them to behave was not effective. I once heard a teacher critique the new religion curriculum being used at her school saying that it didn’t seem like much of an improvement from the old one since the children didn’t seem to be behaving any better.

Before I talk about classroom management in these situations, I usually begin by asking if they covered the topic of original sin in their training, and that it is important to go into a classroom knowing: 1) The children are sinners, 2) You need a strategy to deal with this. Because the problem is usually not ignorance or even malice, it is Romans 7:19: “I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.”⁴ There is an odd comfort in this verse for teachers, for it is a reminder that most of the time, this sin of our students is not purposeful. They did not wake up that morning and decide they were going to be bad in school. They are succumbing to a familiar condition: struggling with their sinful nature, and more often than they (and we)

³ The tune’s place in Lutheran hymnody is probably reason enough alone, but it is also an excellent example of a psalm paraphrase.

⁴ Defiance is often an exception to this, but not always. The vast majority of defiant students I’ve dealt with have been students who were angry about something, and their anger translated into a loss of self-control in speaking to me. Defiance should be dealt with differently, but we should still remember that their defiance was probably not part of some plan to win a power struggle, but evil they did not want to do, but kept on doing.

would like, losing that struggle. And so we need to treat them as struggling Christians, not malicious heathens.⁵

So how do you help struggling Christians?

- **You begin with the premise they are Christians**, and thus they want to do right by their Lord. Unless you have clear evidence to the contrary, you assume their sin is a result of them losing the struggle of Romans 7:19.
- **You address specific sin.** One of the most frequent suggestions I make to teachers about classroom management is “Give specific instructions.” It is not enough to tell students “Be good;” you need to tell them precisely what you want them to do. For our purposes this also means that in disciplining a student you need to be specific with them what sin(s) they committed. Not only does this help focus the preaching of the Law, but it tells the student what behavior needs to be corrected to do better in the future. Most importantly, it helps focus the next point:
- **You absolve them when they are penitent.** And here is where we get to see one of the glories of Lutheran schools. Because most schools, even most Christian schools, see discipline as a balancing of the scales. You did a bad thing, now you need to suffer a punishment and/or do an equally good thing to make up for it. Now certainly there are many times when a student will have to bear a consequence for their action. It is even good classroom management. But as Lutherans we know this is ultimately a futile solution to sin. It can curb behavior, but it can never change hearts. And thus it should never be our last word. Absolution, the Gospel, should be the last word. When a student recognizes their sin and apologizes, they should be told they are forgiven, and that Jesus has paid the price of their sin.

This last part is so important that it bears expansion. Again, our default setting as teachers is *make the children behave*. In a discipline situation, we have one of the miscreants as a captive audience. We’re Christian teachers, so we know we should do the “I forgive you” thing but by itself that doesn’t seem very effective, and so it is easy to succumb

⁵ I once read an article on classroom management which made a similar point but from a secular perspective. She said that teachers need to learn to not take student misbehavior personally because it usually isn’t. It is lack of control. Therefore, the focus of our discipline becomes teaching self-discipline rather than punishing the student because they are causing problems for me.

to the temptation to follow up the words “I forgive you” with a lecture, to make sure they realize the immensity of their sin and know just how bad their actions really were. Now again, we need to be clear with students on how they have sinned. But the correct response to an apology is “I forgive you.” Not, “I forgive you, but you better not do it again.” Or worse, “Well, let’s see how you do the rest of the day.” Or even worse, “Are you sure? Because from what I’ve seen...”

Again, this doesn’t mean you shouldn’t give consequences. It doesn’t mean there won’t be times when you sit down with a student and spend some extra time developing a plan to do better tomorrow, or that there won’t be times when you wonder if a student really was sincere in their apology.⁶ But as you discipline students, especially one-on-one, you should bear in mind the words of the Small Catechism:

What is Confession?

Confession consists of two parts: One that we confess our sins, the other that we receive absolution or forgiveness from the pastor or confessor as from God Himself, and in no way doubt but firmly believe that our sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven.

That section on Confession in the Small Catechism is one of the most glorious facets of Lutheranism, and one of the best ways to let the Gospel predominate in our classrooms. We don’t want our actions to teach a third part, that a person is not really forgiven until they have added their sincerity, their act of penance, or some other satisfaction to God. So work hard at making the word of forgiveness your last word in a discipline situation. Clarify the sin, give consequences, and go over strategies to do better next time *first*, and then end with an apology and forgiveness. Children spend so much time hearing about their behavior, being told how to do better, and consciously or unconsciously working

⁶ I’ve gotten more than a few consternated looks when I tell teachers not to worry too much about how sincere an apology sounds, whether the child is apologizing to you or to another child. But we should keep in mind that just like learning secular things, the early efforts of students learning of spiritual things is going to be imperfect and we want to be careful in what we correct. The goal is to teach how Christians deal with sin. We don’t deal with it through revenge, or hiding it, or rationalizing it. We deal with it through confession and absolution because that puts our sin with Jesus on the cross where sin is truly and forever dealt with. Then when you factor in the various personalities of children and developmental stages, determining sincerity becomes an impossible task. So take a note from pastoral theology courses: As a rule, treat every confession as genuine and let the Holy Spirit teach sincerity.

to earn the attention and love of their parents and teachers that it is very, very important they are hearing the message that they do not need to earn the love of Jesus, that He loves them even in their imperfection, even in their sin.

In Your Demeanor

One of my favorite Bible stories to teach is from Numbers 20, where the people complain to Moses about a lack of water, and God tells Moses to speak to the rock and it will give water. Moses, in his frustration yells at the people, then strikes the rock twice, probably for emphasis. The rock gives water, but then God tells Moses that because of his actions, he will not be allowed to enter the Promised Land.

I like teaching that story for a number of reasons, one of which is that in junior high it provides a great thinking question for them: Was it unfair to punish Moses like that? After all, what had he really done wrong? Not followed directions? Lost his temper? After some dialogue we finally get around to actually looking at the text where God says, *“because you did not ... uphold Me as holy in the eyes of the people”* (Numbers 20:12), and discover that Moses’ sin is that he misrepresents God to His people. That is a very serious sin, and why? Because in the end, God wants to be represented as the One who shows mercy.

This is a good story for Lutheran teachers to meditate upon too, since for six hours during the day you are Jesus to your students, and how you speak and interact with them represents Jesus to them. This is especially significant with students who are not members of our congregation; we become their chief example of what it means to be Lutheran and often Christian. And while good behavior is not the Gospel, we want our conduct to reflect the hope of the Gospel. Thus as much as it might be stressed in secular training, it is even more important for us as Lutheran teachers to be aware of our demeanor with students. Discipline that relies upon forgiveness will play a large roll in coloring this, but other things I stress with teachers are:

- **Strong Classroom Management.** As Lutherans, we of all people should understand that the doctrine of original sin means that walking into a classroom of children means walking into a classroom of sinners. Posting rules on the wall and an overview of classroom rules and procedures at the beginning of the year is not sufficient preparation for this circumstance. You need to plan lessons, plan routines, and plan for misbehavior. Good classroom management is the common denominator in calm classrooms, and when you are

calm your teaching is more effective, your students are happier, and your interaction with students is going to be better. The Gospel I've been preaching about classroom management for the past few years has been *Teach Like a Champion* by Doug Lemov,⁷ others have their own favorites. But examine some books, find one that seems to fit your personality and style and begin putting it into practice. Because the teacher who attempts to manage students by yelling is probably making the mistake of Moses.

- **Be Very Careful With Sarcasm and Teasing.** The old advice given to new teachers was “Don't smile until after Christmas.” My advice is “Don't use sarcasm or teasing until after Christmas.” The difficulty with this sort of humor is that it is deeply reliant on your relationship with the other person and with their understanding of language and humor. Sarcasm is tricky enough with adults, attempting it in a room of people who have only known you a few weeks and are still learning the language creates a minefield. So before you venture into sarcasm or teasing your students, you need to have established a good relationship with them. They need to know you love them, that you are on their side, and that you are unlikely to be mean to them. Even then, I'd use it sparingly and only when it is obvious to all that everyone is in on the joke, and we are laughing together. And the younger students are, the less sarcasm and teasing you should use.
- **Admit Mistakes and Apologize.** The doctrine of original sin should make us aware that we are sinners too, and that we are not only going to make mistakes in the classroom but at times even sin against our students. When this happens, apologize. If you lost the struggle of Romans 7:19, then now is your opportunity to model the way a Christian deals with that loss.

In 2011 Dr. Polly Browne, one of the Elementary Education professors at Bethany Lutheran College, took a scheduled sabbatical. She used this time to visit dozens of schools across the United States, both religious and secular, private and public. One thing she noted in visiting Christian schools is that while they often said their ultimate goal was to teach their students that Jesus was their Savior from sin, Bible verses and slogans on the walls in classrooms and hallways were almost always Law, highlighting behavior, and often mottos and sometimes even mission statements equated Christianity with good behavior. Sadly, this was true even in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, Wisconsin

⁷ Doug Lemov, *Teach Like a Champion 2.0* (Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass, 2015).

Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and Evangelical Lutheran Synod schools she visited.⁸

It is a sad thing theologically and pragmatically because one of the questions prospective parents tend to ask is: “What makes your school different?” This is just a more polite way of asking: “Why should I send my child to your school?” And the classical education answer is a good answer, but in the end I would say it is an incomplete answer because our children are not only intellectual, but spiritual beings. Therefore, no matter how thorough or well-received their education was, it can never make them truly good. For that, they need the Gospel. They need Jesus.

And that is what truly makes us different: We have the Gospel, untainted and unmingled. We send students out of our doors who are truly good because they have been made good by the One who was good for them, who died for their sins and covered them in His righteousness. This is the goodness that will sanctify their lives as citizens in their communities and churches until they ultimately enjoy their citizenship in heaven. LSQ

⁸ Dr. Browne has a presentation on her sabbatical trip that is well worth hearing. If you ever need a speaker for a teacher conference you may wish to contact her.

Born Amid War, Born of War: The Development and Early Years of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

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LSQ Vol. 59, Nos. 2 & 3 (June & September 2019)

ON JUNE 7, 1917 NINETEEN UNDERGROUND MINES in Belgium were simultaneously blown apart by the largest man-made explosion in history prior to the atomic bombs of WWII. Ten thousand German soldiers were killed in one enormous blast. Seven thousand were taken prisoner. British military engineers had worked for two years burrowing beneath the mines as deep as one hundred feet. The detonation was so loud that the Prime Minister in London heard it in his office across the English Channel. The world was at war. That very day, June 7, in the St. Paul Auditorium in Minnesota, among many Scandinavian Lutherans, a decades-long doctrinal war was coming to an end. Nearly eight thousand attendees erupted in celebration. For a small band of men, however, the armistice was flawed. They refused to lay down their arms. How could they be so stubborn? How could they not want peace?

“[God] chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will” (Ephesians 1:4–5; NKJV). It is hard for us to leave our hands off the doctrine of election. We want apparent paradoxes resolved. Confessional Lutheran theology sets the Biblical truth before us, and then wisely walks away without attempting to answer the challenges to reason. The Formula of Concord (FC) advises that we humbly avoid prying into why God has elected some to salvation, and

simply tip our hat to the Holy Spirit, as Martin Luther had encouraged. However, the lure of a logical resolution is powerful, and man is always drawn toward claiming some responsibility. Dr. Oliver Olson once said, “The feeling is basic in man that we object to the notion that God is entirely in charge of our salvation.”¹

Precision in theological language is paramount. A phrase that went beyond Scripture had become familiar to many Lutherans. Like snake venom that works its way to the heart, so the phrase *intuitu fidei* (in view of faith) slowly infected the central doctrine—justification. The wisdom, humility and leadership of such capable theologians such as C. F. W. Walther, H. A. Preus, and U. V. Koren, cannot be overstated. Rarely will men correct themselves. Fortunately the authors of the Formula had carefully addressed this doctrine though there was no “widespread dissension” among Lutherans in their day. FC Article XI had been included “to prevent ... disunity and schism in this article among our posterity.”² Their theological insights were *intuitu belli*—a war that finally occurred centuries later, causing a handful of pastors to gather their weapons and stand their ground in a luxury hotel.

A Thirty Years War... Plus

In 1857, four years after the founding of the Norwegian Synod (NS), Pastors N. Brandt and J. A. Ottesen investigated Lutheran seminaries and “found the same faith” being taught at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. The Confessional line from Germany through Norwegian professors G. Johnson and C. Caspari of the University of Christiania (Oslo) connected these young synods in America. NS seminarians would be trained at Concordia, establishing long-lasting fraternal relations.

The state Churches of Norway and Denmark had never officially accepted the Book of Concord (published in the Norwegian language in 1868). Norwegians believed the Augsburg Confession (CA) and Small Catechism were a sufficient confession. The Smalcald Articles (SA) and FC were considered too closely tied to German politics.³ Many early U.S. Nordic church bodies felt the same, which meant the FC’s strong statements on election and conversion were not frequently studied.

¹ Dr. Oliver Olson, comments made during the Bethany Lutheran College Reformation Lectures, 1997.

² Theodore Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 616.

³ Erling Teigen, “The Quia Subscription to the Confessions,” (paper presented at the Evangelical Lutheran Synod General Pastoral Conference, October 13, 2002), 4.

However, NS pastors knew them well thanks to Johnson and Caspari. Koren and others quoted it as authoritative, though actual subscription was not required. Synod clergy held it more highly than the writings of seventeenth century dogmaticians.⁴ Koren saw this difference of confessional subscription to be at the heart of the growing disagreement.

At age twenty, F. A. Schmidt graduated Concordia Seminary in 1857. Serving LCMS churches in New York and Baltimore, he demonstrated a great talent for theology and was fluent in English. By 1861 Koren selected him for a professorship at the newly established Luther College near LaCrosse, Wisconsin, serving all sixteen students, under L. Larsen's first year of presidency. Schmidt was the primary theologian as the college grew and relocated to Decorah, Iowa (a sixteen-year old Bjug Aanondson would enroll in 1865). By 1872 Prof. Schmidt was called to represent the NS on the St. Louis seminary faculty. His paper on justification received praise at the first convention of the Synodical Conference (SC). The SC considered merging all their seminaries into one school—an idea primarily driven by Walther. The developing division over predestination would soon kill his plan.

In 1877, Walther presented a paper reexamining the *intuitu fidei* expression, labeling it unbiblical (having defended it only five years prior). Upon his retraction of the phrase, F. A. Schmidt soon took a leadership role in charges of heresy against him. Things escalated quickly. By 1878, in its twenty-fifth year, the NS was embroiled in the controversy. Walther wanted to resolve things quietly, but Schmidt claimed he had been commanded by God to wage this war publicly. Walther replied, "Since you desire war, you shall have war."⁵ The controversy caused little damage in the LCMS, which doubled in size by 1888 and built the largest Lutheran seminary of its day. The Wisconsin Synod lost two professors during the dispute, but, under the guidance of Adolph Hoenecke, remained with the FC's position. His own study of election played a large role in the growing confessionalism in the WELS. The NS, on the other hand, was devastated losing nearly one third of its membership—a size they would not regain until 1903. The new NS seminary faculty in Madison was torn apart in its second year. The idea of a joint SC seminary was scuttled. The NS left the SC in hopes of getting its house in order. By 1880 nearly every NS congregation had special meetings to discuss the issue.

⁴ Ibid., 14.

⁵ T. Graebner, *Dr. Franz Pieper: A Biographical Sketch* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1931), 28.

Some charge that the NS grew more rigid on doctrine due to its closeness with Missouri. The NS was certainly tighter than the weak Church of Norway (a professor called from Norway was once required to take two more years of U.S. seminary training). However, early NS men realized they had a chance to form a truly orthodox Lutheran church body, which was impossible in Norway. Theological precision was a characteristic they brought with them from Norway. U. V. Koren, J. A. Ottesen, and H. A. Stub conducted intense studies concluding Walther was correct. Koren emerged as a formidable theologian publishing *An Accounting* in 1884, endorsed by two-thirds of the clergy, while one-third—the Anti-Missourians—refused. His writing caused many NS churches to insert a statement against the *intuitu fidei* doctrine in their constitutions. Families were divided. Opposing churches were built on the same intersection. Communities all across the Midwest still exhibit the scars of this great doctrinal war. The Anti-Missourians established their own seminary at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota in 1886, but left the NS the following year. In 1890 they joined with the Conference of the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod to form the United Norwegian Lutheran Church of America (UNLC), “released from what they regarded (as) the doctrinal straight-jacket of the Synod.”⁶

Yet, there was always a desire to reunite on both sides. Free conferences were organized with such hopes. The controversy became all-consuming. Rev. G. Gullixson reflected, “We were warned against the ‘*intuitu fidei*’ doctrine morning, noon and night by spokesmen of the Norwegian Synod.” LCMS theologians spilled much ink on the subject. Articles by young Franz Pieper appeared as early as 1880. He cut his teeth on the controversy, winning the hearts of Missourians. Upon Walther’s death in May 1887, the mantle of doctrinal leadership fell on him. The NS also deeply appreciated Pieper, conferring an honorary doctorate on him in 1903 (from Luther College). The LCMS published essays from Koren and Prof. H. G. Stub, champions of the NS position. Hoping to keep “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” in 1905, the Hauge Synod raised the possibility of union with the NS, the United Church, and the Hauge Synod. A Joint Commission was established, reaching agreement on all disputed doctrines except election. Despite major differences discussions would continue. The architect of the split,

⁶ Herman A. Preus, “History of Norw. Lutherans in America to 1917,” *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (October 1967), 115.

F. A. Schmidt, was now the UNLC's point man at the table, which drew the ire of NS men.

A Theology of Weariness

Neighbors lived with church segregation daily. Most did not understand the complexities of the doctrinal matters. By the 1900s U.S. Norwegians no longer felt dependent on European connections. Their children were now Americans. At the same time, new arrivals poured into the U.S. soaring their population to over one million by 1910 (almost one-third of Norway's population).⁷ Norway's independence in 1905 heightened national pride. The U.S. Sons of Norway reached a membership of 12,000 homes by 1914. A desire for togetherness with those from the fatherland was growing. The topic of a merger was even being discussed in secular societies. "Norwegian-American cultural pride and identity began to have a moderating influence on religious disputes. Common culture was beginning to trump doctrine."⁸ Pressure was placed on the clergy. Was this long controversy really worth it? Was it just a handful of professors arguing about words? As Thomas Paine once quipped, "Time makes more converts than reason."

As the years passed, each church body went about their own work. The NS grew to a membership of 140,000 by the turn of the century. Meetings continued to be held by the joint Union Committee. Their focus: Is it possible to express the Biblical doctrine of election in two different ways, or are these differences substantive and therefore two different doctrines?⁹ If not, then must this keep us apart? A theology of weariness developed. Lay people longed for the unity they had in Norway. New immigrants were uninformed of the issue. The pastors clinging to orthodox doctrine were criticized. People grew tired of the controversy. Many clergy became disengaged. Seminary professors even neglected the subject, assuming students still understood the nuances of the doctrine, though many did not. Younger pastors leaned on Koren, Stub, and C. K. Preus without staying involved in the discussions. Doctrinal authority was centralized in just a few men.¹⁰ In addition, new men on the other side seemed more compatible toward resolution.

⁷ In contrast, over five million Germans had emigrated to the U.S. by 1900.

⁸ John Brenner, *The Election Controversy* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2017), 158.

⁹ Gernander, 3.

¹⁰ Christian Anderson, "Underlying Causes of the Deterioration and Breakdown of the Old Norwegian Synod," *Clergy Bulletin* 13, no. 1 (September): 3-6.

Rev. C. Anderson recalls hearing the expression, "When the old war horses are gone, we shall have no difficulty to effect a union." At age 76, Koren delivered an essay entitled, "*What Hinders Union of the Various Norwegian Church Bodies?*" Despite a general respect for him, many pastors secretly complained it was time for him to retire. However, the LCMS still appreciated Koren's firmness, and the next year conferred on him an honorary doctorate. He was called to his eternal home in 1910, allowing H. G. Stub to rise to the Synod presidency. Stub had served First Lutheran Church (Decorah, Iowa), was installed as president of Luther Seminary in 1900, and had been knighted by the King of Norway in 1908 for "distinguished services rendered to Norway and mankind." There was new hope he would undo the NS's rigidity and unravel the dissension. He was the face of the future.

Meetings for a joint hymnbook began in 1908 primarily over the switch to English, but it also made union more appealing.¹¹ "When two groups worship with the same hymnal, doctrinal differences become blurred, particularly in the eyes of the laity."¹² Public worship is the most tangible expression of fellowship. *The Lutheran Hymnary* of 1913 contains no hymns on the subject of election. The Union Committee continued to meet. NS representatives were criticized for stubbornness. By 1911, the United Church and Haugeans arrived at agreement. Though the NS was seen as "the problem," the other two church bodies wanted them to join to form a larger organization. New committee members were elected in 1911. Stub selected parish pastors, not only theological professors. Pronounced differences remained, yet negotiations continued. Some wondered why they continued to negotiate with opponents who would not tolerate their doctrine. The Haugeans grew skeptical about having any lasting unity with the NS, fearing it would change the character of their synod. Opposition developed in their own camp. Stub's 1911 theses on election had been the very cause for division, but he began to push for a Merger, and soon became its greatest champion—a puzzling twist in ELS history.

A Victory of Heart Over Head

In the city of Madison, Wisconsin, in February of 1912, a tremendous break-through was announced. The newly chosen committee members had settled on a unifying statement to be known as the

¹¹ P. Faugstad, "Centennial of the Lutheran Hymnary," (paper presented at an Evangelical Lutheran Synod Pacific Coast Circuit Conference), 5.

¹² Brenner, 163.

“Madison Settlement” (*Opgjør*). The NS committee members had been lead to believe, “Since neither of these two forms of doctrine, thus presented, contradicts any doctrine revealed in the Word of God ... We find that this should not be cause for schism within the Church.” The key wording that would now “solve” the controversy would read,

We have agreed to reject all errors which seek to explain away the mystery of election ... either in a synergizing or a Calvinizing manner ... every doctrine which ... would deprive God of his glory as only Savior or ... weaken man’s sense of responsibility in relation to acceptance or rejection of grace.¹³

The idea that man would bear “a sense of responsibility” in regard to his conversion brought everything back to the original issue. In fact, F. A. Schmidt’s UNLC publicly recognized that the *Opgjør* statement agreed with his position. It was “an anti-Missourian victory.”¹⁴ Theo. Aaberg rightly suggests: “In committing themselves ‘without reservation’ to the doctrine of election as presented in the Second Form, they handed over to the ‘Anti-Missourians’ in the United Church what the Synod in the 1880’s had steadfastly refused to yield to them.”¹⁵ The objectionable phrase, “Man’s sense of responsibility in relation to the acceptance or rejection of grace,” would cause a large Minority to organize in the NS once it was closely examined. Nonetheless, “We all agree!” was the news of the day by telegraph. Church bells rang. The United Church president declared that *Opgjør* “brought a storm of jubilation among our people.” When the standing vote was taken at their next convention, six thousand rose to sing, “Now Thank We All Our God,” followed by chorales from the St. Olaf Choir. Dignitaries from Norway attended the celebration.¹⁶ The decades-long war was drawing to a close.

Many wanted union so badly they did not examine the precise wording. Challenged by the Minority, NS leaders insisted they had not caved in. Pastoral conferences studied the wording and discovered its flaws. Stub called for a few changes to make it tolerable. Newer delegates failed to see the long-term results of their approval, and trusted

¹³ Theodore A. Aaberg, *A City Set on a Hill: A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (Norwegian Synod) 1918–1968* (Mankato: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1968), 49–50.

¹⁴ Gernander, 17.

¹⁵ Aaberg, 49.

¹⁶ E. Clifford Nelson, *The Lutheran Church Among Norwegian Americans* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1960), 2:184–185.

the better judgment of their leaders. The NS district conventions “gave overwhelming endorsement to the document.”¹⁷ Some believed the UNLC was now agreeing with the NS historical position. Nothing was further from the truth. E. Clifford Nelson would aptly write, “It was a victory of heart over head. ... Madison was not a meeting of minds but of hearts.”¹⁸ Though most were enamored with the forthcoming Merger, a large Minority survived and began a more intense study. As time passed their numbers grew. They realized the NS’s historic position was being changed. “The very fact that leaders of both parties declared they found their doctrines in *Opgjør*, and that they had not changed their positions, led to the conclusion that it was a compromise.”¹⁹ The Minority sought alterations, so a petition was sent to the NS. However, by the end of 1912, “the Synod had adopted an official position on the Union Matter and all its congregations were exhorted to be loyal to their synod.”²⁰ The Merger was coming. The only questions were “when?” and “how?”

Leaders from the growing Minority approached the SC for help. They suggested offering some new wording. Pres. Stub suddenly began to turn against those delaying the union, denouncing detractors in both the WELS and LCMS. He implied objectors had changed the original doctrine taught by previous generations.²¹ In 1913, he publicly came out against the SC committee members. Luther College Prof. Laur. Larsen, a highly influential Minority man, “was declared out of order from the podium by the chairman and told to sit down, because the explanation he gave did not please the chairman and was harmful to the ‘majority.’”²² Stub would now use the power of his office to push for the Merger. He made personal calls on numerous laymen to request their vote, especially if their pastor stood with the Minority. Merger-promoters believed his efforts were justified. C. K. Preus’s son would later write, “Dr. H. G. Stub ... left no stone unturned in his efforts to pacify this minority group and win their support ... but these endeavors proved largely unsuccessful.”²³

¹⁷ Aaberg, 53.

¹⁸ Quoted in Aaberg, 52.

¹⁹ J. E. Thoen, “The Austin Agreement,” *Lutheran Sentinel* 8, no. 18 (May 6, 1925), 275.

²⁰ J. Herbert Larson and Juul B. Madson, *Built on the Rock* (Mankato: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1992), 57.

²¹ Brenner, 169.

²² J. A. Moldstad, “Prof. Laur. Larsen,” *Evangelisk Luthersk Tidende* 16, no. 16 (9 August 1933), 140–41, trans. J. R. Christianson.

²³ *The Union Documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: The Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1948), 20.

The SC influence was causing a drag on the union movement and added to the number of dissenters. “A belligerently articulate minority had developed within the (Synod).”²⁴ Prominent seminary faculty members, O. E. Brandt, J. Ylvisaker and E. Hove circulated a “Petition to the Synod,” hoping to find true doctrinal unity before merging. Stub considered it an act of rebellion. Tensions began to escalate. The pressure got to Larsen, who suddenly left the Minority. He was tired of fighting, and became critical of the Missouri Synod, blaming it for the lack of unity among Lutherans. Previous colleagues at Concordia Seminary now turned on him. Though his funeral in 1915 was highly attended by many in the NS, there was little recognition in the LCMS.²⁵ His defection puzzled and devastated many in the remnant who would later form the ELS.

Stub’s pressure at the 1913 convention frustrated the Minority into an organized army in hopes of slowing the tide of union by the convention in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, the following year. There the president politicized his opening address by reminding everyone that Christ had prayed “they would be one” (John 17:20–23)—Jesus apparently favored the Merger. The Minority proposed a “peace committee” to establish better conditions before proceeding. It went down in defeat. The *Madison Agreement* continued to puzzle and agitate due to its poor composition, affirming both sides.

In 1913 Stub and Johannes Ylvisaker attended the SC convention in Michigan. The *Madison Agreement* dominated two full days of discussions. WELS and LCMS men again suggested that wording be added which rejected the notion of man’s responsibility in his conversion. Three were elected to represent the SC in hopes of meeting with NS officials—a hope never fulfilled. Theological journals of the WELS and LCMS highly criticized *Opgjør*. A stronger bond was developing between the NS Minority men and the SC synods, whose theologians devoted more time to the issue. Pieper published a brochure on election. The Minority grew frustrated that they had no direct access to NS members, since Stub was denying them a hearing. The seventy-year old Rev. M. F. Wiese of W. Koshkonong began privately publishing *For Guidance and Defense*, in order to supply the Minority with a voice, in which he criticized NS leadership for “trying to run down (the Minority men’s) character and... not giving them an opportunity to reply.”²⁶

²⁴ Nelson, 192.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 196.

²⁶ Union Documents, 24.

On behalf of the SC, Dau and Pieper were in regular communication with Luther College Pres. C. K. Preus and I. B. Torrison, the primary Minority leaders. Their fellowship relations were also on the line. Attempts to meet with NS officials over an eight-year period were always denied. Stub was aware of the potential sway they might have. A NS auxiliary committee would deal with them, denying them any chance to address all of the delegates at conventions. However, whenever the Minority group held their own conferences, SC members (F. Pieper, W. H. T. Dau and T. Graebner) were almost always in attendance.²⁷ Pieper, now president of Concordia Seminary, continued to write in support of the Minority. He stated that the *Madison Agreement* was a doctrinal compromise, and if it passed, the SC would be forced to sever fellowship. The St. Louis faculty immediately translated his tract into English.

A special convention of the NS was called that year at Zion Lutheran Church of Minneapolis. They agreed to move toward actually implementing the union by a vote of 394 to 106. Despite a large dissenting faction of mostly pastors, the NS voted to send out the majority report synod-wide. Stub continued to put the weight of his office behind the movement, but still wanted to keep the large Minority in the fold. He preferred they not lose face while preserving the substance of the document.

Time Running Out

In June of 1914, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated at Sarajevo, sparking the start of WWI. That same month the NS met in convention for a battle of their own. Stub reported that a majority of congregations favored the Merger (though nearly one third of delegates would vote in opposition at the convention). The religion faculty of Luther College stood opposed to *Opgjør*. S. C. Ylvisaker openly blamed Stub as the primary source of trouble toward an unfounded union.²⁸ Synod politics began to taint operations in the NS mission field. Rev. George Lillegard was not allowed to return to China in 1915 due to his anti-Merger convictions.²⁹ The Merger was coming, but it seemed it would be a bloody fight right to the end.

²⁷ *Clergy Bulletin* supplement, "Minutes of the Aberdeen Hotel Meetings," 4.

²⁸ Peter T. Harstad, *Sigurd Christian Ylvisaker, 1884–1959: A Commemorative Volume at the Centennial of His Birth* (Mankato: Bethany Lutheran College), 75.

²⁹ A. Soule, *George Oliver Lillegard*, 2.

Logistics of blending the three bodies were underway. For five years a committee had worked out the details: There would be nine districts, plus a non-geographical English-speaking district. Conventions would be held every three years. Seminaries would amalgamate to form Luther Seminary. Four colleges and fourteen academies would be supported worth \$15 million in real estate. Periodicals would be combined. All that was needed was final approval from each group.³⁰ However, even at this late date United Church leaders became concerned about the growing NS Minority. They met with Preus and Torrison, who again requested changes in *Opgjør* to appease consciences. The UNLC men refused, believing these relatively few pastors in the Minority must not be allowed to derail negotiations and establish a bad precedent.³¹ Still, efforts would continue to be made to bring them along—efforts that would culminate in the fateful meeting in Austin, Minnesota.

The Haugeans had their *own* problems: their minority opposing the Merger had grown. Would the NS influence “quench the spirit” of true Haugeanism? Percentage wise, their minority was even larger and more vocal than the NS contingent.³² By 1916 25% of their churches opposed the union. They wanted assurance that joint seminary instruction would include openness to their lower-liturgical practices and pietistic sensitivities. The United Church saw no such dissension. Their vote was unanimous.

In April 1916, Stub sent a mass mailing refuting the arguments of the Minority.³³ His letter did more harm than good. Minority numbers grew. The May NS convention was highly charged with emotion. Torrison presented a statement signed by 176 men demanding that the Minority view be accepted as biblical. The Minority was at its strongest, yet they were watching things slip away politically. They just did not have the numbers. The proposed constitution, and the handing over of all property was approved. Motions to delay were defeated. All 176 men declared that without changes to *Opgjør* “[we] cannot go into the new body,” insisting they would be “forced to maintain the Synod, continue its work, and protect its interests.”³⁴ Notice: they would “maintain the Synod.” Even if the Majority voted to disband, they intended to

³⁰ J. L. Neve, *A History of Lutheranism in America, 1619–1930*, 3rd. ed., ed. John M. Drickamer and George C. Fry (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1979), 242.

³¹ J. E. Thoen, 277.

³² Nelson, 210.

³³ *Ibid.*, 214.

³⁴ Gernander, 25.

stay and “keep the Synod going.” A massive break was imminent. In November, the NS congregation in rural Nicollet, Minnesota, under the care of Rev. J. J. Strand, voted not to enter the union. Others threatened to leave. That summer the wife of C. K. Preus wrote to a friend, “Most are going into the union and there will be few left, but, God be praised, enough to keep the synod going with God’s help.”³⁵ Her husband must have expected a sizeable group would leave with him. H. M. Tjernagel wrote: “I will not be a member of the ‘new church body.’ I have cast my lot with those who will try to keep the Synod going and remain true to what it has stood for since its organization.”³⁶

Live and Let Live in Austin

In the months following, the Union Committee attempted one last time to bring this huge Minority along. A meeting was arranged in Austin, Minnesota, in 1916. Merger supporters felt empowered. Preus and Torrison made final attempts to amend *Opgjør’s* wording but the committee again refused. They met again in early December and accepted a few minor, non-substantive changes, adding a sentence to soothe the consciences of the holdouts. This “Austin Settlement” would state that the Minority members “are invited to join the new church under complete equality and mutual fraternal recognition,” but the committee insisted it be known that nothing had changed in *Opgjør*. They also declared the Minority opinion was not contrary to Scripture or the Confessions, and would permit this to unify everyone, if the Minority would join. Rev. H. Larson summarized it well,

The Austin Agreement granted the Minority people the right to bring their Scripture doctrine into the Merger, while at the same time calling for them to grant “mutual fraternal recognition” to those who held a distinctly different position on the controverted points of doctrine. This document was essentially an agreement to “live and let live.”³⁷

The sizeable Minority had no leverage. Torrison and Preus traveled to St. Louis after Christmas to seek the opinions of Pieper, Dau, and Graebner. Should they join on these grounds? They sought replies from the three men. The SC team sent a letter on January 9 advising no one

³⁵ Torald Teigen, “Some Footnotes, Grace Notes, and Blue Notes To a Period of Norwegian American History 1916–1918,” *Oak Leaves* 22, no. 1 (Winter 2018), 1.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Larsen and Madson, *Built on the Rock*, 63.

to enter the Merger under these conditions. Since some small headway had been made, their letter stated, "We believe that the time for the Minority to sever its connections with the Norwegian Synod has not yet come, but that it is much more your duty through your witness to the truth in the Norwegian Synod, if God wills, to bring about its complete recognition." That week the Minority assembled. Preus and Torrison provided an interpretation of the letter: the Minority should stay in the new church body and bear witness to the truth. Some disagreed with this understanding. What had the SC men actually advised? A few pastors lined up a meeting with Dau to get his take firsthand. Some were upset with Preus and Torrison's report. Dr. N. M. Ylvisaker, brother of Sigurd, corresponded with the Missourians and claimed they had a change of heart regarding their advice. One can only conclude that Preus and Torrison saw no other options and thought they might make headway in future negotiations. The vast majority agreed to accept the arrangement from Austin, shrinking the Minority numbers dramatically by the June convention. Many hoped their theology would triumph, since it had been allowed by *Opgjør*. It was apparent nothing would change. The new wording really made no difference in the end. Joining on these grounds would be accepting the same Majority position of the past four years. With this development, some had seen enough. One-third of the members of Zion Lutheran Church in N. Minneapolis resigned, forming Fairview Lutheran Church. Rev. C. Anderson continued to serve them. He described his reasoning, "Too much stress was made on outward union without considering what obstacles there might be to *true* union." Soon some members also left West Freeborn Lutheran to form Manchester Lutheran Church in southern Minnesota. These were the earliest seeds of the future ELS.

Dissenting pastors increased their contact with each other, such as H. Ingebritson, O. T. Lee and C. N. Peterson. The fewer the soldiers, the more they would band together. They needed a voice. The U.S.-Nordic paper *Amerika* ran articles by Rev. Bjug Harstad, Rev. G. P. Nesseth and others, including laymen, encouraging people to stand firm. Numerous customers cancelled their subscriptions. Two months before the Merger convention, Harstad wrote to fellow Minority members,

Even if it should come to pass that I should stand alone, I cannot go along into the new body. ... If the members of the other body then put us out by keeping the Synod alive and

going, we will be at our post. Dear friends, let us unite on something very soon. It is getting late.³⁸

He wrote he would rather give up his life than give up adherence to the pure Word of God—a position no doubt impressed upon him while sitting at the feet of Walther. Harstad was weathered and battle-hardened, having established seventeen congregations and four schools among the pioneers of the Dakota Territory and northern Minnesota. The NS had called him to start a college in the Pacific Northwest in 1890. Sons of the men who had shaped him theologically were now conceding defeat.

No one knew how many might defect. Some estimated 200+ pastors and delegates were considering withdrawal. Minority leaders sent out mailings hoping to stall. Some pastors faced termination of their calls. Their wives probably weighed in on the matter. On January 20, 1917, the Minority met in Minneapolis to consider the most advantageous move for their cause. Preus and Torrison embraced the new agreement, implying the union committee had changed their attitude considerably toward their demands. “They were of the opinion that a willingness to yield to the view of the minority was now present.”³⁹ They recommended laying down their arms to accept the Merger. An overwhelming portion of pastors agreed to follow. At the final NS convention, Minority leaders declared their willingness to accept the Union invitation, virtually ending the 64-year run of the NS.

Willing to Die on This Hill

However, a small group of soldiers refused to give up. Picking up the Minority banner, C. N. Peterson sent a letter to all who voted against the *Austin Agreement* calling a meeting at the Aberdeen Hotel in St. Paul on June 7, 1917, during the convention. More than forty men responded positively. SC representatives planned to join them. Thoen explained the reasoning for continued resistance:

[*The Austin Agreement*] gives the impression that both forms [of election] have been used side by side and been regarded as of equal value. This is not true. ... The basis of union was a complete compromise. Each party was allowed to stand on its own doctrine. ... We have good reasons to rejoice and be glad, for in the fact that we were not caught in the net that entangled

³⁸ Torald Teigen, 6.

³⁹ Thoen, 282.

our brethren in the Minority, we see the gracious providence of God.⁴⁰

On June 5, 1917, the U.S. Army Selective Service Act for WWI went into effect. All males 21 to 30 years old were required to register, culminating in 2.8 million men being drafted by the war's end. That very day a small troop of spiritual soldiers rallied in hopes of making a final stand against the Merger vote. Allies of the SC were on-hand: Pieper, W. H. T. Dau, an LCMS dogmatics professor, and Dr. Theodore Schlueter, an LCMS theologian serving as a professor at Northwestern College of the WELS. All their attempts to meet with NS officials had been denied. Even the Minority leaders who had solicited their advice, such as C. K. Preus, refused to meet, having clearly capitulated.

Nevertheless this remnant of the Minority strategized to block the Merger. Their chosen venue had its own unique history. Built in 1889, the Aberdeen contained numerous luxury apartments and sat three blocks from Summit Avenue, St. Paul's most exclusive neighborhood. The ground floor housed a large room for meetings. One Minnesota governor had even made it his home while in office. Following the Great Depression, it was abandoned. In 1938, it was the site of a gruesome murder. Under pressure from neighbors, it was torn down in 1944 and used as scrap metal in the build-up of WWII.⁴¹ During the convention week, the hotel conference hall would serve as the "war room" for the remnant.

Remember Gideon

Minutes were recorded. They opened with a devotion. Rev. J. A. Moldstad presided for the evening. Pieper was first given the floor. This war had consumed so much of his energy. He reminded them the doctrinally sound NS had stood on the right side of this issue through its entire history. They must continue to testify against synergism. He advised: "You should attempt to persuade the majority to do away with '*Opgjør*' and the Austin Agreement; give the Word of God a chance, and be hopeful, you can never tell what will happen. I am optimistic." The chairman, one of his pupils, expressed fear that the *Austin Agreement* would be railroaded through without allowing for discussion. They may not be given an opportunity to speak at all.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 279, 281, 285–286.

⁴¹ "Aberdeen Hotel: The Grandest Apartment Hotel in St. Paul," *forgottenminnesota*, published December 9, 2011, <http://forgottenminnesota.com/2011/12/the-grandest-apartment-hotel-in-the-twin-cities/>.

Consciences were struggling with what path they should take. Dau and Schlueter expressed concerns that it may even hurt the cause of the remnant to have them speak knowing how Missourians were perceived. Among many, Germans were suspect both in theological and political matters. The SC representatives were puzzled that Minority leaders had traveled to meet with them in St. Louis, but now had abandoned the fight. Pieper suggested the remnant select their strongest representative to speak. However, all of the top generals had left their ranks. All who remained were parish pastors with no great voice. The one man with any gravitas would be Harstad, having been a NS District President in both the Minnesota and Pacific Districts. Nonetheless, Dau encouraged them, "As to your smallness of number, remember Gideon's band, bear testimony to the truth and leave the consequences to God."

Throughout the Aberdeen proceedings, one can sense the questions running through their minds. "How long do we continue to testify to the truth? When is it no longer wise for us to stay? Is it better to be a witness for the truth *within* the new Synod?" They were in a very tight box. Dau wisely warned against becoming a church within the church, having a separate confession tighter than the larger church body. "The confession you come in on must be the confession of all." One participant recalled Pieper's determination and encouragement:

He watched with interest, with prayer and with advice during our stormy days of tribulation in our Synod from 1912 to 1917. ... Again and again he advised and urged: "Testify! Nothing else can be done, it is too late; but testify." "My sole interest is that you bear witness. Your testimony may not bear fruit for a hundred years, but it surely will bear fruit." "Obey the Holy Spirit, which is leading you. Testify now, while the Holy Spirit is upon you, for if you do not, the Holy Spirit will leave you, and then you will not have the courage to testify." When he bade us farewell, he said, "I am satisfied; you have testified. The Lord bless and keep you!"⁴²

The chairman still held out hope that inviting Preus and Torrison to their Aberdeen meetings might win them back to lead their cause. Maybe seeing this sizeable remnant would stir their hearts to rejoin them. These were men they had known so well. They learned at their feet and trusted them from their youth. Bjug Harstad had changed his last name under the counsel of L. Larsen. C. K. Preus, Moldstad's childhood

⁴² J. Moldstad, *ELS Synod Report* 1931: 142.

pastor, had personally escorted him to the college at age fourteen, and in 1914 hand-selected him to represent his alma mater on a tour of Norway. Preus and his father were neighboring pastors to M. Wiese for much of his ministry. Nearly all the remnant men had been groomed under Torrison, pastor of First Lutheran Church in Decorah. Harstad expressed his disgust. The very leaders who had taught them to stand their ground on election were now in the enemy's camp.

During the concluding sessions of the NS convention, Pres. Stub made one final plea, inviting those who struggled in conscience to concede and join the union. With wording composed by Harstad, four men went to the microphone, O. T. Lee, Holden Olsen, Bjug Harstad and J. Moldstad, pleading for patience. More time was denied. Their former leaders of the Minority sat in silence without coming to their aid.⁴³ Why had so many good men caved in? Some feared they would be stripped of their calls, and objecting now would bear no fruit. Rev. C. J. Quill, who entered the Merger with regret, but later joined the remnant, explained his own thinking:

[I was] carried along by the implicit confidence in the brethren, who championed the Minority cause, by misconceptions, and neglect of due consideration, the blame for which is all my own, I did enter. But it was with reluctance I did that. ... When the union took place... I did not rejoice, could not. ... [I finally realized] there was no possibility that the things protested against would ever be righted. ... I was urged that union was the will of God. ... Brethren [who questioned the union] were repeatedly accused of insincerity, and ignored when pleading questions of conscience.⁴⁴

Back in the hotel, the remnant discussed the continuation of the actual structure of the NS. They soon discovered this could not be legally sustained once the larger body voted itself out of existence. Aberdeen discussions finally shifted toward joining an existing synod, or starting a new one.

The Post-War Parade

The new Merger church, the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America (NLCA, later known as the ELC in 1946), would be

⁴³ Aaberg, 80.

⁴⁴ C. J. Quill, "Declaration of Withdrawal," *Lutheran Sentinel* 61, no. 10 (May 25, 1978), 708-710.

impressive: 1,031 pastors, 3,009 congregations and 474,715 members (newspapers suggested closer to one million)—90% of all Norwegian Lutherans in the U.S., and over 30% of all U.S. Norwegians. This was worthy of grand pageantry. On June 7, 1917 the three church bodies met separately to finalize business and vote to terminate their existence. They then formed merging parades toward the St. Paul Auditorium, led by the Hauge Synod, oldest of the three. Escorted by mounted police, the massive throng was labeled the largest gathering of Norwegians on U.S. soil. Special flag bearers were chosen: the Hauge Synod was led by South Dakota Gov. Peter Norbeck, who would later be instrumental in the creation of Mt. Rushmore, Badlands National Park, and Custer State Park; the NS selected John A. Berg, a banker and realtor from Wisconsin, who was prominent in national and state politics, as well as the chairman of the trustees of a small Lutheran college in Galesville, Wisconsin; the UNLC chose Judge Oley Nelson from Iowa, a well-known Civil War veteran and leader in the American Legion. The only stage decorations at the convention hall were two enormous American flags. This would be an American church body.

Not all participants were joyful. G. Gullixson of Chicago refused to walk. A young NS pastor, Rev. Norman A. Madson, sat on the curb and cried. In his inaugural year at Bode, Iowa, he felt obliged to join “the wretched Merger.” He had been instructed it was not right to divide a congregation—a view he would later disparage. Having taught at Luther, and recently assisting Moldstad in Chicago, he was close to the remnant men, but entered the Merger hoping things would change. They never would. It would take him seven years to finally leave. Rev. J. Petersen felt similar agitation despite staying in. Some did desert within months. By August physics instructor, Prof. O. Overn, resigned from Luther for doctrinal reasons, and was called to Concordia in St. Paul.

Participants paraded eight-abreast into the auditorium. It is estimated that 8,000 people were in attendance. More than 2,000 delegates were officially seated. The Luther College Band and the St. Olaf Choir performed for the festivities, along with a chorus of over 2,000 voices. Permanent officers were elected. H. G. Stub was chosen as the first president. A massive installation of twenty-seven candidates ordained into the public ministry was featured at the evening service. During the weekend, one service was celebrated with full vestments and chanting, while another was stripped of all high church character to accommodate the pietistic Haugeans.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Neve, 245.

Free, Unafraid, and Happy

The remnant pastors gathered for their first worship service that Sunday. Members of Fairview Lutheran Church were meeting in a rented building during a building project. It was heart-warming for these men to worship with others who had taken drastic steps to preserve the truth. Despite sadness over the demise of their beloved NS, one reflected,

We were free, we were unafraid, and we were happy. We felt that the Lord was with us and that His grace was abundant. Our meeting was continued Monday forenoon and afternoon. Both doctrinal and practical questions were discussed. It was a small beginning and without temporal means, but God's blessings have been showered upon us. One with God is always a majority. May we remain faithful stewards to the end of time! God help us for Jesus' sake!⁴⁶

Along with this sense of optimism, however, came the lingering pain of being deceived by their leaders. One week later Rev. M. F. Wiese, in the final year of his ministry, wrote a scathing letter to the Minority point man C. K. Preus.⁴⁷

Among us (the remnant) people are astonished, grieved and indignant over what the "Minority" has ventured to do in St. Paul. ... In my opinion, an offense has been given by our trusted men such as has no parallel in the history of the old Norwegian Synod. ... Ottesen, your father, V. Koren, Frich, etc. would certainly turnover in their graves. ... Do you really believe that God will bless such conduct? ... I believed, I can assure you, that if there was anyone I was sure would stand fast, it was you. ... This is an exceedingly severe trial for us. God guide and counsel for Jesus' sake.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Aaberg, 76.

⁴⁷ C. K. Preus died three years after the Merger. His son Jake (1883–1961) became governor of Minnesota. Jake had attended two years of seminary, but preferred politics, to his father's dismay. In retirement, Gov. Preus frequently worshipped at Hiawatha Lutheran Church (ELS) in Minneapolis, though he never officially joined. His continued appreciation for the ELS caused his sons, Jack and Robert, to come to Bethany's campus in the 1950s.

⁴⁸ Torald Teigen, 9.

In Harstad's own congregation at Parkland, a slim majority favored the Merger, and were upset that he was elected president of the little remnant. "The old building site ... is storm swept and waste. A destructive hurricane has swept away the dear old mansion," was how he would describe it the following year. Their blessed NS no longer existed—destroyed in front of them by their own leaders. Should they seek shelter in one of the SC church bodies? Should they become a Norwegian district in the Missouri Synod? Could they really survive on their own? Though never documented, oral reports indicate that Pieper and Dau encouraged them to form their own church body, despite their size, since others might leave the Merger in the years ahead and find a place to land of their own Norwegian heritage. According to these reports, the WELS and LCMS men promised they would serve as big brothers to get them on their feet. Despite such assurances, a few pastors believed they would be too small, and instead entered the LCMS.

Encouragement from the SC brethren clearly helped to establish and sustain the fledgling group. The seminary instruction of Dr. Franz Pieper would impact generations to come. Harstad, L. P. Jensen, J. Moldstad, and Holden Olsen had all graduated from Concordia. Ties were strong. At Pieper's fortieth anniversary of ordination in 1925, a representative from the little synod was asked to speak. Upon his death six years later, the ELS held a special memorial service in his honor. Moldstad wrote, regarding Pieper's view of the little synod: "The very fact that our Synod has become so small and so insignificant in the eyes of the world seemed to make it more dear to his heart. It was as the love of a father toward his child."⁴⁹ When the ELS began its own seminary in 1945, notes from Pieper were used in dogmatics, and the English translation became the primary text when published in 1951.

Opponents of the FC's doctrine had expected a greater fight from the Minority. Weeks after the Merger an advocate of *intuitu fidei* wrote to 79-year-old F. A. Schmidt expressing surprise at their acceptance. He anticipated they would explain their reasoning since it was so contrary to their previous stance, which never really happened.⁵⁰ Having posed such a threat to the Merger for nearly a decade, they had faded into oblivion. The opposition was puzzled ... glad ... but puzzled.

Though little attention would be paid to the remnant due to their size, NLCA officers dissuaded congregations from joining them, advising the deposing of any defecting shepherds. Accusations were

⁴⁹ *Synod Report* (Evangelical Lutheran Synod) 1931: 142.

⁵⁰ Torald Teigen, 8.

hurled at remnant pastors, often referred to as a “bunch of Pharisees.” G. Lillegard wrote: “Lawsuits, petty persecution, ridicule and gossip have been the stock in trade of that Church against the Synod.”⁵¹ In April 1919, the ELS president and vice president had to testify in a District Court in Iowa over a property dispute. NLCA Prof. O. H. Hove referred to the little synod as “a group which can justify its separate existence only by emphasizing what it considers the faults of the ELC.” He charged that they claim an “infallibility in interpretation.”⁵² Battles were fought over the use of the name “Norwegian Synod.” Stub commented that this “tiny little obstructionist church body ... has no right to exist.”⁵³ However, C. K. Preus appears to have at least felt some continued connection to the remnant. Upon his death Moldstad would write, “He was much interested in our little church body, and heartily sympathized with us in our work.”⁵⁴ One UNLC theologian expressed admiration for the integrity of the small group of pastors even though he opposed their position.

For the shepherds who hoped to reorganize their old synod, many had to convince their sheep to now come along. Some churches lost members, but the majority stayed with their shepherds, having been well instructed in the doctrinal issues.⁵⁵ Synod officers they elected would be only temporary until their congregations could give final approval. At the hotel, they had decided to establish a publication to unify and attract others. They wanted to waste no time. In April of the following year, they posted this announcement: “Pastors and members of congregations who desire to continue in the old doctrine and practice of the Norwegian Synod will, God willing, hold their annual meeting in the Lime Creek congregation, Pastor Henry Ingebritson’s charge, June 14 and following days.”⁵⁴ The pastor of Northwood, Iowa, Rev. O. T. Lee, the acting treasurer, died nine months after the Aberdeen meeting.

We Are Still Here

The remnant spoke of preserving and restoring the old. Their original statement of protest penned by Harstad and filed at the Merger convention had stated,

⁵¹ Gernander, 27.

⁵² O. Hove, review of *Faith of Our Fathers*, by George O. Lillegard.

⁵³ Gernander.

⁵⁴ T. Teigen, *The Trumpet Call to Freedom*, ELS Synod Report 1968: 27.

⁵⁵ Rev. G. Gullixson of Chicago patiently met with all his members during 1918 to explain why they should join. Only two families left with the Merger.

1. We cannot for conscience's sake join the new church body on the present basis.
2. We continue to stand on the old confession *and organization* [emphasis added], which we as Christians have the liberty to defend and under which we may work from now on as heretofore.

They wished to be seen as the true heirs of the NS, rather than defectors from the Merger. Efforts were made to retain as much as possible of the structure, name and characteristics of their beloved synod, reflected in their title: The Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church⁵⁶—as if to say, “We are still here. We have never left.” When thirteen pastors and about 200 lay people gathered at Lime Creek for their first meeting in June of 1918, they unanimously resolved to “continue the work of the Synod on the old basis and according to the old principles.” The temporary officers were re-elected, with Rev. A. J. Torgerson of Northwood, Iowa, replacing the sainted Rev. Lee.

Due to the *Babel Proclamation*, they walked to a nearby Minnesota farm to work out important wording in their primary language. During WWI, a strong anti-German sentiment was present in the country. Some LCMS parochial schools closed their doors, being charged with raising “Kaiser’s Kids.” Despite U.S. Pres. Woodrow Wilson’s warning against racially charged actions, one lone governor, newly elected Gov. W. Harding of Iowa, issued the *Babel Proclamation*. Germans were the largest immigrant group in his state and had largely voted him into office, but he was fearful they would undermine the U.S. war effort due to their political power. He decreed, “Only English was legal in private or public schools, in public conversations, on trains, over the telephone, at all meetings and at all religious services.” In November 1918, in the town of Lowell, Iowa, a Reformed pastor of German descent was forced to march on Armistice Day carrying a U.S. flag. He was placed on top of a coffin painted with the words, “Kaiser is now the ruler of Hell.” The crowd ran him out of town for disobeying the governor’s decree.⁵⁷ Had similar feelings possibly fueled the anti-LCMS mood leading to the Merger? Would racial fears now impact how some Norwegians viewed

⁵⁶ N. A. Madson told his seminary students that the name, “The Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church,” was proposed by J. A. Moldstad. It was approved by the group, but people really didn’t care for it, prompting a name change to “The Evangelical Lutheran Synod” in 1957.

⁵⁷ Steven J. Frese, “Divided By a Common Language: The Babel Proclamation and Its Influence in Iowa History,” *The History Teacher* 39, no. 1 (November 2005), 59.

this remnant, who aligned with their Germanic friends in the LCMS and WELS?

The Second Wave

Fueled by a desire to support U.S. soldiers and sailors during the war, in 1917 a National Lutheran Council was formed by eight Lutheran church bodies. One year later the NLCA joined this council, establishing closer relations with the more liberal elements of eastern Lutheranism. H. G. Stub was chosen as the first president of the council.⁵⁸ This marked the course for future unionism, and caused further agitation among former Minority men. Dr. Sigurd C. Ylvisaker reconsidered his allegiance. Influenced by his father's battles, the election controversy had much to do with Sigurd's upbringing and the molding of his theology. Pres. C. K. Preus had been grooming him to be his successor at Luther. (Thirty years later, this relationship between Preus and Ylvisaker would bring two of Preus's grandsons to Bethany's campus.) Ylvisaker wrote to his brother six months after the convention:

I am proposing to you that we get out. ... It is my serious intention to take steps soon after Christmas to sever my connections. ... To remain longer than this year, I feel, is going to be positively harmful to my own Christianity.⁵⁹

Former NS men attended conferences with Hauge and United Church clergy. The new ministerium had promised continued study of election, but those promises evaporated. It rarely came up again. The NS men realized predestination was not the only difference. Laxity of doctrine was being exposed in other areas of theology. The NS's confessionalism shed a light on the theological weakness in the other clergy. Madson and J. Petersen wrestled with this for years. H. M. Tjernagel could not take it. In 1916 he accepted a call to a Missouri Synod congregation and joined the reorganized synod in 1923. Others resigned their calls for conscience sake, losing their congregational support, such as L. P. Jensen, C. N. Peterson, and J. Hendricks.

Defectors were finding each other and strong bonds were developing. Nearly all remnant pastors had attended Luther College during their formative years. Twenty-one of the earliest ELS pastors had attended Luther over a nineteen-year span. Congregations and groups started to come to them in small waves. Members in Lake Mills, Iowa,

⁵⁸ G. Fry, 242.

⁵⁹ P. Harstad.

formed a new congregation in 1918. Three years later, they purchased their former sanctuary under the shepherding of T. A. Torgerson. In May of 1919, remnant supporters at Parkland of Tacoma, Washington, watched half of their congregation split away and form a new Merger congregation. In 1920, O. M. Gullerud, along with "35 families and nineteen single persons" withdrew from the church in Santiago, Minnesota, and started Our Saviors Lutheran in rural Princeton, meeting in a barn. Earliest minutes specify that "the whole Book of Concord is accepted as the congregation's confessional writing." A school was soon started. Center Lutheran Church, in Winnebago County, Iowa, broke away from North Prairie Lutheran Church. Scarville Lutheran was started by a group who left Immanuel, served by Emil Hansen, who had resigned his call. In Northwood, Iowa, the parish was dissolved, and a small group reorganized in 1920 to join the little synod. In Forest City, Iowa, the congregation lost their property due to the Merger, but were able to purchase it upon joining the ELS in 1921.

In the early 1920s, a deacon in northern Wisconsin wrote to a remnant pastor requesting advice on convincing his congregation to break with the NLCA. He received six lengthy letters. First Lutheran Church of Suttons Bay, Michigan, regretted joining the Merger, and by 1922 had pulled out. The church in Somber, Iowa, lost their building due to the Merger and held services in a schoolhouse. New congregations organized at both Amherst Junction (1922) and Manitowoc, Wisconsin, by families escaping the Merger. A small group in Mayville, North Dakota, left their church in 1923 to start First American Lutheran seeking old NS fellowship. In 1924, Boston Norwegian Lutheran Church entered the little synod. Two years later the churches in Fertile and Ulen, Minnesota, had to reorganize due to splits in Merger churches.

Others took a bit longer to act. At local conferences, Petersen and Madson commiserated and finally talked each other into joining the little synod. A few families left with Madson, including some from the Gullixson family. Concordia, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, was started in 1928 by families removing their membership from Merger churches. In 1937, families from three churches near Tracy, Minnesota, regretted going with the Merger, and gathered together to start Zion Lutheran. As late as 1944, a group in Calmar, Iowa, would not concede to joining the ELC and started Trinity Lutheran Church. St. Paul's and Immanuel of Lengby, Minnesota, once split by the Merger in 1917, reunited decades

later.⁶⁰ Dau and Pieper were right. Others would look for a familiar place to land.

However, very few of the congregations that came together were of any great size. After ten years there were 45 congregations, although only 22 had more than 100 souls. There were an additional 25 congregations and preaching stations that were unofficially associated with the synod. Many were in the process of rebuilding, having lost church and parsonage.

In the first decade, no statistics were published in the *Synod Report*. Some believe this was intentional so NLCA pastors would not belittle them.⁶¹ Certain splinter groups were too small for the little synod to serve. In most cases they joined LCMS and WELS congregations.⁶² Concerned that many ELS parishes could not support them, a few second-generation pastors left for the LCMS.

Early ELS members were galvanized in their appreciation for their little church body. Three months after the synod reorganized in 1918, the Fairview congregation dedicated their new church building in north Minneapolis. A large group of synod pastors traveled great distances—mostly by free train fare—to celebrate with them.⁶³ A fresh start often sparks new enthusiasm toward the work of God's Kingdom. There was great zeal to reach the lost. Not content to find shelter in the bunker of doctrinal integrity, they left the fortress to carry out the Great Commission. Retrieving disgruntled Lutherans who already confessed the Gospel was not to be considered mission work. They looked for ways to reach souls who had not heard the blessed truth about Christ. Lillegard returned to his work in China with synod support. Anena Christensen was sent to India, having left the NLCA. Tjernagel brought the Gospel to Native Americans in Wisconsin. C. U. Faye had been a NS missionary in South Africa, having left the NLCA in 1922. The women of Fairview in Minneapolis planted seeds for a daughter congregation, Emmaus Lutheran. Through the SC the synod supported mission work among African-Americans in the south—many still reeling from the torments of slavery. This mission-mindedness was an appealing characteristic for others seeking a new home.

⁶⁰ Iver Johnson, *After 100 Years: A Pictorial History* (Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphics Publishing Co., 1953).

⁶¹ J. Moldstad, *The History of Bethany Lutheran College*, 1–2.

⁶² Aaberg, 87.

⁶³ Gullixson (Chicago), Hansen (Iowa), Harstad (Washington), Hendrix (Minneapolis), Lillegard (Chicago), Moldstad (Chicago), Nesseth (N. Minnesota), Olsen (Mankato), Torgerson (Iowa), and C. N. Petersen (Minneapolis).

The little synod also sought to establish its corporate fellowship, officially rejoining the SC in 1920. The WELS and LCMS brethren became very caring “big brothers.” On SC boards and committees, ELS men were given equal representation at the table, including *The Lutheran Hymnal* committee. The smaller synod was lacking in so many areas with such limited resources. One cannot overstate the tremendous value of WELS and LCMS friends during these formative years.

Our Own Luther

A desire for their own college began early. A committee on higher education was formed at the second synod meeting. Dr. S. C. Ylvisaker would later express gratitude for advice given by Dr. Pieper and Dr. Pfotenhauer that the “Synod could not properly perform its mission without a higher institution of its own.”⁶⁴ In the early years, Concordia College in St. Paul (LCMS) functioned as the synod’s college, where Ylvisaker was the lone synod faculty representative. Teacher candidates would attend DMLC in New Ulm. Typically 20–35 students from the synod attended these two institutions. It was difficult to fund these salaries, so when the possible purchasing of Bethany College came to the convention floor some suggested it was “tempting God.”

In 1920 Pres. Harstad advocated joining the Bethany Ladies’ College Association. The synod felt the urgency, but financially considered it out of reach. Due to the insights and determination of certain pastors that dream would become a reality. Since the synod had declined the purchase, an association of ELS members would buy it on their own, at great sacrifice. A collection was taken in 1925. Pastors gathered commitments from their members.⁶⁵ Some secured loans they would pay back for the rest of their lives. The original plan of finding fifty donors was exceeded with seventy-four pledging support.⁶⁶ Having purchased the college on June 1, 1926, the association began running the school in September with an enrollment of thirty students. The synod finally resolved to purchase the college from the association the next year by a 59% majority, following an urgent appeal from Pres. C. Anderson. The final payment was made in August of 1944. They modeled their new

⁶⁴ S. C. Ylvisaker, “Our Twentieth Anniversary,” *The Lutheran Sentinel* 30, no. 18 (September 27, 1947), 280.

⁶⁵ When Rev. J. B. Unseth saw a farmer writing out a \$100 check, he asked him to add another zero. The man obliged. N. A. Madson, new at his call in Princeton, sought pledges and thirteen families committed \$2,300. One family pledged \$100 in the name of five-year-old Juul Madson.

⁶⁶ Moldstad, 17.

college after Luther of Decorah. By 1953, 1,715 students had attended Bethany in twenty-five years of synod ownership. It still has the greatest percentage representation of SC students among all colleges.

The War's Legacy

How did this small synod survive, when many others have not? Despite such a limited pool of clergy, God always provided the talent needed at crucial moments in ELS history: Harstad, Ylvisaker, Madson, Lillegard, B. W. Teigen, R. Honsey, M. Tweit ... the list goes on. The timing of the purchase of Bethany College also came at a crucial juncture. Strong fraternal support from the WELS and LCMS has proven to be invaluable, both on the synodical level and in local congregations. The pastors of the ELS fought the urge to become a "one-issue" church body. None of the titles of the synod essays from 1919–1924 dealt with the subject of election. They remained theologically balanced. The clergy also developed a healthy questioning of synod leaders, which prompted a gentleman's agreement to limit terms in office. Power and influence was not to become concentrated in just a few men.

Relations with Missouri were soon tested. When the LCMS entered into negotiations with known liberal elements of Lutheranism by 1935, it prompted sharp warnings from the little synod in only its seventeenth year of existence. This closeness with Missouri would later cause some of their disgruntled shepherds and sheep to seek out the ELS—men like Arthur Schultz, Elmer Bonnek and Glenn Reichwald. While attending Concordia Seminary, Rev. A. V. Kuster became friends with ELS second-generation seminarians, such as B. W. Teigen, W. Gullixson, M. Tweit, and C. Hansen causing him to migrate into their synod. A steady trickle of men from Missouri through the decades has provided a renewed doctrinal fiber. The eclectic mix of pastors from WELS, LCMS, ELCA, and other Lutheran synods into the ELS has created a unique clergy roster. By the synod's fiftieth anniversary in 1968, the list of fifty-one pastors included graduates from the following seminaries: Bethany—22; Concordia or Springfield—22; Thiensville (Mequon)—6; and Luther, Minneapolis—1. Only 35% of present-day ELS pastors grew up in the synod as children. The smaller size is often a negative, but can also have its advantages. Annual conventions and general pastoral conferences have allowed ELS clergy to stay more engaged with matters of doctrine and synod work than in larger church bodies.

The Merger fallout had other rippling effects. The first dean of the seminary, N. A. Madson, having lived through the strife, saw the great

significance of the doctrine of church fellowship. Never again would he be so patient with false teachers. This was deeply impressed on the pastors trained under him starting in 1946. Students heard about the doctrine of fellowship nearly every day in his lectures. Battle scars from the election controversy caused him to join the CLC in 1960. Throughout the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s synod periodicals regularly included articles by Tjernagel, Ylvisaker, Lillegard, Madson and others addressing the dangers of unionism. It is the primary difference that still separates ELS clergy from the more conservative element in the LCMS. The deep connections with the LCMS made the fellowship break so difficult in 1955. Many pastors had family connections and ties to Missouri. In the years prior to the split, there was great tension on the Synod Convention floor. So much good had been accomplished through the SC fellowship that it was hard to experience such a sad division—yet one that became necessary.

Conclusion

It is very common for soldiers who have endured combat to feel tremendous closeness with those who were by their side in such trying times. Life-long friendships forged in battle can become even more intense than family ties. For the early men and women who reorganized their synod in 1918 the bonds they developed meant more to them than blood-relations. What great blessings we have been given by their steadfastness! Our Lord instructs us, “For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required” (Luke 12:48). The election battles helped to shape and impact the very DNA of the church body they formed. It has been said, “The confessor serves future generations.” The Evangelical Lutheran Synod is a living, breathing example of this truth.

“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines” (Hebrews 13:7–9). [LSQ](#)

Appendix: Lessons from our Forefathers

1) During controversy, be able to properly state the other side's position to their liking before proceeding (S. C. Ylvisaker, *Grace for Grace: Brief History of the Norwegian Synod* [Mankato: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 2010], 192, re: F. A. Schmidt).

2) Do not simply depend on others to do your theology (C. Anderson, *Underlying Causes*).

3) Avoid emotional, fanatical responses to issues (Ylvisaker, *Grace for Grace*, 167).

4) Do not fire off charges before a deep study. Do not be too quick to make public accusations.

5) Do not assume that the position of your church body is correct simply because it is from your church body—avoid “Synoditis.” The best way to lose the truth is to assume you already possess it.

6) Understand the need for antithetical statements to defend the truth (Ylvisaker, *Grace for Grace*, 193).

7) Avoid the temptation to make difficult doctrine more “rational.” Confessors are willing to live with the paradox (FC SD XI.25–26, in Tappert, 620).

8) Be precise with wording when it comes to doctrinal statements (Ylvisaker, *Grace for Grace*, 195).

9) Desire for unionism at all costs—dangerous (Ylvisaker, *Grace for Grace*).

10) Learn that false doctrine will be willing to tolerate the truth in its midst if it can have equal standing (Ylvisaker, *Grace for Grace*, 199).

11) Be willing to put up with scorn, even from former brethren.

12) Swallow your pride. Being willing to renounce a position you yourself once held if it is wrong.

13) Go back to the wells of Scripture and the Confessions. How firm a foundation is laid for your faith in His excellent Word. Study FC XI often. It is why our synod exists today.

14) Don't fall into the trap of seeing the confessions of the church only as historical documents.

An American Synod: A History of the ELS as a Post-Ethnic Body

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LSQ Vol. 59, Nos. 2 & 3 (June & September 2019)

“... and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

WHEN HEARING OF MY ASSIGNED TOPIC, INEVITABLY the remark has come: “Oh, so you’re going to talk about how the ELS began to reach out to the Germans!”

Whether *pa Norsk, auf Deutsch*, in Swahili, or whatever, all souls of every ethnicity need to hear and believe the only gospel that saves. Concerning the precious and exclusive name “Jesus of Nazareth,” the Apostle Peter boldly proclaimed, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12, NIV84).

In the entirety of our world’s history, God’s plan always has been to reach all nations with his Word of Salvation. The *protoevangelium* of Genesis 3:15 is woven like a golden thread, tying together the pages of Holy Writ with the exclusive and yet inclusive promise of a Savior for sinners. It is to be reiterated and reverberated until the end of time. God’s work of redemption through the coming of his Son was, and is, intended for Jew and Gentle alike (see Genesis 12:3; Psalm 72:17; Isaiah 42:4; Isaiah 49:6; Zechariah 9:10; Matthew 28:19–20; and Romans 10:11–12). The multi-language experience at Pentecost and the grand description of the gathering of all the saints at the last day underscore the universal range of our Lord’s Great Commission. We read in Revelation 8:9: “After this, I looked and there before me was a great

multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.”

While the message is intended for all, and even though Christ made full atonement for the sins of all (1 John 2:2), not all believe and are saved. Some hear but refuse to believe. Others perish because they do not even hear the gospel message. This is why every Christian and certainly every organized body of believers—including our beloved ELS—fervently desires to reach people of every nation and language with the good news of Christ. The Holy Spirit has promised to work faith in no other way than through the use of Word and Sacrament (Romans 10:17).

In his commentary on Galatians, Luther stated:

I know I have been accepted and that I have the Holy Spirit, not on account of my worthiness or virtue but on account of Christ, who subjected himself to the Law on our account and took away the sins of the world. I enjoy hearing, reading, singing, and writing about Him. There is nothing I want more than to make His Gospel known to the world and to convert many people.¹

Pre-1918 Interests

At the 1872 convention of the old Norwegian Synod² the decision was made to join the newly formed (same year) Synodical Conference. As the synod took this action, it provided this reasoning:

It must, of course be our aim as an orthodox body to preserve and spread our Lutheran teaching, which aim we can advance in the surest and best way when we do not isolate ourselves but try to cooperate with brethren in the faith of other nationalities, whereby we also will be better prepared for the time when the transition to English takes place among our people.³

¹ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, Helmut Lehmann, and Christopher Brown (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia Publishing House and Fortress Publishing House, 1955–), 26:379.

² The Norwegian Synod was established on October 5, 1853, near Beloit, Wisconsin.

³ G. M. Orvick, *Our Great Heritage: A Popular History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod* (n.p.: n.p., 1968), 23.

In the early years of the Synodical Conference⁴ each member church devoted much time and effort—as expected—to organizing local congregations respectively as German, Norwegian, or Slovak in the continually expanding American migration. While efforts to reach other cultures with the gospel did not consume as much of the attention as it did after the turn of the century, the Synodical Conference nevertheless made some significant efforts.

In 1877 a “foreign” mission was begun among Afro-Americans in the South. Armin Schuetze notes involvement by the Norwegian Lutherans in this endeavor: “The Norwegians had contributed \$1,665, but since they remained in fellowship after their withdrawal [from the Synodical Conference in 1883], their congregations continued to support the Conference’s mission work.”⁵ One of the early missionaries to the blacks, sent by the Synodical Conference, was N. J. Bakke. He was a student from Norway who, upon finishing seminary training at St. Louis in 1880, went to New Orleans and then eleven years later established Immanuel Lutheran College at Greensboro, North Carolina. Bakke served as its first president. Another noteworthy venture in the South, in which Bakke also was very much involved, was that of providing full support for a black private grade school in Wilcox County, Alabama, run by a young teacher named Rosa Young. She had written a letter to the well-known black leader and educator, Booker T. Washington, seeking assistance. He then directed her to the leaders of the Synodical Conference, mentioning that “they were doing more for the colored race than any other denomination he knew of. He liked them because of the religious training which they were giving the colored people.”⁶

We should cite another effort at mission work among “other cultures.” This was done through a special school operated by the Norwegian Synod at Wittenberg, Wisconsin, in 1885. The synod ran an orphanage for Winnebago Indian children, which was one of the few Lutheran missions among Indians in America.

⁴ The synod stayed with the Synodical Conference until the controversy over the doctrine of election broke out. The Norwegian Synod withdrew from the conference in 1883, not because of doctrinal difference but because it feared that the alignment with the German-speaking bodies would complicate matters and make a settlement among the Norwegian Lutherans more challenging. In 1920 our synod, following its reorganization, rejoined the conference.

⁵ Armin W. Schuetze, *The Synodical Conference: Ecumenical Endeavor* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000), 129.

⁶ Schuetze, *Synodical Conference*, 141.

In 1898, the Norwegian Synod wrestled with its decision to move forward with gospel work among the Eskimos in Alaska. The mission site near the town of Teller was in reality a reindeer station. The herd provided income for the mission and also gave opportunity to train boys in become reindeer herders.⁷ Our history book, *Built on the Rock*, documents this interesting comment by Missionary T. L. Brevig:

We can show our thankfulness for the fact that by God's wonderful grace we have been called out of the darkness of heathendom, and thereby placed in the church of Christ on earth, best of all in this way, that we do what we can, whenever the opportunity is given us, so that the light of the Word may be spread among heathen people who are still unfamiliar with salvation in God, and of whom there are unfortunately so many.⁸

In the year of 1912, the Norwegian Synod began missionary work in China. Rev. George O. Lillegard was called to serve this field located around Kwangchow in the central region of China. Lillegard served two stints, from 1912 to 1915, and then again under the time of the reorganized synod (and in conjunction with the Synodical Conference) from 1920 to 1927.

Post-1918 Ventures with the Synodical Conference

The reorganized synod at its second convention established two boards—one for foreign missions and another for home missions. Support for the Lillegards in the China field was run through the Missouri Synod, which operated the field, but members of the ELS “gave significant financial support to the mission. Contributions were able to care for the missionary’s salary, but were unable to cover other expenses.” C. Ferkenstad notes that the Missouri Synod was impressed by the level of giving for this project. He quotes Missouri as saying, “Quite an undertaking for a body having only 33 pastors [by the year of 1920] and supporting a professor in St. Paul! May God bless the plucky little band.”⁹

⁷ H. Larson and J. B. Madson, *Built on the Rock* (Mankato: Evangelical Lutheran Synod Book Company, 1992), 11. Rev. Brevig, besides being called by the synod as missionary, was also hired by the U. S. government to teach school at Teller. Later, the Rev. H. M. Tjernagel served the Eskimo mission.

⁸ Larson and Madson, *Built on the Rock*, 37.

⁹ Craig A. Ferkenstad, *Proclaim His Wonders: A Pictorial History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod* (Mankato: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 2017), 94.

Other early mission endeavors for the ELS should be mentioned briefly. Anena Christiansen, following a stint in Madagascar, was sent by the synod in 1926 as a missionary/teacher to Ambur, India. She worked in India for a period of thirteen years. When the Synodical Conference in 1935 started work in Nigeria, our synod saw two of its pastors go to this promising field: Rev. Paul Anderson and Rev. Gerhardt Becker. Then, too, Rev. Joseph Petersen was called in 1951 to begin work in Cornwall, England. In 1959 the ELS ended its involvement in the Cornwall mission.

H. Larson and J. B. Madson state, "The earliest efforts in the sphere of home missions were directed toward providing moral and financial support for minority congregational groups which had failed to embrace the merger or had later broken away from it."¹⁰ The year of 1926, in particular, was noteworthy for home missions. "Holy Cross congregation was organized on the east side of Madison, Wisconsin, which today is our largest congregation. Emmaus congregation was organized in north Minneapolis, and another in Holton, Michigan. Work was also begun in Simcoe, North Dakota, and Fresno, California."¹¹

We should also make mention of two churches in California (Our Savior's First Lutheran of Granada Hills and Our Redeemer's Lutheran of Canoga Park) that briefly joined the ELS in the late 1950s and had looked to be successful for growth in membership. Yet, in 1961 they left and joined the Missouri Synod when the split was occurring in the Synodical Conference. That year's *Synod Report* explains: "Both congregations had previously signified their intention of joining the Missouri Synod" (13).

Reflecting the thrust of this presentation, a significant change for the synod was made in 1957. This is the year we switched the name of our church body from "Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church" to our beloved "Evangelical Lutheran Synod." As G. M. Orvick puts it:

While the members of the synod were still proud of their heritage handed down by their Norwegian forefathers, they wanted to make certain that nothing would hinder them from preaching the Gospel to every creature, and that persons of every nationality would feel at home in our midst.... It should

¹⁰ Larson and Madson, *Built on the Rock*, 126.

¹¹ Julian G. Anderson, *Let's Look at Our Synod* (Mankato: Board of Publications Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1967), 8.

now be abundantly clear that we are an American church body made up of people of every nationality and background.¹²

Pushing Forward in the 1960s and 1970s

This year's centennial for our synod (2018) also marks the fiftieth anniversary of establishing our mission in Peru. Following years of cooperating jointly in world missions through the Synodical Conference, the ELS decided in 1968 to establish its own foreign mission in Lima. And in 1971, with twenty-three communicant members, the church in Peru officially organized itself as *Centro Christiana* (Christian Center).¹³

In 1967 the synod was providing financial assistance to twelve congregations, to the total tune of \$34,000 per year. Among those supported as new missions or assisted congregations were at the time: Central Heights, Mason City, Iowa; River Heights, East Grand Forks, Minnesota; Grace, Madison, Wisconsin; Pilgrim, Waterloo, Iowa; Concordia (Traverse City) and Faith (Petoskey) in northern Michigan; St. Timothy, Lombard, Illinois; Indian Landing, Rochester, New York; Ascension, Eau Claire, Wisconsin; and Harvard Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Interestingly, the remark was made in 1967: "Land purchase and building costs have increased tremendously in the larger towns and cities in recent years. The fact is that we must now be prepared to spend a minimum of about \$100,000 at every new mission station; and this has necessarily reduced the number of new missions we can open."¹⁴

As C. Ferkenstad notes in *Proclaim His Wonders*, in 1971 "a group of pastors and congregations withdrew from the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod for doctrinal reason and organized the Federation for Authentic Lutherans (FAL). After FAL dissolved, several congregations joined the ELS in 1975–76. These congregations are located in California, Florida, Oregon, and Wisconsin."¹⁵

¹² Orvick, *Our Great Heritage*, 40.

¹³ Note especially Ferkenstad, *Proclaim*, 119ff.

¹⁴ Anderson, *Let's Look at Our Synod*, 10. The rate of inflation shows that \$100,000 in 1967 had the same buying power as \$733,835 in 2017. By the way, the \$140,000 total budget for the ELS in 1967 is realized in today's value (2017) as \$1,027,370.

¹⁵ Ferkenstad, *Proclaim*, 169. Among congregations coming to the ELS from FAL were these: Naples, Florida; Okauchee, Wisconsin; Sutherlin, Oregon; Myrtle Creek, Oregon; Bishop, California; Escondido, California; Bell Gardens, California; Fillmore, California; Santa Rosa/Windsor, California; Ventura, California; Grace, Vero Beach, Florida, etc.

Other German heritage congregations that joined the ELS during the 1970s, and did so through correspondence with then president, Rev. George Orvick, would include: West Bend, Wisconsin (1972); San Antonio, Texas (1974); Port Orchard, Washington (1973); Mt. Vernon, Washington (1978); and Midland, Michigan (LCR background) (1979). “Much like the congregations which reorganized the ELS sixty years earlier, these congregations, along with others who have joined the synod, are very important as they bring with them a renewed ‘first-generation’ spirit of doctrinal steadfastness.”¹⁶ The biggest annual increase in churches joining the ELS came in 1976 when twelve joined.

The Period of the 1970s through the 1990s

Our Evangelical Lutheran Synod was blessed with numerical growth of congregations especially in the third-quarter span of our now hundred-year history (see Appendix). Summing up this period, the authors of *Built on the Rock* (published in 1992) described comparatively the spurt in member congregations as being “unprecedented” for the synod’s history:

Twenty-five years ago the synod had eighty-four congregations. Only five of them, six percent were outside the Midwestern states. As the 1990s began there were one hundred twenty-five congregations. Almost forty of them, about one-third, or thirty-three percent, were not in the Midwest. Some of these new congregations have been begun as missions by the synod. Others have joined it as self-supporting congregations or parishes which had been independent or members of other Lutheran church bodies. The greatest geographical expansion has been in Florida and on the West Coast, from California through Oregon and Washington.¹⁷

Mention also should be made of certain LCR-minded (Lutheran Churches of the Reformation) congregations that came to the ELS. Emmaus in Chicago, Illinois, was the location where the LCR was formed in 1963 as a break-off from the Missouri Synod. This church, served for a long time by Rev. Carl Rusch (1951–72), eventually joined the ELS in 1986 (transferred to WELS in 2003; presently, closed). In 1979 Holy Scripture, Midland, Michigan, a congregation affiliated with (but independent of) the LCR, joined our synod in 1979, the very

¹⁶ Ferkenstad, *Proclaim*, 169.

¹⁷ Larson and Madson, *Built on the Rock*, 159.

year that Rev. M. Martin died. Rev. Wilhelm Petersen conducted the meeting when the congregation was entering the ELS. The Midland church building reflects the old Georgia colonial style. Two other churches, under the guidance of Pastor Rusch in his retirement, joined our synod: Scriptural Lutheran of rural Cape Girardeau, Missouri (independent for many years, then officially joining in 1990); and Grace Lutheran in Piedmont, Missouri (officially entering the ELS in 1983).

During the Last Twenty-Five Years

Our Chilean mission observed its twenty-fifth anniversary in 2017. The work in the Santiago area began in 1992 as a result of political unrest in Peru. Our synod's Board for Foreign Missions had maintained a contingency plan to exit quickly our American missionary families living in Lima to the country of Chile in the case of a coup. This led the board to begin outreach in Santiago, and today also includes, among other areas, the city of Linares to the south. The English as a second language (ESL) program has been quite successful in directing new prospects to our established congregations. May 2017 marked the ordination of our first national pastor in Chile, the Rev. Mario Galvez. Rev. Tim Erickson and wife Ellen are scheduled to return to the United States in early 2018.

After completing two years at our Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary and then completing his colloquy, Rev. Young Ha Kim was installed as pastor of Asian Mission, Irvine, California. His Gospel outreach to the Korean population in the Los Angeles area was in conjunction with sharing a building with our synod's Faith Lutheran Church of Irvine. This lasted from 1999 to 2005 when the Board for Foreign Missions commissioned Young Ha to begin work in Seoul, South Korea. Today our efforts in Korea are geared toward a worker training program known as Seoul Theological Institute (STI), headed by our Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary graduate, Dr. Sam Choi. Our hope is that through the efforts of STI we can equip pastors to bring the saving message of Christ to many souls not only in Korea but also in the country of China.

In 2005 our synod took over a mission known as LMSI (Lutheran Mission of Salvation-India). Through funding provided by the Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation,¹⁸ we have been able to

¹⁸ The Marvin M. Schwan Charitable Foundation began making large bequests to the ELS in 1994. These gifts have greatly enabled the synod to expand mission opportunities.

assist in ministry and education efforts in the districts of Hyderabad, Rajahmundry, and Jabalpur. Over 20,000 souls are registered as members of LMSI, and the Indian church body also supports twenty orphanages.

In 2008 the ELS approved the acquisition of Thoughts of Faith, Inc. (TOF), which originally began as a radio ministry to Ukraine in 1979. Following the 2009 convention, TOF with its three separate mission fields—Latvia, Czech Republic, and Ukraine—came under the guidance and control of our synod through the newly constituted Board for World Outreach.

An important avenue for conveying God's Word to many who are of various nationalities and cultural backgrounds is our synod's flagship four-year baccalaureate institution, Bethany Lutheran College (BLC). The latest enrollment figures (2017) from BLC show that ELS students make up only 16% of the student body and those of our sister synod (WELS) comprise 41% of the 655 total students taking classes. Many enrollees in the last decade have been international students, and in some cases, have learned of Christianity for the very first time on our BLC campus.

Quo Vadis?

Each decade of our synod's century includes efforts made to share the life-giving message of Jesus with people from varied social and ethnic surroundings. Every soul of every clime and of every tribe and of every nation is precious in the sight of our Redeemer. He keeps the world going so that more and more may be brought to faith by the Holy Spirit through the efforts of Christians working individually and together in spreading the seed of God's Word (2 Peter 3:9). In 1986 Pres. G. M. Orvick reminded all of us:

We cannot live in the past or dwell too long, as it were, under the famous oak trees. There is a world out there that is perishing at a frightening pace. Souls are going to eternal perdition because they do not know Jesus Christ as their Savior and Redeemer.¹⁹

And as we are strangers and pilgrims on earth, help us by true faith and a godly life to prepare for the world to come; doing the work Thou hast given us to do while it is day; before the night cometh when no man can work.
(TLH 13)

¹⁹ Ferkenstad, *Proclaim*, 173. Comment is highlighted as the page header.

Ultimately, the Church we serve is God's, not the synod's, not our own, not the council's, etc. It is a humbling experience to see how God works, despite our bumbling. Remember Luther's sacristy prayer.

"Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth" (Psalm 46:10). [LSQ]

Year Joined ELS

Current member ELS congregations as of December 31, 2017. Over the years a number of other churches have joined the synod officially, but now are either defunct or have joined another church body.

- 1919 Lake Mills – Lake Mills, IA
- 1919 Lime Creek – Lake Mills, IA
- 1919 First Shell Rock – Northwood, IA
- 1919 Somber – Northwood, IA
- 1919 Center – Scarville, IA
- 1919 Scarville – Scarville, IA
- 1919 Our Savior's – Albert Lea, MN
- 1919 King of Grace – Golden Valley, MN (1919, Fairview; 1928, Emmaus)
- 1919 Parkland – Tacoma, WA
- 1920 Bethany – Ames, IA
- 1920 Hartland – Hartland, MN
- 1920 Mt. Olive – Trail, MN
- 1920 Western Koshkonong – Cottage Grove, WI
- 1920 Our Saviour's – Madison, WI
- 1921 Our Savior's – Princeton, MN
- 1922 Forest – Forest City, IA
- 1922 King of Grace – Waukon, IA (1922, East Paint Creek; 1924, West Paint Creek)
- 1922 Holton – Holton, MI
- 1922 First – Suttons Bay, MI
- 1922 English – Cottonwood, MN
- 1922 Our Savior's – Amherst Jct., WI
- 1923 Saude – Lawler, IA
- 1923 Jerico – New Hampton, IA
- 1924 Pinewood – Burlington, MA

- 1924 Norseland – St. Peter, MN
1925 Rock Dell – Belview, MN
1926 Calvary – Ulen, MN
1927 Holy Cross – Madison, WI
1928 Manchester – Manchester, MN
1928 Mt. Olive – Mankato, MN
1930 Immanuel – Audubon, MN
1930 Our Savior’s – Belview, MN
1930 Concordia – Eau Claire, WI
1938 River Heights – East Grand Forks, MN
1938 Zion – Tracy, MN
1940 Pinehurst – Eau Claire, WI
1942 Redeemer – New Hampton, IA
1945 Trinity – Calmar, IA
1948 Richland – Thornton, IA
1949 Zion – Thompson, IA
1951 Lakewood – Lakewood, WA
1952 Bethany – Luverne, MN
1954 Bethany – Princeton, MN
1954 Ascension – Eau Claire, WI
1956 Our Savior’s – Bagley, MN
1957 St. Timothy – Lombard, IL
1961 Grace – Madison, WI
1963 St. Paul – Lengby, MN
1965 Pilgrim – Waterloo, IA
1966 St. Paul’s – Portage, WI
1966 Newport – Wisconsin Dells, WI
1969 Faith – Hillman, MI
1971 Heritage – Apple Valley, MN
1971 Good Shepherd – Bloomer, WI
1972 Trinity – West Bend, WI
1973 Immanuel – Riceville, IA
1973 Trinity – Brewster, MA
1973 Bethany – Port Orchard, WA
1974 Redeemer – Iola, WI
1974 First Trinity – Marinette, WI
1975 Our Savior – Bishop, CA
1975 Our Savior – Naples, FL
1976 Christ the King – Bell Gardens, CA
1976 Grace – Vero Beach, FL
1976 Faith – Parkersburg, IA
1976 St. Matthew – Myrtle Creek, OR
1976 Christ – Sutherlin, OR
1976 Faith – San Antonio, TX

- 1976 Our Savior's – Elderon, WI
1976 Holy Trinity – Okauchee, WI
1976 St. Martin – Shawano, WI
1977 Norwegian Grove – Gaylord, MN
1978 St. Luke – Mt. Vernon, WA
1978 Our Redeemer – Yelm, WA
1979 Holy Scripture – Midland, MI
1980 Our Saviour – Lake Havasu City, AZ
1980 Faith – Oregon, WI
1983 Grace – Piedmont, MO
1984 St. Paul – Escondido, CA
1984 Nazareth – Trail, MN
1985 Redeemer – Scottsdale, AZ (Christ the Cornerstone)
1985 Faith – Irvine, CA
1985 Christ – Windsor, CA
1985 Our Savior – Lakeland, FL
1985 Bethany – The Dalles, OR
1986 Our Savior – Grants Pass, OR
1987 Christ – Port St. Lucie, FL
1987 Oak Park – Oklee, MN
1987 Christ – Klamath Falls, OR
1988 Peace – Jefferson City, MO
1988 Grace – Weston, OH
1989 Gloria Dei – Saginaw, MI
1989 Concordia – Hood River, OR
1990 Scriptural – Cape Girardeau, MO
1990 Saved by Grace – Gresham, OR
1991 Family of God – Fort Mohave, AZ
1992 Peace – Kissimmee, FL
1992 New Life – Sebring, FL
1993 Peace – Lakeland, FL
1994 Grace – Hobart, IN
1995 Resurrection – Winter Haven, FL
1995 Lord of Life – Holland, MI
1995 Trinity – Rogers City, MI
1995 Faith – Clara City, MN
1995 Zion – Irwin, PA
1995 Christ the King – Green Bay, WI
1996 Gloria Dei – Cold Spring, MN
1996 Abiding Word – Bowling Green, OH
1996 Messiah – Omro, WI
1997 Reformation – Hillsboro, OR
1998 Hope – West Jordan, UT
1999 Faith – Carthage, MO

- 2000 Good Shepherd – Indianola, IA
- 2002 Peace – North Mankato, MN
- 2002 Abiding Shepherd – Cottage Grove, WI
- 2003 Faith – Medford, OR
- 2005 Hope – Portage, IN
- 2006 Resurrection – North Bend, OR
- 2006 St. Katherine’s – Menomonie, WI
- 2007 St. John’s – Frankenmuth, MI
- 2007 Redeeming Grace – Rogers, MN
- 2009 Ascension – St. Helens, OR
- 2011 Hope – Farmington, MN
- 2013 Hope – Leander, TX
- 2014 Grace – Lincoln, IL
- 2016 Peace – Deshler, OH
- 2016 Divine Mercy – Hudson Oaks, TX

Messages From Peru

*James P. Olsen
Pastor Emeritus*

LSQ Vol. 59, Nos. 2 & 3 (June & September 2019)

IN 2018 ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY of our synod's mission work in Peru, South America, I wish to share messages from Peru around the theme of universal justification. The Means of Grace are the Holy Scriptures and the Sacraments, Holy Baptism and the Holy Supper. These are means because God works through them. They are of grace because God unconditionally works through them, despite the sinful nature of men and women, to create and sustain faith in their hearts in the objective fact that God declared the world of sinners forgiven and saved on account of the redemptive work of His Son, Jesus Christ.

It was to an open court, that is the entire world, that God declared His love of mankind to be universal. He continues to declare it by His Word through the preaching and teaching of pastors and missionaries. God's teaching of objective justification continues to be effective, meaning that people continue to come to faith in Christ through the power of this teaching. "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). The very words of this verse point to faith as an effect of their very own power. For the sins of the ungodly, Christ died (Romans 4:5), while we were sinners. With good reason, His love is called unconditional.

The teaching of the Gospel of justification raises up faith, not in the sinner's self-justification, but rather faith in God's justification. This is saving faith! It is saving because of its focus. Its object is Christ

Jesus. Faith's object is saving, because Christ is the Savior. He is the Savior of sinners from their sins. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but shall have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not charging them with their sins" (2 Corinthians 5:19). This is what mission is all about, a mission to save sinners. The world is full of them. It is a mission to connect them with the pure marks of the Church. These are the means which Christ has clearly indicated are the instruments which produce faith in Christ. These same means not only create saving faith, but nurture and preserve faith. Where these means are taught in their truth and purity is where the Church of Christ is found (John 8:32; Ephesians 2:19–22; Acts 4:11; Mark 16:16; 1 Corinthians 10:16; Romans 10:17). The household of faith consists of people who believe in and follow these means. A truly Christian mission cannot be planted without these means.

Therefore, it can be said truthfully that the history of missions is the story of the movement of the Gospel. It goes from relative to relative, from congregation to the creation of a new congregation, from town to town, and from country to city and back again. It can, of course, go across boundaries: leaping linguistic, ethnic, and cultural barriers, as the Book of Acts shows us. And all these things happened during the fifty year history of the movement of the Means of Grace to Peru, first to the capital city of Lima and then to another part of the country known as Ancash Region.¹

A Message From Ancash, Peru

When I began discussing the idea of writing some history of the Peru mission with Pastor Wayne Halvorson, a member of the Board of World Outreach, Latin American Division, I asked him what I should write. His reply was that I ought to write my story. When winnowing a message into meaningful and helpful content, I thought it should

¹ The word "Region" is the designation of the first-level administrative sub-division of Peru. (It has replaced the earlier name, Departamento=department.) Thus, as a U.S. citizen might say, "The State of Wisconsin is . . .", so a Peruvian may say, "The Region (accent on final syllable) of Ancash," but call it, "Ancash Region." Similarly, one would say, "Amazon Region," "Ayacucho Region," "Puno Region," etc. Several of the places where the ELS missionaries worked and where congregations are to be found today in Peru are in Ancash Region such as Chimbote, Pacllon, Chiquian, Llamac, and Pocpa. The growth of the church into other places in Ancash is given in the report by Pastor F. Convercio.

be shown that the Gospel message had indeed taken hold in Peruvian hearts.

Concerning the Teaching and Learning of Evangelism

Our Savior reminds us, “Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out.... And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries” (Ezekiel 34:12–13).

The call I accepted in 1970 to be a missionary to Peru stipulated that I should seek to begin a theological training program. I sought to do this by identifying men in the congregations with skills which could be developed so that they could in time serve as pastors. Time was needed to form churches out of which future pastors could come. So, of necessity my efforts, and those of my missionary colleagues, in the earliest years, was the planting and establishment of congregations. One of my earliest students was Fidel Convercio, whom I instructed and confirmed in 1971, in the congregation I started in his home town of Pacllon. I noticed rather early that members of the congregation often turned to him when seeking advice and answers to questions, and that he was well-respected and liked by his fellow townsmen at the young age of twenty-one.² He, along with several other people in Pacllon, made up the first class of confirmands who had studied Luther’s Small Catechism. Over the next two years or so, I instructed him from Luther’s Large Catechism, the Augsburg Confession, and J. T. Mueller’s *Christian Dogmatics*. (We also used these materials with some students in Lima after their confirmation.)

Quite often I invited Fidel to accompany me on visits to the homes of people in Pacllon to do family evangelism, and we discussed the idea of visiting towns not far from Fidel’s home town of Pacllon. He suggested Llamac (Yah-mock) and Pocpa (Poke-pa).

The missionaries, together with the Board of Missions, made a point of approaching the work in a way which was reproducible by the national church. I wanted to show Fidel an approach to evangelism which is simply face-to-face contact. I noted in my diary that we

² I encouraged questions on the part of adult confirmands. And early on, I decided to encourage discussion of the sermon after worship services. This often resulted in animated exchanges. Over time, I noticed the observations made by Fidel, not only his questions, were articulated well and spoken in a humble way and in a manner to which the others in the assembly paid attention. By listening to the citizens of the town, I learned that he was well spoken of by others. I followed this pattern of being on the look-out for other potential pastoral candidates, whom we invited into post-confirmation instruction, both in Pacllon and in Lima.

made this trip to Llamac and Pocpa, starting September 17, 1973. (My companion walked while I rode a horse, since he was pretty sure I would soon be exhausted walking at the high altitude of our trail, and I knew he was absolutely right!)

The narrative unfolds in a letter I composed over the next days written to my wife. Mary was in the U. S. awaiting the birth of our sixth child. The greater portion of the letter to her reads as follows.

This is the first missionary trip taken by Fidel.... The planning and excitement this last week reminded me of anticipation before a vacation or the hunting season.

[We were] not disappointed in Lamac, the first of the two stops we will make on this journey. Eighty-five people trudged through a drenching down-pour of rain to hear us proclaim Christ and Him crucified.³ Fidel ... presented Law and Gospel well, focusing on objective justification. I spoke on the same subject. The audience was attentive and invited us to return.

Tomorrow morning, we will analyze the day's experience, along with seeing several families in house-to-house visits, as part of Fidel's pre-seminary training.⁴

On the following day, I added to my letter:

Our trip from Llamac to our next stop, Pocpa, was uneventful.... We left Llamac, giving charge to two men there to receive and distribute materials which I will send them.... The attendance of eighty-five people at the meeting last night was encouraging.

Our hopes for a warm reception in Pocpa were dampened; however, when a man we met told us that others had tried unsuccessfully to preach the Gospel there. (Not even a letter of commendation Fidel carried to a certain Jose Sanchez helped: "No one will accept you here," said this man.)⁵

We decided to go ahead with plans to stay in the village and, if possible, hold a gathering. I had noticed the layout of the town seemed similar to towns around which haciendas (plantations) had been built. And I asked someone about this. "Yes," I was told, "This has always been a hacienda. We've all worked

³ Letter, September 16, 1973.

⁴ I believed it could be helpful to students if they could watch and hear their teacher instructing new people who'd never heard the unconditioned Gospel.

⁵ This was to be the first of multiple indications of resistance by the town. In time this intransigence melted away and a congregation was born.

for little or nothing for the master (hacendado). Generations of people have been treated like slaves, but no more. The hacendado has twenty-four hours to get out of town, by orders of government officials who have come. He's packing today and leaving tomorrow."⁶

I learned that an epidemic of pneumonia was sweeping the town. We talked with a number of people. Someone asked why we had come. Fidel answered that we would like to show a film-strip about the life of Jesus and talk to the people about a new religion, and the word spread. The president of the community came to us and offered us use of the town hall for a gathering that evening. People learned from Fidel that I was a Lutheran pastor.

The letter continues:

Forty-five people assembled in the town hall. They, who had not permitted missionaries to address them before in a public meeting, listened with full attention.

The film strip, entitled *The Life of our Lord Jesus Christ (La Vida de Nuestro Señor, Jesucristo)*, was first. I followed this with an address on objective justification, based on verses from the books of Galatians and Romans. Then, Fidel spoke in an address of about forty-five minutes. He taught in greater depth than had I on the same topic of justification of the sinner. When he finished, I realized I had been reminded by God's Law of my state as a sinner, but also by God's Gospel of my justified state as a forgiven sinner. This was a very, very good message delivered to people whom I thought may not ever have heard the Gospel. The address became memorable also because it was taught by a twenty-three-year-old who had been a believing Christian for a relatively short time, but who believed sincerely in God's justifying grace and could explain it well. The assembly gave Fidel their complete attention.

⁶ The Hacienda system was broken up under President T. Belaunde in 1969. It took time, some years, for officials of the government to complete the reform. There were many dozens of haciendas scattered throughout Peru. Thus, on this very day when we had arrived in Pocpa, four years after Belaunde's agrarian reform became law, officials of the government were present to make sure the hacendado would no longer be acting as though he owned the hacienda town of Pocpa. Title to his land was taken from him. The land was divided into farms. It is noteworthy that haciendas in many cases had become social systems of complexity. Roads, stores, and even chapels and churches had been built. (Places of business were "company stores," as we might say.)

Some in this audience did not speak Spanish well, and preferred Quechua, their tongue of “hearth, cradle, and home.” It was likely that everyone present, including children, were bi-lingual, but Fidel sensed that some among the elderly were not grasping his words fully. He approached them, and addressing three or four individually, he spoke to them in Quechua to explain justification by grace. I noticed men and women nodding and perhaps smiling in approval.

These were touching moments! This part of the night’s ministry was beyond my powers, for I only knew Spanish. Words which God had placed into the legal system of the Quechuas now were connected with the Gospel message. Law, transgression, and pardon found new significance for people’s consciences and souls because these words were now linked to the objective fact of Christ’s saving work and God’s declaration of forgiveness for Jesus’ sake.⁷

While Fidel was preaching and when the concentration was fully on his message, there was the sound of a loud thud which came from the back of the room. A twelve- or thirteen-year-old lad who had been sitting on a high bench had fallen asleep. Suddenly, he pitched forward and with arms and legs extended, landed facedown on the floor. The group erupted in laughter. After some minutes, with good humour, people turned attention again to the topic.

After the evening’s presentation, my diary of the trip records that I baptized three children. One of them, a tiny infant, had contracted pneumonia in the epidemic. I baptized the child by request of the parents, having gone to their home, following the meeting, by request of a certain Martin Gamara. About a half hour later, the little one’s soul was taken from his frail body by our heavenly Father and brought home to Him, who had from eternity imagined this child’s existence here and arranged things to be so. In part, I believe because of this event and the pneumonia epidemic parents of three other children came to me and requested baptism for their youngsters, and we arranged the baptisms for the following day.

⁷ The Quechua legal system passed down from early Inca times included words such as guilt, law, pardon, etc. I often heard Quechua being spoken on the streets of Paillon and Chiquian. Sometimes on a pastoral home visit, an elderly person would turn to me with a helpless look, and Fidel, at my side, would quickly translate what I’d said into Quechua. There are several Quechua languages or variations. Several millions of people in the Andean countries are Quechua speakers. The central Andean Quechuas are direct descendants of the Incas. Their legal system was based in part on three laws, which some claim were used as greeting words between people: Ama Sua “don’t steal”; Ama Llulla (Yu-ya), “don’t lie”; and Ama Quella (kaya) “don’t be lazy”.

On this night, the seeds of the Gospel were planted in Pocpa. A tender plant sprouted as the result. For some years, the young church was nourished by materials which came by mail and by occasional visits from missionaries and Fidel. But one day, several years later in 1991, Fidel was ordained into the holy ministry and became this congregation's pastor along with serving the congregation at Pacllon.

Concerning History of the Churches of Ancash

Each Region of Peru is sub-divided into Provinces and each of these has its capital. Chiquian (population 6,500 in 2015) is the capital city of Bolognesi Province. Within Bolognesi lie the district towns of Pacllon, Pocpa, and Llamac. Other town names designating districts will come up in the following narrative, including the larger city, Huaraz (population 127,000 in 2015), the center of Ancash government and capital city of the Region.⁸

Pacllon and Chiquian and other towns lie at an altitude of between 10,000 and 11,000 feet. Foot paths join the scattered towns which are nestled among the peaks of a compact range of mountains. These are known as the Cordillera Huayhuash, only about twenty miles in length north to south, but which have many peaks having an altitude of around 20,000 feet. The highest of these is Mt. Yerupaja (Yeh-roo-pah-hah) at 21,768 feet.

Our sister congregations of Ancash are served by pastors who arrive to do pastoral work on foot or horseback. There is vehicle travel available to the city of Huaraz. In the following narrative written by Pastor Fidel Convecio, we see history come to life in the description of the movement of the Gospel from Lima to Pacllon and on to many districts of Ancash Region. The story spans a thirty year period. Fidel's original presentation was made by request of his fellow pastors and the ELS missionaries working in Peru in 2015. Pastor Convecio began his paper with the theological and scriptural base of Christian evangelism followed by his account of the Gospel's movement.

⁸ The largest city the Region is Chimbote with well over 300,000 inhabitants. It has grown rapidly the past half century.

Evangelization and Formation of Congregations in the Sierra of Ancash⁹

The greatest and noblest charge given by Christ to His disciples of all times is that of proclaiming to the world with boldness the great love He has for the human race. Christ wants all to come to know the blessed news of this love and be saved (1 Timothy 2:4).

This was the purpose of His incarnation and sacrifice. He knew all along that man fallen in sin could not of himself re-establish a relationship with God because after the fall, all people are lost in sin (Mark 7:21–23). In the exercising of His holy ministry Christ said, “The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). And having finished the work of redemption of mankind which He planned in His unconditioned grace, He charged His disciples with this great commission: “Going through the world, preach the Gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

For this work, when failing to comprehend the love of God for us, we cannot have the proper motivation for bringing others to Christ (Romans 5:8). The love of God in regard to us is the unique force for motivating us to heed the great commission.

Thus far Pastor Convecio’s presentation of the theological base for bringing the Gospel to others.

The presenter considered appropriate the inclusion of common sense guidelines in which evangelism ought to operate. A part of this is Christian concern for the individual, whom the evangelist wishes to address.

For this sacred ministry, we need time and total dedication. Sowing the blessed Gospel in the hearts of unbelievers is not easy. For this work, we need to use the abilities God gave. For example, the farmer needs to explore where best to plant and cultivate the ground on which may be rocks, thorns, and bushes;

⁹ The Spanish title is: *Evangelismo Y Formacion De Congregaciones En La Sierra De La Region De Ancash* (“Evangelism and Formation of Congregations In The Sierra of The Ancash Region”). The translation of the paper is mine (JPO). To the Peruvian, the word “sierra” conjures up the idea of a vast mountainous land mass, consisting of about half the nation’s geographic area with the Amazon Region the other major portion. Fidel refers to the sierra of Ancash, as his homeland. The narrow coastal desert where the large cities are found makes up a small percentage of the land surface.

so also, the evangelist needs to view the circumstances appropriate for presenting the Word of God. Once we've made an appointment for study, we must prepare adequate time to carry it out.

It's important to form a friendship on a secular level. Be open to helping out in difficult situations. If we arrive (for an appointment) while the person is still working, lend a hand in order to help build confidence in you.¹⁰

After getting to know the entire family, it is time to ask if they would like to have a devotion from God's Word with you. Ask them if they know other families who may also like this. Perhaps you will find they already know someone else who knows the Gospel with whom they are friends. Perhaps then a larger gathering can be gained. Then try setting a time and day for another meeting.

It is worthy of mention that Pastor-evangelist Convercio, early in his ministry, watched for men who seemed to have potential to become church leaders and ministers. This continued on through his years of service (see note 10).

In this process we can be on the look-out for someone in one of the families who may have an aptitude for becoming a future leader whom we may instruct in the [Christian] doctrine. Give such a person, the respect which corresponds with becoming one more companion in the work. It is important that a [potential] leader be situated with his family in his own home town.¹¹

In his paper our presenter next shows the following sub-title,

The Evangelization in Ancash, Bolognesi

The pioneer evangelist of the Ancash sierra was the missionary, Jaime Olsen, citizen of the U.S.A. In 1970, he

¹⁰ These are words spoken by a pastor working in rural farming communities where his work centers in farm towns.

¹¹ Seven pastors serving now in the Amazon Region, Ancash Region, and Lima may trace their roots to Pacllon or Llamac. In addition, two men served as pastors for several years who no longer are in the ordained ministry. Furthermore, most recently we have learned in a letter from Pastor Convercio of the passing of several men who were either on course to enter the seminary or were in the seminary. A sad letter, indeed, addressing a burden for the Peruvian church which may be described as very heavy. Yet, we see in such history that God directs the church for its good, as He teaches us in Romans 8:28 and elsewhere.

made contact with two of my friends (in Lima), and when they returned at mid-year, they said to me with much enthusiasm: "We have found a good religion." A gringo pastor has told us from the Bible that salvation is a gift of God, and not by the keeping of the law of the commandments, not even by prohibiting the eating of pork or cuy, as the Adventists teach. He has promised to come to Chiquian.¹²

In April of 1971, Missionary Olsen came to Chiquian, having invited these friends (Juan Avalos and Porfirio Ibarra) to visit him there. I went with them (from Pacllon) and we studied with Olsen at his place of accommodation for two days.¹³

In 1972 I went to Lima with a friend for temporary summer work at the Club Regatas (Yacht Club) in Lima. There Pastor Olsen came to invite us to supper at his house. He then proposed we could live with him and his family during the (summer) season for three months and study doctrine each day until the time to go to work.¹⁴

In April of 1973, when Missionary Olsen came to Pacllon, we organized the congregation more formally with a Board of Directors, (Junta Directiva)... From that point on, I was charged with leadership of the group. We began to have contact with other missionaries.¹⁵

In 1976 I went with Missionary Olsen to the town of Llamac, arriving at the home of Norberto Carrera, a friend. We visited at length and he showed great interest in the Gospel. Then we agreed on my continuing to come for visits. Thus we continued to the point of forming the group with Missionary Daniel McMiller. Often we made the trip walking, without a

¹² The reference to Adventists is to Adventist churches in Bolgnesi Province, including Pacllon. The reference to "cuy" or guinea pig, commonly used as food, as well as pork, brings in the issue of the Ceremonial Law. About this I spent considerable teaching time the first two or three years.

¹³ The contact was by telegram, sent to Chiquian over wire, then hand-delivered from there to Pacllon.

¹⁴ Seasons of the coast and the sierra are reversed. Thus summer on the coast (December–April) is winter in the Andes. Cool, wet weather in the sierra winter curtails farming activity. Often then, younger men availed themselves of temporary work during the tourist season and sunny weather in Lima or other coastal cities. I did not belong to the Yacht Club but merely went there in search of these men and found them. The description Fidel gives of studying with me eventually morphed into gatherings at the San Gabriel mission house in later years and annual conferences there.

¹⁵ Lay missionary volunteers Wm. Krug and Ralph Mozach, and Pastor-missionary, Robert Moldstad in turn made visits to Pacllon in the mid-70s.

mount. The distance from Pacllon to Llamac is about thirteen kilometres (eight and half miles).

In 1978 we extended the work to the village of Pocpa with Missionary J. Olsen. We were accommodated in the home of a man we knew, Martin Gamarra, and we stayed two days. There the pastor baptized a young girl, the daughter of Felisimo Gomero. It would be some years before we returned. We received the bad news that the town had decided not to give welcome to any religion except the (Roman) Catholic.¹⁶

In 1982 I formed a friendship with Tomas Aldave in Pacllon (who now is a firm member of the church). Tomas was employed at the hacienda of Quiscapu, associated with the town of Quero. We agreed on meeting with his whole family in Quero. Then my wife and I began making regular visits to meet with them at the hacienda. Here we made contact with Ruben Aldave, the son of Tomas. The distance from Pacllon to Quero is approximately twenty-three kilometres (just over fourteen miles). Thus the mission work continued forward.

In 1987 my sons moved to Chiquian to continue their studies at the secondary level, and I had opportunity then for contact with families we knew secularly, who were not affiliated with the church: Alejos, Damian, Zubieta, and Aguirre & Velasquez. We studied every so often with them in their homes.¹⁷

In 1990 we began holding classes in the house in Chiquian which I had rented for my sons' quarters while they attended secondary school. There our brother in the faith, Oswaldo Fernandez, brought from Llamac five persons prepared for confirmation, and together we conducted the service of confirmation. Brother Fernandez, before entering the seminary, worked as manager (*mayordomo*) of the hacienda owned by the Roman Catholic congregation of Chiquian. Despite the fact that the local priest was his employer, Oswaldo identified

¹⁶ I was no longer in the country in 1978, so I could not have accompanied Fidel on this evangelism trip. I left Peru in 1976 with my family. We moved to Waterloo, Iowa, where I had accepted a call from Pilgrim Lutheran, ELS. Fidel and I had visited Pocpa together in 1971, where we first became acquainted with Martin Gamara. I think Fidel may have confused the two trips. Pastor Martin Teigen in all likelihood was the missionary who accompanied him on the 1978 trip. Eventually, resistance from Roman Catholics in the village disappeared.

¹⁷ These are family surnames. Aguirre & Velasquez is a single surname.

himself as Lutheran, and he did what he felt was necessary and right when he baptized several young people, children of the hacienda workers. It is worthy to remember the courageous work of this brother.¹⁸

In 1991 we formally organized the Pocpa congregation. We traveled to Pocpa at this time, disguised as seed potato sales people.¹⁹ By this time we had developed a friendship with the two families Ramirez and Liberato. And now the town was not so drastic in attitude toward non-catholic teaching as was the case earlier. In another visit later, I brought film strips regarding the universal flood and about the prophet Elijah to show the people. I showed these in the house of our brother in the faith, Herminio. In another visit still later, I asked the president of the community for the use of a large public room, and we invited everyone. Thus we became better known. With those whom we felt were closest to us and to our teaching, we continued forming the group.

And so in this manner, we went about matters involved in strengthening the (older) congregations at Pacllon, Llamac,

¹⁸ Commentary on hacienda ownership by the Roman Catholic churches in various towns around Peru should include the fair assessment that had treatment of workers been on the financial base of a fair wage and good all-around treatment, ownership per se was not wrong. We think of our own churches receiving ownership of farms through the generosity of members, especially in wills of inheritance. Further, we may remember the earliest pastors of our ELS, who received the "prestegard," meaning, about forty acres of land by which they could be gathering some of their resources for maintaining themselves, their wives, and children. However, in the case of Peru, it was well-known that in many cases, the Roman Catholic priests were involved in money-making. Many of these men did not have a hard life, but an affluent one. Their source of material comfort was the hacienda they managed. The land-title for which they were the signers, showed them as owners, representatives of the Roman Catholic Church. Tens of dozens of people were often employed on the haciendas which could be vast tracts of land covering hundreds, even thousands of acres.

¹⁹ For a decade long period, the Shining Path (*Sendero Luminoso*) was active in the region. This group used terrorism as a tactic in an overall strategy designed for purposes of control. Town after town was attacked. Control of Lima and the central government was the eventual goal. The number of people killed by *Sendero* is estimated by various humanitarian groups as between fifty and ninety thousand. An attack on Pacllon left several dead, including the mayor who was a member of Fidel's church. Fidel was warned by a "friendly spy" to be very careful because Sendero opposed the Christian church. During this period, he and his wife used the disguise of seed potato buyers-sellers. They travelled with several burros, each of which carried several with sacks of potatoes. The missionaries were warned by Fidel and others to stay away from the area. Missionary Tim Erickson was the first missionary to return to Ancash Region in 1999, after a twelve year hiatus.

and Pocpa. Meanwhile the (newer) group at Quero continued its formation. I must thank my wife for her constant support and good will and her parents who loaned me the use of their horses for many trips. (Fidel's in-laws had special designations of endearment for these mounts, calling them their "missionary horses!")

In 1992 I was ordained as pastor of the congregations I've mentioned. In April that year I extended my ministry to Huaraz. I traveled also to a village in the valley of Huaylas to a town named Yacu Raquina in order to evangelize the parents and relatives of Alfonso Lliuyua. He was a member of one of the congregations in Lima, located in the *barriada* known as Santa Anita, pastored by Missionary Dan McMiller. It was he (Pastor McMiller) who asked me to visit Yacu.²⁰

I went there (Yacu) carrying a letter of recommendation from Alfonso's son. We conversed in Quechua. Things appeared favorable to this man, whose name is Hipolito. We agreed I should come to bring them the Gospel monthly. On the second visit there, along with my wife, there were nineteen people gathered for worship. On another occasion, I went together with our brother Oswaldo Fernandez and Alfonso (who had come from Lima). On this occasion we also traveled to the town of Vicus to see a relative of Alfonso's. We went to the health center, where he lay gravely ill with cholera. Later, along with Pastor Daniel McMiller, we traveled many times to this zone, arriving also in a remote town named Atogh Pampa, for there lived another son of Hipolito.

A great disappointment occurred in 1992. Some families stopped coming to our gatherings in Atogh Pampa, and I began home visits, house after house, to try to determine why this happened. I learned that a Pentecostal pastor had come

²⁰ In the migration movements of rural people to the cities of the coast, especially Lima and Chimbote, people left behind in their home villages their loved ones and friends, whom they wished could be evangelized as they had been. Roger Greenwood wrote a book about evangelizing both ends of the migration "bridge," which helped alert us to these possibilities. (After reading it many years ago, I've not been able to find the book on the internet, tracking title or author.) In time we came to locate quite a number of people from Ancash who had moved to Lima and were living in the *barriadas* (shanty towns), where they squatted on the land in hopes of gaining property rights, etc. The missionaries began working both ends of the evangelization bridge connecting city and the sierra. Church services in Lima in some cases became "paisano reuniones," that is gatherings of people from the same rural area.

evangelizing, whom some in the community killed. The reason for this act, they said, was that he had insisted that they must reject religious use of an image of Christ on the cross.... The image was carried through the town at the time of religious fiestas. I learned that the wife of the man killed had come to the village herself and went about imploring with tears, making people aware of the danger they were in. They believed her and stopped coming to our services (although we had nothing to do with any of it).

At about this time, Hipolito became ill and he was brought to the house of his nephew in Huaraz. From here on I visited (him) in Huaraz, where others introduced me to additional families, whom I visited in their homes. They are Juan Evaristo, Gilberta Salas, Hugo Evaristo and Luisa Lliuya.

In 1993 I met with the other families in Huaraz; namely, Cano, Trejo, and Miranda, and we formed the group in Huaraz.

In 1998, enlarging the work, we went to the town of Carcas. We met with Alfonso Padilla, whom we had gotten to know in Chiquian, when he looked for quarters to rent for his daughter attending high school. We gave her a room and in time invited her to watch VHS videos of Bible Stories. We began studying doctrine with her and loaned her videos to show her parents (in Carcas). Subsequently we went to Carcas to visit them, and there made contact with an additional family as well, that of Alberto Palacios. Thus started the work in Carcas.

In the year 2001, the strengthening of the Huaraz congregation occurred. We rented quarters at a location for worship with economic help from the mission. This subsidy could not be continued, and we resumed our church services at the home of the family Cano. At the present time, we are gathering in the home of our brother in the faith, Areli Convercio, and his family, and with others.²¹

After meeting informally for some years, the church at Quero was organized in 2005.

Fidel writes that here, at Quero, and also at the nearby Quiscapo hacienda, were families he hadn't known previously, who became members of the congregation. These were the families Barrenechea, Martin, Ruben, and Antaurco.

²¹ Areli Convercio is Pastor Fidel's son.

Thus God blessed us to be able to include new families of Quiscapo and Quero.

In 2006 we came to the town of Roca by invitation from people we'd befriended in Chiquian. We evangelized various families there.

Then Fidel ends his pastoral conference presentation rather abruptly with these telling words: "We lack workers so that we may continue instruction with these people and support the devotion of the people." Fidel closed his paper with expressions of gratefulness that missionaries had brought the Gospel to Peru. At the bottom of the last page of this paper, Fidel wrote in longhand, these words: "This topic I presented at a pastoral conference in accord with the request of the others."

Pastor Fidel Convercio, Lima, April 11, 2015.

A Message Which Influenced a Future Pastor

Early one morning in July 1974, a lone figure might have been spotted striding out of the town of Llamac along a path among the giant peaks of the Huayhuash Mountains, heading towards Chiquian. Without looking, he was aware of the varicolored plots of alfalfa, maize, and potatoes clinging to the mountain sides in garden-sized plots, the fields of fellow townsmen. At differing times, but sometimes simultaneously, this man was a farmer, cattle buyer-seller, hacienda manager and professional mountain guide.²² Expeditions of mountain climbers and skiers came from far away places in Germany, France, Switzerland, and Norway and they contracted this man as a guide. He was one of several expert guides hired to help people scale Mt. Yerupaja and other smaller giants. This man is Oswaldo Fernandez, and on this day, he is heading for Chiquian, where he must attend to some business.

However, like Simon of Cyrene, while heading one direction, he is turned around to an entirely different destination. Not physically or visibly, of course, but spiritually, Oswaldo is soon to come close to his Savior. For on the trail, he meets a contingent of people traveling on the path from Pacllon, heading also for Chiquian. They tell him they plan to travel the next day to Lima. They say they are planning to attend a conference in Lima and that he should consider coming along with them. "What is the conference about, how many days will it last, and who is sponsoring it," he wants to know? "The missionaries who started our new church in Pacllon are hosting it," they said. And I imagine they

²² From the photo file of NASA, an image of the Huayhuash Mountain range can be viewed on-line. The towns lie invisible among these peaks, some of the highest of the Andes.

may well have given him a general idea of the main topic they would hear about and discuss: "Divine Justification of The Sinful World." "The conference is for five days," they added. Oswaldo became convinced by them and turned back towards home in Llamac to fetch clothing and food for the trip. He left the group telling them, "he'd see them on the truck in the morning."²³

Sometime in late July 1974, in Watertown, Wisconsin, my wife Mary's parents read the letter she wrote to them about the conference.

We just had an interesting week: The Ancash Congreso (conference). The missionaries hosted it at the Mission House in San Gabriel.²⁴ Sixteen adults and a few of their children came from Ancash to spend a week of studying and singing and fellowship. Fifteen were from Pacllon and one from Llamac. This fellow came along on a whim, but was converted at the congreso and is now very eager to bring the Gospel to his home town. Oswaldo Fernandez is the man's name. I hope you'll be hearing a lot more about him. The biblical instruction was on Justification (by Jim) and Christian sanctification (by Robert Moldstad). All of the Pacllon people were already members of the church, but they all said they learned so much more and were grateful for the opportunity. Vicki Miller taught parents (in a daily class) on the matter of teaching their children God's Word.

Classes were five hours each day. Oswaldo, Fidel Convercio, and others had many questions to discuss with the missionaries in the off-hours. Before the conference ended, Oswaldo began wondering aloud if the missionaries could help him by reproducing more materials which he could bring with him along home. Indeed, this occurred, and Oswaldo gathered people in Llamac, read to them, and explained what he had learned about justification by grace, etc. I sent him more materials in succeeding months. We missionaries believed it was of significance if people could witness one of their own being enthused about the Gospel and be willing and able to aid their understanding.

These events of 1974 marked for Oswaldo the beginning of a long trek along a path of study, resulting in graduating seminary. He was assigned to the congregation which he helped plant over the years as

²³ The people knew they would ride approximately ten hours in the back of an open truck, one-way, Chiquian to Lima.

²⁴ San Gabriel is a suburb of Lima.

lay leader and student-pastor. In 1996 Oswaldo became the ordained shepherd of this flock.

We may conclude that the Gospel took hold in the hearts of Peruvians in Ancash Region in several towns. The messages about situations outlined above give us a small slice of work done. There is, as Pastor Convercio indicated, much more to be done.

The same God who spoke to Israel speaks through His Word today to us and to Peruvians: "I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains.... I will feed My flock and make them lie down, says the Lord God. I will seek what was lost...." and He finds them where they are and calls them through His precious teaching of justification by grace (Ezekiel 34; Psalm 80; John 10; Romans 3).

In John 1:35–51, Christ our Lord teaches us that He will have a people that is His own through faith. Christ calls upon this people to join Him in his concern for those who don't know Him yet (Matthew 10; Luke 10:1–12; Matthew 28:18–20; Mark 16:15; 1 Peter 2:9–10). And to serve their Savior in this way, His people shall be willing. "My sheep listen to My voice; I know them and they follow Me" (John 10:27). We hear the voice of our Shepherd saying to use words like these: "As you go about your life as My sheep, share what you know about Me with others, for I want to be their shepherd, as well as yours" (Matthew 28:18–20; 1 Peter 2:9–10; John 10:27).

Objective justification is the chief teaching of the Scriptures which tell us that God, who had loved us so much that He gave His only begotten Son to be our Savior, has for the sake of Christ's substitutionary atonement declared the entire world of sinners forgiven and saved (Romans 5:17–21). This is the message Fidel and Oswaldo, and other Peruvians heard, believed, and have been sharing within the fifty year history of the Peru mission. Being justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, how may we, like our Peruvian brothers, not speak what we believe?

The above has dealt chiefly with congregation planting in one part of the Peru, while work in other areas; notably, Lima and Amazon Region was also going on. Conclusions about the work in these other areas are similar.

Summary remarks which seem appropriate follow:

1. A lot can happen in fifty years. Several congregations and six pastors were added by our Lord to His church through the congregations planted in Ancash Region, Peru. "He (our Savior, Jesus Christ),

“will clothe the priests of the new Zion with salvation, and we the saints of Zion, will rejoice” (Psalm 132:9).

2. The doctrine of the Holy Scriptures was passed from believers in one culture and country to people of another culture and country. A mother church formed a daughter church. A Lutheran synod planted a Lutheran synod.

3. The Church of Christ, the Church of true believers, which form His body on earth, was extended. The reason is because the pure marks of the church were used in planting new congregations. Grace alone, Scripture alone, and faith alone were preached by missionaries and in turn, then, by their students. Universal justification, Christian sanctification, Law and Gospel were preached as well.

Finally, because we are so deeply interested in the preservation of the Gospel in newer Lutheran congregations, it must be the case that we treat them as a mother treats her mature daughters. She listens when listening is needed. She encourages when consolation is required. She advises when asked. She warns if danger is real and near, especially if anything threatens the pure marks of the church. Above all, she loves her daughter (1 John 4:11)! [LSQ](#)

2019 Bjarne W. Teigen Reformation Lectures

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