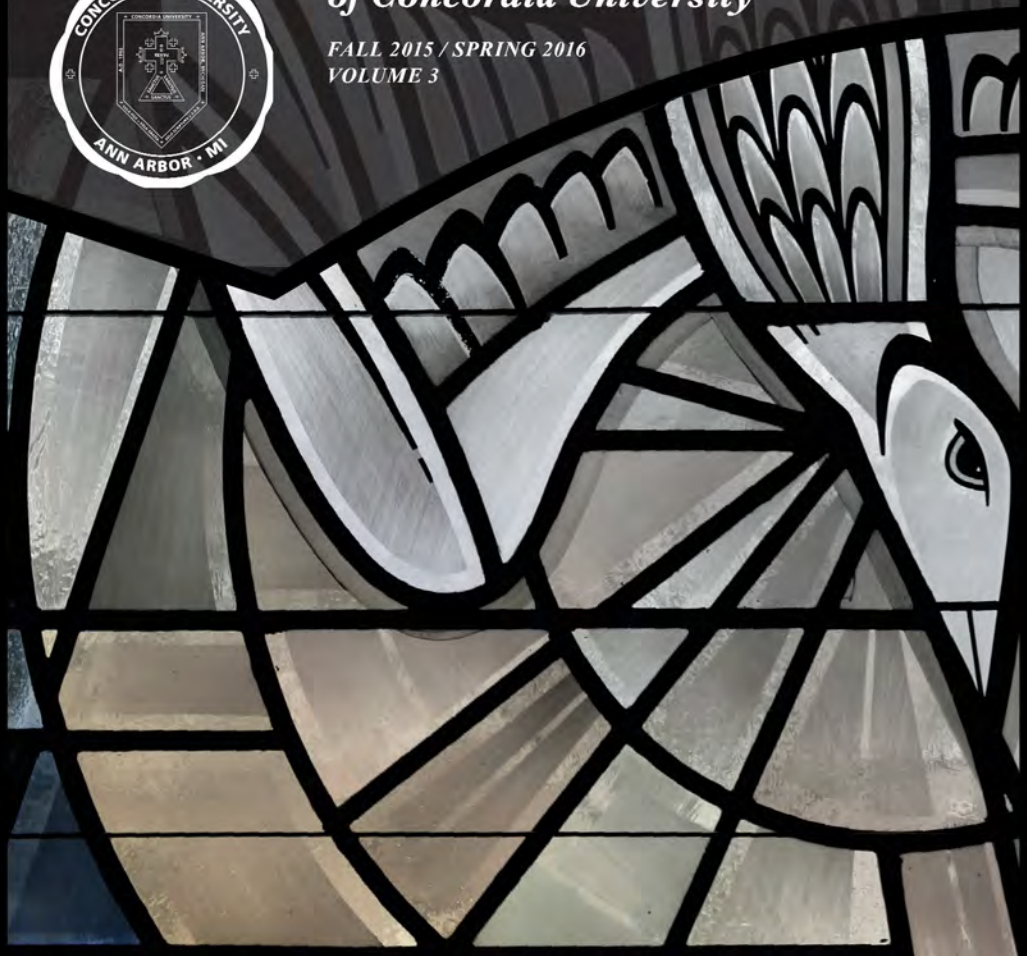




CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL

of Concordia University

FALL 2015 / SPRING 2016
VOLUME 3



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**CONCORDIA
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Editorial

Editorial Introduction

Dear Readers,

I am happy to present a combined Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 issue (volume 3) of *Concordia Theological Journal*. Articulating our uniqueness as confessional Lutherans in the academic milieu of the twenty-first century remains a key feature of our Department of Theology. While we are all active in teaching our various courses on campus, members of our department continue to do research in a variety of professional and pastoral areas of theological inquiry. Our journal is an attempt to demonstrate our interests as well as to facilitate growth among our students and pastoral colleagues in the field. In this issue, we offer several articles which have grown out of professional presentations over the past year or so. Contributions from members of our Philosophy department will remain part of this publication for the near future, even though that department is now a department distinct from our Theology department.

You will notice that several articles have a Reformation theme. This will be increasingly evident in the next issues as we approach the Quinquecentennial of the Reformation next year. The biblical insights from Nathan Jastram's study of Luther's comments on polygamy can readily serve as a conversation piece for pastors' conferences in light of the Supreme Court of the United States' decision last summer on redefining marriage. Timothy Maschke's piece provides some Reformation reflections on Lucas Cranach the Elder, an oft-neglected, yet significant contributor to the sixteenth century evangelical movement in Germany and beyond. The Reformation legacy of Law and Gospel is clearly articulated in the article by Jonathan Mumme as he reflected upon that central idea for his Westfield House colleagues in 2012. While stewardship is always an important aspect of parish life, Angus Menuge gives us a stimulating perspective from his own philosophical viewpoint. With a more focused critique, Gregory Schulz encourages our school to consider its role in the larger community of academia. Finally, we are pleased to present once again a final Senior Seminar paper from one of our recent graduates, Nicholas Gonzalez, who is now a seminarian at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. In addition to these articles, several book reviews and sermons conclude this issue.

Picking up the editorial reins at this time is a humbling endeavor. While an anticipated change in editorship was expected at the end of the last academic year, personal and professional responsibilities prevented our designated editor from completing the task, and I have been asked to help out. I will try to provide the guidance for the continuing publication of this journal in the next semesters. As our academic year draws to a close and a combined Fall 2015 / Spring 2016 volume comes off the press, it is my hope that our scholarship and our work as the church's teachers will continue to be a blessing to those who labor for Christ's kingdom.

Timothy Maschke *Editor*

**CONCORDIA
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Articles

Luther's Authentic Voice on Polygamy

Nathan R. Jastram ◀

On June 25, 2015, the United States Supreme Court legitimized a major upheaval in sexual ethics when it ruled that it is unconstitutional to ban same-sex marriage. While progressive churches rejoiced that the law of the land was finally catching up to decisions that those churches had already made, other churches that seek to follow the authority of Scripture and the traditions of their faith bemoaned the slide into immorality and warned of future moral outrages to come, such as legalized polygamy or inter-species “marriage.”

Warning against polygamy as a moral outrage resonates with many Christians. It is common today to take for granted what was first expressed as a direct Christian law at the Council of Trent: “If anyone says that it is lawful for Christians to have several wives at the same time and that this is not forbidden by any divine law, let him be anathema.”¹ Even Martin Chemnitz, who wrote a scathing review of the Council of Trent from a Lutheran perspective, agreed with the Council on this point:

Therefore Christians are not permitted to have a number of wives at one and the same time, and that not as though Christ had instituted a new and special sacrament of matrimony in the New Testament, but because God established it thus at the beginning of the creation, when He first instituted marriage. And Christ recalls and restores matrimonial matters in the New Testament to this rule of the original institution, thus abrogating the exceptions which Moses had permitted. Therefore the Anabaptists and all others who, contrary to the norm of this institution, taught by God in the beginning of the creation and afterward repeated and confirmed by Christ, attempt either to introduce or to defend polygamy in the New Testament are rightly condemned.²

It is an embarrassment for many Lutherans to learn that Luther's attitude toward polygamy was more ambiguous than Chemnitz's, and

¹ Council of Trent, Session 24, canon 2, 11 November 1563, *Doctrine on the Sacrament of Matrimony*.

² Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, trans. F. Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 731.

that the canon from the Council of Trent may have been directed, at least partially, against Luther's teaching. Though Luther was vehemently opposed to making polygamy legal in Germany, he nevertheless said, "It must not be said that it is not allowed. It is certainly allowed; Scripture does not prohibit it."³ Thus Luther agreed with the first part of the Tridentine canon that faulted the *legalization* of polygamy, but disagreed with the second part that claimed that polygamy is forbidden by divine law.

Much of what Luther wrote and said about polygamy is not included in the American edition of *Luther's Works* and thus remains hidden from English speakers. The additional twenty volumes projected for the new series of *Luther's Works* will supply some of the omitted works, but none that include his further comments about polygamy have yet been published.⁴ The original series included the following tantalizing note, hinting at the enormity of the issue that has remained largely hidden all these years:

Landgrave Philip of Hesse, a prominent evangelical prince who had been unhappily married to the daughter of Duke George of Saxony and had been resorting to a succession of prostitutes, finally decided to end his immoral conduct by marrying Margaret von der Sale. The theologian Martin Bucer interceded in his behalf with Luther and Melancthon, who reluctantly gave their approval to the proposed marriage on condition that the arrangements be kept secret. On March 4, 1540, the marriage took place. When it became widely known soon after, a scandal resulted.⁵

Julius Köstlin characterizes this scandal as "the greatest stain on the history of the Reformation, and in spite of everything that can be said in explanation and excuse it remains a stain on the life of Luther."⁶ The key document of this important scandal, the *Wittenberger Ratschlag*,

³ Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke: kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 127 vols. (Weimar: H Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1883-2009), 14:263, 11-12 (hereafter cited as *WA*, *DB*, *TR*, or *BR* according to the subseries in the edition). Compare the assertion of Melancthon in his advice to King Henry VIII: "Necessity therefore allows the king, if done according to the conscience, to have another wife, according to the rule: one must obey God rather than men.... The king has the highest authority to make laws and dispensations from them in his own kingdom, ... even if the pope issues an opinion that polygamy is prohibited by divine law" ("De Divortio Henrici VIII, 1531," *Corpus Reformatorum*, ed. Carl Gottlieb Bretschneider, Heinrich Ernst Bindseil [Halis Saxonum, 1834-], 2:527).

⁴ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann, 55 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-86), hereafter cited as *LW*; the new series is cited as *LW1* with projected subcategories and works cited according to the prospectus available at <http://therebelgod.com/Luher/ProspectusLW.pdf>.

⁵ *LW* 54:379 n 57.

⁶ *Martin Luther, sein Leben und seine Schriften*, 5th ed. (Elberfeld: R. L. Friderichs, 1903), 2:478.

“Wittenberg Counsel,” will finally be included in the new series of *Luther’s Works* as the letter “To Ph. von Hessen (Luther and Melancthon, 10 Dec 1539).”⁷

To explore Luther’s authentic voice on polygamy, *all* that Luther wrote or said about polygamy needs to be examined to see whether his approval of Philip’s bigamy was a one-time aberration or was consistent with his teaching on polygamy in general. For this study, an electronic search was conducted for all occurrences of key words in three languages in the most comprehensive collection of Luther’s writings available, the Weimar edition.⁸ The following table shows the number of hits of each search term with its wildcard.

Term	Hits
uxor*	5,079
poly*	184
monogam*	11
digam*	145
bigam*	73

Term	Hits
mulier*	4,519
zweyweib*	21
zwey weyb*	21
doppelehe*	72
πολυγαμ*	9
διγαμ*	6

These 10,140 references come from about 115 distinct works in the Weimar edition, of which 90 are not (yet) included in the American edition. The following quotations are Luther’s more direct teachings about polygamy, arranged by the year in which he made the statements.⁹ They show that, despite the additions planned in the new series of *Luther’s Works*, much of what Luther wrote and said on the subject remains hidden from English speakers.

⁷ LW1 8.153.

⁸ The searchable electronic edition is at <http://luther.chadwyck.co.uk/>.

⁹ Translations follow the LW where it exists, and other works where they are cited. My original translations have been carefully reviewed and improved by Jonathan Mumme. LW1 citations with a question mark indicate that they lie within a portion of WA from which selections are planned for publication in the new series of *Luther’s Works*. LW1 citations without a question mark indicate that they are specifically included in the plan for publication, although none of them had yet been published at the time of this article’s publication.

Quotations

1 “The Law permitted a bill of divorce, polygamy, and many other things that are a hindrance to the spirit, like riches, honors, pleasures.”

1513 “Scholae: Psalmus XI [XII],” *WA* 3:97, 4; *LW* 10:102

2 “For what could be said more simply than that Lamech took two wives? Who, nevertheless, is firmly censured [as having acted out] of lust.”

1519 “Scholia in librum Genesis,” *WA* 9:339, 32; *LW* null

3 “For my part I so greatly detest divorce that I should prefer bigamy to it.”

1520 “De Captivitate Babylonica Ecclesiae,” *WA* 6:559, 20–21; *LW* 36:105

4 “That God approved that polygamous marriage for Jacob is clear from the text, as first Leah, then Rachel gave thanks to God and went with God.”

1521 “Predigten,” *WA* 9:501, 25–26; *LWI* 1.8?

5 “Jacob was polygamous and is not criticized. Esau and Lamech were polygamous and were criticized, wherefore it is not to be judged by the work, but the Spirit discerns.”

1521 “Predigten,” *WA* 9:505, 18–26; *LWI* 1.8?

6 “Let us hear of the wives of Jacob, since they presented examples of a Christian life.”

1521 “Predigten,” *WA* 9:510, 2–3; *LWI* 1.8?

7 “Now I say that this marriage of Jacob and the two wives was not unjust, as if it took place for lust. It was in the third degree, which God had not forbidden, and it was a custom at that time, that one man might have two wives, as was said. But that he had the two maids was not of his own will. This the women did. But he allowed it only that he obtain children and bring forth the Seed that was promised to him by God. That the marriage pleased God is clear from the text, which says, ‘Leah beseeched God, Rachel also beseeched.’ These were holy women—the words that they spoke were not words of a mean spirit. They thanked God when they obtained children and entrusted them then to God. Now our Lord God also allowed Jacob to err, as all the patriarchs. He thought that Rachel would be the proper wife of his house and mother of the children, whom God had promised to him. But Leah, the lesser of the two, bears Judah, from whom Christ has come, and on whose account all this is written.”

1521 “Predigten,” *WA* 9:543, 10–23; *LW* null

8 “Lamech and Esau sin and are rebuked, for they married two wives. Jacob

had four and he was pleasing to God.”

1521 "Predigten," *WA* 9:547, 2–4; *LW* null

9 Lamech and Esau had two wives and displeased God. Jacob had four and pleased God.

1521 "Predigten," *WA* 9:561, 2 note; *LW* null

10 “They speak of the beauty of the patriarchs who had many wives, of whom all the works were complete in faith, to whom must not be preferred writings of chastity.”

1523 "Dominica Letare Euangelium Ioh. 6," *WA* 11:64, 17 note; *LW* null

11 “And yet we blind men do not see that the most holy patriarchs had not merely one, but four wives, and the priests of the Old Testament were forced to live married.”

1523 "Predigten über das erste Buch Mose," *WA* 14:113a, 8–10; *LW* null

12 “‘Lamech had two wives.’ ... Our learned men say that Lamech was the first to have been a bigamist, as the law has it, but with this fact it is not established that he did this wickedly, because in what follows we see that many more holy men, etc.”

1523 "Predigten über das erste Buch Mose," *WA* 14:171a, 12–15; *LW* null

13 “Lamech was the first bigamist or the first adulterer. Our commentators and the holy divine law rightly conclude from this that it is not permitted to have two wives, etc.”

1523 "Predigten über das erste Buch Mose," *WA* 14:171b, 28–29; *LW* null

14 “Scripture does not say that Lamech sinned by having two wives, nor that bigamy is sinful, when both are legitimate wives at the same time. We read later that even holy men had multiple wives.”

1523 "Predigten über das erste Buch Mose," *WA* 14:171c, 35–37; *LW* null

15 “Should one have multiple wives? That this takes place even in these stories stands written [here]; that one must leave uncontested, for the Holy Spirit rules here.”

1523 "Predigten über das erste Buch Mose," *WA* 14:252a, 8–10; *LW* null

16 “On multiple wives: Divine works must be sinless, therefore this is not sinful. Also Abraham is a true Christian, whose example is not bad.”

1523 "Predigten über das erste Buch Mose," *WA* 14:252c, 33–35; *LW* null

17 “[Polygamous] Abraham was a true Christian and filled with the Spirit, therefore his work must be allowed to stand, that it might be an example,

when it should be.”

1523 "Predigten über das erste Buch Mose," WA 14:252a, 10–12; LW null

18 “[Even though] I do not wish to make it [polygamy] allowed, it must not be said that it is not allowed. It is certainly allowed; Scripture does not prohibit it.”

1523 "Predigten über das erste Buch Mose," WA 14:253a, 11–12; LW null

19 “Abraham used only one additional wife. Others took a great number of wives, and yet they were true marriages.”

1523 "Predigten über das erste Buch Mose," WA 14:253c, 35–37; LW null

20 “Christ seems only to have prohibited divorce to Christians [Mt 19:9]. And Paul wants a bishop to be chosen who is the husband of one wife [ITm 3:2].”

1523 "Predigten über das erste Buch Mose," WA 14:253c, 37–38; LW null

21 “At this point, you have what Scripture calls concubines: they were not harlots, but wives; they were not truly *matres familias*; they did not bear the keys. Hagar was such a wife, who was not the primary one. They are compelled to give way to the primary [wife] like the other handmaids. And this Scripture calls concubines, which is [the conclusion] to which this text leads[, saying.] ‘He took another wife,’ and yet, ‘He gave Isaac all his goods.’”

1523 "Predigten über das erste Buch Mose," WA 14:320a, 15–19; LW null

22 “Augustine and others who extol virginity are deceived. They are offended by the fathers who had a multitude of wives. Then immediately we fall into line and believe them, as if some angel had said so. Just as in this place, also in other places, they have gone astray. I hold the matrimonial life of Abraham, even if he had had ten wives, higher than the chastity of Jerome. Therefore I say this, lest we despise the state of marriage.”

1523 "Predigten über das erste Buch Mose," WA 14:323b, 5–10; LW null

23 “This is the text, stronger than a hundred popes, and because this Scripture does not chastise Jacob, it is necessary that we allow him to remain pious and holy. God confirms the ‘error’; he gives sons and wishes that he marry two wives. It is true: the example must not be imitated, for God acts in a special way in this instance, etc.”

1523 "Predigten über das erste Buch Mose," WA 14:405d, 23 – 406d, 13; LW null

24 “Jacob married four wives.... What shall we say? If God commends him, it is necessary that we close [our] mouth and say that anything that

pleases God pleases us.... Ought we then to do the same and imitate Jacob in this? No, look at the person, not the works, if you are Jacob, do it, if not[, don't.]”

1523 "Predigten über das erste Buch Mose," *WA* 14:411a, 13 – 412a, 14; *LW* null

25 Allegorically God is married to two wives: “The two wives of one man are that double and yet single church consisting of Jews and Gentiles.”

1523 "Vorlesung über das Deuteronomium," *WA* 14:698b, 35 – 699b, 1; *LW* 9:214

26 “As for me, I truly admit that I cannot prohibit it if someone wishes to marry several wives, nor is it repugnant to the Sacred Scriptures: in truth, however, I would not want such an example introduced among Christians in the first place, among whom it is proper to abstain even from things that are allowed, in order to avoid scandal, and for the integrity of life, which everywhere Paul requires.”

1524 *BR* 3:231, 10–14; *LWI* 8.41

27 “Polygamy, however, was characteristic of this people on the basis both of the example of the patriarchs and of legal right.... Here you see, therefore, that polygamy is permitted by law.”

1525 "Vorlesung über das Deuteronomium," *WA* 14:696b, 4–24; *LW* 9:210–11

28 “God says thus: ‘I will give you a wife, that you may have enough....’ Thus he reproached David, ‘I have taken away the wives from Saul and given them into your bosom,’ etc. This occasion here makes the adulterer just like a thief.... So that we may be chaste, he gives to each a wife, prohibits nothing with a wife, nevertheless we are not chaste.”

1525 "Predigten über das 2. Buch Mose," *WA* 16:511b, 6 – 512b, 9; *LWI* 4.2

29 “Previously they had multiple wives and their own maids, because God wished to increase and multiply their population.”

1525 "Predigten über das 2. Buch Mose," *WA* 16:533b, 31–32; *LWI* 4.2

30 Responding to a question whether one may marry a sister’s daughter: “For here stands our ground and rock: What God has not forbidden, but has left free, everyone should leave free, and no one is to be obeyed who forbids what God wishes to be free, but everyone needs to fight against such a prohibition with word and deed ... Gal 2 & 5.”

1526 *BR* 4:18–22; *LW* null

31 “As to the other matter it is my honest warning and counsel that no one (especially Christians) should have more than one wife, not only because it is scandalous, and no Christian should cause scandal except in a case of

necessity but should diligently avoid it, but also because there is no word of God here on which one can rely that this is pleasing to him in regard to Christians. Heathens and Turks may do what they please. The ancient fathers had a great many wives, but they were driven to this by necessity, as Abraham and Jacob and thereafter many kings, to whom the wives of their relatives fell as an inheritance upon the death of these relatives according to the law of Moses. But it is not sufficient for a Christian to observe the work of the fathers (patriarchs). He too must have a divine word for himself that makes him certain, just as they had. For where there was no necessity or cause, the ancient fathers did not have more than one wife, as Isaac, Joseph, Moses, and many others. Therefore I cannot advise it (taking more than one wife), but must advise against it, especially for Christians, unless it were a case of high necessity, such as that the wife was leprous or otherwise taken away from her husband. With others [i.e. non-Christians] however, I know not how to shield them from this.”

1526 BR 4:140, 1–17; LWI 8.63

32 “In regard to your first question, whether someone may marry more than one wife, this is my answer: The unbelievers may do what they please, but Christian liberty should direct itself according love (charity), that is, in such a way that all is directed in the service of the neighbor, provided only that he can render such service without jeopardy and damage to his faith and conscience.... Moreover, although the ancients had many wives, Christians are not to follow their example, because there is no necessity for doing this, no improvement is obtained thereby, nor is there a special word of God that commands this practice, and because great offense and trouble may come from it. Accordingly, I do not view this as open to Christians any more. First a command would have to be given by God about such a liberty.”

1526 BR 4:141, 3 – 142, 18; LW null

33 “Here have our teachers become wise, in that they say, Lamech was the first adulterer (which is how they view bigamy, that is, to have two wives). I do not agree that this is the meaning. For the text says simply that he had two wedded-wives. Whether he was also the first, I do not know. But if he were the first that does not mean that he did wrong to have two wives. For one later reads that the same thing about many people, also holy ones.”

1527 "Predigten über das 1. Buch Mose," WA 24:144, 19–24; LW null

34 “It is necessary that divine acts are sinless, therefore in this deed there is nothing sinful. Again, Abraham was truly a Christian, whose example is not evil. To have multiple wives was not prohibited to Abraham. Again, previously kings are said to have had multiple wives; truly it might seem that this was abolished on account of the gospel [Mt 19:5; 1 Cor 7:2] ‘Each

one should have his own wife and cling to his own wife.' Naturally, as Abraham did certain external works, these should not be imitated by all. But this is not enough, it is necessary that we speak in the simplest way concerning sacred things. This is true: some things were abrogated, so that he allows [them] to be done or omitted, so long as this happens without the notion that one is sanctified and without the hope that one is justified [by so doing or omitting] – such as eating the [Easter] lamb, circumcision, etc., and almost all the examples of the patriarchs. Here Abraham added only one other wife; others had a great number of wives, and they were, nevertheless, true marriages. Thus Christ showed that only divorce is forbidden to Christians, and Paul wishes a bishop to be selected who is the husband of one wife [1Tm 3:2]. Truly, where there is no Christian thought, but some diabolical and perpetual discord, there I wish this law of divorce to be observed, which Moses spoke of on account of the hardness of heart of some, in order that women be expelled in this way, by giving a writ of divorce, that they might marry whomever else they pleased. But those who expelled them were not Christians. For a Christian would always bear the cross; he does not get separated, whether he has multiple wives as the holy patriarchs or one. I am not able to defend that it is not permitted to have multiple wives; there are many examples now, and they are not to be blamed, neither are they commanded. Because here there is no necessity, I would not counsel to introduce this custom again."

1527 "In Genesin Mosi librum sanctissimum Declamationes," *WA* 24:303a, 9 – 305a, 11; *LW* null

35 "Polygamy, which in former times was permitted to the Jews and Gentiles, cannot honestly be approved of among Christians, and cannot be attempted with a good conscience, unless it were an extreme case of necessity, as, for instance, when one of the spouses is separated from the other by leprosy or for a similar cause."

1527 *BR* 4:177, 24–26; *LW* 1:8.69

36 "They are mistaken who think that Solomon took all these wives because he was so lustful. The law imposed this necessity upon him, for it enjoined that when a husband died, the next of kin was to take his place. Accordingly, forsaken widows realized that it would be the best arrangement for them if they were among the royal wives or concubines. It was for this reason that Solomon became the husband of so many wives."

1528 "Vorlesung über das Hohelied," *WA* 31.2:726b, 31 – 727, 27; *LW* 15:245

37 "See concerning polygamy, in order that you be cautious and prudent."

1528 *BR* 4:447, 8–9; *LW* null

38 “Jews who had multiple wives would have gotten tired of them and wished that they had only one or even none. But they were forced [Gn 15:5; 22:17; 28:14] to have multiple wives by the necessity of the promise and of families.”

1530 *TR* 1:589, 18–20; *LW* null

39 “The holy patriarchs married close relations and multiple wives.”

1530 “Tischreden,” *WA* 48:698, 24–27; *LW* null

40 “Before I would approve of such a divorce I would rather permit the King [Henry VIII] to marry still another woman and to have, according to the examples of the patriarchs and kings, two women or queens at the same time.”

1531 *BR* 6:179, 26–29; *LW* 50:33

41 “[Martin Luther said,] ‘The time will come when a man will take more than one wife.’ The doctor’s wife responded, ‘Let the devil believe that!’ The doctor said, ‘The reason, Katy, is that a woman can bear a child only once a year while her husband can beget many.’ Katy responded, ‘Paul said that each man should have his own wife’ [1Co 7:2]. To this the doctor replied, ‘Yes, “his own wife” and not “only one wife,” for the latter isn’t what Paul wrote.’ The doctor spoke thus in jest for a long time, and finally the doctor’s wife said, ‘Before I put up with this, I’d rather go back to the convent and leave you and all our children.’”

1532 *TR* 2:105, 11–19; *LW* 31:153

42 “Although there was polygamy, the decency of those nations [Egypt and Palestine] was extraordinary.”

1535 “In Genesin Enarrationum,” *WA* 42:480, 12–13; *LW* 2:305

43 “People who are coarse and lack experience in spiritual matters see only the fact that she [Sarah] brings her maid to her husband. Because they themselves burn with lust, they do not consider the promise which gave occasion for this action; they consider only those filthy deeds of the flesh.... The godly husband and wife do not resort to these plans because they have been spurred on by lust; they succumb to temptation, both because they are concerned about offspring on account of the promise and because they are eagerly waiting for the Seed promised to Adam in Paradise. Therefore Sarah, who knows that she is both exhausted and barren, shares her plan with Abram and has her maid Hagar lie with him, in order that she may be built from her. Even though she is not in doubt concerning the promise, yet she does have doubts about the persons whom God wants to choose for this work....

Even though Sarah sees that the fulfillment of the promise is being delayed and even though she despairs—both because of her barrenness and because of her age—of being a mother, she nevertheless relinquishes the glory of motherhood in the utmost humility and is content if her maid Hagar becomes pregnant by Abraham....

Abraham's virtuousness is also outstanding. Although he had the right to take another woman, as was customary—for at that time polygamy was in vogue—yet he does this only at the urging of his wife. This was a rare example on the part of both. Abraham could have taken another woman than that Egyptian servant, one who was more distinguished, more refined, and in better circumstances; but he yields to his wife, who has her maid lie with him. Sarah herself intends to remain the mother and the mistress in the household; she herself intends to have the promised Seed—if not the natural one, still the legal one....

But this case should not be set up as a pattern, as though we were allowed to do the same things; for it is necessary to consider the circumstances. The promise of the Seed has not been made to us, as it was to Abraham; and no matter if your marriage is completely barren, there is no danger whatever from this source, even if your entire lineage should die out if God so wills. Abraham, however, not only had the promise of the Seed, but it was also an assured fact that Sarah was barren.

These circumstances do not exist in your case. Therefore this unusual action of these spouses should in no wise be adduced as a pattern, especially not in the New Testament.

For the Old Testament permitted polygamy also for the sake of children, and in Moses there is a law which states that if anyone has ravished a maid, he must keep her as his wife (Dt 22:29). But regulations concerning ceremonial or legal matters have come to an end, and Abraham's case is far different from the one which appears in Moses....

Moses states clearly that Abraham obeyed Sarah; he does not say that he was glad to do so. I for my part am completely convinced that he obeyed Sarah unwillingly; for he loved her very much, as the account shows. Yet he yielded to her reasons when she mentioned her barrenness and her old age. Therefore he does this in compliance with his wife's wishes, not as the polygamists of the Old Testament were in the habit of doing.

And Moses has reason to continue to call Sarah Abram's wife, and Abram her husband. He does so in order to show that Abram did not become an adulterer and that the earlier marriage of Sarah and Abram had not been dissolved by this new arrangement. Abram remains the chaste husband of his very chaste wife. He lies with Hagar only to prevent the promise of God from being obstructed....

And why should the Jews use Abraham's example to justify polygamy when

this practice was commanded in the Law (Dt 25:5)? For the widow of a brother who died without children had to become the wife of her deceased husband's brother, in order that the latter might bring forth offspring for him who had died.

When we reflect on this command, we commonly assent to the opinion that much license was given to sexual lust among the Jews, since polygamy was not only permitted but even commanded.

But my opinion is different, for we see the ways of nature. As soon as the law orders us to do something, we do it unwillingly and incline toward what is forbidden. Nor did polygamy lack disadvantages. We see the boundless weakness of women. They indulge their moods and are controlled by them. One is irritable and quarrelsome; another is proud. This one is unsuited to manage a household; that one is negligent in bringing up children, etc. Therefore it was a serious matter to marry the wife of a deceased brother, for the law could not be evaded under any pretext. Hence this law did not give license for lust; but it did increase trouble, toil, and worries."

1535 "In Genesin Enarrationum," *WA* 42:580, 19 – 581, 9 – 582, 18; *LW* 3:42–47

44 "But when Deuteronomy (25:5) directs a brother to raise up offspring for his dead brother, polygamy is included and is established by Moses. And this was the reason why Solomon had such a large number of wives, of whom some were certainly related to him by consanguinity or affinity; and if there was some poor little woman in that household, she joined herself to the king as her blood relative or her relative by marriage. Then they attached themselves to their cousin, and he supported a large number of such women. Nevertheless, because of this law some were undoubtedly concubines alongside the queen. Surely it was troublesome and intolerable to be burdened with so many wives or concubines for whom you do not have the slightest desire."

1535 "In Genesin Enarrationum," *WA* 44:315, 32 – 316, 2; *LW* 7:18–19

46 "Lamech was the first man who had two wives at the same time, and Jacob had four, yet they were holy ministers of God."

1537 *TR* 3:453, 3–4; *LW* 54:244

47 "This sin Moses points out clearly when he states: 'They took to wife such of them as they chose.' It is as though he were saying: 'To take a wife is nothing evil; if it is done properly, it is something good. But those men were sinning in this respect, that without discretion and contrary to the will and judgment of the fathers they married whomever they themselves wished, as many as they wished, and without distinction took married women as well as unmarried ones.'

This is a harsh statement. With it Moses indicates the great sins that they

promiscuously took two or more wives, exchanged wives, or took them away from others by force the way Herod took possession of his brother Philip's wife (Mk 6:17). This boundless dissoluteness of their lusts Moses points out and condemns."

1538 "In Genesis Enarrationum," *WA* 42:283, 11–19; *LW* 2:31–32

48 "If you want to be like Joshua and Samson, see to it also that all the circumstances impel you to change the civil administration and slay the magistrate, just as those heroes were moved by a special call. Otherwise the example has no validity....

Accordingly, this is handed down not as an example but in order that we may abstain from the example and from imitating it. We should admire but not imitate it, for there are some things which we should imitate and some things which we should admire. Hope, believe, pray, just as Leah did. But you should not marry four wives, as Jacob did. For this pertains only to Jacob and to those whom God wanted to be exempted from the rule."

1538 "Text des Genesisvorlesung," *WA* 43:653, 13–29; *LW* 5:326

49 "In his *Confessions* Augustine reports that the Manichaeans inveighed against the very saintly patriarchs with the most virulent reproaches for having many wives and children.... They do not see that it is stated very clearly in the text how the very saintly women cry out, pray, give thanks, and trust in God, likewise that God heard them, that God had regard for them and brought about a change. God, who was invoked, who heard, and who was praised and blessed, is in the midst of these accounts. Therefore they should not have regarded purity, innocence, and chastity in accordance with their own judgment as concupiscence and lustful acts befitting pimps.... Therefore they were not harlots. No, they were lawful wives given to Jacob for the purpose of procreating offspring."

1538 "Text des Genesisvorlesung," *WA* 43:666, 18–35; *LW* 5:344–45

50 "This belongs to the sacrament: when man and woman—not [man and] virgin—come together and become one flesh, that is the sacrament, and bigamy prevents nothing. It is enough that the man and woman are one body as Christ and the church. And Paul [says] to all husbands, not only those who have a [living] wife, but [also to those who have] other [wives] who are dead, "Love." [He says this] without regard for whether he has one, etc. If [his first wife is] dead, [and] he takes another, he again becomes one body with her."

1539 "Predigten," *WA* 47:677, 12–17; *LWI* 7.92

51 "This must have been a very chaste people.... This is not an example for us. Abraham had two wives."

52 "It was lawful for them to have many wives and concubines."

1539 "Handschriftliche Einträge ins Alte Testament," *DB* 3:286, 7–8; *LW* null

53 "Solomon and David were made polygamous on account of poor female relatives. But now our avaricious nobles and peasants seek it on account of their rich female kin, and thus the wretched and impoverished girls are not provided for. Therefore we prohibit these men on a political level on account of necessity; but the pope prohibits [this] on account of hypocrisy and the dispensation of money."

1539 *TR* 4:300, 34 – 301, 1; *LW* null

54 "He was saying concerning the polygamy of David, who had ten wives, [that] he was [so] oppressed with various other burdensome and troubling matters, that he scarcely would have touched a wife once a year."

1539 *TR* 4:437, 5–7; *LW* null

55 "We cannot advise that any should make a public introduction, that is, a law, that it is allowable to marry more than one wife.... But when it is said that what is right before God shall be permitted, this may be true in a measure."¹⁰

1539 "Wittenberger Ratschlag," *BR* 8:640, 22–32; *LWI* 8.153

56 "God has instituted marriage as a society between two persons alone, and not more, so nature does not become destroyed. So we have the passage, These two shall become one flesh, and thus it was at first. But Lamech introduced the example of having more than one wife, which is spoken of concerning him in the Scriptures as bringing in something against the first rule. Accordingly it became a custom with the unbelieving, until Abraham and his descendants took more wives; and so it came to be allowed in the law of Moses, Deut. 21[:15], If a man have two wives. For God allowed something to weak nature.

But inasmuch as at the beginning and conformably to the creation, a man was not to have more than one wife, so such a law is praiseworthy and therefore to be received in the Church; and no other law is to be made against it. For Christ repeats this passage, They two shall be one flesh, Matt. 19, and reminds us of how it was before the time of human weakness. But that in a certain case a dispensation might be given, as for instance in the case of a captive in a strange land, who has become free and brings his wife with him, or in the case of some chronic disorder such as was thought

¹⁰ John A. Faulkner, "Luther and the Bigamous Marriage of Philip of Hesse," *The American Journal of Theology* 17, no. 2 (April 1913): 206–31; here 213.

of for a time with lepers—that in such cases, with the advice of their pastor, a man might take a wife again, not to bring in a law but as counsel for his necessity, this we do not condemn. Because it is one thing to bring in a law and another to use a dispensation, this we humbly beg you to observe.”¹¹

1539 "Wittenberger Ratschlag," *BR* 8:640, 36–641, 61; *LWI* 8.153

57 “As now Your Princely Grace has finally concluded to have another wife, so we think that such is to be held secret, as is said above of a dispensation.”¹²

1539 "Wittenberger Ratschlag," *BR* 8:643, 140–41; *LWI* 8.153

58 “So far we hold this for right that what was permitted concerning marriage in the law of Moses is not forbidden by the Gospel.”¹³

1539 "Wittenberger Ratschlag," *BR* 8:643, 150–51; *LWI* 8.153

59 “Now polygamy pertained to the Jews along with writs of divorce, both of which the gospel abrogated in accordance with the first institution: ‘The two will be one flesh,’ whether inseparably glued together, or as Caesar says, ‘the individual mode of life.’ Also the perverse examples, as Lamech, Esau, David, who took another wife. For even if one is not to judge by examples but by laws, nevertheless the adding in of examples does not in any way shed light on the material to be explained, but it does illustrate and often even interpret the laws themselves.”

1540 "Dialectica," *WA* 60:154, 265–71; *LWI* 2.54

60 “Lamech is the author of polygamy, authors of a great new evil.”

1540 "Einträge in Luthers Handexemplar des Neuen Testaments," *DB* 4:318, 22–24;
LW null

61 “I have received Your Princely Grace’s letter and note therein that you are pleased with our counsel, which we would be pleased to see kept secret. However, Melanchthon has not yet written me, that Your Princely Grace [has given any] indication. But he will certainly write me, or report orally. In any case, the reason we would like the business to be left a secret is because of the example it would set, which thereafter everyone would want to follow, right down to the coarse peasants. Perhaps [there are] equally weighty or weightier reasons—be they for or against [giving indication of the marriage]—that could be brought forward, through which we might well have our hands full. Wherefore your Grace will please not only keep secrecy

¹¹ Faulkner, 213–14.

¹² Faulkner, 215–16.

¹³ Faulkner, 216.

in this matter, but also improve [your life] as you promised in regard to this matter.”

1540-04-10 BR 9:90, 4-14; LW null

62 “In answer to your question about the Landgrave’s new wedding, dear Antony, I can write nothing.... I only know that no public proofs of the nuptials have been shown me.... One must not pronounce rashly on insufficient evidence about the doings of princes.”¹⁴

1540-06-02 BR 9:123, 3 – 124, 12; LW null

63 “Most serene, high-born Elector, most gracious Lord! I have heard that Your Electoral Grace is being unjustly importuned by the court at Dresden about the matter concerning the Landgrave and would like to know what he should give such wise-guys from Meissen to understand. For what pertains to the matter, we both—I and Melanchthon—were unwilling to report to you, Your Electoral Grace (as a matter of confession), as it is clearly proper to keep things secret in confessional matters—both the matter [itself] and the counsel given about it in confession. And had the Landgrave not revealed this matter and counsel of the confessional, [all] this unpleasantness and idle talk might never [have taken place]. I still say that if the matter were brought up with me even today, I would not know what counsel to give other than what I did.... We, for our part,... humbly bade His Princely Grace that if he would not, or, as he averred before God and his conscience, could not, do otherwise, to please keep the matter secret, because such necessity drove him to it. For before the world and the imperial laws it was indefensible. This he promised to do. Accordingly, we wished as much as was possible to help cover the action before God by means of examples, such as Abraham and others. This happened and was handled confessionally, in clean fashion, so that no one can lay the guilt at our feet, as though we did this readily and gladly or with delight and joy.... Indeed, both under the papacy and later, I have received and given counsel in more matters in a confessional manner. If these were revealed, I should have to say no to them or even report the confession. Such things do not belong in the secular courts, nor are they to be revealed. God has here His very own court and must counsel the soul where no code of justice or legal arts can help.... But had I known that the Landgrave had long since been making satisfaction for his insuppressible desires, and could make satisfaction for them with others, as I have now just learned that he did with her of Eschwege,¹⁵ certainly not even an angel could have brought me to give such counsel. I was looking at his unavoidable necessity and weakness, and

¹⁴ In this letter of June 2, 1540, Luther feigns ignorance of Philip’s marriage that took place on March 4, 1540.

¹⁵ A mistress of unknown identity.

also at the peril of his conscience, which M. Bucer reported to us. Much less would I have advised that this should come to a public wedding ceremony, and with such a woman (this bit was kept from us) from whom a princess and young countess should come. This is certainly intolerable, even to the whole empire [it is] unbearable. However, I understood and hoped, that because he, out of weakness of the flesh, had to make use of commoners with sin and shame, that he would do something like take an honorable maiden, secretly keep her in a house, have her in secret marriage (even if this would have been seen before the world as illegitimate) for the great exigency of his conscience, mount her and ride her out, as indeed often takes place with great lords. In like manner I also advised certain parsons under Duke George and the bishops that they should secretly marry their cooks.... I am not ashamed of what is being reported, even if it should come out before the whole world; but for the sake of the unpleasantness which would then follow, I should prefer, if possible, to know the matter kept quiet.”

1540-06-10 *BR* 9:133, 1 – 134, 74; *LW* null

64 “As for this Macedonian business [Philip’s bigamous marriage], afflict not yourself [Melanchthon] too much respecting it; matters are now come to a pass that renders utterly futile either joy or sadness. Why should we kill ourselves?”¹⁶

1540-06-18 *BR* 9:144, 23–25; *LW* null

65 “Is it not a good plan to say that the bigamy had been discussed and should not he [Philip of Hesse] say that he had indeed debated the matter, but wasn’t finally decided? All else must be kept quiet. How would it be, if for the sake of the greater good and of the Christian Church, one would tell a good, strong lie?... And before he, Luther, would reveal the confession, which Bucer had made to him in the Landgrave’s name, and thus speak about the pious prince, whom he above all had wished to serve, he would rather say that Luther had talked like a fool, and take the blame on himself.”

1540-07-15 “First Protocol at the Eisenach Conference”;¹⁷ *LW* null

¹⁶ “When he [Melanchthon] had gone as far as Weimar, the worriment and anxiety occasioned by the threatened publication of his and Luther’s advice to the landgrave, cast him upon a bed of sickness. He saw that such a publication would not only put him and Luther in a very bad light, but was calculated to injure the cause of the Gospel. He communicated his troubles to Luther and received a letter of consolation in reply. But he broke down at any rate, and his strength failed so rapidly that death seemed imminent” (Joseph Stump, *Life of Philip Melanchthon* [Reading, PA: Pilger Publishing House, 1897], 158–59). Melanchthon recovered after Luther’s heroic prayer, in which he demanded that God heal Melanchthon for the sake of the Reformation.

¹⁷ Max Lenz, *Briefwechsel Landgraf Philipps Des Grossmüthigen von Hessen mit Bucer* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1880), 1:373. The document is not included in the Weimar edition, but Luther participated in this conference and his views shaped its conclusion.

66 “Therefore I wish (if it is possible) that the Landgrave again would go back to living in the secret ‘Yes’ and in the public ‘No,’ and simply let talk and preaching have their way, so that no one is able to help himself to having more than one wedded-wife by way of the law or example. [I wish that] he would hold his peace about everything concerning the secret counsel and the difficult situation that were discussed in confession or might come up in the future. But I wish that he would forbear the announcement. For so long as no announcement has been made that one may have two wives, but there is just loud talk for it (and this only about the single person of the Landgrave), let loud talk combat loud talk.”

1540-07-16 *BR* 9:178, 42 – 179, 50; *LW* null

67 “By God’s grace I know well to distinguish what in a crisis of the conscience before God can possibly by grace be ceded from what (outside of such a crisis situation before God) does not rightly belong in open society on earth.”

1540-07-24 *BR* 9:200, 25–28; *LWI* 8.161

68 Philip of Hesse should keep his bigamy secret and give ambiguous answers concerning the matter: “For this Your Princely Grace will not be able to obtain, that the world should take such a secret marriage of Your Princely Grace as an open [legal] marriage, even if you could present a hundred Luthers, Philip [Melanchthon]s, and others for it. For people will indeed say, ‘Luther and Philip [Melanchthon] do not have the power to establish another law against public and praiseworthy law even if they are in secret obliged to counsel otherwise for the sake of the conscience in crisis.’... Should Your Princely Grace now wish, by revealing the counsel that was given, to go out of God’s court (who yields it with grace if there be a crisis) into the court of man, so must Your Princely Grace also suffer the punishments of human law without the assistance or aid of God’s court, in which Your Princely Grace did not remain.... And why are you arguing about not wishing the gal to be taken for a whore? Already now, before the counsel is revealed, must you suffer that she be taken for a whore before the whole world, though before the three of us, that is before God, she is held to be nothing other than a wedded concubine.”

1540-07-24 *BR* 9:200, 30 – 201, 69; *LWI* 8.161

69 “It pleases me right well that Your Princely Grace has given such a reserved answer to the unnecessary and dangerous questions of the Margrave and the men of Meissen, for, as they wish to be so holy and so friendly, they should be so before others by helping quiet such loud talk, as, thank God, everyone does. The Margrave has also tried to poke around with

me, but I will answer him as I have done many others, particularly those in Dresden, perhaps more strongly. For I shall do it with good conscience, as Christ does [when he says] in the gospel, ‘The Son does not know the day,’ and as a pious father confessor, who should and must say publicly or in court that he knows nothing of what is being asked him of a secret confession. Thus what one secretly knows, one cannot know publicly. So even if it should get spoken of openly, one should not believe it. Now since Your Princely Grace does not desire to defend this matter, making a public example of it, but to make use of such grace in view of your crisis of conscience, it seems good to me that, should they come again, your Grace should be a little sharp with them.”

1540-09-17 *BR* 9:233, 4–19; *LW* null

70 “It seems to me that silence in such cases is not only a response, but also the best response. But it is not against us that Sir Justice proceeds against the law and example of public polygamy, as we also do, and not against necessity and casuistic dispensation for a single person, with which we as father confessors were dealing.”

1540-09-17 *BR* 9:240, 34–39; *LW* null

71 “When news of the bigamy of Hesse spread abroad, the doctor [Martin Luther] said with a serene countenance, ‘He’s a remarkable man. He has his [propitious] star. I think he wishes to obtain it [consent for his bigamy] through the emperor and the pope in order to gratify his desire. It’s also possible that he may defect from us as a result of this business.’”

1540 *TR* 4:625, 24 – 626, 4; *LW* 54:379

72 “Something could have been done about secret concubinage.”

1540 *TR* 4:628, 8–9; *LW* 54:381

73 “The doctor [Martin Luther] said, ‘Great is the scandal caused by our Hesse, but the restoration [of Württemberg] caused much greater offense.... Bigamy has well-known examples in the Scriptures and could have been kept secret, but to drive out the king, the emperor’s brother, from the duchy [of Württemberg] in the face of the raging of the bishops and the pope! That was a great risk.... Just be calm! It will blow over. Perhaps she [Philip’s second wife] will soon die.’”

1540 *TR* 4:634, 12–19; *LW* 54:382

74 “We have suffered greater scandals than this, but the papists excuse all their sodomous lusts by this bigamy. What can we do? If they had only followed my advice! But with the way it was done, we cannot leave the church. The scandal will be blamed on me. I believe that he [Philip] will

round up some others, who will defend what he has done. They cannot make a rule out of it; the example has no validity. We are under our magistrate and make use of our political laws according to Paul's doctrine. That they cannot take from me."

1540 *TR* 4:651, 13–21; *LW* null

75 "They [papists] kill people while we strive for life—and practice polygamy!" This he said with a pleased look on his face and not without loud laughter."

1540 *TR* 4:657, 14–15; *LW* 54:389

76 "If somebody should ask, 'Does that deed [Philip's second marriage] please you?' I would reply, 'No!' If I could change it I would. If I can't change it I'll bear it with equanimity."

1540 *TR* 4:658, 9–11; *LW* 54:390

77 "We have up to this point through so many writings shown that Moses's law does not apply to us and no longer has any legal standing. And one should observe neither the example of the history of the saints, much less of the kings, but rather God's command and their faith."

1542 "Antwort D. M. L. auff den Dialogum Hulrichi Nebulonis," *WA* 53:193a, 30–33; *LW* 1 6.22

78 "Whoever follows this idiot [writing under the pseudonym Huldereichus Neobulus] and book and thereupon takes more than one wedded-wife, and desires that it should be a righteous thing, the devil will bury him in the abyss of hell, Amen."¹⁸

1542 "Antwort D. M. L. auff den Dialogum Hulrichi Nebulonis," *WA* 53:195a, 14–196a, 1; *LW* 1 6.22

79 "The reference to the fathers of whom Moses speaks is irrelevant: Moses is dead. Granted, however, that bigamy was legal in the days of the fathers and Moses—which can never be established—still they had God's word for it that such a permission was given them. That we have not. And although it was permitted to the Jews and tolerated by God, while God Himself considered it wrong, ... it was merely a dispensation.... Now, there is a great difference between a legal right and a dispensation, or something that is tolerated or permitted. A legal right is not a dispensation, and a dispensation is not a legal right; whoever does, obtains, or holds something

¹⁸ Hastings Eells, *The Attitude of Martin Bucer toward the Bigamy of Philip of Hesse*, Yale Historical Publications, Miscellany, XII (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1924), 212.

by a dispensation does not do, obtain, or hold it by legal right."¹⁹

1542 "Antwort D. M. L. auff den Dialogum Hulrichi Nebulonis," *WA* 53:196a, 8 – 197a, 7; *LWI* 6.22

80 "What need is there why we should try to find all sorts of reasons to explain why the fathers under Moses were permitted to have many wives? God is sovereign; He may abrogate, alter, mitigate a law as He pleases, for emergency's sake or not. But it does not behoove us to imitate such instances, much less to establish them as a right. But this Tulrich [Huldreichus Neobulus] rashly declares carnal lust free, and wants to put the world back to where it was before the Flood, when they took them wives, not like the Jews by God's permission, or because of an emergency or for charity's sake towards homeless women, as Moses directs, but, as the text says, 'which they chose' (Gen. 6, 2)... That is the way nowadays to rise to the stars. In this way we have Moses and the fathers with their examples as beautiful cloaks for carnal liberty; we say with our lips that we are following the examples of the fathers, but in very deed we act contrary to them. Lord, have mercy! If the world continues, what all may we not expect to happen these times, if even now shameless fellows may print what they please."²⁰

1542 "Antwort D. M. L. auff den Dialogum Hulrichi Nebulonis," *WA* 53:199a, 11 – 200a, 14; *LWI* 6.22

81 Solomon had so many wives because he married widows as their royal "next of kin." God allowed polygamy to take care of widows and increase population.

1542 *TR* 5:180, 20 – 181, 9; *LW* null

82 David was allowed ten wives, but sinned when he lusted after Bathsheba.

1544 "Predigten," *WA* 49:527, 5–7; *LW* null

As the quotations above show, Luther's comments began from before he posted his *Ninety-five Theses* in 1517 and continued until two years before his death in 1546, with a flurry of activity around 1540 when Philip of Hesse had his bigamous marriage. Luther's advice to Philip was not simply one mistaken answer given in the heat of the moment, but represented his complex teaching on polygamy in general. He was personally and politically opposed to it, but refused to condemn it as sinful for all people in all times and places because of the example of the Old Testament patriarchs and a

¹⁹ W. H. T. Dau, *Luther Examined and Reexamined: A Review of Catholic Criticism and a Plea for Reevaluation* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1917), 233.

²⁰ Dau, 234.

lack of any scriptural *sedes doctrinae* prohibiting it.

Luther's teaching on polygamy may be a source of embarrassment to modern Lutherans, but one cannot legitimately eliminate the embarrassment by claiming that Luther had the same attitude toward polygamy as canonized in the Council of Trent and endorsed by Chemnitz. Though Luther found polygamy personally repugnant, he refused to claim scriptural authority for his personal attitude by adding to Scripture an absolute prohibition against the practice. As an exegete he had to conclude, "What shall we say? If God commends him [polygamous Jacob], it is necessary that we close [our] mouth and say that anything that pleases God pleases us" (#24 above).

True, Luther expressed regret about how Philip's bigamy turned out. He was angry at Philip for not giving a completely accurate description of his situation when he was asking for permission to contract a second marriage and for not keeping it secret. His ultimate conclusion, however, as expressed to John Frederick, Elector of Saxony, shows that he did not think his counsel was a mistake: "I still say that if the matter were brought up with me even today, I would not know what counsel to give other than what I did.... I am not ashamed of what is being reported, even if it should come out before the whole world; but for the sake of the unpleasantness which would then follow, I should prefer, if possible, to know the matter kept quiet" (#63 above).

Luther did not stand alone in his teaching about polygamy. Melancthon agreed with him, as can be seen from his co-signing the *Wittenberger Ratschlag*. Previous to this watershed moment, Melancthon had written concerning King Henry VIII's question about the permissibility of divorcing Catherine of Aragon to marry Anne Boleyn:

If the King desires to provide for the succession, how much better it is to do so without throwing any stigma on his previous marriage! And this may be done without peril to any one's conscience or reputation by a second marriage. For although I would not concede polygamy generally—for I said above that we are not laying down laws—yet in this case, for the great benefit of the kingdom, and, it may be also, for the sake of the King's conscience, I hold that the safest course for the King would be to marry a second wife, without casting off the first; because it is certain that polygamy is not prohibited by Divine Law; nor is it unprecedented. Abraham, David, and other holy men had a number of wives.²¹

²¹ Melancthon, "De Divortio Henrici VIII, 1531" *Corpus Reformatorum* 2:526; as translated by Clyde Leonard Manschreck, *Melancthon: The Quiet Reformer* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958), 262-263.

Nor were Luther and Melancthon alone in their teaching on polygamy. “The careful study of Rockwell has shown that his [Luther’s] opinion [on bigamy] was shared by the great majority of his contemporaries, Catholic and Protestant alike.”²²

While Luther’s teaching on polygamy is an embarrassment for many Christians today, his reasoning is still worth serious consideration by those who seek to derive doctrine from Scripture alone, *sola scriptura*, while at the same time being aware of the serious problems that can result from legalized polygamy. A candid acknowledgment of the complexity of the question is particularly appropriate in view of the heightened interest in Luther as the five-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation approaches. The issue played a major historical role in the Reformation as theologians and rulers lined up for or against Philip of Hesse and his theological allies. It became a touchstone to test whether churches would solve moral problems by creating convenient canon law or whether they would restrict themselves to what Scripture alone teaches. It was used to teach the difference between the two kingdoms, in this case characterized as the difference between man’s court and God’s court. Finally, it illustrated particularly well the tension that could come to boil between exegetical, systematic, and practical theology. While Luther was not completely consistent in his teaching, the following comments are recurrent themes in his writings.

In the realm of exegetical theology, and contrary to the Council of Trent, Luther concluded that it was neither commanded nor forbidden by any divine law for Christians to have several wives at the same time (##1, 5, 18, 26, 27, 34, 41, 52). Luther also found that God forbade polygamy for pastors (##20, 34), but commanded it in the case of levirate marriages (##43, 44), and that polygamous marriages were true marriages that created one-flesh unions (##19, 21, 34, 49, 50). He was certain that monogamy conforms to creation and is God pleasing (##55, 56). On the whole, he concluded that Lamech’s polygamy proves nothing about its goodness or badness,²³ but that patriarchal polygamy was legal, holy, approved by God, and not sinful (##4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 20, 22, 23, 24, 28, 34, 43, 49, 51).

In the realm of systematic theology, Luther concluded the following:

1. Marriage is between a man and a woman (#56).

²² Preserved Smith, 384; William Walker Rockwell, *Die doppelehe des landgraten Philipp von Hessen* (Leipzig: A. Pries, 1903); Rockwell’s work is available at <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951001713806;view=1up;seq=5>.

²³ See especially #33 in the quotations above. Luther was inconsistent with his comments on Lamech’s polygamy. The quotations above include the following claims: it was not necessarily bad (##2, 5, 8, 9, 12, 14, 33); it was good (#46); it was bad (##13, 56, 59, 60).

2. God approved of polygamy for the sake of population growth or other necessity (##7, 29, 31, 32, 36, 38, 43, 44, 49, 53, 54, 80, 81).
3. God gave a special call to patriarchs to be polygamous, but their example should not be imitated by those who have not received the same special call (##23, 24, 34, 43, 48, 51).
4. Laws rather than examples must govern behavior (##31, 59, 77).
5. Though we may disapprove of polygamy, we should not condemn what God commends (##17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 26, 55).
6. What God has not forbidden must be left free, and what is right before God should be permitted (##30, 55, 58).
7. What God has not commanded may be uncertain (##31, 32).
8. One must have a clear conscience before engaging in polygamy, and must not engage in polygamy for the wrong reasons (##43, 47, 53).

In the realm of practical theology, and in agreement with the Council of Trent, Luther concluded that it should be forbidden by human law for Christians to have several wives at the same time (##26, 30, 32, 35, 53, 55). His agreement on this point, however, was not absolute. He thought that polygamy could be approved for Christians in cases of extreme necessity, not as a law, but as a dispensation from the law (##31, 35, 55, 56, 57, 63, 67, 68, 70, 74). He thought that serious marital problems would better be solved by polygamy than by divorce (##3, 40). Of paramount concern was that scandal must be avoided when exercising Christian freedom (##26, 31, 32). Therefore polygamy should be kept secret from society (##57, 61, 63, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 72, 73), and if necessary, lies should be told to conceal it (##62, 65, 66, 69).

The last conclusions of Luther in the realm of exegetical and practical theology are particularly problematic for modern students of Luther. That patriarchal polygamy was approved by God and not sinful, and that secrecy and lies are acceptable methods to avoid scandal, violate common moral standards today. Knowing that Luther held these conclusions, however, helps resolve some contradictory statements that Luther made about polygamy.

Luther found himself in a very difficult position when the *Dialogue of Hulrich Nebulo* was published pseudonymously as part of a movement to legalize polygamy. Luther felt compelled to write a rebuttal of the tract. The problem was that it would not serve Luther's purpose in the rebuttal to repeat again his oft-repeated teaching that God was pleased with patriarchal polygamy. Because the conflict over polygamy had the possibility of seriously harming the Reformation and hindering the spread of the gospel, Luther thought that no holds should be barred in the fight. When secrecy

about Philip's bigamy became impossible, he encouraged telling "a good, strong lie" for the good of the church (#65). Luther was not above following his own advice. He feigned ignorance of Philip's marriage (#62), wished that Philip would openly deny that the marriage had taken place (#66), and said that he would feign ignorance with a good conscience, "as Christ does [when he says] in the gospel, 'The Son does not know the day,'" (#69). It is therefore entirely reasonable to evaluate some of his statements in his rebuttal as words designed to mislead the reader, words that could be characterized as exegetical lies.

In his rebuttal, Luther gives the impression that taking more than one wife could never be a righteous thing, but he doesn't really agree with that as he shows in many other places. A careful reader discerns that what Luther actually says is that it could never be a righteous thing to take more than one wife *for the reasons given* in the *Dialog of Hulrich Nebulo*.²⁴ Taking more than one wife *for valid reasons* is left open as an unexpressed possibility. In his rebuttal, Luther gives the impression that the legality of patriarchal polygamy is uncertain,²⁵ but he doesn't think so himself, as he shows in other places on the basis of the holiness of the patriarchs and the law of levirate marriage. In his rebuttal, Luther suggests that God considered polygamy wrong despite his contrary interactions with the patriarchs,²⁶ thereby effectively pitting God in his supposed hidden thoughts against God as he revealed himself in Scripture. It is the revealed God that Luther confesses elsewhere when he says again and again that patriarchal polygamy was legal, holy, approved by God, and not sinful. Whether Luther would have revised the statements in his rebuttal before publication is not known, since he decided not to fan the flames of controversy by publishing his scathing draft. It is ironic that this anomalous unpublished opinion is the one that is considered most authentically "Lutheran" today.

It is relatively easy to select isolated quotations from Luther's writings that make him appear to be completely inconsistent, at times approving, and at times disapproving, of polygamy. When Luther's statements are examined together, one can see that his teaching about polygamy was for the most part consistent, though quite complex: he both approved and disapproved of polygamy, but for different reasons and in different contexts.

²⁴ "Whoever follows this idiot and book and thereupon takes more than one wedded-wife, and desires that it should be a righteous thing, the devil will bury him in the abyss of hell, Amen." (#78 above; italics added).

²⁵ "Granted, however, that bigamy was legal in the days of the fathers and Moses—which can never be established—..." (#79 above; italics added).

²⁶ "And although it was permitted to the Jews and tolerated by God, while God Himself considered it wrong.... it was merely a dispensation..." (WA 53:196a, 12 – 197a, 2; italics added).

The search for historical truth, then, provides one good reason to restudy Luther's teaching about polygamy. Another good reason is the search for exegetical truth, the desire to interpret Scripture properly, neither adding to, nor subtracting from, what God has revealed. In addition, systematic theology is strengthened by properly distinguishing revealed doctrine from human application. Finally, practical theology may reap substantial benefits from this study as the church engages the world today.

According to comprehensive anthropological data collected in the 1960s, roughly 48 percent of societies practice frequent polygyny, and another 37 percent practice occasional polygyny, whereas only about 15 percent are limited to monogamy.²⁷ By a curious coincidence, the Christian church is growing most quickly in Africa, where polygamy is often legal and practiced. As the Lutheran church continues its missionary activity and its doctrinal discussions with these growing churches, it will need to wrestle with how it approaches the issue of polygamy.

Luther still has much to contribute to this discussion, though his advice about secrecy and lies are best rejected. Polygamy is a complex issue that should be examined from exegetical, systematic, and practical points of view. Instead of answering the question with an absolute yes or no, the church should preserve the important principles identified by Luther as he struggled with the issue. The best short answer, after all, may be the one Luther gave to George Brück in 1524: "As for me, I truly admit that I cannot prohibit it if someone wishes to marry several wives, nor is it repugnant to the Sacred Scriptures: in truth, however, I would not want such an example introduced among Christians in the first place, among whom it is proper to abstain even from things that are allowed, in order to avoid scandal, and for the integrity of life, which everywhere Paul requires" (#26).

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²⁷ J. Patrick Gray, ed., "Ethnographic Atlas Codebook," *World Cultures* 10, no. 1 (1998):89-90; <http://eclectic.ss.uci.edu/~drwhite/worldcul/Codebook4EthnoAtlas.pdf> (accessed 1/19/2016); this data is based on George P. Murdock, *Ethnographic Atlas* (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Pr., 1969).

Lucas Cranach the Elder: Artist, Apothecary, Aristocrat

Timothy Maschke ◀

Lucas Cranach the Elder was one of the most influential non-academic friends of Martin Luther. His depictions of Luther are among the most famous and well-known. His understanding and appreciation of the subtleties of the newly restored Gospel were of the highest level. Yet, little has been written about him, at least in the English language.¹ Three key aspects of his life are particularly noteworthy and will serve as the structure of this article—Cranach as an artist (both in woodcuts and in painting), as an apothecary (both owner and operator), and as an aristocrat (serving at different times as Burgermeister/Mayor of Wittenberg and electoral diplomat).

As we approach the celebration of the Reformation, the Germans have highlighted various aspects of our Reformation heritage. A year ago, the focus of the German “Lutherdekade” (the decade-long Reformation celebration in Germany) was on “Reformation—Image and Bible,” including recognition of Lucas Cranach the Elder. That same year, they remembered the 500th anniversary of the birth of his son, Lucas Cranach the Younger (October 4, 1515). This article will review the work of Lucas Cranach the Elder, providing insights into his Reformation value for communicating God’s gracious love in Christ as well as appreciating the fine arts for the modern world.²

¹ A few of the more recent works include the following: Max J. Friedländer and Jakob Rosenberg, *The Paintings of Lucas Cranach* (New York: Tabard Press, 1978), although critical of many of Cranach’s work, is a thorough study; Carl C. Christenson in *Art and the Reformation in Germany* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1979), gives a general overview, including the work of Cranach; similarly, Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), comments insightfully on Cranach’s work in its historical context; Peter Moser, *Lucas Cranach: His Life, His World, His Pictures* (New York: Art Stock Books, Ltd., 2008), provides a visual overview of Cranach’s life; and Bonnie Noble has published her doctoral dissertation, which focuses on only a few aspects of Cranach’s voluminous work in *Lucas Cranach the Elder: Art and Devotion of the German Reformation* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2009). The most recent work, albeit somewhat superficial, is by Steven Ozment, *The Serpent and the Lamb: Cranach, Luther, and the Making of the Reformation* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2011).

² A version of this article was presented to the Concordia Pastors’ Conference in November 2015 at Concordia University Wisconsin.

I. His life

Born in 1472 to a Renaissance painter, Hans,³ and his wife, Barbara (nee Hübner), Lucas grew up in the Franconian town of Kronach,⁴ near what is now the eastern border with Austria. Lucas was named after St Luke, the patron saint of artists and a popular saint in that region. Little is known of his childhood, other than his mother died (1491) in his teenage years.

Trained initially by his father, Lucas developed his talent to a high degree during these years in the prominent community of Kronach, with its population of about twenty-five hundred inhabitants. None of his father's work has survived, so little can be deduced from that early training. Lucas probably acquired further artistic skills from the nearby community of Nuremberg, where Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), only a year older than Lucas, grew up and received his training.

At some time before the turn of the century, Lucas possibly encountered Dürer in Nuremberg on his journey to Vienna. Dürer's unique and detailed style was considered cutting-edge and extremely influential, as well as being very popular among the upper classes. Dürer's woodcuts and subject matter served as key influences on Cranach's early work.

In Vienna, Cranach met two great German humanists, both poet laureates—Conrad Celtis and Johannes Cuspinian, who succeeded Celtis as rector of the university. While in Vienna, Cranach demonstrated his unique and characteristic portraiture ability by painting a double portrait of the twenty-nine year old Johannes Cuspinian and his aristocratic wife, Anna Putsch. He also did a double portrait of the Italian patrician, the forty-one year old University Rector Stephan Reuss and his wife, although these are much less flattering in their facial depictions and background illustrations. Cranach also exhibited his humanistic interests in classical antiquity by drawing the mythological characters of Venus and Hercules as subjects of his artwork. During this time, Cranach's work has been described as "hasty and expressionistic," yet they also displayed a more lilted style of graphic depictions with "delicate lines and willowy bodies."⁵

Religious themes were important topics for most artists of his day, portraying a piety which was reminiscent of the high Italian Renaissance. His *Schottenkreuzigung* (Schotten Crucifixion) for the Benedictine abbey in

³ Hans's last name is not known for certain, but it is often listed as Maler, German for "painter," or Moller.

⁴ The region in northern Bavaria is the area from which several early Lutherans, who settled in eastern Michigan—Frankenlust, Frankentrost, and Frankenmuth—had emigrated.

⁵ Ozment, 14.

Schotten depicts an unusually compact scene, populated with peasants and nobles. This may be the only work originating from the town of Kronach. Most art historians have little praise for this work, but contrast it with two works done shortly thereafter, demonstrating evidence of Cranach's quick learning style. A woodcut from 1502, *The Mount Calvary Crucifixion*, showed a more dramatic scene in great detail and energetic depictions, which some scholars suggest was influenced by Dürer.

Steve Ozment writes almost lyrically about the loincloth in the 1502 woodcut:

Cranach's imagination made this work a model for all of his future crucifixion scenes. He girded Christ in an outsized, billowing loincloth, henceforth to become a Cranach signature of hope beyond tragedy, peace of mind everlasting. While firmly tethered to the Savior's body, the animated loincloth takes on a life of its own as the dying Christ surrendered his. Free-floating and kite-like, the loincloth became an agile guardian of the sacred space around the Savior and a protector of all the holy dead. Holding tightly to the Son of God, both in his death throes and after his life was gone, the faithful, feisty loincloth stands an unstinting vigil, its ethereal folds suggesting smoke and the beating of angel wings. It reminds the view of the staying power of the Holy Ghost and the Gospel message of eternal life after all else is irretrievably gone⁶

That woodcut is in stark contrast to an even more solemn and unusual depiction of the crucifixion from 1503, known as the *Schleissheim Crucifixion*, which has received lasting praise.

The *Schleissheim Crucifixion* is also known as "The Lamentation under the Cross." [See illustration.⁷] Cranach portrays a very different crucifixion scene—with only two mourners (Mary and John) and two thieves on two crosses, which are almost lost on the left side of the picture. The focus is obviously on Christ.

⁶ Ozment, 40.

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucas_Cranach_the_Elder#/media/File:Lucas_Cranach_d_%C3%84._-_The_Lamentation_of_Christ_-_The_Schleissheim_Crucifixion_-_Alte_Pinakothek.jpg



These early works along with a depiction of the “Stigmatization of St Francis” and “St Jerome Doing Penance” have an individualistic style that was moving away from the stylized Renaissance art forms common in Italy by expressing a more agitated emotionalism. In addition, the influence of Dürer is less evident in Cranach’s “Stephanus,” which has more passion and feeling than Durer’s more controlled and moderate depictions. Cranach’s “John the Baptist,” according to a recent German critic, “dominates and achieves a range of expression which could hardly be wider.”⁸ Each of these works demonstrates a development in both style and purpose in Cranach’s artistic skills. Toward the end of this “Danube period,” Cranach’s “ecstatic excitement...has largely disappeared in the idyllic ‘Rest during Flight’ of 1504.”⁹ Cranach portrays a solemnity reminiscent of the *Schleissheim Crucifixion*. The quiet scene of Mary, Joseph, and the Christ Child is the first painting that Cranach identifies with his initials, “L” and “C,” along with the date of its composition.

⁸ Franz Winzinger, “Lucas Cranach,” *Lucas Cranach 1472/1972* (Bonn: 1972), 7.

⁹ Winzinger, 8.

Although Cranach was only beginning to be recognized for his giftedness and artistic abilities, his work in the first decade of the sixteenth century demonstrated his creativity and spirituality, while beginning to reveal his pragmatic entrepreneurialism. His abilities for portraiture and his moving crucifixion scenes became hallmarks of the new evangelicals in the next years.

II. Wittenberg (1505-1550)

The precise details of how Cranach came to Wittenberg is unclear. What is known is that Lucas Cranach was engaged by Elector Frederick the Wise late in 1504 as the candidate most similar to his slightly older contemporary, the Nuremberger Albrecht Dürer, who had prepared several paintings for the Elector. Cranach must have had a significant amount of fame already at that time, since he was paid two-and-a-half times the salary of his predecessor.

As court painter (*pictor ducalis*, “duke’s painter”), Cranach was responsible for anything and everything related to art and decorations of the elector’s five castles—Wittenberg, Coburg, Torgau, Weimar, and Lochau—and numerous social events (jousting tournaments, royal hunts, and royal celebrations).¹⁰

Dr. Christoph Scheurl, Professor of Laws at Wittenberg, presented Cranach to the community with these words in his dedicatory introduction, which was published in 1509: “In the long neglected, now reawakened art of painting, with the single exception of his fellow-countryman, Albrecht Dürer, an undoubted genius, Lucas Cranach alone holds the highest rank.”¹¹

The first major commission prepared by Cranach in Wittenberg was for an altar in the Castle Church, dedicated to St. Catherine, an eastern saint who was martyred upon a wheel. A second painting of the same subject was done the following year, 1506. Another early production by Cranach was an altarpiece dedicated to the Holy Trinity for the Castle Church. Unfortunately, it was destroyed in a 1760 fire. The following year, 1507, he worked with other artists and craftsmen on an altar for the Elector’s Castle in Torgau dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Around that same time he also created an intriguing painting known as “the Helpers,” a depiction of various saints and angelic beings who were to assist the observers in their devotional piety, particularly in times of plague. During these early years, Cranach began to display his own Wittenberg style of artistic expression—

¹⁰ Ozment, 10, notes that on one occasion, Cranach had to create a gingerbread mold for the elector’s two pre-teen sons! https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lucas_Cranach_Elder_Turnier_auf_dem_Marktplatz_1506.jpg

¹¹ Winzinger, 8.

integrating more expressive elements by not conforming to the expected Gothic art of Italy, with its more grandiose and often rigid triumphalism.

In the summer of 1508, the elector sent Cranach to the Netherlands on an official visit. There he met Emperor Maximilian and was commanded to paint a portrait of the Emperor's eight-year old grandson, who would later become Emperor Charles V. This same year, he received his heraldic coat-of-arms, which will be explained below. Also in 1508, Cranach painted his first depiction of "Venus and Cupid," a mythological subject which would gradually change in context and figural style over the years.

Between 1509 and 1510, Cranach worked on a series of fourteen woodcuts depicting *The Passion of Christ*, as well as 117 woodcuts for the Elector's "Book of Relics." These works were considered devotional illustrations rather than expressions of artistic creativity, yet even in these works he exhibited great care to produce objects which the common people could appreciate and use. As he was becoming involved in courtly activities, he was commissioned to design medals and coins for the Elector. Sometime during these early years, Cranach produced an illustration of the Virgin Mary's family—Anna and Joachim, Mary's parents. Interestingly, Cranach depicts the emperor and the electors in the background.

In 1510, the first evidence of a Reformation theme is seen, according to some historians, in his depiction of the biblical account of Jesus' "Cleansing of the Temple." Over the next two years he continued his productivity, having completed the "Princes Altar" in Halle, a "Madonna under the Fir Trees," and one of his first "Adam and Eve" paintings. The subject of this latter painting became a common subject of his artistic talent, providing over two dozen different nude figures throughout his lifetime. He also prepared a series of woodcuts of "Christ and the Apostles" and "Martyrdom of the Apostles."

In 1512, Lucas Cranach left his residence in the elector's castle and purchased two homes in Wittenberg's Marktplatz (#3 and 4 today) and the next year he married Barbara nee Brengbier from Gotha. Their first son, Hans, was probably born that next year. Their second son, Lucas, was born in October of 1515. Besides his own marriage, Cranach and ten assistants spent almost two months in Torgau preparing the Castle Hartenfels for the three-and-a-half-day (November 12-15, 1513) wedding celebration of John the Steadfast and Margarete of Anhalt. Besides decorating the bridal bed, they prepared tournament tents, helmet plumes, tapestries and a variety of banners for hanging and waving.

One of the hallmarks of Cranach's artistry was his ability to prepare careful and insightful portraits. Noteworthy is his new style of preparing

full-length paintings of his patrons. His first such large scale work was in 1514 of Duke Henry the Pious and Duchess Katharine of Mecklenburg—the figures are portrayed in their magnificent clothes with an almost featureless background.

Noteworthy for this article is a panel Cranach prepared for the Wittenberg Town Hall. In 1516, he painted a “Panel of the Ten Commandments.” Each panel depicts one of the Ten Commandments, demonstrating the importance of the Law in the life of the Wittenberg citizenry. There is some conjecture that this might reflect collaboration with Luther, although there is no specific evidence of it. The panel now resides in the Lutherhalle in Wittenberg, suggesting that Luther indeed was instrumental in directing the content of this panel.

III. Contact with Luther

Sometime in 1517 Cranach met Luther personally and recognized his fellow Wittenberger’s reformational significance. Cranach was forty-five and Luther was thirty-four, both in the prime of their professional lives. While there is little information about their contacts during those early and tumultuous years of the Reformation, there must have been a growing personal and professional relationship between them.



In 1520, at the encouragement of Albrecht Dürer and the request of Elector Frederick the Wise, Cranach engraved an official portrait of Luther as a gaunt and bony-faced Augustinian friar. This first image was deemed unacceptable by the elector, so Cranach had to prepare a second one, this time with Luther in a traditional saint’s niche. [See illustration.¹²] Cranach asked Luther this same year to serve as god-father for Cranach’s youngest daughter, Anna. Their relationship would continue to grow closer over the next decades.

Not only was Cranach and his workshop known for his paintings, he continued to prepare woodcuts. In 1521, Cranach provided Luther with twenty-five depictions of the

¹² <https://differentia.wordpress.com/2012/02/21/logos-und-ludus-eine-meditation-uber-narrenfreiheit-und-internetkommunikation-1/>

pope as “Antichrist” with similar portrayals of Christ, but Christ is ways depicted in contrasting humility. The propaganda value of Cranach’s work, particularly as he developed illustrations for many of Luther’s Reformation pamphlets and Bible, became increasingly useful for Luther in the next years.

Sometime in the early 1520s, he and the elector’s goldsmith, Christian Döring, purchased a printing shop. Shortly thereafter, they engaged the famous Leipzig printer, Melchior Lotter, Jr., whose father had published Luther’s *Ninety-five Theses*. Lotter brought the best printing technology available to Wittenberg, and they had one of the most popular authors at their doorstep, Martin Luther. By 1526 the printing house became a paper supplier and exporter of books (by boat in barrels) to the Prussian port city and capital, Königsberg, which became a center of Lutheran publications for the next generation.

After the 1521 Diet of Worms, Luther had escaped to the Wartburg Castle, just outside of Eisenach. Cranach was one of the few persons with whom Luther communicated during his flight from Worms and exile in the Wartburg. Later that year, when Luther had returned secretly to Wittenberg during this Wartburg exile, Cranach painted a famous portrait of Luther as “Junker Georg.” [See illustration]¹³



Toward the end of 1522, Cranach was enlisted to provide illustrations for and organized the distribution of Luther’s first New Testament translation, *September Testament*, in a run of three thousand copies, with a second edition, the *December Testament*, of five-thousand copies (which ran out in 3 months).¹⁴

In 1525, Cranach and his wife, served as witnesses to Luther’s marriage to Katherine von Bora. Katherine had lived in the Cranach household and had become a close friend of Barbara Cranach. As a wedding gift, the Cranachs presented the Luthers with a now-famous double-portrait of Martin and

Katherine. The following year, the Cranach’s served as godparents to the

¹³ <http://www.zeno.org/nid/20003886530>

¹⁴ Ozment, 106-108.

Luther's oldest son, Hans.

IV. Altarpieces

Besides Cranach and Luther's professional contact and personal relationship, no artistic contribution by Cranach had more lasting value than his altarpieces. Cranach had received commissions early in his career in Wittenberg to prepare altarpieces for the elector's chapels. However, with the influence of the Reformation, there is an obvious change in focus and function. Evangelical instruction formed the central purpose of these altarpieces.

Bonnie Noble, in her published doctoral dissertation, commented that "Cranach shifted the function of the retable from being a marker of explicitly Catholic ritual to being a tool of religious instruction, transforming a familiar form to suit the devotional, theological, and didactic practices of a new faith."¹⁵ A few lines earlier, she wrote:

The content of the lessons the pictures taught, the tasks the images performed, and the pictorial strategies that determined the range and nature of their use reveal the innovations of Lutheran art...The fact that "Lutheran" and "art" are not mutually exclusive terms, that such a thing as "Lutheran art" exists, testifies to Luther's moderate attitude toward images.¹⁶

Luther had written in his *Against the Heavenly Prophets*, "If it is not a sin but good to have the image of Christ in my heart, why should it be a sin to have it in my eyes?"¹⁷ Hanne Koling Poulsen noted in her chapter, "Between Convention, Likeness and Iconicity":

Luther's thoughts on images partly legitimized the process in Cranach's portraits toward an iconic quality, which contrasted sharply with the humanists' ideal of mimesis, and partly reinforced it. The portraits became "masks". Luther, Melancthon, the electors and their wives look, to a very large extent, the same in the numerous portraits of them. Furthermore, because this "iconic" style was in accordance with Luther's teachings, it was able to

¹⁵ Bonnie Noble, *Lucas Cranach the Elder: Art and Devotion of the German Reformation* (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 2009), 3.

¹⁶ Hanne Kolind Poulsen, "Between Convention, Likeness and Iconicity," *Lucas Cranach 1553/2003 Wittenberger Tagungsgeträge anlässlich des 450. Todesjahres Lucas Cranachs des Älteren*. Andreas Tacke, ed. (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2007), 215.

¹⁷ Martin Luther, "Against the Heavenly Prophets," *Luther's Works* 40:99-100.

connote “the right use of images” and thereby “the right faith”, namely Luther’s new faith. It was used to greatest effect in the portraits of the champions of this new faith. As propaganda for the new confession and its leaders it was crucial of course, that these portraits fully satisfied the new concept of precisely and emphatically of who the Elector, his consorts, the Reformers etc. were and what they believed in.¹⁸

This idea of propaganda is recognized particularly in Cranach’s portrayal of the papacy as Antichrist. More significant, however, is the fact of the evangelically didactic element as worthy of further consideration.

Noble, later in her introductory comments, provided a description of what she considered Lutheran art in general:

Broadly speaking, art functioned to instruct believers in theology and grace and helped define the theological parameters of religious communities.... First, Cranach’s paintings are didactic, instructing believers in the Lutheran doctrine of salvation by faith without works.... Second, Lutheran art redirected worship back to the Bible by limiting itself to subjects derived from scripture.... Third, Lutheran art redefined sacraments and other rituals and helped believers understand and establish ways to follow these practices, especially Baptism and the lay Eucharist in both kinds (both the bread and the wine). Fourth, by including portraits of religious and political leaders, including the artist himself, Cranach’s Lutheran paintings memorialized illustrious members of the community as paragons of explicitly Lutheran salvation. ... These altarpieces depicted believers exemplifying a specifically Lutheran path to salvation through grace without works and thus served as models for the community.¹⁹

Lutheran art is clearly didactic, biblical, sacramental, and communal. Cranach recognized the place of “the simple folk,” as Luther would often refer to his hearers in the pews. They needed to know of God’s love and His grace in Christ. Thus, these altarpieces served the Gospel.

¹⁸ Hanne Kolind Poulsen, “Between Convention, Likeness and Iconicity,” *Lucas Cranach 1553/2003 Wittenberger Tagungsbeiträge anlässlich des 450. Todesjahres Lucas Cranachs des Älteren*. Andreas Tacke, ed. (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2007), 215.

¹⁹ Noble, 10-11.



The themes of “Law and Gospel” are clearly depicted in several altarpieces. Two 1529 altarpieces (called “Law and Gospel” in Gotha, but *Gesetz und Gnad*, “Law and Grace” used in Prague) are some of the best examples of Cranach’s reformation messages, and also the first to be specifically and clearly Lutheran.²⁰ The illustration on this page is from a woodcut depicting the same scenes as the altarpieces. On the left, Cranach portrayed the Law—Christ returns as Judge (an image described in Revelation 1), with Adam and Eve standing under a tree. Below them is the Man being chased into the fires of hell by Death and the Devil. On the right of that panel stands Moses with the Decalogue and civil magistrates who are God’s representatives to carry out that Law (the kingdom of the left, as Luther described it). On the right panel is the Gospel in all its fullness—Christ is brought from heaven by the Holy Spirit into the womb of the virgin Mary, while shepherds are in their fields (upper right), the rebellious people of Israel are encamped before the bronze serpent on a cross, while Christ crucified is clearly the focus as John the Baptist directs the Man’s eyes to Christ crucified, who in turn bestows His Spirit on the Man. The victorious Christ stands upon the broken bodies of Satan and Death in an open tomb (lower right). The Law-Gospel distinction and details from the biblical narrative cannot be more clearly portrayed.

Another significant Cranach altarpiece is of Jesus blessing the children. Here not only is the depiction an interesting expression of Jesus’ love of children, but Cranach shows that the children (according to Matthew’s

²⁰ <http://faculty.wartburg.edu/wilson/arhistory/images/23/23-01.jpg>

text) were infants at the breast, not yet able to walk. Mark 10 is cited above several of these panels, of which at least twenty were prepared, three for John Frederick the Magnanimous. Cranach's depiction of this biblical scene again highlights the gospel:

Over the years, this novel, riveting scene appeared in twenty-plus versions highlighting the gospel message and admonishing the Wittenberg faithful to heed the words of Jesus: [cites verse] (Mark 10:13-16; Matthew 19:12-15, and Luke 18:15-17). In the background of this popular painting, the enemies of salvation by faith alone and infant baptism [Anabaptists] are seen scoffing and grumbling as Jesus welcomes a throng of new mothers, who caress, kiss, and commend their babies to God in holy baptism. Here the grim, ascetic religious mindset that rather chose chastity, repression, and the single life over God-ordained marriage, sex, and family met its "betters" in the army of happy mothers and contended infants directly blessed by their Savior. In this familial setting, the viewer is reminded of God's commandment to live together in the divine estate of marriage, there to become "fruitful and multiply," and thereupon also to build the kingdom of God in and through disciplined children and loving families.²¹



One of the most "Lutheran" of Cranach's altarpieces was completed after Luther's death for St. Mary's Church, the city church in Wittenberg. [See illustration.²²] Commissioned by Cranach himself, this work not only

²¹ Ozment, 25, also cites Bobo Brinkman, ed., *Cranach der Ältere*, exhib. Cat. Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main November 23, 2007-February 17, 2008 (Frankfurt am Main and Ostfildern, 2007), pp. 214-15; cf. Christine O. Kibish, "Lucas Cranach's *Christ Blessing the Children*: A Problem of Lutheran Iconography," *The Art Bulletin* 37 (1955): 196-203.

²² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art_in_the_Protestant_Reformation_and_Counter-Reformation#/media/File:Wittenberg_Stadtkirche_Cranachalter.jpg

shows the three Lutheran sacraments—Holy Baptism, Holy Communion, and Holy Absolution—but also with the lower central depicts the key Reformation focus on preaching Christ crucified. In his commentary on Psalm 111, Luther had written:

Whoever is inclined to put pictures on the altar ought to have the Lord's Supper of Christ painted, with these two verses written around it in golden letters: 'The gracious and merciful Lord has instituted a remembrance of his wonderful works.' Then they would stand before our eyes for our heart to contemplate them, and even our eyes, in reading, would have to thank and praise God. Since the altar is designated for the administration of the Sacrament, one could not find a better painting for it. Other pictures of God or Christ can be painted somewhere else.²³

This altarpiece continues to serve as a clear witness to the Reformation message of God's gifts for all people.



The last of Cranach's altarpieces is in the St Peter and Paul Church in Weimar [see illustration²⁴] and again is a well-defined demonstration of the Law-Gospel themes. This work has been called "the single most

²³ Martin Luther, "Psalm 111," LW 13:375.

²⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter_und_Paul,_Weimar#/media/File:Weimaraltar-1555-B.jpg

important visual monument of the German Reformation.”²⁵ In its open position, the two outer panels depict the elector’s family—John Frederick the Magnanimous and his wife, Sibylle of Cleves, on the left wing, with the letters VDMIA (*Verbum domini manet in aeternum*, “The Word of the Lord endures forever”). On the right wing are their three sons, John Frederick III, John William, and John Frederick II, the actual donors who dedicated this altarpiece to their parents. A lost inscription on the retable (recorded earlier) indicates such a dedication.²⁶ The central panel is didactic, and not intended as an object of devotion (in contrast to most Catholic altarpieces).

Although completed by Lucas the Younger, it captures the key themes of his father’s faith. Lucas Cranach the Elder stands between Martin Luther on the right and John the Baptist pointing to Christ with a lamb at his feet. Christ Himself is portrayed twice, once on the left, defeating the devil and death, and most prominently on the cross, with a flow of blood coming from His pierced side and spurting onto the head of Cranach. Two inscriptions are included: The Lamb holds a banner with an inscription of John 1:29, “*Ecce agnus dei qui tollit peccata mundi.*” Luther holds his German Bible with the full texts of 1 John 1:7b (The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin), Hebrews 4:16 (Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need), and John 3:14-15 (And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life).

Cranach’s work can be summarized in light of Luther’s influence this way: “The blended visual-visceral impact of Cranach’s altar paintings, portraiture, and broadsheets was every bit as powerful as Luther’s sermons, pamphlets, and catechisms, not a few of whose covers were also decorated by Cranach.”²⁷ The altarpieces certainly conveyed the evangelical message of Luther. Such productivity was not able to be accomplished singlehandedly. That brings us to consider Cranach’s accomplices as well as accomplishments.

V. Cranach’s workshop

Although he was a prolific artist, more was demanded of him than Cranach could produce on his own. This was especially true of some of the more general decorative art pieces and the designs for the Elector’s festivals

²⁵ Noble, 138, citing Joseph Leo Koerner, “Moment of Self-Portraiture,” in *The Reformation of the Image* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 406.

²⁶ Noble, 155, gives an English translation of the Latin text.

²⁷ Ozment, 250.

and community fairs, as mentioned earlier. Already before 1510, Cranach had hired as many as ten apprentices (*Lehrlinge*) and journeymen (*Gesellen*) along with cabinetmakers, glaziers, gold-platers, goldsmiths, illuminators, silk sewers, tailors, and weavers. These talented guildsmen would continue to serve him in varying capacities throughout much of his professional life.

During the 1520s, Cranach developed a technique for easy duplication or replication of popular images. Known as *pictor celerrimus* (“swiftest painter” inscribed on his tombstone) already in 1508 by Christoph Scheurl, Cranach was noted for his impulsive creativity and voluminous productivity. Some art critics have called his work lacking in “reflection, composition, and construction...nourished by his imagination and fancy, particularly in unheroic and idyllic scenes.”²⁸ Yet, his creativity and entrepreneurial genius cannot be denied. As Poulsen describes:

The assistants in the workshop were probably technically able to produce all kinds of portraits, of whatever quality. Cranach, however, was the creative force in the workshop. He created the drawings and patterns necessary for the works. As a result of the new concept of the artist, this activity had become perhaps the most important part of the artist’s profession because it involved art itself, that is, the *inventione*-aspect. Any assistant, in principle, could subsequently transfer the great artist’s *inventione* to panel—this only required skillful craftsmanship.²⁹

Cranach was able to gather a very capable staff of assistants who helped reproduce the many portraits and pictures for which he received commissions.

One example of these workshop replications is Cranach’s depictions of Adam and Eve. Over his lifetime, his workshop produced several dozen different paintings of the first couple. Throughout those years, a significant shift in focus becomes evident in the style of these paintings. What is somewhat unusual and even inexplicable, at least for most contemporary art critics, is the fact that these figures were not in the conventional style of Renaissance nudes. Instead of the voluptuous figures of the typical Renaissance painter, Cranach developed a more subtle and innocent portrait, with long sinuous bodies and charming expressions, yet with some coyness reminiscent of an earlier Gothic style. Critics decry the fact that such

²⁸ Friedrich Thöne and Donald King, eds. “Lucas Cranach, the Elder.” Britannica online Encyclopedia. <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Lucas-Cranach-the-Elder>.

²⁹ Poulsen, 216.

paintings actually “defy basic principles of anatomy.”³⁰ Ozment noted: “From the start, the crude, the rude, and the nude were among Cranach’s imagistic foot soldiers serving in the great confessional war against Rome.”³¹ Commenting a little later, Ozment explains:

In ways straightforward theological argument cannot do, Cranach’s alluring images of women drove home the awesome power and divine blessing of human sexuality in and through which new life is created. From the sex drive comes the vital human need for intimacy and companionship, progeny and family, upon which the foundations of entire cities, states, and nations are laid. In this regard, Cranach’s images are incomparable couriers of history and the gospel.³²

Cranach’s evangelical understanding of God’s grace was portrayed in the naive sexuality which modern critics detect in his subject matter.

Yet, it is more than mere human sexuality that Cranach displays. He seems to be attempting to portray the innocence of the pre-fall couple, ignorant of their own nakedness. Although he had used classical themes early in his career, Cranach continued to produce works which featured several stories from the golden age of mythology—Hercules, Paris, Caritas, Venus, Apollo and Diana, and the three graces.

In 1533, Cranach’s artistic and entrepreneurial methods are evident in his productive use of his workshop. In that year, he was paid for “60 pairs of panels” on which he had pictures his two princes, undoubtedly as gifts for friends of the Elector. The details of these panels were undoubtedly done by assistants and Cranach may have only added final touches to the faces, as a kind of personal touch.

VI. Apothecary

Discussion of the productivity of Cranach’s workshop leads us naturally to consider his other, yet related activities in Wittenberg. As an artist, Cranach obviously needed particular colors. The connection of art to apothecary is not as distant as one might think. Since there were no stores from which to purchase pigments, artists had to make their own by using natural elements and chemicals which they could obtain. Art historians have noted, for example, that the color vermilion (a scarlet red) was crafted

³⁰ “Lucas Cranach, the Elder.” Britannica.

³¹ Ozment, 150.

³² Ozment, 250.

by alchemists from sulphur and mercury. These same alchemists were also in search of what was known as “the Philosopher’s Stone,” a substance imagined to be capable of turning base substances into gold and, also by some alchemical ideal, of rejuvenating or extending life. Evidence of such a connection is intriguingly portrayed in Cranach’s depiction of the mythological account of the “Judgment of Paris,” of which he painted a dozen different versions. In one of those scenes, he depicts this stone as an orb being held by the Greek god, Mercury, before Paris and the three goddesses waiting Paris’ decision as to which was the most beautiful. Venus, the goddess of love, was selected according to the myth, instead of Minerva—military prowess—or Juno—wealth and power. Interestingly, Cranach portrays himself with a white beard, symbolizing “white Mercury,” the element which is just before gold on an alchemist’s table of elements.

Archival evidence from Wittenberg indicates that sometime around 1511 or 1512, Cranach bought an abandoned pharmacy building. By 1520, the Elector had granted him a license to serve as an approved apothecary who was qualified to disperse natural and rare herbs and other healing medications and remedies. In addition to these medicinal products, Cranach’s apothecary distributed sealing wax, sugar, rat poison, beer, and wine.

The relationship of Cranach to this apothecary shop is intriguing since one of the most important early German pharmacists, Valerius Cordus (1515-1544), studied in Wittenberg and worked with Cranach from 1539 until his death. Records from the University of Wittenberg indicate that Cordus attended lectures by Philip Melancthon on Nikander of Colophon’s *Alexipharmaka*, a second-century BC toxicology reference work. In addition, Cordus himself gave lectures at the University in the winter semesters of 1539-40 and 1542-43. He authored a book, *Dispensatorium*, during his time in Wittenberg, demonstrating his close practical ties with Cranach’s apothecary experience. Noteworthy was the fact that Cordus used not only philology in his lectures, the common practice of the time, but also he drew from his own experiences.³³

His role in pharmacy is based primarily on the much-praised *Dispensatorium* (1546), which through a limited selection of prescriptions brought order for the first time into the unsystematic corpus of medicaments and soon became the obligatory standard for all of Germany. In addition to describing approximately 225 medicinal plants and minerals, Cordus also refers, with careful commentary, to the origin and adulteration of drugs. The undated

³³ Rudolf Schmitz, “Cordus, Valerius,” *Encyclopedia.com* Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2008.

first edition was quickly followed by the second and subsequent editions that made this first official pharmacopoeia known far beyond the borders of Germany. Cordus also is generally called the discoverer of ether, for which—probably based on work by his predecessors—he gave the first method of preparation in *De artificiosis extractionibus liber* (1561).³⁴

Inexplicably, this well-received publication was not printed by Cranach, but rather was published in Nuremberg two years after Cordus' death.

Cranach's apothecary shop remained in the Cranach family after Lucas the Elder's death, as Lucas the Younger continued the operation for twenty-seven more years. "Through the female line, the Cranach pharmacy remained in the family until the nineteenth century."³⁵

VII. Aristocrat

Cranach's workshop and apothecary as well as his other land holdings resulted in his persistently prominent position in Electoral Saxony, one of Germany's most powerful regions in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. Cranach was not only the chief artist of the electors and a prominent shop owner, he was recognized as an influential businessman in Wittenberg. As such he was recognized by the aristocracy of that whole region and would be elected to serve the community on several occasions. Christopher Scheurl's commendation of Cranach, mentioned above, continued: "Our Princes visit his workshop as often as State affairs and Divine Service allow, but they do this not as Alexander did on his visit to Apelles, trying to show off by making inexpert comments, and thus earning the derision of the painter's pupils and assistants, but in order to admire with the highest veneration the works of a genius, and to praise his pictures with the most exalted delight of soul."³⁶ By 1519, Cranach was elected for the first time to Wittenberg's twenty-one member city council as Treasurer (along with Christian Döring, his business partner), an office Cranach held again in 1531 and 1534.

Already in 1508, Cranach received a coat-of-arms from the Elector, which provided him with "the respect of every rank of royal servant and kin,

³⁴ Schmitz.

³⁵ Ozment, 118, citing Heinz Lüdecke, *Lucas Cranach Der Ältere Im Spiegel Seiner Zeit: Aus Urkunden, Chroniken, Briefen, Reden Und Gedichten. Im Auftrag Der Deutschen Akademie Der Künste Hrsg. Und Erläutert* (Berlin: Rütten und Loening, 1953), 61-64, 107.

³⁶ Wiltzinger, 8-9.

including prelates, freemen, lords, knights, and counts.³⁷ This heraldic insignia thus gave him aristocratic privilege. Cranach's coat-of-arms is quite



unique in an enigmatic way. It has been described as follows:

It set a black, bat-winged serpent against a bright yellow shield, its wings shooting skyward. Wearing a red crown on its head, the serpent bites down on a ruby ring set in gold. Atop the ensemble sits a blue and gold warrior's helmet capped with green thorns, above which the serpent replicates itself. Interpretations of the shield are varied and not a few impenetrable. The winged serpent signifies Chronos, the Greek god of time, a name Cranach occasionally applied to himself in an apparent humanistic embrace of antiquity. In classical mythology, a snake biting down on a golden ring represented eternal life, and bat wings were associated with dragons. In contemporary German folktales, both crowns and rings, as those seen here, conveyed magical powers. The tribute was to Cranach's ability to paint remarkably fast, creating images of the present that would keep for posterity, hence, an artist whose work was both plentiful and enduring. Adorning the shield are the traditional black and yellow Saxon colors of a loyal Saxon vassal.³⁸

This coat of arms would grace almost every work Cranach or his studio published, painted, or portrayed throughout his life and that of his son.

According to city documents, by the late 1520s, Cranach possessed the greatest amount of real estate in Wittenberg. The town itself was growing exponentially at this time. City records indicate that during the academic

³⁷ Ozment, 70. Detail from 1514 painting, signature of Lucas Cranach the Elder: snake. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Mattes/Favorite_files/Images/C/Arts#/media/File:Podpis_had_cranach_starsi.jpg

³⁸ Ozment, 70.

year of 1520-1521, the student population soared to twenty-three thousand students, roughly comparable to the non-student population of Wittenberg!³⁹

Along with his aristocratic status, Cranach apparently assumed some diplomatic importance. Sometime in late 1523, Cranach accompanied the Elector to the Diet of Nuremberg, where he reconnected with his friend and fellow artist, Albrecht Dürer. Dürer completed a portrait of Cranach at that time. [See illustration.⁴⁰]



After the death of Elector Frederick the Wise (1525), Cranach remained in the services of Elector John the Steadfast. It was during John's electorate that Cranach was again elected as *Ratsherr* (Councilman) of Wittenberg (1531-1533). His concern for the Wittenberg community and the common man echoes Luther's own interest in helping the community know Christ and God's graciousness.

One interesting quality of Cranach, as an aristocratic entrepreneur, is his association with one of Luther's greatest opponents and adversaries, Prince Albrecht of Brandenburg, who was also Cardinal Archbishop of Mainz and Magdeburg—appointments which cost him 30,000 golden gulden (approximately \$25,000 today). As a patron of the arts, Albrecht commissioned several portraits of himself by Cranach, including one which showed him praying absent-mindedly before a crucifix and another as Jerome. In 1972, a German writer quipped that few other artists were capable of portraying "contemporaries with such merciless frankness as did Lucas Cranach the Elder in his portrait of Cardinal Albrecht of

³⁹ Ozment, 104, citing Lüdecke, 65-68, and Strehle, *Lucas Cranach d. Ä. in Wittenberg*, 68.

⁴⁰ <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Duerer-cranach-1524.jpg>

Brandenburg... If ever a painting could be described as a public execution, then this is it.⁴¹ In spite of such a caustic depiction, the Cardinal apparently wanted to keep some semblance of congeniality between himself and Luther, since he sent Luther and Katharine a wedding gift of twenty gulden.

When Elector John the Steadfast died in 1532, Cranach continued serving the new elector, John Frederick, the Magnanimous. From 1537-38, he served again as *Ratsherr*, and the next year, 1538-1539, he was elected as *Bürgermeister* (Mayor), a position he held two more times (1540-1541 and 1543-1544), and then completed another year as *Ratherr* in 1544-1545.

VIII. Death and Legacy

In 1547, a year after Luther's death, Cranach lost his position as court painter, when Elector John Fredrick was wounded and captured at the Battle of Mühlberg by the imperial troops. Cranach joined the Elector in exile in Augsburg around 1550 (and later in Innsbruck). During that period Cranach again met Emperor Charles V, who remembered him from 40 years earlier and told him that Cranach's portrait of the 8-year old prince was still in his possession. As a result, the Emperor exhibited a favorable attitude toward Cranach, who knelt before the Emperor, asking only for pardon for his captured master, to which the Emperor agreed. While at Augsburg, Cranach met the famous Italian painter, Titian, who had been invited to paint King Philip II of Spain. That encounter, although noteworthy historically, did not have any apparent effect on Cranach's artistic style during the last years of his life. After his father's departure from Wittenberg, Lucas the Younger remained there as an overseer of the workshop, producing many works in the style of his father, much to the dismay of many art critics today!

At the time of his release in 1552, Elector John Frederick travelled north to Weimar accompanied by Cranach. That next year, while staying with his daughter, Barbara, in Weimar, Cranach died on October 16th at the age of 81, an unusually long life for a person in the sixteenth century. He was productive until the end.

One illuminating portrait of Cranach comes from his later years, when he was 78. For many years, it was considered a self-portrait, although now most art critics attribute it to his son, Lucas the Younger. In that portrait, one sees a very distinguished elder with a forked beard and penetrating eyes. A similar portrait of Cranach is given in the Weimar altarpiece (1555)

Lucas Cranach is honored in our Lutheran liturgical calendar on April

⁴¹ Götz Fehr, "Lucas Cranach Eye-witness of an Era," *Lucas Cranach 1472/1972*, translated by K. Neil Key (Bonn: Inter Nationes, 1972), 3.

6th along with Albrecht Dürer. In Europe, artists and theologians have rediscovered Cranach and his workshop. Exhibitions of Cranach's work have mushroomed. Over a thousand works exist of which 400 are by Cranach himself and 600 are from his workshop, which is probably only 10% of the total production.⁴² Götz Fehr, a German art critic, commented about Cranach's art:

He portrays people as if they were landscapes, and landscapes as if they were people, he creates atmospheres as symbolic representations of moral situations, and both through and in the faces he portrays, he reveals the essential quality of the changing era....He was the most observant and reliable chronicler of his time.

Two main threads are united in Cranach's work, the craftsmanship of the painter and the analyzing spirit of the committed observer. For him history became art, and art history. This makes him unique among German artists, and explains why his work is so highly regarded abroad. He is more than a painter, he is a witness of world history.⁴³

Lucas Cranach was certainly a man of his time, but also a man for all time. His artistic abilities and his entrepreneurial skills made him a key figure for the expansion of Luther's Reformation message. His understanding and portrayal of the Gospel and his ability to depict many of the most important Reformation figures have made his artistry a key to appreciating the Reformation for five hundred years.

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⁴² Ozment, 6. It should be noted here that Cranach's first biographer was Matthias Gunderam (1556). Curiously, Cranach never left any specific information on himself as did Albrecht Dürer. Dürer, for example, left personal diaries and correspondence along with comments on his work. The extant archives from Wittenberg and the region contain no opinions or plans or descriptions of how Cranach viewed or even interpreted his own work.

⁴³ Fehr, 5.

Martin Luther and the Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel: A Living Legacy

Jonathan Mumme

“Distinguishing Law and Gospel is the heart and core and guts of everything you do in theology.”¹ Given that Martin Luther identified the reformational turn and the decisive development in his understanding of theology with the Gospel coming to be properly distinguished from the Law,² it is perhaps no surprise that a teacher of Lutheran theology would utter so bold a statement to a group of students, who were shortly to undertake preparations toward the office of the holy ministry at a seminary. And yet in doing so, Brian Mosemann set himself apart from a good deal, certainly the greater portion, of Luther’s nominal heirs. For it is not unfair to say that most Lutherans, at least those of the English-speaking variety, view the distinction between Law and Gospel as something of a birthright, a patrimony that they have in their pocket or under their thumb ever since great-grandpa Luther bequeathed it to them. It is often seen as a *locus*, among *loci*, that is treated, understood, and can be hauled out for a quick rehearsal at a moment’s notice: “The Law shows our sin; the Gospel shows our Savior. Law – not nice; Gospel – nice. O.K., that’s that. What’s on the syllabus for tomorrow?” When not always so trivially as portrayed here, Law and Gospel are often treated as a topic that can be checked off, and so are checked off. Instead Law and Gospel are rightly recognized as the fundamental way in which God deals with human beings all the time and so are the very shape and contours of all theology and the pattern according to which all life plays out around us in a fallen world – a world for which the Son of its Creator took on flesh and died, that things with this world might finally play in the way of the Gospel, instead of only according to the Law.

“The Gospel is what Lutherans care about” – not as their trademark or their particular heritage, but as “that source of our life as Christ’s,” which

¹ Brian Mosemann (then professor for systematic theology at Concordia University Chicago) to a group of seniors in the university’s pre-seminary program, Nov. 14, 1999. An initial version of this paper was delivered as an address for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Westfield House on February 25, 2012.

² *D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Tischreden* [hereafter *WA TR*] (Weimar: Böhlau, 1912ff.) 5:210,12-16, no. 5518 from the year 1542; *Luther’s Works* [hereafter *LW*], ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1955ff.) 55:442f.. Cf. Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther’s Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp, (Grand Rapids, MI and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2008), 58.

“may not be denied or diminished,” whose “magnitude ... is recognized by contrast with the Law, and particularly its function of disclosing sin.”³ These words are borrowed from Norman Nagel, then Dean of the Chapel of the Resurrection at Valparaiso University. During his subsequent tenure at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis⁴ he led an annual graduate seminar on Luther, one year on this bit, the next on that, but always with the proper distinction as the North Star to navigating and finally gleaning Luther.

This distinction between the Law and [the] Gospel is the highest art of Christendom, which each and every one who is proud to call himself a Christian can and should understand. For where this bit is missing, there one can't tell a Christian from a heathen or a Jew.⁵

He who knows this art, [who can] separate the Gospel out from the Law – put him right up front and call him a doctor of Holy Scripture.⁶

Though certainly reflected in such quotable *dicta heroica* of the Wittenberg professor, preacher, and reformer, one has, by quoting them, done little more for students of theology than tell them that the proper distinction between Law and Gospel is important, a message which itself can work in the way of the Law.

The proper distinction between Law and Gospel is not, finally, taught by talking about the Law, or the Gospel, or their relationship to one another, though some definitions and delineation of characteristics can be of help.⁷ The Law demands; the Gospel gives. The Law accuses; forgiving, the Gospel silences accusation. The Law works in the way of sensible mathematics, which plays out in fractions, comparisons, and all manner of talk about progress and regress, generating self-assurance and security on the one

³ Norman E. Nagel, “The Gospel is What Lutherans Care About,” *The Springfielder* 27,2 (1973): 118-20.

⁴ 1983-2007.

⁵ *D. Martin Luthers Werke kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1883ff.) [hereafter WA] 36:25,21-25; see n19 below.

⁶ Luther, WA 36:29,32-34; see n19 below.

⁷ In addition to the following see also Theodosius Harnack, “Gesetz und Evangelium” in *Luthers Theologie mit besonderer Beziehung auf seine Versöhnungs- und Erlösungslehre, Erste Abtheilung: Luthers theologische Grundanschauungen* (Erlangen: Blaesing, 1862; reprinted Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1969), 475-599. Following Luther he defines the Law, according to its essence, as (the expression of) God's eternal, irrefutable, unchangeable will; his eternal, unchangeable judgment (p. 491). According to its office, the Law is that word of God that demands righteousness and punishes unrighteousness; it shows sin and reveals God's wrath (p. 504f.). The Law kills, “so that you may be made truly alive through Christ” (p. 511).

hand and despair on the other; the Law leaves life in the swing of a bi-polar pendulum of religiosity – this week determination and commitment, next week despondency. The Gospel works in the way of wholes and finally makes nonsense of religion's normal mathematics. It frees speech and life – it frees persons – from being run under the rubrics of need and necessity and from being driven by certain modal verbs (must, should, ought, have to) according to which our thinking and behavior are hardwired as fallen people in a fallen world. With the Law, there is some cost to us; the Gospel comes free, as a gift. The Law is irresistible, the Gospel resistible.⁸ The Law kills; the Gospel gives life – this in the way of some definitions. But the distinction is not so much taught in talking *about* the Law and the Gospel as it is *caught* in being struck by these two distinct words and workings of God, and then also by observing how they play out with others as they are struck by them. “The Lord strikes with His Words,” stated Nagel in 1988. “The target is you.”⁹

I. Luther's Law and Gospel

Luther can be of help on both accounts, not only in talking *about* the Law and the Gospel, but also in his tacit cognizance of how Law and Gospel are playing out in a given situation as he then *applies* the distinction *actively* to the topic or situation at hand.¹⁰ Especially if one moves beyond those points where Luther is talking *about* Law and Gospel, to where he is *actively applying* Law and Gospel, then looking for the proper distinction in Luther's works is indeed, “like looking for a piece of hay in a haystack.”¹¹ The bounty of those gifts is not restricted to the limits of this little paper. What to do? What bits of hay from the haystack for a paper that has promised something of *Luther* and the proper distinction? Luther's legacy can be of help.

Wherever the proper distinction is in play, there is usually a bit of legacy floating around – a bit of who caught what where via whom. Thomas M. Winger, whose “Readings in Luther” seminar would trace the proper distinction through Luther's “Invocavit Sermons” and pastoral practice of

⁸ Nagel, “The Gospel,” 119: “Our competence does not rise above our ability to reject him. He suffers himself to be rejected. His saving way is the gracious giving way which is the way of his Spirit with the means of grace. Outside the means of grace his working with his power is irresistible.”

⁹ Norman Nagel, “Law and Gospel according to Luther,” audio cassette, from the Law and Gospel Retreat at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 24 Sept 1988 (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Media Services, 1988); in the holdings of Concordia Seminary's library, cos1 CASS 88-8 pt. 4.

¹⁰ In active application of Law and Gospel one does not need to speak of the “Law” and the “Gospel”, one does not need to talk about them or even mention them in order to be applying them. Luther can and does distinguish Law and Gospel and apply Law and Gospel where he does not mention “Law” and “Gospel”.

¹¹ Nagel, “Law and Gospel”.

1522, crossed paths, as did Mosemann, with Nagel at St. Louis, who long before his arrival at the seminary where the legacy of C. F. W. Walther's *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*¹² was held high, studied under Werner Elert in Erlangen, who was preceded there, among others by Theodosius Harnack, author of the two volume *Luther's Theology with special reference to his Doctrine of Reconciliation and Redemption*, the last section of whose first volume is entitled "Law and Gospel".¹³ That happy web needs a seminar of its own to sort it out; we turn to Walther and to Harnack for some help with Luther's haystack of Law and Gospel.

Five years Walther's junior, Theodosius Harnack was born in 1816. In 1837, the year before the Saxon Walther set out from Bremen for Missouri, Harnack completed his theological studies in Dorpat, now Tartu (Estonia), where he later served two tenures as professor for practical theology (1848-52 and 1866-75). The intervening years were spent on the theological faculty at Erlangen (1853-66).¹⁴ Out of these years in Erlangen, at that time "the center of the new Lutheran theology,"¹⁵ came not only his influential book on the church, its ministry, and its governance¹⁶ but also his first volume

¹² C. F. W. Walther, *Die rechte Unterscheidung von Gesetz und Evangelium: 39 Abendvorträge* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1897); trans. W. H. T. Dau, *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel: 39 Evening Lectures* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1986); trans. Christian C. Tiews, *Law & Gospel: How to Read and Apply the Bible* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2010).

¹³ Harnack, *Luthers Theologie* 1:578-99. The fourth "book" of Harnack's first volume is actually entitled "Law and Gospel as well (1:475-599; cf. n7 above); it deals mainly with the office of the Law and the Law in the economy of salvation before coming to its final section (§. 32.) on the Law and the Gospel at the aforementioned pages.

¹⁴ Harnack also taught systematic theology for one year in Dorpat, 1852/53. Bernd Schröder, "Harnack 1, Theodosius Andreas" in *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000) 3:1457.

¹⁵ Manfred Seitz and Michael Herbst, "Harnack, Theodosius (1816-1889)" in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* [hereafter *TRE*] (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984) 14:458-62, citation p. 459.

¹⁶ *Die Kirche, Ihr Amt, Ihr Regiment: Grundlegende Sätze mit durchgehender Bezugnahme auf die symbolischen Bücher der lutherischen Kirche, zur Prüfung und Verständigung hinausgegeben* (1862) (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1947). Holsten Fagerberg, *Bekenntnis, Kirche und Amt in der deutschen konfessionellen Theologie des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Uppsala/Wiesbaden: Lundequistska/Harrassowitz, 1952) sees Harnack's irenic, summarizing work bringing a sort of close to the debate surround the office of the ministry that had been raging in German Lutheranism at the middle of the nineteenth century (p.118). His work, as also Walther's (*Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt* [Erlangen: Blaesing, 1852]; trans. J. T. Mueller, *Church and Ministry* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1987]), Fagerberg describes as a "Versuch zur Synthese" ("an attempt at sythesis", p. 118; cf. x and 111f.).

on the theology of Martin Luther.¹⁷ Harnack, like Walther, was influenced both by Pietism and by the revival movements of the nineteenth century. After the systematization and domestication of Law and Gospel in Lutheran theology during the age of Lutheran orthodoxy, Pietism exhibited the tendency to psychologize the distinction and use it as a sort of pedagogical tool toward proper Christian conduct, seeing the Law and the Gospel as types of motivation for conversion and (further) sanctification. Similar to the theology of the Enlightenment, which saw the notions of the wrath of God as now overcome in the development of the history of religion, Pietism also did not consider it fitting to confront sinners with the indignation of a righteous God. However, pietism was not Harnack's only influence, and he came to be associated with a *particular* revival, namely the confessional revival afoot among some German Lutherans of his day. On this basis he found himself opposite the prominent figure of Albrecht Ritschl, professor in Bonn and Göttingen, whose theological approach could entirely do without the second usage of the Law; for Ritschl the Gospel equaled enablement to live as a moral individual, thereby helping realize the Kingdom of God. Thus it is not a certain law-mindedness that incites Harnack to approach Law and Gospel primarily from the place of the Law in Luther's theology, but rather the theological conviction that he garnered from Luther: "His *doctrine of the Law* can be described as *the dialectic to his doctrine of the Gospel*." "[The Law] decisively engages every dimension of Luther's theology and spreads out in all decisive relationships that can possibly come up, be they generally in man's relation to God [or] more specifically in the doctrine of reconciliation and redemption, justification and sanctification."¹⁸

Harnack's aims were thus rather different than those of C. F. W. Walther in his 1884 and 1885 evening lectures at in the Baier auditorium of Concordia Seminary. Though keenly aware of a general religious context shaped by Pietism and Rationalism, Walther also showed himself cognizant of particular American phenomena as well. And his lectures do not have the feel of a written, academic treatise about them, but rather the sense of what

¹⁷ See n7 above. Hans-Martin Barth, "Gesetz und Evangelium I" in *TRE* 13:129,35-37, notes its importance for the Luther Renaissance of the early twentieth century. We rely on Barth's article (13:126-42) for much of this paragraph. Werner Elert, who recommended Harnack's work as one of the first books that a student of theology should have in his library, was very impressed by the its christological direction, which persists throughout, by its impressive presentation of Luther's doctrine of predestination, and by its foundation in Christ's mediation of salvation. According to Elert, Harnack gives evidence that "with Luther the wrath of God is not just a dark background for the lighter side of his doctrine of salvation or just some residue of his theology as a monk." He shows that "only in relation to [the wrath of God] can the paradox be felt, which makes Christ the Christ of faith." Citations from Seitz und Herbst, "Harnack, Theodosius", 459, who are quoting *Theologische Literatur-Zeitung* 49 (1928):330-32.

¹⁸ Harnack, *Luthers Theologie* 1:521.

they were: a theologian and minister of the church talking to future ministers of the church about a distinction fundamental to the task of theology and finally to all pastoral care. Thus Walther, who also makes good use of Luther, does so differently than does Harnack. He pulls out a bit here (often an extended bit) and an example there, using them as a starting point for the explication of his theses; the method at times is almost expository. Walther carries with Luther here and there, whereas Harnack serves him up in gobs. As near as I can calculate, Walther makes use of 47 different works of Luther in the 401 pages of the original German edition; Harnack makes use of 47 different works in just the last 21 pages of his book, as he deals with “Law and Gospel”. Leaving aside the mound of hay they both pull from Luther’s greater commentary on Galatians (1535) five other pieces of hay overlap.¹⁹ Helped along by a bit of legacy, we arrive at Luther, who has no shortage of things to show and tell of these two words of God in just five writings.

II. Luther’s Legacy

Having tracked a few bits of legacy back to Luther, we see that he too was often up to defining things, stating what the Law and the Gospel are, what their respective offices or works entail, and what they variously effect. “The Law...is the word of perdition, the word of wrath, the word of grief, the word of pain, the voice of the judge and the accuser, the word of agitation, the word of the curse.”²⁰ Its job or office is to terrify the unrepentant with the wrath and hostility of God turned in their direction.²¹ The Gospel is “a preaching of the incarnate Son of God, who is given to us for salvation and peace without our merit. That is the word of salvation, the word of solace, the word of comfort, the word of joy, the voice of the bridegroom and the bride, the good word, the word of peace....”²² The Gospel’s office is to preach forgiveness of sins to heavy consciences.²³ “[The Gospel] promises; [the Law] commands. The Gospel gives and bids receive; the Law requires and says, ‘This you should do.’”²⁴ These two messages are distinct in

¹⁹ Titles, dates, and references according to Kurt Aland, *Hilfsbuch zum Lutherstudium*, 4th ed. (Bielefeld: Luther-Verlag, 1996): “Resolutiones disputationum de indulgentiarum virtute”, 1518 (WA 1:525-628); Po. 28 (on Gal 4:1-7), 1522 (WA 10/II1:324-78); Po. 142 (on Jn 6:44-51), 1527 (WA 17/II:427-35); “Wie das Gesetz und Evangelium recht gründlich zu unterscheiden sind”, 1532 (WA 36:8-42); “Wider die Antinomer”, 1539 (WA 50:468-477). The last of these works appears as “Against the Antinomians”, trans. Martin H. Bertram, in *LW* 47:107-19.

²⁰ WA 1:616,24-26.

²¹ WA 36:26,29-31. On the Law as the revelation of God’s wrath see also WA 50:474,20f.

²² WA 1:616,20-23.

²³ WA 36:26,31f.

²⁴ WA 36:32,21f.

essence, office, and effect: "For these are two different things, taking and giving, terrifying and making glad. The Law demands of us and terrifies, but the Gospel gives to us and comforts."²⁵ Though distinct, they, when properly distinguished are never apart from one another. The work of the Law is God's alien work, where his word knocks everything to the ground, making the mountains valleys and leveling the hills, so that all hearts that are struck by it must despair,²⁶ and must conclude that they are damned.²⁷ God creates room ready for the Gospel, his proper work; the one who had been closed to the gifts God would give is now open to hear of help and be comforted; his ears have been tuned to hear the promise of God.²⁸

On the receiving end of God's alien and proper works are persons, and not just any persons, but sinners through and through. Sinners are the targets of God's Law and Gospel. Luther's understanding of the depravity of human sinfulness is nothing short of radical. Not only, for example, are we incapable of producing good works before being justified,²⁹ but even our good works are in need of God's mercy;³⁰ there is nothing good in us that is not forgiven. The bleak anthropology of man, the sinner, under the Law is illustrated in the figure of Cain. On the one hand man would storm heaven with his works, laying claim on God; here we are left standing as heavy-laden camels before the needle's eye of faith. Only in casting aside all that we would bring, all our claims on him may we enter.³¹ If the path of presumption fails then the path of self-abasing humility shapes man's religion; like Cain he refuses to look up, refuses to believe that God is a dear Father, favorably disposed to him: "God preserve me from such horrible heresy and overconfidence! Should I, a poor sinner, be so proud and say that I am God's child? No, no, I'll humble myself and recognize the fact that I am a poor sinner, etc."³² We are those whose "hearts would punish us,"³³ and so we come to live our lives in narrow places, frightened, startled, and scared by every leaf that blows across our path.³⁴

The one who has man, the sinner, (be he storming heaven armed to the

²⁵ WA 36:41,25-27.

²⁶ WA 17/II:429,29-38; see Is 40:4.

²⁷ WA 17/II:430,2.

²⁸ WA 17/II:430,3-9.

²⁹ WA 10/I(1):325,14-21.

³⁰ WA 1:623,8-10.

³¹ WA 10/I(1),330,17ff.

³² WA 10/I(1):371,15-18.

³³ WA 10/I(1):373,11.

³⁴ WA 10/I(1):372,8-10; the allusion is to Lev 26:36.

hilt with his works or quivering in the corner) in his sights is God. He is just and can demand of man, the sinner, all manner of things that man cannot render, not the least of which is righteousness. He can condemn him, and does, and this unto death. But this is not the God that he would be. He would instead be a helper, comforter, and one who blesses and makes blessed. He would not be other than Savior, Helper, and Giver of Salvation.³⁵ The honor of this God is not found in being given to, but in giving.³⁶ He is maximally the God that he would be when things are playing out according to the description of Ps 81:11: "I am the LORD your God, who led you out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it!"³⁷

God, the just and would-be Giver, takes aim at and strikes man, the sinner, neither ambiguously nor halfway. In accord with his own incarnation he brings himself near; he is after the sinner, both the overconfident, heaven-storming type and the cowering, despondent type. He brings himself near by sending preachers who preach his word as two words.³⁸ Though the Law of God is finally inescapable,³⁹ God does man the sinister, left-handed service of having that Law preached to him nonetheless. He sees to it that the lot of confident heaven-stormers hears that they are far from their mark. "Right and evangelical preaching is to make sin great, as much as is possible, so that man [be brought] to fear and come to right repentance."⁴⁰ "Thus man comes to be anxious about God and doesn't know what to do; he gets a bad conscience and is faint of heart, and if someone weren't to come to his aid soon, he'd be in despair forever."⁴¹ To the disheartened, stricken bunch the preachers bring a different word, a word of comfort and joy. This preached word works faith, thereby delivering as a gift itself that disposition of looking to God for and receiving from God all good gifts.⁴² Faith as sure confidence has its concrete reference point for such happy certainty in the preached Gospel and in the administered sacraments, wherein the salvation

³⁵ WA 17/II:430,19-25.

³⁶ WA 1:616,39-617,3.

³⁷ WA 17/II:430,25-27. Cf. the Large Catechism's descriptions and definitions of God as the Giver: LC 1,2 (*Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* [hereafter *BSLK*], 11th ed. [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992], 560,10-13; *The Book of Concord* [hereafter *BC*], ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert [Minneapolis, Fortress, 2000], 386). He is likened to a fountain; the more he pours forth what he pours forth, the more he is what he is: LC III,56 (*BSLK* 674,39-44; *BC*, 447).

³⁸ WA 17/II:431,10-25.

³⁹ WA 50:471,22-26; LW 47:110f. Cf. also 50:474,35-475,1; LW 47:115.

⁴⁰ WA 1:622,18f.

⁴¹ WA 17/II:431,31-34.

⁴² See WA 10/I(1):328,11-15.

won by Christ is delivered and man, the sinner, is justified.⁴³ “When this happens the heart gets happy and runs to such grace as a thirsty deer runs to water.”⁴⁴

God’s twofold work of leveling and killing the sinner in order that he may raise him up and make him alive is, as Luther presents it, a contested work. Man hangs between God and the Devil in a cosmic battle, in which man himself is the prize. The Devil, who is a murderer from the beginning and the father of lies,⁴⁵ has all manner of deceptions up his sleeve – cards that he plays in order to have man, the sinner, living on his own and so finally dead, rather than to see man, the sinner, killed by God and made alive. One such card⁴⁶ is the one by which he would trump or negate the Law of God in conscience. He can and does play this card in both regiments,⁴⁷ drawing a line through “the Law”.⁴⁸ Before Harnack had his hands full with this phenomenon in the nineteenth century, Luther had his hands full with it in the sixteenth as confronted with the Antinomians. We dare not make straw men of the Antinomians, as if they were somehow not talking about Christ or doing their work outside of the church. That which is against Christ (anti-Christ), is always to be found *in* the church.⁴⁹ The Antinomians were Antinomians precisely in the way they preached *Christ*; to be sure they were interested in seeing people repent and be turned to Christ. This

⁴³ WA 10/1(1):331,15-22 and 332,4.

⁴⁴ WA 17/II:431,38-439,1. The allusion is to Ps 42:1 (see WA 17/II:432,1-4).

⁴⁵ Cf. Jn 8:44.

⁴⁶ For another, see WA 36:32,27-37; the Law has a proper goal, but the Devil directs it toward other, improper ends.

⁴⁷ We can here, only deal with one regiment and so only speak of the church. As an example of the Devil drawing a line through the Law in the other regiment we note that now, some 50 years after the onset of the sexual revolution, more than just infractions of a specifically Christian piety against the Sixth Commandment seem to have been the goal. In a step to silence consciences that somehow still aren’t free enough to be still, all manner of “partners” in all manner of relationships cry for societal sanctioning through the bestowal of the title “marriage”; and who could deny married “partners” the right to have, even if they can’t beget, children? (The laboratory must, in this case, catch up to the forum, which has overtaken it.) The negation of the Law as summarized in the Sixth Commandment will not stop short of the dissolution of the Fourth Commandment, wherein the *Catechisms* identify the very foundation of the ordered governance of the created world, which would mean the dissolution of what we call “society.” If children are not ordered to “father and ... mother” (Ex 20:12; SC 1,8 [BSLK 508,21-25; BC 352]; LC 1,103-78 [BSLK 586,34-605,34; BC 400-10]), at the very foundation of society we are left with nothing more than the commitment of individuals to one another. Will that be a place where hearts can find rest and security (cf. esp. LC 1,134 [BSLK 584,32-44; BC 404f.]?)

⁴⁸ WA 50:474,34f.: “Thus they do nothing more than throw these poor letters “L A W” away.” (See LW 47:115.)

⁴⁹ 2 Thes 2:3f.; cf. Wolfgang Hühne, *Luthers Anschauungen über die Kontinuität der Kirche* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1963), esp. 77f., and Otto Hermann Pesch, “Luther und die Kirche,” *Lutherjahrbuch* 52 (1985): 113-39, esp. 131.

repentance, however, was to be brought about by preaching grace in all its sweetness and by pointing to the sufferings of Christ.⁵⁰ In their way of doing things there was no point where man, the sinner, is ever made insecure. The so-called Gospel of Antinomians finds people who are secure and offers them religious, Christian, sweet-Jesus-type security. A bit too much like so much lingo of modern mission work and evangelism, which talks almost exclusively about “telling the love of God” or “sharing the Gospel” as it describes its work, Luther diagnosed the deceptive work of the Devil behind the preaching of the Antinomians. The proclamation of sweet security in Jesus to those who have not been brought to know the terror and despair of death as the wages of sin through the preaching of the Law is but a setup; the Devil rolls this red-carpet *evangel* out only to pull the rug out from under the same peoples’ feet as he confronts them later with death, suffering, or a conscience that still bugs them for some reason. If you’ve only known sweet Jesus, he must surely have exited at some point if your situation has now turned sour.⁵¹ No preaching of the Law = no true knowledge of sin = no true knowledge of Christ. So if the Devil can displace the Law he can displace Christ.⁵² Of such is the dissolution of the church.

Thus far a legacy of five pieces of Law and Gospel from Luther’s much larger stack of hay, delivered to us by way of Harnack and Walther.

III. Law and Gospel Today

In speaking of a living legacy we would speak, however, not just of the past, but of the present, and with eyes tuned toward the future. In that regard two thoughts, or theses if you will, are here offered as bits of hay for rumination as we consider theology and theological education today and into the future. The first is more of a systematic or dogmatic nature, the second more of a confessional or symbolic nature, with both relating to the other. But first, as a point of comparison, I mention three theses from Karl Barth, which formed the backdrop to his 1922 lecture entitled, “The Word of God as the Task of Theology”. Therein the yet young professor in Göttingen confronts his audience with what he believes to be the crux or paradox of doing theology. “[1] As theologians we ought to speak of God. [2] But we are humans and as such cannot speak of God. [3] We ought to do both, to know the ‘ought’ and the ‘not able to,’ and precisely in this way give God the

⁵⁰ WA 50:472,14-20.

⁵¹ WA 50:471,31-37.

⁵² WA 50:471,9-21 and 463,6-10. If we have understood Harnack correctly, this is precisely the *evangelical* reason for his emphasis on the Law in approaching Luther’s theology.

glory.”⁵³

1.: The primary domain of the proper distinction between Law and Gospel is that domain defined by the care of souls and that domain wherein the Christian encounters his fellow man. Law and Gospel as a theological category and locus follow.

This rehearses a point mentioned earlier, namely that this distinction is a living distinction, an applied distinction. Though one can talk *about* it, it is never really grasped, but more caught, observed, and recognized as it plays out around us, and more decisively *for* us, and hopefully also *through* us.⁵⁴

Sadly, looking at the paper I’ve composed, I realize just how far short of affirming this thesis I am in practice today. I am doing little more than talking about “the Law” and “the Gospel.” Bo Giertz, the bishop of Gothenburg, rose better to the occasion. His lecture on “The Freedom we have in Christ” is a marvelous example of Law and Gospel being distinguished in the task at hand without ever mentioning the terms.⁵⁵ Giertz did the by speaking of “freedom” and “slavery,” words that could be heard and understood even by non-religious or non-Christian ears. He obviously had experience in applying this distinction in the sphere of where his vocation placed him in regard to his fellow man, speaking to a society that had already then mistaken “carnal liberty” for freedom.

We live and move in a one-word world, and we, as human beings in this fallen place that we call home, are hard-wired to think, and live, and be nothing more and nothing other than one-word people. Every action has an equal and opposite reaction; this rule of physics is also the expected norm of our social interactions. If a bit more civil than “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,” and “tit for tat,” certainly still true are the friendlier but finally burdensome forms of, “You scratch my back; I’ll scratch yours,” “One good turn deserves another,” and the need to return all favors. Even if someone takes us out to lunch the old dictum, “There’s no such thing as a free lunch,”

⁵³ “Das Wort Gottes als Aufgabe der Theologie” in *Anfänge der dialektischen Theologie, Teil I.*, ed. Jürgen Moltmann (Munich: Kaiser, 1962), 197-218; English translation: “The Word of God as the Task of Theology”, in *The Word of God and Theology*, trans. Amy Marga, (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2011), 174-198, citation from p. 177; numbers in brackets added by J. Mumme.

⁵⁴ In recent years both Oswald Bayer and Gerhard O. Forde have called attention to proclamation as the hub or primary venue of theology.

⁵⁵ “The Freedom We have in Christ: Lecture delivered by The Right Reverend Bo Giertz, Bishop of Gothenburg, at the Inauguration of Westfield House, Cambridge, as a Lutheran House of Studies, 22 February 1962, (London: Concordia Publishing House Ltd); reprinted with introduction by Norman Nagel in *Lord Jesus Christ, Will You not Stay: Essays in Honor of Ronald Feuerhahn on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. J. Bart Day et. al., (St. Louis: Concordia, 2002), 9-21. Cf. WA 50:473,16f.: “Thus, where one will preach Christ, the Law must indeed be preached, even if one doesn’t want to mention the word ‘Law.’” (see LW 47:113).

rings rightly in the back of our minds.

Herein, and not in the fact that we are humans, lies our problem with speaking of God. Across the board our language and actions betray a denial of our fundamental identity, namely that of creatures whose Creator defines himself as and would be nothing other than the Giver of all good things.⁵⁶ In our conversations and actions we give constant witness to the fact that we, as our first parents, are cursed with and actively opt for an existence in which we must now take, work, struggle, and do⁵⁷ in order to have the identity that we have and to achieve what we would be and would accomplish. This is the sweat of which our faces never dry.⁵⁸

The Gospel breaks into this one-word world as a foreign word⁵⁹ that Christ mandated be preached, along with the call to repentance of all our hard-wired communication and modes of obligatory interaction. His mandate sees to it that men not only speak *of* God, but that they speak *for* God⁶⁰ and *as* God.⁶¹ Revelation, “[t]hat God has spoken[,] is not yet good news[.]”⁶² In order that there be a second word in the current world, the Lord gave to specific persons the mandate to preach that second word and its way-paving first word: the Eleven, then Matthias, and Paul, later Timothy and Titus, and others whom they were putting in place as ministers. So utterly in the way of divine monergism is Christ’s mandated delivery of this foreign word that even Judas can be in on carrying it out.⁶³ The first point in theology is not an “ought”, but an “is”.

Theology is not a task. It is an office, which Christ himself carries out by means of men whom he has given to speak for him and in his place. In this way he delivers to people living under the curse of self-definition, self-realization, and self-preservation an utterly foreign word, a language that they do not understand, a news that is actually fully good. Thus he brings the Gospel, which sets the cursed free. The divine monergism of theology as

⁵⁶ See n37 above.

⁵⁷ Cf. Gen 3:6, 16-18.

⁵⁸ Cf. Gen 3:19.

⁵⁹ Cf. Ps 81:5f.: “I hear a language I had not known. I relieved your shoulder of the burden, your hands were freed from the basket.” (ESV).

⁶⁰ Lk 10:16: “He who hears you hears me.”; the Lutheran Confessions make ready reference to this verse.

⁶¹ See, for example, SC IV,16,26-28 (BSLK 517,10-18 and 519,15-26; BC 360f.; at issue in IV,28, as Bente recognized [*Concordia Triglotta* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1921), 555], is not whether or not the penitent has some faith [as the translation in BC would suggest], but whether or not he or she believes what the confessor has just asked, namely that his forgiveness is God’s own forgiveness).

⁶² Nagel, “Law and Gospel”.

⁶³ See Acts 1:16f.; cf. CA VIII (BSLK 62,1-16; BC 42f.).

Christ's own mediately administered office is found in the fact that for those who receive the Gospel, this word is and remains no matter of reciprocal obligation, but is rather "a hope which is in [them],"⁶⁴ of which they are always all too ready to tell, as a foreign-word hope, and not as an(other) first-word obligation. The foreign word of good news delivered to their ears comes out their mouths and resounds in a yet greater chorus of this foreign language, by which the Lord would and does also set their fellow human beings free.

One might be tempted to ask about this distinction as an, or even *the* Lutheran hermeneutic, but hermeneutics have to do with interpretation and talking *about* things, and this distinction knows finally no such detachment. Is this how Lutherans do theology? Perhaps. But this *is* how any theology that is Christ's doing is done among any, and for any, and finally through any who are Christians.

The second thesis for rumination, the one having to do more with confession and symbolics, is based on an observation drawn from our five bits of hay from Luther via Harnack and Walther. This observation, already reflected in the first thesis, is that when Luther talks about the Gospel being applied, he is always talking about a preached message, which preaching he often explicitly relates back to preachers, whom God has sent.⁶⁵

II. Even in Lutheranism the proper distinction between Law and Gospel has suffered the wrong of a misbegotten subjectification or psychologization at the hands of a yet incomplete ecclesiology.⁶⁶

Harnack, for example, had to state, and correctly so(!), that the Law is not a phenomenon of the conscience.⁶⁷ That such a one-sided internalization of the essence and operation of the Law is illegitimate can also be seen on the basis of the Lutheran Confessions, in that, according to them, the

⁶⁴ 1 Pt 3:15.

⁶⁵ His thought is working from Rm 10:14-15; there the order is faith as that which is called to life by the Gospel, referenced back to hearing, referenced back to a preacher, referenced back to the preacher's Sender.

⁶⁶ To say that a doctrine or a particular point of the church's confession is uncompleted is not to say that its confession of the matter up to this point is wrong or false, but simply that all that can be said has not yet been said, especially in view of challenges posed regarding said doctrine. Cf., for example, Hermann Sasse, "On the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: Letters to Lutheran Pastors," No. 51" in *We Confess the Church*, trans. Norman Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia, 1986), 17-39, p. 36: "The doctrine of the Holy Spirit belongs to the uncompleted doctrines of the church." (cf. p. 32: "unfinished"). Lutherans are not alone in ecclesiology as unfinished business; Jaroslav Pelikan describes the doctrine of the church as the theological "leitmotiv" of the modern age (*The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. 2, *Christian Doctrine and Modern Culture [since 1700]* [Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989], 289).

⁶⁷ *Luthers Theologie*, I:532.

word of the Gospel is, finally, the word of Absolution,⁶⁸ a Word which the pastor speaks to the penitent “as from God himself,”⁶⁹ i.e. with no space between Christ’s keys and the keys which are placed in and at work in the mouth of the minister.⁷⁰ That sort of external way of God dealing with man, the sinner, is something without which the Gospel cannot be if it is to be the Gospel. Faith needs such a Gospel to cling to.⁷¹ The point at which we notice the disjuncture is that nowhere in the current ecclesial reality of Lutheranism (at least not of the English-speaking variety) can sins be bound with the same certainty with which our Confessions bid us forgive them. Our binding key is defunct; it stops short of a sure application of the Law,⁷² an application that is what it is even when not internally appropriated as such (psychologized) by the person in question. At best we can rely on powers of personal or communal persuasion when sin openly resists the will of God, but there is no locking the gates of heaven without passing some internal, subjective, psychological point with said sinner; there is no binding without the Law being or becoming a phenomenon of his or her conscience. This is a sad situation indeed, as we find ourselves actually sitting opposite Luther on this matter, with him telling us along with the late-medieval papacy that where only one key allegedly works you actually have neither.⁷³ Our ecclesiology, ecclesiologies, or lack thereof have given rise to this ecclesial reality.

Sometimes a bit of Lutheran doctrine is so critical, so touchy, that you actually have to turn to a non-Lutheran to hear it straight. So we return to Barth, who was operating self-admittedly as a Reformed theologian with his understanding of a unified, singular Word of God.⁷⁴ In his explication of

⁶⁸ See *Ap* IV,271 (*BSLK* 214,28); XII,39 (*BSLK* 259,7-9; *BC*, 193) XII,8 (*BSLK* 273,11.19).

⁶⁹ See n61 above.

⁷⁰ Cf. Luther’s 1530 treatise “On the Keys” (*WA* 30/II:497,32-498,17; *LW* 40:365f.).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, *WA* 30/II:498,34-40.: “Do you think he is not bound who does not believe the binding key? He shall certainly learn in due time that the binding key was not of no avail, nor did it fail, because he did not believe [it]. Thus also he who does not believe that he has been set free and his sins forgiven shall also in due time certainly learn just how certainly his sins have been forgiven him right now, and he didn’t want to believe it.” (cf. *LW* 40:366f.).

⁷² This is not to say that the Law has somehow ceased to be objective or its working contingent on some sort of appropriate appropriation by the sinner. Death itself is objective, and no sinner can get around it even if he or she would deny it. The Law does not cease to work; its operation does not become contingent on the psychological self-appropriation of sinners. What can cease to work is the mandated exercise of the office of the Law in a particular communion. The assertion here is not that the Law fails, but that Lutheranism (at least that of the English speaking variety) is failing the Law and so our fellow man; the sure and external-to-the-appropriation-of-the-sinner exercise of the binding key is meant precisely to kill a person before he or she dies and death be the final word from God.

⁷³ Luther, “On the Keys” (*WA* 30/II:473,18f.; *LW* 40:334): “He who has not one of them, has none.”

⁷⁴ “Das Wort Gottes als Aufgabe der Theologie”, 218; see n54 above.

theologians as those who should speak of God but cannot he notes that this must be the case, i.e. that man cannot actually speak of God, unless, that is, one were, as Luther, to put the office of the ministry in the place of the call from God himself.⁷⁵ Barth could see that according to Luther those in the office of the ministry speak for God; they speak his word. As we have seen, that word has two teachings, two distinct messages, which may not stop short of being externally and surely spoken and applied so long as they are actually God's word. An ecclesiology or ecclesiologies that stop short of this being possible as a lived ecclesial reality are still unfinished business.

Looking at these two theses for rumination, may we surmise, inquiring as we are into the living legacy of the proper distinction between Law and Gospel in the present and toward the future, that this living distinction will fully come into its own where the Lutheran confession comes clear on the doctrine of the ministry and the church, confessing these articles in a way that actually allows God's twofold word to be spoken fully as Law and fully as Gospel?

Are such matters too big? Might they be too much for us, even as those who seek to learn and to teach theology? The course of the church and the articulation of theology can come to feel rather wearisome at points. In his closing words on the matter with the Antinomians the old Dr. Luther confessed his weariness, "I am praying for a gracious hour of death. I care no more for this life,"⁷⁶ he said. And in the same breath he confessed his confidence, "[W]e are not the ones who can preserve the church, nor were our forefathers able to do so. Nor will our successors have this power. No, it was, is, and will be he who says, 'I am with you always, to the close of the age.'" Those seem words fitting for our past and our present. And there seems good reason there to be hopeful about doing theology, about a living legacy of the proper distinction between Law and Gospel, and about what might yet be said of Lutheran theological education in the future.

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⁷⁵ Ibid., 206f.: "We do not wish to roll out the question, if it might be so easy, to put the ecclesial office in the place of the call through God himself – to identify the one with the other – so bright though Luther's thoughts were, with which he made this move."

⁷⁶ WA 50:476.31-35; LW 47:118.

Stewardship is Work for Rational Souls

Angus Menuge ◀

According to Christian physicalism, human beings do not have immaterial souls, but are either identical to or constituted by physical objects.¹ On this view, what appear to be the distinguishing features of minds emerge from (or supervene on or strictly reduce to²) the physical. Many have pointed out that Christian physicalism faces serious difficulties in accounting for our life in the world to come, because it fails to ground personal identity across the gap between physical death and resurrection,³ to say nothing of the difficulties it presents to an orthodox understanding of the incarnation.⁴ In this paper, I will argue that another problem for Christian physicalism concerns *this* life: our call to be stewards of the rest of creation requires that we have rational souls. Stewardship demands special intellectual and moral competences, ones that allow us to be cognizant of the world and our obligations to preserve it as a trust for future generations. However, I will argue that an ontological analysis reveals that the sort of material object which Christian physicalists claim is (or constitutes) a human person will not have these competences. This is partly because Christian physicalism fails to justify its claims that a self (a being capable of stewardship) emerges from a material body. But it also because no such material object is capable of a concept of nature (or even of matter) or of those beings (including itself) which are subject to the moral demand. By

¹ For a sample of those who identify humans with physical objects, see Trenton Merricks, "How to Live Forever Without Saving Your Soul: Physicalism and Immortality," in *Soul, Body and Survival: Essays on the Metaphysics of Human Persons*, ed. Kevin Corcoran (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 183-200.

For those who argue that humans are constituted by physical objects, see Kevin Corcoran, *Rethinking Human Nature: A Christian Materialist Alternative to the Soul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), especially chapter 3. Constitution physicalism is also developed by Lynne Rudder Baker in her *Persons and Bodies: A Constitution View* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Nancey Murphy at some points says we "are" our bodies but also emphasizes the emergence of novel causal powers when a certain level of complexity is reached. See her *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

² Although there are important distinctions between emergence, non-reductive supervenience and reductive supervenience, they won't matter for the purposes of the argument given here.

³ For example, see Jonathan Loose, "Constitution and the Falling Elevator," *Philosophia Christi* 14: 2 (2012), 439-449. This was one of the issues raised during an EPS panel discussion at SBL on the future of the soul in which Kevin Corcoran, J. P. Moreland and I participated, November 2011, San Francisco.

⁴ For example, see Luke Van Horn, "Merricks's Soulless Savior," *Faith and Philosophy* 27: 3 (2010), 330-341.

contrast, in virtue of its transcendence of the material, a rational soul can possess a concept of nature and of those beings called to care for it. If I am right, our stewardship obligations imply that having a rational soul is part of what it means to be made in the image of God.

1. Christian Physicalism.

Christian physicalists do not deny that human beings have special cognitive capacities, so it might seem they can easily account for the powers required to be stewards. Yet, while it is easy to assert that these capacities belong to physical objects, this is completely non-explanatory unless one shows *how* these capacities are located in a physicalist ontology. For Nancey Murphy, the answer is that what we had thought were the distinctive capacities of the rational soul emerge when neuronal structures are sufficiently complex. She claims that this neuronal complexity accounts for “language-based reasoning,” “the human will,” and even “morality and religious experience.”⁵

Kevin Corcoran is more cautious than those who simply identify persons with physical objects. That view, he points out, is really *animalism* (humans are living bodies of a certain kind), which he rejects because persons have psychological capacities and therefore have different persistence conditions than living bodies. He claims that although persons and bodies are spatially coincident,⁶ sharing the same matter, some living human bodies fail to be persons. To be a person, one must be *constituted* by a body, but also have a capacity for intentional states⁷ and a first-person perspective,⁸ which a living human body can lack. So having a living body is necessary but not sufficient for being a person on Corcoran’s view.

2. Stewardship and the self.

In order to carry out our stewardship call, human beings must be, and know themselves to be, distinct from the nature they are called to care for, and in order to carry out stewardship projects they must be and know themselves to be continuants, beings that persist over time. In order to engage in the practical and theoretical reasoning necessary to care for creation, stewards must be able to unify many reasons *at a time* (for example, premises, pieces of evidence, beliefs and desires), and carry out

⁵ Nancey Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?*, 66.

⁶ Kevin Corcoran, *Rethinking Human Nature*, 66.

⁷ Kevin Corcoran, *Rethinking Human Nature*, 67.

⁸ Kevin Corcoran, *Rethinking Human Nature*, 68.

reasoning *over* time so as to derive a theoretical or practical conclusion. As several philosophers, myself included, have argued at length, this requires a unified, continuant self.⁹ For example, in order for a person to address the global problem of declining supplies of drinkable water, one and the same being needs to recognize the problem, identify its causes, develop a solution, and persist long enough to implement it. So if Christian physicalism is to account for our roles as stewards, it must show how unified, continuant selves emerge from physical bodies. However, physicalism appears incapable in principle of doing so.

A. Unity at a time.

In order to carry out stewardship plans, an agent must be able to unite several reasons in one consciousness (for example, concerning an environmental problem, likely causes, a range of possible solutions, etc.). However, absent a soul, a physical body has no evident unity. It is merely an aggregate of parts which exist in external relations to one another. In particular, neuroscience reveals a brain which processes widely distributed information signals in parallel. There is no single entity that exists over and above the parallel streams of information processing in the brain. Thus Daniel Dennett compares cognition to multiple, partial narratives assembled by different sources at different times, like different trains carrying different informational freight on different railway lines. He insists that “there is no one place in the brain through which all these causal trains must pass in order to deposit their content.”¹⁰ As a result, there is no one entity that can survey a variety of reasons for pursuing a stewardship plan, making it impossible to rationally implement that plan.

As J. P. Moreland has pointed out, the underlying problem here is that the relationship between the parts of a brain and the brain is fundamentally different from the relation between thoughts and a thinker.¹¹ The brain consists of separable parts. Thus one can remove a neuron from a brain and the neuron will still be the same physical thing. But a thought is an inseparable part (or mode) of a mind. One cannot take Jack’s thought that there is a global water crisis out of his mind and expect to find the same thought. For one thing, thoughts are essentially modes of thinkers: there is no such thing as a thought which is no-one’s thought. Put another way,

⁹ See William Hasker, *The Emergent Self* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), J. P. Moreland, *The Recalcitrant Imago Dei* (London: SCM Press, 2009), Angus Menuge, “The Ontological Argument From Reason,” *Philosophia Christi* Summer, 2011 (13: 1), 59-74.

¹⁰ Daniel Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1991), 135.

¹¹ J. P. Moreland, *The Recalcitrant Imago Dei*, chapter 5.

there are no ownerless thoughts. Any thought is intrinsically subjective and intrinsically tied to the mental life of a particular thinker. Part of what makes *Jack's* thought the thought that it is, is that it belongs to him. This is why, even if Sarah agrees completely with Jack's reasoning and comes to have thoughts with precisely the same content as Jack's, still she cannot have his thoughts.

This matters because it is the fact that thoughts are inseparable parts of a mind which explains why multiple reasons for a plan can be surveyed and assessed by a mind. Because subjective ownership is necessary for the individuation of a thought, one and the same person can have many thoughts at the same time and evaluate their joint implication. By contrast, for the physicalist, it seems "thoughts" must be located in the distributed information processing of the brain, and not only is it unclear that they really are thoughts (they appear to be ownerless, separable parts, like neurons), but even if they are thoughts, they cannot be unified in the mental life of one person, so their joint evaluation is impossible.

By contrast with the physicalist account, the defender of the soul can point out that souls are immaterial simples, as David Barnett powerfully argues.¹² They are not composed of separable parts. As a result, a soul is precisely the kind of being we would expect to be capable of a unified consciousness with its thoughts as inseparable parts (or modes) of that consciousness. A single thinker can simultaneously think that: the leaves are turning, the angle of the sun is low, there is a hint of a chill in the air, and the Packers are (again) triumphant.

B. Continuant selves.

Suppose, however, that a unified self could somehow emerge from the brain. This does not help very much because there is no good reason to think this self could persist over time. Within the brain, there is a continual flux of event-casual processes, and there is no identifiable physical continuant which could plausibly ground a mental continuant capable of pursuing a chain of practical or theoretical reasoning over time. As neuroscientist Mario Beauregard points out,

No single brain area is active when we are conscious and idle when we are not. Nor does a specific level of activity in neurons

¹² David Barnett, "You are simple," in *The Waning of Materialism*, eds. Robert C. Koons and George Bealer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 161-174.

signify that we are conscious. Nor is there a chemistry in neurons that always indicates consciousness.¹³

What this implies however, is that it is not reasonable to expect a continuant self to emerge. Let a total brain state B_i be the complete electrochemical state of the entire brain at time i . Then, given a sequence of total brain states B_1, B_2, \dots, B_n , and supposing that a unified self can emerge from the brain, since each of the B_i is different, the best one could reasonably hope for is a sequence of instantaneous selves or self-stages, S_1, S_2, \dots, S_n . If that is the case, none of these self-stages (none of the S_i) persists through sustained reasoning, so none of them reasons to a conclusion. For example, consider a simple argument with two premises and a conclusion, such as a *modus ponens* argument of the form, "If A then B, A, therefore B." Suppose that S_1 entertains one premise ("If A then B"), S_2 entertains another ("A") and S_3 affirms the conclusion ("B"). Neither S_1 nor S_2 has both of the reasons required to draw that conclusion, and S_3 cannot be credited with drawing a conclusion from reasons it never had. For by the time S_2 appears, S_1 no longer exists, and by the time S_3 appears, neither S_1 nor S_2 exist. And the entire sequence of selves is not a single continuant self either, since the sequence also consists of separable parts (complex event stages), and as we just saw, the thoughts of a self are inseparable parts. So, whether we consider the self-stages or the sequence of them, there does not exist a single continuant self that can be credited with reasoning, which would include solving the stewardship problems entrusted to us. If S_1 identifies an environmental problem and S_2 identifies possible solutions, but S_3 "concludes" that one solution is the best, neither S_1 nor S_2 nor the sequence of the two have a reason to draw that conclusion, and S_3 cannot be credited with doing so, since it does not possess the reasons for it.

Against this sort of argument, Corcoran claims that physicalists can account for continuant selves. Following John Locke, Corcoran maintains that the identity of living things does not depend on their particular parts, but only on there being some parts or other united into one life, where a life is a "biological event...that is remarkably stable, well individuated, self-directing, self-maintaining and homeodynamic."¹⁴ He offers a striking simile:

¹³ Mario Beauregard and Denyse O'Leary, *The Spiritual Brain: A Neuroscientist's Case for the Existence of the Soul* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 109.

¹⁴ Kevin Corcoran, "Physical Persons and Postmortem Survival without Temporal Gaps," in *Soul, Body and Survival: Essays on the Metaphysics of Human Persons*, ed. Kevin Corcoran (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 206.

Human bodies are like storms. A tornado, for example, picks up new stuff and throws off old stuff as it moves through space. Human bodies...are storms of atoms moving through space and time. They take on new stuff...and throw off old stuff as they go.¹⁵

Corcoran's account is aimed at explaining persistence over time, but presumably sharing in one common life also explains the identity of a body at a time. So if each body is distinguished from all others by its unique life, one might claim that the unity of personhood and hence of a person's consciousness derives from the unity of the body that is conscious.

This view faces several problems, however. First, the life that defines a body's identity does not seem to be defined in physicalist terms. Talk of a system that is "self-directing," "self-maintaining," and "homeodynamic" (capable of dynamic self-organization as an organism adapts to change) sounds irreducibly teleological, and it is not clear how such talk can be anchored in a truly physicalist ontology which standardly recognizes only undirected efficient causation. Second, these phrases seem question-begging in that for a system to be *self-directing* etc., there must be some account of what makes that system a unified entity in the first place: to say that the identity of something at or over time depends on its *self-directing* power assumes that there is *one* thing which has such a power, but that there is one such thing is the very claim that needs to be justified. A third problem is that, to the extent that the account is plausible, it relies on a dualism of kind between living and non-living systems. This sounds vitalist, and standard physicalism would find vitalistic dualism just as objectionable as mind-body dualism. It would be odd if Christian physicalism can eschew psychological dualism only by affirming a biological dualism equally at odds with the core principles of physicalism.

More fundamentally, the physicalist seems to be making a category mistake, because a continuant which retains identity over time and despite accidental changes (e.g. changes in which step in the chain of reasoning is being attended to), must be in the category of substance, and yet there is no explanation provided of why something in this category arises from the basic resources available to the physicalist. At the physical level, there are only physical objects and events, and any combination of these in external relations produces an aggregate, whose identity changes as soon as its parts or relations change, so it cannot maintain identity over time. Why should aggregates of physical parts which lack unity and do not persist over time, give rise to unified continuant selves? It is not sufficient for the physicalist to simply assert that this happens, since this simply begs the

¹⁵ Kevin Corcoran, *Rethinking Human Nature*, 72.

question against a rival dualist account (either emergent dualism or some more standard version of substance dualism). In order for this proposal to qualify as physicalist, the physicalist must show what it is about the underlying event-causal physical processes that necessitates the emergence of a continuant self.¹⁶

By contrast with physicalism, the defender of the soul can point out that souls can persist through acts of reasoning. Not being composed of separable parts, a soul cannot be destroyed by removing or disconnecting its parts. And a soul is a substance, so it can endure all sorts of accidental change in its mental contents or its relations to physical objects. So a soul is the ideal thing for persisting over time and through change: a series of internal changes in its occurrent thoughts or of external changes to the organism to which the soul belongs (e.g. metabolic changes which occur while someone is thinking) are compatible with it being the same soul from beginning to end of the series. And the soul maintains the right kind of unity over time to explain how a steward reasons to a conclusion: although a soul's thoughts occur at different times, each of those thoughts belongs to the same soul, so we can say that it is one and the same soul that considers several proposed solutions and selects one of them.

3. Intellectual competences of stewards.

In order to be a steward of natural resources (animals, plants, ecosystems), one must have a correct concept of nature, and also of various particular creatures (one cannot effectively steward something if one does not know what it is). This requires a number of things. For us to grasp the idea of the rest of creation, we must be able to distinguish ourselves sharply from the environment. We need to have a concept of ourselves as stewards distinct from the resources we are called to care for, and we need not only to be, but to see ourselves as unified continuants. In addition, our concepts must connect us with what nature is and also with the particular nature of the particular creatures we are called to steward.

A. The concept of nature.

A serious problem for physicalism is that it cannot account for the existence of sharp boundaries between the self and non-self, including the environment and other creatures. As Dean Zimmerman points out, when we consider plausible physical candidates for the referent of "I," they all

¹⁶ On this, see J. P. Moreland, *Consciousness and the Existence of God: A Theistic Argument* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 9-10 and Mihretu Guta, "Frank Jackson's Location Problem and the Argument From the Self," *Philosophia Christi*, Volume 13, Number 1 (2011): 35-58.

“appear surprisingly like clouds on close inspection: it is not clear where they begin and end, in space or time. Many particles are in the process of being assimilated or cast off; they are neither clearly ‘in,’ nor clearly ‘out.’”¹⁷ The point is clearly conceded by Corcoran, who compares human beings to storms, absorbing and repelling matter as they go. As we saw, his solution of appealing to a common life to unite these changing constituents is not a physicalist one, and it appears to beg the question by assuming there is some *one* living thing, which is precisely what needs to be established. From a hard-nosed physicalist perspective, all that exists are particles arranged in various aggregates, and there is no sharp boundary between self and non-self. And obviously, if our earlier arguments are right, and there is no such thing as a unified, continuant self, one cannot have a correct self-concept: that concept must be an illusion. But if the self and the distinction between selves and their environment are both illusory, it does not seem possible for stewards to heed their call to care for the environment.

B. Creature concepts.

Physicalism also has a problem accounting for the knowledge of creatures which a steward requires. One reason for this is that according to physicalism, there are no well-defined kinds of creatures. As Logan Gage points out, before Darwin, our understanding of human nature was dominated by the Aristotelian/Thomistic paradigm, according to which each organism shares a stable nature or essence.¹⁸ However, on Darwin’s view, the natural world is in a constant state of flux and transition between forms. If living things are defined by the organization of matter, and that organization is malleable, there is no sharp boundary between one kind of creature and another. For this reason, Darwin saw “the term species as one arbitrarily given, for the sake of convenience, to a set of individuals closely resembling each other.”¹⁹ On this view, there is no such thing as a creature’s essence, shared by all and only creatures of that kind, a conclusion explicitly drawn by the great evolutionary biologist Ernst Mayr: “The essentialist philosophies of Aristotle and Plato are incompatible with evolutionary thinking.”²⁰

A committed physicalist might reply: “So much the worse for species!”

¹⁷ Dean Zimmerman, “From Experience to Experiencer,” in *The Soul Hypothesis*, eds. Mark C. Baker and Stewart Goetz (New York: Continuum, 2011), 168-196, 187.

¹⁸ Logan Paul Gage, “Can a Thomist be a Darwinist?” in *God and Evolution*, ed. Jay Richards, (Seattle, WA: Discovery Institute Press, 2010).

¹⁹ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (New York: The Modern Library, 1993), 78-79.

²⁰ Ernst Mayr, *Population, Species, and Evolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 4.

All that matters is that I care for individual creatures, not whether I can sharply divide them into members of different species.” However, a similar problem surfaces at the level of individual things, as Michael Rea has argued.²¹ For as Rea points out, if someone believes in particular material things, he has to believe that they have distinct identities and individual persistence conditions which tell us when they will or will not continue to exist. For example, if I believe there is raven in front of me—call it Caw—I believe that this object can continue to exist so long as it has raven DNA and has not been atomized. But if Caw’s DNA is changed to that of a frog or if Caw is atomized, then it is not a raven anymore. But as Rea says, “If there are no facts at all about what sorts of changes a putative thing X can and cannot survive, then there is no such thing as X.”²² If a “raven” can still be a raven with frog DNA or if it is atomized, then “raven” no longer picks out a well-defined thing. But, on physicalist grounds, whether an aggregate of particles composes a distinct individual at a time is irrelevant to the causal powers of that aggregate at that time: thus a cloud of atoms with a certain structure will have exactly the same causal powers whether it is an undefined cloud or constitutes a particular thing like a raven. Likewise, for all times *t*, whether a physical body B at time *t* is identical to another physical body at an earlier or later time is irrelevant to B’s causal powers. So there is no difference in causal powers between a continuant body B and a series of body-stages. The implication is that, on a physicalist understanding of causation, even if a cloud of particles constitutes a single body at and over time, that fact is irrelevant to the body’s causal powers. But if the identity and persistence conditions of bodies have no causal powers, they cannot cause us to have valid concepts of those bodies, including living creatures (and other environmental resources). For example, suppose we are looking at a bear and we name him “Teddy.” If physicalism is true, then “Teddy” designates a particular aggregate of particles. This aggregate cannot produce in me the concept of a particular enduring bear, because the identity and persistence conditions of an aggregate are not physical causal powers that it has. (In this, physicalism is a disappointment to small children, and not just philosophers.)

As Robert Koons points out, this is a serious problem, because in order to avoid Gettier-style counterexamples to definitions of knowledge (where there is a justified true belief, and yet the reason why someone has the belief is some false belief and is independent of the fact that makes the belief

²¹ Michael Rea, *World Without Design: The Ontological Consequences of Naturalism* (New York: Clarendon Press, 2002), see especially chapter 4.

²² Michael Rea, “Naturalism and material objects,” in *Naturalism: A Critical Analysis*, eds. William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland (New York: Routledge, 2000) 112.

true²³), it is required that there is a direct or indirect causal connection between the fact believed and the belief. Thus, in order to have knowledge of an object, it must be the case that one's concept of an object is caused by the way that object is. So if physicalism is true, even if I somehow independently acquire a correct concept of Teddy, I cannot know the bear for what it is.²⁴

As R. Scott Smith has recently argued, we get the same result if we argue from the other end, starting with the perceptions and concepts in our own mind, and asking what is required in order for them to contact the real world. Physicalists disagree about whether the human mind has its own "original intentionality." *Original intentionality* designates the idea that our thoughts are really about their objects, so that the thought that the Eiffel Tower is in Paris is really about the Eiffel Tower, unlike the state of a computer, which is about something only in the sense that *we* take it to be (it has *derived* intentionality), not because the computer is actually thinking of anything. Fred Dretske and John Searle affirm the existence of original intentionality, while Paul Churchland and Daniel Dennett deny it. Yet, there is an underlying similarity between their physicalist views all the same. On no authentically physicalist view can a perception or thought be *intrinsically* of its object. For Churchland and Dennett this is obvious: Churchland eliminates the intentional states of folk psychology, and Dennett's view is that intentional talk is a useful explanatory device for capturing patterns of behavior, so the attribution of intentional states for this purpose does not commit us to their real existence.²⁵ Furthermore, whatever intentionality can be used to describe human beings is for Dennett derived from natural selection itself viewed under the intentional stance as "Mother Nature."²⁶ But even for Dretske, Fodor and Searle, who offer more robust accounts of intentionality, no physical state is intrinsically of or about something else.

²³ For example, Smith may have good evidence for the false belief that Jones owns a Ford, and form the logically justified belief that either Jones owns a Ford or Brown is in Barcelona, which so happens to be true, because by a fluke, Brown is in Barcelona. Then Smith has a justified true belief but not knowledge, because the reason *why* the belief is true has nothing to do with why Smith believes it. Hence, many conclude, some sort of causal connection between the fact and the belief seems required. See Edmund Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?", *Analysis*, 23 (1963): 121-123.

²⁴ Robert C. Koons, "Epistemological Objections to Materialism" in *The Waning of Materialism*, eds. Robert Koons and George Bealer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 281-306, especially 290-292.

²⁵ R. Scott Smith, *Naturalism and Our Knowledge of Reality: Testing Religious Truth-claims* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 93.

²⁶ Elsewhere, I have argued at length that Dennett's views on this matter are profoundly incoherent. See chapter 3 of my *Agents Under Fire: Materialism and the Rationality of Science* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004).

So the physicalist must claim that intentionality emerges from the learning history of an organism (Dretske²⁷) or from the novel causal powers of sufficiently complex brains (Searle²⁸). In both cases, intentionality arises from a complicated, physical causal process, and it is the nature of this process, Smith argues, that makes it impossible for our perceptions and concepts to constitute knowledge of the real world.

Dretske is careful to reject internalist accounts of representation, like the classical sense data view, since they are vulnerable to the skeptical objection that there is no way to show our sense data correspond with a reality outside our minds. So he prefers an externalist, reliabilist account of knowledge, according to which, so long as our perceptions and concepts are caused to represent the world in the way they do because in fact the world is that way, we have knowledge of the world. It is not clear that Dretske can avoid the classical objection to causal theories of perception, that since the causal chain consists of many links and the subject cannot traverse the chain to see if the final perception corresponds to its cause, he has no way of telling whether the perception is veridical. Yet, setting that aside, Smith shows there is a deeper problem for Dretske's account: it cannot explain how we correct or even form concepts which constitute an understanding of the real world, and since reliable concepts of objects are required to know them, it follows that knowledge cannot be accounted for.

To make this case, Smith points out that for physicalism, the only way we can attend to our experiences is to conceptualize them a certain way. So, for example we may see a red object and conceptualize or take that experience to be one of a stop sign. But if the only way we can attend to our experiences is to conceive of them in various ways, it seems:

We cannot *correct* concepts: We cannot compare what is represented in an experience with a concept, for...the very act of introspecting our experiences requires a conceptualization.²⁹

In other words, if our mind does not have nonconceptual introspective access to its own experiences, it cannot independently evaluate the accuracy of those concepts by comparing the experience to the concept. So even if our perceptions are caused in a reliable way by their objects, there is no way for us to tell if our concepts of these objects are valid. Thus not only might we take our experience to be as of a particular bear even though there

²⁷ See, for example, Fred Dretske's *Naturalizing the Mind* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).

²⁸ See for example, John Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992).

²⁹ R. Scott Smith, *Naturalism and Our Knowledge of Reality: Testing Religious Truth-claims*, 49, italics in original.

is no such thing as a particular bear (Rea's point), we have no reliable way of correcting our error by attending to our experience of this or similar objects, because as soon as we attend to that experience, we are already conceptualizing it, and the concepts employed may also be in error.

To make matters worse, Smith argues that the very formation of concepts surely requires some degree of separation between our awareness of our experience and our conceptualization. He gives the example of his daughter learning the concept of an apple. To learn this concept, the child must first look at many samples of apples (or pictures of apples), and label them as apples. At some point, from noticing many common features of the objects experienced, an initial apple concept is formed, and this may then be further refined and corrected by experiencing different varieties of apples, or by learning that similar fruit or objects do not qualify. Since the evolving concept is formed by comparing it to experience, the child must have some access to that experience which is not mediated by concepts: "She had to be able to see an apple...*for what it is.*"³⁰ Yet for Dretske and other physicalists, the only way to see an apple for what it is already is to conceptualize it as an apple, which implies, absurdly, that one has to have the concept of an apple before one can form that concept. It does not avoid this issue to say that one uses different concepts in order to form the concept of an apple (e.g. initial concepts of round objects, fruit etc.) since then we will need an account of the formation of these concepts. To avoid an infinite regress, it seems we must at some point be able to form concepts starting from non-conceptual experiences. If Dretske's and similar accounts are correct, however, this is impossible, since whenever we notice experiences we are conceptualizing them. And without concepts, we cannot form beliefs about the way the world is, and without beliefs we certainly cannot have knowledge.

A similar problem arises for John Searle's account of intentionality.³¹ For Searle, all representations of the world are made within a conceptual scheme. While this is logically compatible with some representations being veridical, there seems no way to know if they are since we would have to know whether the conceptual scheme was itself correct, and we can only hope to evaluate the reliability of a conceptual scheme if we have some nonconceptual access to reality. As Smith points out, this means in particular, that there is no way to tell whether a physicalist conceptual scheme is valid, which means we cannot even be sure that its underlying ontology corresponds to objective reality: "it makes his claims about the objective truth of the physical nature of bedrock reality just a claim made

³⁰ R. Scott Smith, *Naturalism and Our Knowledge of Reality: Testing Religious Truth-claims*, 45.

³¹ John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1995).

from under the aspect of his conceptual scheme."³²

Putting all of this together, it appears to follow that if physicalism is true, stewards cannot know objective reality. They cannot know what nature is, what particular creatures are, and they cannot even know the aggregates of physical particles alleged to underlie this. Since stewardship is a clear scriptural obligation and requires just such knowledge of the world, Christian physicalism is unable to account for one of the most basic Christian moral obligations we have, to care for the rest of the world that God entrusted to us.

Physicalist accounts of knowledge run into this difficulty because they deny natures or essences. Thus it cannot be in the nature of a representation to be of its object, and that object cannot have an essence which defines the identity and persistence conditions of that object, and the knower also cannot have an essence, such as a soul. So, a credible alternative to physicalism should allow that objects, representations, and subjects do have essences.³³ There must be well-defined objects of knowledge and thoughts that can by their nature represent those objects as they really are; and there needs to be a continuant subject of knowledge, a subject which can persist through the process of concept formation and correction.³⁴ In this way, it is reasonable to think that humans are capable of at least approximate knowledge of the world, and so are equipped to carry out their stewardship task.

4. Moral competences of stewards.

Stewards must be capable of grasping the moral demand to care for the rest of creation. This assumes that stewards are under the moral demand and that they can carry out that demand. However, it is plausible that in order to be under the moral demand a being must be aware of its continued existence over time (as the completion of moral projects takes time). This is also required for an individual to grasp that a moral rule applies to him or her. We judge that while animals can take food or kill prey, they cannot

³² R. Scott Smith, *Naturalism and Our Knowledge of Reality: Testing Religious Truth-claims*, 66.

³³ Whether these essences are to be understood as Platonic universals or are, in some sense, attributes of the mind of God (my own view) is a further question. For an insightful exploration of this issue, see Stephen Parrish, *The Knower and the Known: Physicalism, Dualism, and the Nature of Intelligibility* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2013). Parrish argues that abstract objects like universals are real (mind-independent) in the sense of being independent of the human mind, but that they are ideal (mind-dependent) in the sense that they exist as ideal objects in the mind of God. This is a reflection of an ancient philosophical debate between nominalism and realism which has also become immensely controversial in recent Christian philosophy.

³⁴ See R. Scott Smith, *Naturalism and Our Knowledge of Reality: Testing Religious Truth-claims*, 193-194.

steal or murder because they have no concept of themselves as beings bound by a moral rule.³⁵ To see oneself bound in this way one must see the rule as applying to possible future actions and hence have the ability to think of oneself persisting over time. However, as we have seen, on physicalist assumptions, there simply is no being who persists over time, so there could be no (non-illusory) awareness of being a continuant being, hence no way to grasp that a moral rule applies to one's future actions, and no way to implement a moral project.

It is also plausible that in order to have a moral obligation to a creature, one must be at least capable of knowing that creature (or at least what sort of creature it is), and we have seen that this also is deeply problematic. Just how can someone have an obligation to steward bears if he cannot know what a bear is, and worse, there is most likely no such thing, since both valid concepts of bears and the existence of bears require essences denied by physicalism? Further, even if these objections could be overcome, physicalism makes it especially difficult to see how stewards could grasp the moral demand. This is because, as J. P. Moreland points out, "value properties are not empirically detectable nor are they the sorts of properties whose instances can stand in physical causal relations with the brain."³⁶ Thus even if a continuant self could emerge from the brain, it still could not know what the moral demand is, since this would require the moral value to register in that self via its influence on the brain. Further, on the basis of finite, contingent interactions with a non-normative physical world it seems one could at best only know non-normative contingent truths, and for that reason, one could never grasp the normative necessity of our duty to be stewards of the rest of the world.³⁷

By contrast, souls persist over time, are aware of that fact, and hence can grasp that the moral demand applies to their potential future actions. As non-physical beings, they also are not limited in their causal commerce to physical objects, but they are capable of perceiving essences, including moral essences such as goodness and justice. And the soul, as itself transcending the physical world, is not limited to contingent interactions with a non-normative realm. In grasping a moral essence, it is possible for a soul to discern that some obligations are matters of normative necessity. In

³⁵ See Richard Taylor, *Ethics, Faith and Reason* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1985), 14.

³⁶ J. P. Moreland, *The Recalcitrant Imago Dei* (London: SCM Press, 2009), 149.

³⁷ For a sophisticated development of this thesis as a critique of Darwinian accounts of the origin of morality, see Richard Joyce, *The Evolution of Morality* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), chapters 5 and 6. See Also Angus Menuge, "Why Human Rights Cannot be Naturalized: The Contingency Problem" in *Legitimizing Human Rights: Secular and Religious Perspectives*, ed. Angus Menuge (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), 57-78.

particular, when a soul perceives clearly what a steward is called to do and becomes aware that it is a steward, it sees that care for the environment is not optional, even if the means of carrying out this duty are debatable.

Conclusion

Christian physicalism has been heavily criticized for its failure to explain how personal identity can be maintained across the “bridge of death,” so that it is one and the same person who dies and is raised to new life. In this paper, I have marshaled some recent work on ontology to argue that Christian physicalism fares no better as a framework for understanding the earthly life of the Christian. In order to fulfill our stewardship obligations, we have to be unified, persistent selves at and over time, we have to be capable of knowing the world and the creatures we are called to care for, and we must be capable of grasping the stewardship moral demand. On physicalist assumptions, all of this looks to be impossible. Physicalism does not disentangle human beings from the world sufficiently for them to fulfill their stewardship role. By contrast, rational souls that can perceive essences, including moral ones, are capable of fulfilling this role. Since this requires us to have some special characteristics that distinguish us from the rest of creation, it is plausible to say that this tells us something about what it means to be made in the image of God. Though we are not God, like God, we are unified, rational beings, we persist over time, and we are capable of knowing the way things really are and the way we should act.

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Our Ignorance, or How to Make Our Universities More Dangerous

Gregory P. Schulz ◀

It is a dangerous time at my university, but not nearly as dangerous as it needs to be. We are reconsidering our core requirements for our undergraduates. Such reconsiderations are the academic equivalent of a constitutional convention. Once the core requirements are under review anything can happen, no matter what the original intent of the reconsideration may have been. My intent during this institutional convention is to make things more dangerous still. This is doubtless because I am a professor of philosophy in the Socratic gadfly tradition, but I have my reasons. Let's see what you think.

The danger I have in mind to increase is the danger that Allen Bloom addresses in *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students*. The danger I have in mind is the inherent danger in the great texts of Western culture that we have committed ourselves and our students to by virtue of our implied promises to provide a liberal arts education. This liberal arts commitment necessarily follows from my university's formal commitment to teaching the most dangerous of texts, the sixty-six books of the Holy Bible.¹ This liberal arts commitment follows as well from our mission as "a Lutheran higher education community" in light of our founding reformers' educational philosophy. As Philip Melancthon puts it, "... take care that the universities flourish with their true ornaments – with teachers who are intelligent, erudite and distinguished by virtue and sagacity, who both understand the method used for rhetoric and perform their duty faithfully"² I gather that these dangerous texts are largely missing from the lives of our students and from the reading lists of too many of my colleagues. When these texts – most especially the biblical text – come up, I am afraid that we have a predilection for flattening them out by hurrying over them and deflating them to serve our pragmatic curricular needs. So, let me explain why we need to make our universities more textual and thus more dangerous than we make them out to be.

¹ "Concordia University Wisconsin is a Lutheran higher education community committed to helping students develop in mind, body, and spirit for service to Christ in the Church and the World." Accessed 6 October 2015 at <https://www.cuw.edu/admissions/undergraduate/index.html>.

² Sachiko Kusukawa, editor, Philip Melancthon, *Orations on Philosophy and Education* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, 1999), page 15.

At present there are at least two mitigating factors that make our classes much less dangerous than university classes ought to be. The first problem is what Bloom identifies as the one-two punch of “the diversity of perversity” or “the diversity of specialization” that first plagued upper-tier universities in America such as Cornell in the 1980s and has now become accepted and expected practice most everywhere in our institutions of higher learning.³ This perverse fragmentation within the university by way of its insular specialized disciplines is worsened by a second, not unrelated problem. Faculty insulated from one another by their various specialties and professional programs are divorced from the mission of the university to its students by what Bloom identifies as “our ignorance” – a reference to the ignorance of us university professors when it comes to what, if anything, we are reading and professing.⁴

Part One

Speaking of our dangerous times, think about our national crisis of reason and reasoned conversation. No matter how noble the intent and no matter how pressing the need for national reformation, the United States cannot afford a constitutional convention at this place and time in our history, on pain of vivisectioning the Constitution itself. The reasons for this are (1) our demonstrated ignorance of the text of the Constitution and the texts on which it is based on the one hand (2) and on the ways in which powerful persons have successfully overwritten its text in our nation on the other hand in light of what Nietzsche identified as the sheer will-to-power, the employment of institutions and language itself in the accomplishment of the agendas that powerful individuals will inevitably impose on us in the wake of the murder of God by Western society, in determined opposition to what God has revealed in the Bible. Willful ignorance and ignorant willfulness – our crisis in articulating and maintaining our national identity is analogous to the identity crisis of the university in the argument of Bloom’s *The Closing of the American Mind*. Indeed, the political failure of our democracy is intimately linked to the educational failure of our universities as announced in his subtitle: *How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today’s Students*.

Bloom attributes the failure of the universities in large part to faculty structure and to the curricular and ideological insularity that it exacerbates. Let me sketch out his diagnosis and then apply that diagnosis to what I

³ Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today’s Students* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1987), Part Three: The University, page 338. Hereafter cited as CAM.

⁴ See CAM, Part Two. Nihilism, American Style, pages 227-240.

worry about in my university as we reconsider how, if at all, we are actually going to enrich the souls of today's students.⁵ I begin by noting that he frames his diagnosis within the ideal of a person's college years as "four years of freedom to discover himself – a space between the intellectual wasteland he has left behind and the inevitable dreary professional training that awaits him after the baccalaureate". But what of these four years that "are civilization's only chance to get to him"?⁶ Thirty years after this reference to the university as an oasis on the way to "the inevitable dreary professional training that awaits him after the baccalaureate", the oasis has been effectively paved over with a superabundance of ("exciting / high-quality", "accredited", etc., etc.) professional training in almost every university we could name, East Coast, West Coast, Midwestern. But let us return to the evaporating vision of the university as a space for developing young human beings as such.

From his three decades of university teaching Bloom observes that the university has failed in its responsibility to think positively [that is, to posit what formative texts are to be read in its curricula and syllabi and in the content of its classes, GPS] about the contents of a liberal education. My pious Roman neighbors used to lament "Cafeteria Catholicism" and what it was doing to parishioners and prospects alike; similarly, we have reason to lament a university's "cafeteria curriculum", according to Bloom.

The university now offers no distinctive visage to the young person. He finds a democracy of the disciplines – which are there [in the curriculum] either because they are autochthonous or because they wandered in recently to perform some job that was demanded of the university. This democracy is really an anarchy, because there are no recognized rules for citizenship and no legitimate titles to rule. In short there is no vision, nor is there a set of competing visions, of what an educated human being is. The question has disappeared, for to pose it would be a threat to the peace. [...] Simply, the university is not distinctive. Equality for us seems to culminate in the unwillingness and incapacity to make claims of

⁵ Hyphenating "professor" is a philosopher's trope. Although I am not pausing to consider the university student since my concern in this paper is with myself and my colleagues as university professors (my Heideggerian training tells me to hyphenate this in order to call attention not to our title but to our vocation as teachers who are *pro-fessors*), let me acknowledge my commitment to a philosophical anthropology that maintains the personal everlastingness of each and every one of my students *qua* human beings. See for example my sermon at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbY-d-zbQmQ>

. With the biblically warranted immortality of each human being in view, we could reconfigure Bloom's concern as a Jamesian one: "Not many of us should presume to teach ..."

⁶ CAM, page 336.

superiority, particularly in the domains in which such claims have always been made – art, religion and philosophy.⁷

(The “threat to peace” is a threat to a Neville Chamberlain kind of peace, of course.) Let’s leave our student at the door realizing that “the net effect of his encounter with the college catalogue is bewilderment and very often demoralization”⁸ and step inside the university to consider exactly how we professors are failing democracy and impoverishing the souls of these young immortal human beings.

In a nutshell, we have simultaneously chosen to ignore education as a necessary condition for democracy and have cocooned ourselves within an insular university structure, all under the assumption that an assemblage of specialties under one school name will provide an education capable of liberating the human being to be all that she can be as a human being. As if diversity delivers university. As if a concatenation of pre-professional programs incorporated as a “university” could spontaneously produce good citizens capable of a shared understanding of the good life – or could somehow begin to fulfil their aspiration to understand what it means to live together as human beings in a place of institutionalized, professionalized diversity. On the contrary, our professor-author observes, the American university has become programmatically impotent of speaking to these human aspirations. It – meaning *we university professors as a whole*, truth be told – has failed in its duty to our undergraduates.

The so-called knowledge explosion and increasing specialization have not filled up the college years but emptied them. ... And in general the persons one finds in the professions need not have gone to college, if one is to judge by their tastes, their fund of learning or their interests. They might as well have spent their college years in the Peace Corps or the like. These great universities – which can split the atom, find cures for the most terrible diseases, conduct surveys of whole populations and produce massive dictionaries of lost languages – cannot generate a modest program of general education for undergraduate students. This is a parable for our times.⁹

In biblical terms, it is the Parable of the Talents for us academics, don’t you think? To put it another way, the *university* of the twenty-first century

⁷ CAM, page 337.

⁸ CAM, page 339.

⁹ CAM, page 340.

has mutated into the *multi-versity*. This mutation is the expression of a somatic genetic alteration.

To this point, here is a remark about the far-reaching success of what Bloom accordingly calls “the perversity of the diversity” mutation in our American universities. In my university’s formal and informal conversations regarding the upcoming revision of the core courses there is a pervasive confusion of the basic terminology such that colleagues are speaking of “a liberal arts component” to the professional majors of our institution. This is academic nonsense. Our professional programs as such are *servile arts*. These professional programs are in service to their respective professions. Nursing programs and education programs and so on are what they are for the expressed purpose of training persons to become professionals in those professions. Just look at their major requirements for graduation, the bachelor nomenclature on their diplomas notwithstanding. Look at their curricula. Consider their required texts. Professional programs are by design and delivery *not liberal but servile arts*. These professional or occupational programs exist to prepare students – not to be all that they can be as citizens or human beings, but – to function as trained and certified members of those discreet professions.

What we need in our discussions of the liberal arts is truth in advertising, not merely for the sake of institutional integrity in its recruitment, but *for the sake of faculty integrity in light of our stated mission*.

Beyond accurate speaking and thinking about what is servile arts (programs designed to develop students for particular professions or types of work) and what is liberal arts (courses and curricula designed to develop persons as human beings via formative textual study) let me offer this hypothesis for your consideration: A university that is predominately committed to professional programs is inevitably going to take on the character and to become *anything but a liberal arts institution* inasmuch as its curriculum and its majority faculty by training and disposition are at the university for the purpose of training undergraduates to be professionals in particular careers. Such a university (or “such a *di-versity*”, as Bloom would say) may aspire now and then to be known as a liberal arts institution, but it will run aground against the reality of that student holding the university’s catalogue and feeling frustrated and demoralized. Professional programs are not outfitted for the task of liberating that student for living a good life, only for qualifying the student as a worker in a particular career. Now back to us faculty, as Bloom sees us.

Returning to the analysis in *the Closing of the American Mind* we can

see that the initiation of “the core curriculum” was a response from the 1980s to the educational free-for-all of the 1960s.¹⁰ According to Bloom there remain two or three typical responses to the problem of education unmoored from its pre-1960s commitments to Western texts, Western notions of religion and Western philosophy. The first typical response is to make use of the autonomous university departments that were invented in the two decades prior to the late 1980s “and simply force the students to cover the fields, i.e., to take one or more courses in each of the general divisions of the university: natural science, social science and the humanities”. The liability of this strategy is that it is not a liberal arts education but a cafeteria curriculum served up as if any diet whatsoever is a healthy choice for the student’s soul. In the stead of the liberal arts quest to understand our humanity and thereby to learn who we are and what we should be doing as human beings – fundamental human questions posed to great thinkers, the serious reading of great texts and the serious study of the Bible as the text where God reveals Himself to us humans – it provides a mere gesture toward liberality. It is a gesture that cultivates neither culture nor character but only a cult of imitation perhaps of certain professors, a kind of liberalism or libertinism instead of a liberating experience of reading, discussing and contemplating together the higher and more fully human possibilities of a life lived well.

The second response to problems with university education in the wake of the educational unmooring of the 1960s is what Bloom calls “composite courses ... constructions developed for general-education purposes and usually require [-ing] collaboration of professors drawn from several departments.”¹¹ These composite courses trend toward popular subjects and tend to lack substance, as well as engagement from the natural sciences. A further related liability: “[T]hey do not point beyond themselves and do not provide the student with the means to pursue permanent questions independently, such as, for example, the study of Aristotle or Kant as wholes once did. ... Liberal education should give the student the sense that learning must and can be both synoptic and precise.”

At this point we are each asking, “Okay, but how do you do that?” Bloom adverts, “For this, a very small, detailed problem can be the best way, if it is framed so as to open out on the whole”. A very small, detailed problem is not, of course, sufficient condition for the danger in our classrooms that I am calling for; still, it is a start.

It’s a worthy question for disciplinary or department conversations about

¹⁰ See CAM, *Liberal Education*, pages 341-347.

¹¹ CAM, page 343.

what we are up to in our respective universities and how we can progress toward “a more dangerous university” – the sort of university that my university’s mission statement calls for, the sort of university that will serve and educate rather than disappoint and bewilder our students, a university that will be seriously working at being a *uni*-versity in the liberal arts, the reading-and-thinking-and-re-thinking-on-the-basis-of great-formative-texts sense of higher education. A university that will attract and retain young (and not-so-young) souls who sense that *preparation for a particular career is insufficient reason for investing themselves in four years of college*, who crave something more – somehow to have a seat at the table of what we used to teach as the Great Conversation. But are we professors up to the task?

Part Two

Asking whether we professors are up to the task to provide a person-liberating (or *liberal arts*) education sounds rude in today’s educational environment, but given the accuracy of his diagnosis there is good reason to swallow the bitter pill of Bloom’s prescription. His prescription is, in my view, not a cure-all. Still, if taken as directed it can serve to keep us professionalized professors in remission, so to speak. To begin, then, let me say that his diagnosis of our intellectual malaise is spot-on:

As an image of our current intellectual condition, I keep being reminded of the newsreel pictures of Frenchmen splashing happily in the water at the seashore, enjoying the paid annual vacations legislated by Leon Blum’s Popular Front government. It was 1936, the same year Hitler was permitted to occupy the Rhineland. All our big causes amount to that kind of vacation.

What is so paradoxical is that our language is the product of the extraordinary thought and philosophical greatness at which this cursory and superficial survey has done nothing more than hint. There is a lifetime and more of study here, which would turn our impoverishing certitudes into humanizing doubts. To return to the reasons behind our language and weigh them against the reasons for other language would in itself liberate us. I have tried to provide an archeology of our souls as they are. We are like ignorant shepherds living on a site where great civilizations once flourished. The shepherds play with the fragments that pop up to the surface, having no notion of the beautiful structures of which they were once a part. All that is necessary is a careful excavation to provide them with life-enhancing models. We need history, not to tell us what happened, or to explain the past, but to make the past alive so that

it can explain us and make a future possible. This is our educational crisis and opportunity. Western rationalism has culminated in a rejection of reason. Is this result necessary?¹²

The ignorance under discussion is *our ignorance as professors*. What exactly do we profess in our classes and in our scholarly publications? In a word, what is the content of our teaching? Well, according to Bloom we university professors are ignorant shepherds with little more than a childishly fragmentary knowledge of Western culture as a whole, its ideas, its texts, and the semantics of its language.

Western rationalism has culminated in a rejection of reason. This is owing, according to Bloom, to the capitulation of the humanities to the natural sciences, a capitulation to the unwarranted and unwarrantable claim that only the knowledge of our selves and our universe acquired by scientific methodology counts as *knowledge*.¹³ For example, this irrational culmination of Western rationalism (as promoted in today's universities) is verified in post-secular society by the political philosopher Jürgen Habermas, a methodological atheist.

Egalitarian universalism, from which sprang the ideas of freedom and social solidarity, of an autonomous conduct of life and emancipation, of the individual morality of conscience, human rights and democracy, is the direct heir of the Judaic ethic of justice and the Christian ethic of love. This legacy, substantially unchanged, has been the object of continual critical appropriation and reinterpretation. To this day, there is no alternative to it. And in light of the current challenges of a post-national constellation, we continue to draw on the substance of this heritage. Everything else is just idle postmodern talk.¹⁴

And why is this Christian and biblical heritage of justice and love little

¹² CAM, pages 239-240.

¹³ For more on this see CAM, Part Three The University, an Bloom's analysis of the methodological isolation between the university's natural sciences on the one hand and its social sciences and its humanities departments on the other, pages 243-382. See also Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974 edition, particularly Part Three: The Justification of Personal Knowledge, pages 249-324, and Part Four: Knowing and Being, pages 327-405.

¹⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *Time of Transitions* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2006), pages 150-151. I note that Habermas is not unequivocally arguing that Christianity is the present-day justification for human rights. But he is speaking at one remove about the Bible, the cultural and textual basis for what he calls "the Judaic ethic of justice and the Christian ethic of love". The indispensability of the Judeo-Christian *text*, the Scriptures, is my reason for citing him.

more than pretty playthings in our professorial hands? It is our cultural *aliteracy* that is to blame. We can read the great and dangerous texts of the West, but we really do not want to, at least, we choose not to read them any more than we have to in order to serve the interests of our own disciplinary specialties. This, says Bloom, is the reason for our unreasonable ignorance as university professors.

Let me offer a recommendation for recuperation of our professorial integrity as professors at a Lutheran university. Suppose we devoted an entire plenary faculty meeting to a roundtable discussion of what I call in my introductory philosophy courses “master metaphors of Western thought” that every educated person ought to know before graduating from college, namely:

- Plato’s Allegory of the Cave (*Republic*, Book 7)
- Aristotle’s Cross Examination of Nature (*Physics*, Book 2, section 3)
- Augustine’s Story of the Pears (*Confessions*, Book 2)
- Aquinas’s Phoenix (*On Being and Essence*, Chapter 4)
- Descartes’ Evil Demon (*Meditations on First Philosophy*, Meditation 3)
- Berkeley’s Table (*Principles of Human Knowledge*, 1, 3)
- Kant’s Ultimate Principle for Relationships (*Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, 222)
- Nietzsche’s Madman (*The Joyful Science*)
- Wittgenstein’s Rule for When to Speak and When to Be Silent (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 7)
- Searle’s Chinese Room (“Minds, Brains, and Programs” in *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*)

How many of us could participate intelligibly in the conversation? What if the faculty topic for that conversation was four or five great books from the Western canon such as Plato’s *Republic*, which Allan Bloom has translated and to which he attributes his incisive thinking about higher education? How rigorous or worthwhile would our discussion of that fundamental text be? Would we as a faculty undertake a reading of these texts afterwards? If this sounds rather “philosophy-centric”, perhaps we could agree to a pre-modern sensibility and say for the sake of my recommended discussion that we think of “philosophy” in its original sense. We could remind one another that most of us have PhD credentials and not FibDs (Fill-in-the-blank doctorates).

To put it still another way, how professionally interested are we in what other persons outside our disciplinary or program's stage lights have to say? The matter of what texts we live and die by is again the heart of the matter. Robert Sokolowski has argued, by way of his philosophical phenomenology, that the authors of the enduring books undergo a type of resurrection in the process of our reading their words. Sokolowski has provided us, I would say, the detailed footnotes for us to apprehend Bloom's hasty mention of those beautiful fragments of whose meaning we are ignorant shepherds. Recall that Bloom suggests the need for an archeology of our language. Here is Sokolowski:

Our use of language is so complex in its stacking that not only the words of other people but even their manifestations of the world, and their appropriation of those disclosures, can be brought to a kind of cognitive life in me as speaking now. Homer can come to life again, and so can Plato and Aristotle, Seneca and St. Augustine, Shakespeare, Milton, and Samuel Johnson, and even some person unknown to us who a thousand years ago wrote a letter that we read and quote now. This is what it means to have a mind and to be a person, a rational animal: that our thoughts can come to life again, and we ourselves can be echoed, in the minds and speech of others. *Human life is intellectual as well as biological.*¹⁵

Remember my first-page quote from Melanchthon regarding our Lutheran philosophy of education and his insistence on our rhetorical facility? A necessary condition of an authentically Lutheran university is the *rhetorical* athleticism of its professors. This is not a matter of modelling and communicating a skillset desirable for remaining meaningfully employed,¹⁶ but of instigating resurrections, if you will – bringing the best words and thoughts that we can find on the intellectual aspect of our human being into the ears and heads, the hearts and conversations of our students and thereby into our ears and heads and hearts and conversations. The *pathos*, *ethos* and *logos* of pre-modern rhetoric (the rhetoric that our Lutheran fathers knew

¹⁵ Robert Sokolowski, *Phenomenology of the Human Person* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), page 76. My italics.

¹⁶ My university has an online page concerning our liberal arts core requirements that answers the question of what the student will learn in our liberal arts curriculum with a bullet list of job skills: "Liberal Arts courses build transferable skills that help you: Communicate clearly, Solve problems, Think critically Make sound decisions, Work within a team, Adapt to change, Write effectively". Further, the page explains, "A Liberal Arts major prepares you for a wide variety of job opportunities and vocations as well as master's degree work. Liberal Arts majors go on to work in: Business, Government, Academia, Non-profit". Accessed 7 October 2015 at <https://www.cuw.edu/programs/liberalarts/index.html>

and which they require of us university professors) is not acquired *nisi per verbum*, except through the Word and, I am willing to argue, by affinity through other non-biblical texts. The unexamined life is not worth living, as even the pagan Greeks realized – not because the human being is worthless but because the worth of being human for those of us blessed with health and wealth and opportunity for education far outstrips what is dreamt of in today’s university. Why is this? *The Word (the verbally inspired text of the Bible in the first place) and the words of the culture of the West (the texts and ideas such as Sokolowski refers to, other Western texts) are not being read by the university’s students because they are not being read by university professors as a group and therefore are not informing our classes and curricula.*

To reiterate: Reading the Word and simultaneously reading lesser texts such as *Republic* is not a blueprint for a safe, readily and metrically manageable curriculum, of course. It is countercultural. It is countercultural also in regard to university culture today. This liberal arts or text-rich form of higher education is *dangerous*, as we know from reading any book of the Bible or from reading any book of *Republic*. Think of the *Apology* and compare 1 Peter 3:15. It is a matter of life and death. It is also very, very demanding of us professors. Notwithstanding, our ignorance is no excuse. Ignoring the texts, be it the canonical texts of Western culture or most especially the Judeo-Christian Scriptures, is inexcusable for us. It is disruptive of the peace to say this, I know. Still, let me belabor the point with another thought experiment.

Suppose we devoted one semester’s worth of faculty meetings to the reading and discussion of papers in which we were each required to give public defenses (I have in mind the *apologia* required of Socrates and mandated for each Christian in Peter’s epistle) for the intellectual merit of the particular chapters or doctrines of the Bible that have been and continue to be formative for our day-to-day teaching and curricular contributions to the university as a whole in our respective disciplines? I do not intend this to be merely a thought experiment, but a provocation for each of us as professors. Earlier this year I preached an Easter season chapel sermon calling for us to take the disruptive fact of the Resurrection into our curricular work, calling on our university’s professors to disrupt what I called “Sadducee syllabi” with the ever-relevant doctrine of Jesus’ resurrection.¹⁷ Time is short, as short as the four- or five-year stay of each class of students at the university. So, as John Updike puts it in his 1960 poem “Seven Stanzas at Easter”,

¹⁷ Please see this sermon at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGcES9Mz8BU>

Let us not mock God with metaphor, analogy, sidestepping, transcendence; making of the event a parable, a sign painted in the faded credulity of earlier ages: let us walk through the door.

The stone is rolled back, not papier-mâché, not a stone in a story, but the vast rock of materiality that in the slow grinding of time will eclipse for each of us the wide light of day.

Let us not seek to make it less monstrous, for our own convenience, our own sense of beauty, lest, awakened in one unthinkable hour, we are embarrassed by the miracle, and crushed by remonstrance.

Accordingly, as for the liberal arts in light of our stated mission to be “helping students develop in mind, body, and spirit for service to Christ in the Church and the World”, let me offer you, my fellow pro-fessors, a question for us all and a collegial imperative for each of us in order to help make ours a more dangerous university in the way that only we professors can. I will put these two items in a format that will resonate with our Lutheran sensibilities, as theses for sustained intellectual debate among the faculty.

Thesis 1.

The question that we must be occupied with if we are to be a university rather than a diversity is “What is man?”

As Bloom has it in his Preface,

A liberal education means precisely helping students to pose this question to themselves, to become aware that the answer is neither obvious nor simply available, and that there is no serious life in which this question is not a continuous concern.¹⁸

If we do not occupy ourselves as a university with this question, we have no claim to be a liberal arts institution, no matter how we package our core requirements. If we do not occupy ourselves as a faculty with this question in light of Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2 – that is, in terms of posing our question to God and of contemplating the Incarnation of Jesus in an intellectually biblical, creedal, confessional manner, we have no claim to be a *Lutheran*

¹⁸ CAM, page 21.

institution of higher learning.¹⁹

Thesis 2.

In order to be university professors at “a Lutheran higher education community committed to helping students develop in mind, body, and spirit for service to Christ in the Church and the World”, we must be actively articulating, presenting and publishing a Lutheran and liberal arts philosophy of education in terms of *the* question (see Thesis 1) and according to the distinctives of our respective academic disciplines. As professors of the university we ought each individually to fulfil this responsibility to articulate and publish, while at the same time contributing habitually to papers and publications at the department and school level as well.

My recommendation is that we consider ourselves professionally responsible for publishing our individual philosophies of education.²⁰ These written philosophies ought to be part and parcel of applications for promotion and regular features of department and school meetings. Those of us who are full professors ought to take the lead, but perhaps it will fall to our younger colleagues to do more thoroughly and blatantly what we senior faculty at our Lutheran university ought to have produced by this point in our lives.

How to bring this all together? We need some background – not background for the texts themselves, but background for *our relationship to the texts that are the source* of wise rhetorical engagement and an authentic liberal arts *habitus*. Let me try to set the table for our upcoming conversations with some text from John Steinbeck’s *East of Eden*. The novel is a multigenerational contemporary re-imagining of the biblical story of Cain and Abel. In these paragraphs, the voice to keep an ear on is the voice of Lee. Lee is a Chinese person working in America who speaks pidgin in public but is in fact college-educated. You will also hear the voice of Samuel Hamilton. Samuel is a wise neighbor who asks a lot of serious biblical questions. The book has to do with our moral ability and responsibility as human beings.

¹⁹ For the video of my March 3, 2014, “Who are We? - A 21st Century Anthropology from Luther’s 1536 Disputation Concerning Man” contact the Concordia Bible Institute whose website is <http://blog.cuw.edu/cbi/>

²⁰ My philosophy of higher education has been published as Two Principles for an Extended Conversation Regarding Lutheran Teaching and Scholarship, in *LOGIA: A Journal of Lutheran Theology*, Volume 14, Number 2, Eastertide 2005, pages 39-47.

Samuel wiped up the remains of gravy in his plate with a slice of bread, “Adam, I wonder whether you know what you have in Lee. A philosopher who can cook or a cook who can think?”... Lee laughed. “You’ve given me great trouble, Mr. Hamilton, and you’ve disturbed the tranquility of China.... Do you remember when you read us the sixteen verses of the fourth chapter of Genesis and we argued about them? ... The story bit deeply into me and I went into it word for word. [Later, Lee talked at length about the various Bible translations of what God said to Cain. The KJV quotes God as saying “*Thou shalt* rule over sin,” a promise of triumph over sin, whereas the American Standard Bible quotes Him as saying, “*Do thou* rule over sin,” an order commanding the impossible. GPS] “Lee,” Samuel said, “don’t tell me you studied Hebrew?”....

“Well, to go on, I went to San Francisco, to the headquarters of our family association. ... I went there because in our family there are a number of ancient reverend gentlemen who are great scholars. They are thinkers in exactness.... Every two weeks I went to a meeting with them, and in my room here I covered pages with writing. I bought every known Hebrew dictionary. But the old gentlemen were always ahead of me. It wasn’t long before they were ahead of our rabbi [whom they had hired to teach us Hebrew]; he brought a colleague in. Mr. Hamilton, you should have sat through some of those nights of argument and discussion. The questions, the inspection, oh, the lovely thinking – the beautiful thinking.

“After two years we felt that we could approach your sixteen verses of the fourth chapter of Genesis. My old gentlemen felt that these words were very important too – ‘Thou shalt’ and ‘Do thou.’ And this was the gold from our mining: ‘*Thou mayest*.’ ‘Thou mayest rule over sin.’²¹ The old gentlemen smiled and nodded and felt the years were well spent. It brought them out of their Chinese shells too, and right now they are studying Greek....

²¹ It is worth noting that, with due admiration for Steinbeck, תמשל should be transliterated *timshol* instead of *timshel*. It is the imperfect or jussive of תשל to rule. The verbal aspect could indicate a future, modal, or volitive verb, which explains all the listed translations in his story. To say that *timshol* means *thou mayest* absolutely may be misleading, since that portion of the translation is simply one of the possibilities of the imperfect aspect. Lee’s study of the verbally Inspired Hebrew text opts for one *timshol* possibility. It may illustrate the problem of using a biblical proof text to support Steinbeck’s narrative needs – a case of reading one’s own preconceptions onto God’s words. Thanks to my colleague Nathan Jastram for his Hebrew scholarship on this point.

“Don’t you see?” he cried. ... ‘The Hebrew word, the word *timshel* – ‘Thou mayest’ – that gives us a choice. It might be the most important word in the world....”²²

In our heart of hearts we long to have our university to be widely known as “a place of beautiful thinking”, isn’t that so? We want to invite young, immortal, impoverished souls to come and learn with us around the Bible and the great texts of our tradition. Well, then we must cultivate the “*timshel* habit”. We must become a place of texts and long, expertly guided peace-disturbing discussions.

There is significant momentum to be overcome, a pseudo-professional momentum, I would say, that we may well have acquired in the course of our graduate programs. We may well have acquired a magisterial disposition over and against the very texts that we need to submit ourselves to as the means of making progress toward understanding who we are as human beings. This momentum vectors us away from the text as it is, back from the Great Conversation, back into our siloed selves. For example, far too often we twenty-first century Christian professionals in higher education exhibit a predilection for coming up with our own ideas and then plugging a Bible passage into our presentations, as if God naturally supports our preconceptions. For example, we come up with our own ideas of what constitutes effective teaching and then quote the Bible verse about “being apt to teach” as if St. Paul was endorsing our educational theory de jour. This is hermeneutical nonsense. It is also intellectually perilous. So, let us begin with Scripture and end with Scripture and thus conform our thinking to God’s; and not vice versa. *Timshel*. As I have said, texts – and in particular the inspired biblical text – are dangerous to our presuppositions and predilections.

Come, shall we reason and read and talk together in risky, dangerous, disruptive ways about how to be *university professors*? Consider that there are questions so crucial to human beings that they ought to disturb the tranquility of China and that there are questions so crucial to our work that they ought to disturb the tranquility of our universities, curricula and our pro-fessing. Ask not what we can do to the texts; but what the texts can do to us. And for us. And for the impoverished souls who come to us in these closed-minded times to learn what it means to be human.

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²² John Steinbeck, *East of Eden* (New York: Penguin Putnam, Inc., 2002 edition), pages 298-301.

Marriage: The Goal of Dating Relationships, Not Just an Option

Nicholas Obed Gonzalez

According to Scripture, a husband and a wife should share the same relationship that Jesus shares with the church. However, due to postmodern cultural values, especially as seen in social media outlets and the sexual revolution over the past decade, marriage has lost its significant meaning. The goals of dating relationships have changed amongst the youth of the Christian church. Instead of marriage being the goal of a dating relationship for Christian youth, it has become only an option. Social media, specifically Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr have affected the way the youth of the Christian church, and especially high school and college aged youth, view relationships and marriage. One must consider these causes when developing an approach towards teaching against what social media and society claim as acceptable relationship options. Marriage is the goal of a dating relationship and not just an option for the Christian youth.

Social media have become a major influence in identifying what is important in dating relationships and marriage. So as social media set the options for what the goal of a dating relationship is, relationship and marital values become damaged or flawed because of what social media portray as “the perfect relationship,” specifically between a man and a woman. Since social media are continuously changing and updating, it is impossible to follow and respond to every single post. And because the use of social media is increasingly popular in today’s culture, especially with the youth, its influence spreads irrepressibly. In order to keep the youth of the church focused on marriage as the goal of a dating relationship, it is essential to explain what marriage is according to the Bible. Providing this definition along with a clear description of the church’s view on marriage will help protect the youth in the church from believing what social media display as truth.

For the purpose of this article, marriage and a dating relationship are specifically referring to the coming together of one man and one woman. Social media are distorting the significance of what it means to be married. Social networking sites Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr are three of the most popular in the United States. While these sites are often used for communication purposes, they have also changed the way people approach dating relationships. People often look to these sites as resources

regarding ways to improve their dating habits and to provide options for their relationship going forward. Since the approach towards the relationship changes, the reasons for being in the relationship change as well. Thus marriage becomes merely an option in the dating relationship between a man and a woman.

Yet marriage should not be just an option in the relationship because that is not what God intended when he instituted marriage. God's purpose for creating Eve was to be a helper to Adam. Upon being married, a man and a woman are no longer two separate people, but one flesh, according to Scripture. Marriage is a gift from God; it should not be seen as an option in a dating relationship, but as the goal of a dating relationship.

In order to explain this process, this article has three parts: examining how social media affects attitudes about marriage; exploring different definitions of marriage; suggesting ways to teach about marriage in today's culture. Research on Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr using various key terms such as *relationships* and *marriage* will show what is being said about this topic on these sites and the social impact of the comments suggested by the volume of various things such as "likes" or "shares" on Facebook, "followers" on Twitter and "followers" on Tumblr. On Twitter and Tumblr, hashtags are used as a way to track the user traffic regarding these search terms. Turning marriage into an option has led to a loss in the understanding of what marriage is and why this loss is important.

The second part of the article will explain what marriage is according to Scripture and how that compares with a general definition of marriage. The third and final section of the article will suggest how the church can deal with this situation. It will discuss ways for the church to educate its members, especially the high school and college-aged youth, about the effects social media are having on marriage. Educating in the face of secular perspectives, specifically the perspectives given by social media, will allow the church to express what it truly means to love and how God created marriage as a way for his creation to express this love. As the church addresses and educates about the effects caused by social media, it can express the importance of marriage as not just an option in a dating relationship, but as a goal.

I. How Social Media Affects Attitudes about Marriage

A. “*The Perfect Relationship*”

Social media have become a breeding ground for what it means to be in a perfect dating relationship. Major social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr are filled with posts about events in people’s lives, and often about their relationships. Competitions frequently erupt as to which couple posts the best pictures, or who has the better boyfriend or girlfriend, or husband or wife, which develops into who has the better life. This competition stems from the idea of a “perfect relationship.” According to one researcher, “With the inrush of so much information about how other people are living their lives, or conducting their businesses, it’s easy to feel that we can’t compete.”¹ People are so concerned with having a perfect relationship that they set unrealistic expectations for their relationship. Social media are the ideal places to illuminate these unrealistic expectations of a perfect dating relationship because the people in the relationship control what they share and do not share. So while striving for the perfect relationship that can transition into the perfect marriage, people are led by these unrealistic expectations to the downfall of their relationship and even to divorce.² And although social media are an extremely popular and useful method of communication, they distort what true dating relationships are.

“Often described as Twitter meets YouTube and WordPress, Tumblr lets its users curate pictures, videos and text in one place online.”³ On the first night it was launched in 2007, there were 75,000 users; in 2012 there were over 42,000,000 users.⁴ And currently there are 226,000,000 blogs registered online, with an average of 75,000,000 posts daily, amassing to over 105,000,000,004 completed posts.⁵ These posts vary in content, but the most popular blogs often contain content related to dating relationships and

¹ Rachna Jain, “Four Ways Social Media is Changing Your Relationships,” *Social Media Examiner*, <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/4-ways-social-media-is-changing-your-relationships/> (accessed March 28, 2015).

² Tara Blau, “The Myth of the Perfect Marriage,” *Psych Central*, <http://psychcentral.com/lib/the-myth-of-the-perfect-marriage/00010528> (accessed April 15, 2015).

³ Josh Halliday, “David Karp, Founder of Tumblr, on Realizing His Dream,” *The Guardian*, <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2012/jan/29/tumblr-david-karp-interview> (accessed February 20, 2015).

⁴ Halliday, “David Karp, Founder of Tumblr, on Realizing His Dream.”

⁵ Tumblr, “Follow the World’s Creators,” About Tumblr Reference Page, <https://www.tumblr.com/about> (accessed February 21, 2015).

love.⁶ According to the site, nearly one third of the posts mention love and dating relationships on at least a weekly basis.⁷ While relationships and love are very broad categories, they are correlated to one another via hashtags, as they seem to be associated according to Tumblr bloggers. In posts related to the title of “perfect relationship,” both relationship and love are found within the posts.⁸ Yet the majority of them mention nothing relating to marriage or being married. They all describe a “perfect relationship” that is based solely on actions that are associated with what it means to love or be in love according to secular beliefs. The most popular post relating to a perfect relationship states,⁹

I don't want us to be those parents who never act romantic in front of their children. I want our kids to learn how to really love somebody because we lead by example. So kiss me in the kitchen while I'm making cereal, cuddle me on the couch during family movie night, and hold my hand while we grocery shop. Let's show them what true love looks like, so when they find it for themselves they'll never let it go.¹⁰

While this post may reveal an enjoyable illustration of affection, it should not be seen as something all dating relationships should strive to achieve outside of the context of marriage.¹¹ And even though this post does not directly oppose marriage, it does promote actions that all dating relationships should not be focusing on. Nonetheless, many of the youth read these posts and think that these are goals for their relationships and that these will lead to love.

As Tumblr is a popular website to post long random thoughts or ideas, Twitter is the shorthanded version. On March 21, 2006, the social media world changed forever. The first ever tweet was sent from the cell phone of

⁶ Tumblr, “Love and Relationships,” Tumblr Search Engine, <https://www.tumblr.com/search/love+and+relationships> (accessed February 21, 2015).

⁷ Tumblr, “Follow the World's Creators.”

⁸ Tumblr, “#ThePerfectRelationship,” Tumblr Search Engine, <https://www.tumblr.com/search/perfectrelationship> (accessed February 21, 2015).

⁹ In relation to what specific word(s) are being searched on Tumblr, the server is set up to produce posts according to what is considered the “most popular” first and continue with that pattern all the way to what is least popular. The post mentioned here is the most popular according to Tumblr users, having received over 5,000 likes and or re-posts.

¹⁰ Tumblr, “PerfectRelationship,” Tumblr Search Engine, <https://www.tumblr.com/search/perfectrelationship> (accessed February 21, 2015).

¹¹ It is important to mention that the user who originally posted this photo quote is not married. She clearly states that she is single according to her Tumblr blog. So, the use of the word “family,” is produced with a loose meaning and for this purpose is used outside the context of marriage.

the co-founder of Twitter, Jack Dorsey.¹² At its origination, Twitter was used to express daily thoughts and occurrences in a person's life. It began as an application on a phone allowing users to tweet anything in 140 characters or less.¹³ Today, Twitter is a worldwide social media outlet with over 288 million monthly active users and 500 million tweets sent per day.¹⁴ These tweets often feature hashtags, symbolized by a #, which links the word following the hashtag to all other posts containing that same word.¹⁵ When using the "#relationship" search on twitter, it links directly to anything using the word *relationship* on the site. The most popular tweets and twitter profiles are about the "perfect relationship."¹⁶ According to the profile's numbers, the "Perfect Relationship" profile has 2,111,000 followers, and the number of followers increases daily.¹⁷ Often the posts coming from these profiles are linked to blogs that either support the original tweet or express a deeper explanation why the ideas mentioned in the tweet should be valued in a dating relationship. Yet the posts from the "Perfect Relationship" profile do not ever mention marriage or being married. According to the numbers, this profile has tweeted over 7,000 times with nearly 3,000 of those posts being photos with quotes mentioning thoughts relating to dating relationships; not one mentions or depicts marriage.¹⁸ Instead they often talk about general thoughts like spending quality time together, or various displays of affection.¹⁹ In comparison, the most popular profile related to marriage has just over 50,350 followers; that number is less than 5 percent of the "perfect relationship" followers.²⁰ Since Twitter settings promote what is more popular, or trending, the youth are more likely to see the posts talking

¹² Twitter, "Milestones," Twitter Search Engine, <https://about.twitter.com/milestones> (accessed February 26, 2015).

¹³ A tweet is the term coined for a post on Twitter. The user can tweet anything from providing details about his or her personal activities, or where he or she is currently located, or any event in his or her life that he or she feel like sharing.

¹⁴ Twitter, "About," Twitter Search Engine, <https://about.twitter.com/company> (accessed February 26, 2015).

¹⁵ For example, if someone searches the #love, they will come across every tweet that ever contained the #love. This allows users to see what other people around the world think about that specific hashtag.

¹⁶ Twitter, "#Relationships," Twitter Search Engine, <https://twitter.com/search?src=typd&q=%23relationships> (accessed February 26, 2015).

¹⁷ Twitter, "Perfect Relationship," Twitter Search Engine, <https://twitter.com/JustRelatable> (accessed February 26, 2015).

¹⁸ Twitter, "Perfect Relationship."

¹⁹ Twitter, "Perfect Relationship."

²⁰ Twitter, "Marriage," Twitter Search Engine, <https://twitter.com/mrgwrks> (accessed April 15, 2015).

about the perfect relationship than about marriage.²¹ Since the Christian youth are exposed to a much larger amount of perfect relationship posts, they do not see any harm in reading and using them as guidelines for their dating relationship.²² They find comfort in these posts because they are not judgmental. About 17 percent of young Christians aged 18–29 feel judged by their church for past mistakes regarding immoral sexual relationships, and they turn away from the church.²³

The most popular social media site in the world today is Facebook. Originally launched as a site specifically for college students in February of 2004, Facebook now has over one billion active users.²⁴ Facebook is known for launching the world into the social media era. Every new social media outlet is linked to Facebook in some way. Social media like Tumblr and Twitter are more focused on specific aspects of Facebook, but they allow users to link their account on that site to their Facebook account.²⁵ When searching “relationships,” in the search bar on Facebook, the top site is a Facebook page titled “Relationship Rules” with over 6,980,000 people who have “liked” the page.²⁶ The page posts five to six quotes or picture quotes daily, relating to dating relationship values or inspirational quotes about being in a dating relationship. These posts average over 20,000 likes daily and over 10,000 “shares.”²⁷ On that Facebook page is a link that leads directly to the “Relationship Rules” website.²⁸ This website is full of articles with titles such as “Six Signs You’re in a Terrible Relationship, Nine Habits Happy Couples Have but Never Talk About, or Ten Old Fashioned Relationship Habits We Need to Bring Back.”²⁹ Each of these

²¹ Twitter, “About.”

²² Barna Research Group, “Six Reasons Young Christians Leave Church,” Barna Group, <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/millennials/528-six-reasons-young-christians-leave-church#.VRqw0JPF-Xx> (accessed March 26, 2015).

²³ Barna Research Group, “Six Reasons Young Christians Leave the Church.”

²⁴ Facebook, “About Facebook,” Facebook Search Engine, <https://www.facebook.com/facebook/info?tab=milestone> (accessed February 27, 2015).

²⁵ Tumblr is more focused on blogging and expressing words and thoughts through pictures. Twitter has a character limit, which forces users to use keep their thoughts to a limited amount of words.

²⁶ When a person “likes” a page on Facebook he or she sees all the posts from the website on his or her home Facebook domain. But the amount of “likers,” is not the amount of people who view the page or have viewed it; it is just the people who follow it directly.

²⁷ When a person “shares” something on their Facebook, he or she is sharing the direct post from the page, so in this case either the quote or picture quote directly from the Relationship Rules page.

²⁸ Mark Zuckerberg, “Relationship Rules,” Relationship Rules Facebook Page, <https://www.facebook.com/RelationshipRules> (accessed November 10, 2014).

²⁹ Mr. RR [pseud.], “Relationship Tab,” Relationship Rules Official, <http://www.relrules.com/category/relationships/> (accessed February 27, 2015).

articles mentions basic ideas the youth often use as guidance in forming their relationships. And although these articles may be relevant to youth, they miss the key foundation to a healthy dating relationship, God. Instead of turning to Scripture, the youth of the church may find more pleasing justification in worldly things. The two major reasons why youth turn towards worldly things instead of Scripture are that they find Scripture to be unclear, and believe that the Christian church is close-minded and judgmental.³⁰ Nearly 40 percent of Christian youth aged 18–29 believe they can find God in other things; they also believe they cannot relate to church.³¹ Since they cannot find justification in Scripture, social media are the most relevant option. Social media provide an open environment for people to express their personal values and beliefs without being judged, so the youth use social media as guidance in the hope of being more accepted.

B. Relationship Approach Affected by Social Media

Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr all have turned into globally used social media outlets. They are described as “social” media because they connect the world around them. Each of these sites provides an opportunity for people to share things with the world. But social media are actually much more focused on the user posting than on the users seeing the post. The user is the one controlling what is and is not posted. Instantly the focus of “social” media becomes the user, not the viewers. According to recent statistics, the time spent viewing media, either social media or television, is sufficient for approximately 3,500 to 5,000 marketing messages daily.³² These numbers are alarmingly high considering social media intend to connect people, not disconnect them. Yet this has led to a major disconnect in relationships, as people are more engaged with their technology than with each other.³³

The growing usage of social media amongst the Christian youth is slowly producing negative effects on the approach towards being in a dating relationship and eventually towards the relationship as a whole. The Barna research group has found that ideas about dating relationships, love, and

³⁰ Barna Research Group, “What Millennials Want When They Visit Church,” Barna Group, <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/millennials/711-what-millennials-want-when-they-visit-church#.VRubH5PF-Xy> (accessed March 26, 2015).

³¹ Barna Research Group, “What Millennials Want When They Visit Church.”

³² Jake and Melissa Kircher, “Does Media Distort Love?” *Relevant Magazine*, <http://www.relevantmagazine.com/life/relationship/features/25275-distorting-love> (accessed March 28, 2015).

³³ Kircher, “Does Media Distort Love?”

marriages are changing amongst Christian youth. Nearly 40 percent of Christian youth want to get married, but believe they will get divorced at least one time.³⁴ So while social media sell the exciting parts of love and dating relationships, such as the pictures, quotations, and descriptions of a perfect relationship, the youth seem to realize there is a potential aspect of marriage that is not exciting. However, since social media only provide the exciting parts, the youth are not reminded about the actual God-given purpose for dating relationships and how important God is to sustaining the marriage.³⁵ Studies also show that Christian youth aged 18–29 are unlikely to get into a dating relationship with a serious commitment involved. According to a study done by trend researchers, 43 percent of Christians aged 18–34, but especially those aged 18–25, would feel more comfortable in what is called a “beta marriage.”³⁶ A “beta marriage” is a two-year trial period of marriage, at the end of which the couple can either formally get married, or decide the relationship was on a downhill and move on. Researchers believe this idea is so popular because of how social media have idealized what love and being in a dating relationship mean to such a high degree that marriage becomes a much less valued option.³⁷ So instead of approaching dating relationships with the intention of eventual marriage, the youth are settling for relationships that require less commitment, such as *friends with benefits*, that is, two people who are mutually interested in each other and have sexual relations without the commitment of marriage. Social media not only support these actions, but also present them in a positive way.

C. Marriage as an Option

The goal of a dating relationship is no longer exclusively marriage. Marriage has lost much of its value and significance since its original institution. Marriage rates have declined drastically in the past few decades. According to a recent census, the marriage rate has decreased 60 percent since 1970.³⁸ Marriage rates from 2000–2012 decreased approximately

³⁴ Barna Research Group, “New Marriage and Divorce Statistics Released,” Barna Group, <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/family-kids/42-new-marriage-and-divorce-statistics-released#.VRUu9pPF-Xw> (accessed March 24, 2015).

³⁵ Kircher, “Does Media Distort Love?”

³⁶ Jessica Bennett, “The Beta Marriage: How Millennials Approach ‘I Do,’” *Time Magazine*, <http://time.com/3024606/millennials-marriage-sex-relationships-hook-ups/> (accessed March 28, 2015).

³⁷ Bennett, “The Beta Marriage: How Millennials Approach ‘I Do.’”

³⁸ Christina Sterbenz, “Marriage Rates Are Near Their Lowest Level in History – Here’s Why,” *Business Insider*, <http://www.businessinsider.com/causes-of-low-marriage-rates-2014-5> (accessed March 28, 2015).

1.4 percent.³⁹ The major factor seems to be an aversion to commitment, especially in the generation of people in their twenties and early thirties.⁴⁰ Some bypass commitment because it is no longer required under the *friends with benefits* system. This arrangement promotes the most intimate physical interaction with much less emotional or spiritual attachment than that found in traditional marriage.

Popular movies such as *No Strings Attached* and *Friends with Benefits* were both released in 2011 and promote *friends with benefits* as a positive way to connect with another person. While movies are not included in the forms of social media discussed above, both of these movies took to Twitter as a major promoter of their movies, which effectively promoted the *friends with benefits* approach towards a dating relationship. In each of these movies the main characters are portrayed as people just looking for physical attachment, but they eventually become emotionally and spiritually attached as well. So while the end of the movies lead to the two characters in a dating relationship, they do not end with, or even mention, marriage. With over 23,000 followers, the *Friends with Benefits* profile was extremely popular and trending worldwide on Twitter just hours after it was released.⁴¹ Since *friends with benefits* does not include commitment, it represents a socially relevant option to the youth of today, even to Christian youth, especially because youth in general are shying away from long-term intentions. Social media promoted the idea of friends with benefits, beyond the influence of the movies. They have shaped the outlook for the youth regarding possible relationship outcomes, specifically between a man and a woman who are not looking for a relationship with longevity.

II. The Definition of Marriage

Understanding the definition of marriage from a general perspective as well as from a Christian biblical understanding is vital in order to contrast traditional marital values with what social media suggests as good dating relationship and marital values. From a Christian perspective, marriage is an institution that originated from the creation of Adam and Eve. In the history of Western culture, dating or courting usually begins the process towards

³⁹ CDC/National Center for Health Services, "National Marriage and Divorce Rate Trends," CDC Center for Disease Control and Prevention, http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/marriage_divorce_tables.htm (accessed February 28, 2015).

⁴⁰ Aaron Ben-Zeev, "Friends with Benefits: Sex Is the Icing on the Cake of Friendship," *Psychology Today*, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/in-the-name-love/201109/friends-benefits> (accessed February 28, 2015).

⁴¹ Twitter, "Friends with Benefits," Twitter Search Engine, <https://twitter.com/FWB> (accessed March 25, 2015).

getting married. Courting means “to act in a way that shows that you want or intend to get married.”⁴² Courting is similar to dating, but there are specific rules that are applied to courting that depend on the two families involved. Courting is a step towards possible marriage, while dating can end with various outcomes. Traditionally, marriage is two people becoming one according to the law and through God’s institution. Becoming one through the law and through God’s institution has its own effects on the relationship between married people, as they are both a significant part of marriage. The law is directly related to the common understanding of marriage, while the biblical understanding of marriage is directly related to God.

A. Marriage

1. Common Definition

In order to understand what marriage means outside the church, it is important to identify the common and legal definitions of marriage. These definitions provide an understanding of how marriage has various definitions according to culture and customs. One common definition of marriage is “the state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law.”⁴³ Another common definition is “a legally and socially sanctioned union, usually between a man and a woman, that is regulated by laws, rules, customs, beliefs, and attitudes that prescribe the rights and duties of the partners and accords status to their offspring (if any).”⁴⁴ Both of these definitions establish that marriage is between two people, usually a man and a woman, recognized by the law. Some states’ definitions of marriage might include people of the same sex, but that is not true for all states. Out of thirty-seven states that allow same sex marriage, only eleven and Washington D.C. have passed a law legalizing it.⁴⁵ The other twenty-

⁴² *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “Courting,” <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/courting> (accessed November 15, 2014).

⁴³ *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “Marriage,” <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/marriage> (accessed November 15, 2014).

⁴⁴ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. “Marriage,” <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/366152/marriage> (accessed November 15, 2014).

⁴⁵ According to the National Conference of State Legislature the eleven states and one district are: Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Minnesota, Maryland, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and Washington D.C. [Addendum; The statements in this paragraph are now outdated, since on June 26, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage in all fifty states.]

five states allow for same sex marriage via judicial decision.⁴⁶ And even though it has become increasingly popular, there are still thirteen states that acknowledge that marriage can only be between a man and a woman by law.⁴⁷ The general definition of marriage by law is “the civil status of one man and one woman united in law for life, for the discharge to each other and the community of the duties legally incumbent on those whose association is founded on the distinction of sex.”⁴⁸

2. *Biblical Definition*

As the law uses the common definition of marriage, Christians do not only abide by the common definition, but also by the biblical definition. The biblical definition of marriage is important to know as a Christian because it helps one understand why marriage was originally instituted. The biblical definition of marriage can be found in various places throughout Scripture. The first description of the relationship a husband and wife share stems from the creation of Adam and Eve: “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Gn 2:24).⁴⁹ Marriage according to Scripture is becoming one flesh until death.⁵⁰ While teaching the Pharisees about divorce, Jesus says, “So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate” (Mt 19:6). The coming together as one is the formation of a marriage that is built with God as the foundation. It is also important to acknowledge the significance of marriage according to God’s design: “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous” (Heb 13:4). When discussing marriage from a Christian perspective, focusing on God as the

⁴⁶ National Conference of State Legislature, “Same Sex Marriage Laws,” under “Human Services,” <http://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/same-sex-marriage-laws.aspx> (accessed March 26, 2015).

⁴⁷ According to the National Conference of State Legislature, the thirteen states are: Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Texas.

⁴⁸ *Black’s Law Dictionary*, s.v. “Marriage,” <http://thelawdictionary.org/marriage/> (accessed March 27, 2015).

⁴⁹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* ©, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

⁵⁰ The reasons to divorce according to Scripture are sexual immorality and malicious desertion. Concerning sexual immorality

it is written, “And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery” (Mt 19:9). Concerning malicious desertion it is written, “But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace” (1Co 7:15).

foundation is essential. Marriage according to Scripture is more than just two people coming together, but a special bond between two people, formed with God. The bond formed through marriage is a gift from God; it is bestowed upon a man and a woman whom God has chosen to come together as one.⁵¹

3. *Synodical Perspective and Teachings*

The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod teaches that marriage is an institution of God from creation as expressed in Scripture. According to a previous president of the LCMS, the Word of God teaches that “marriage is the life-long, exclusive union of one man and one woman, as husband and wife.”⁵² Thus the rite of marriage is not one that is man-made, but is present from the beginning and is the first institution created by God. While the LCMS agrees with this point, it explains marriage in further detail through *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. According to Luther’s Small Catechism,

The ceremony itself makes this clear. For all who desire prayer and blessing from the pastor or bishop indicate thereby – whether or not they say so expressly – to what danger and need they are exposing themselves and how much they need God’s blessing and the community’s prayers for the estate into which they are entering.⁵³

This is how Luther expresses his understanding of being married in a church by a pastor or bishop. In his Small Catechism are these words regarding marriage:

For, although it is a worldly estate, nevertheless it has God’s Word on its side and is not a human invention or institution like the institution of monks and nuns... Those who first instituted the custom of bringing a bride and bridegroom to church surely did not view it as a joke but as a very serious matter. For there is no doubt that they wanted to receive God’s blessing and the community’s prayers and not to put on a comedy or a pagan farce.⁵⁴

Both of Luther’s claims are found in texts that the LCMS supports

⁵¹ Just as it says in Scripture, in Gn 2:24 and Mt 19:6.

⁵² A. L. Barry, “What About... Living Together without Marriage,” Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, <http://www.lcms.org/page.aspx?pid=862> (accessed September 19, 2014).

⁵³ SC 8.5.

⁵⁴ SC 8.3.

and acknowledges as foundational beliefs. These beliefs are expressed and practiced in LCMS churches throughout the world.

Understanding the common definition, the biblical definition, and the LCMS teachings of marriage will assist in comprehending the various ways marriage is outlined in Western culture, specifically for an LCMS Christian. The common definitions explain how marriage is viewed according to the law. The biblical and LCMS definitions express the view of marriage according to Scripture. Together these three definitions shape a proper framework for Christian youth as they contemplate marriage.

B. Marital Guidelines and Purpose in Scripture

1. Eph 5:22–33

As the legal system and the church have definitions of marriage, the Bible provides guidelines and the purpose for marriage. These guidelines serve as a reference point for Christians as they contemplate marriage. In St. Paul's letter to the people of Ephesus, he discusses various ways of Christian living. The Epistle to the Ephesians is often used as a guide for Christian living and for some of the issues Christians may face. One of the topics in the epistle is the institution of marriage. He addresses the relationship between a husband and wife to the relationship between Christ and the church.

Paul begins first by describing the way a wife must submit to her husband. He writes, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior" (Eph 5:22–23). This submission is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of the love and respect that a wife should have for her husband. It is important to keep in mind this does not mean the wife is an unthinking woman who follows her husband blindly. As Peter O'Brien writes, "The wife's response of submission, which is not an unthinking obedience to his leadership, is to be rendered gladly, irrespective of whether the husband will heed the injunctions explicitly addressed to him or not."⁵⁵ The act of submission does not stem from whether her husband loves her as he is called to do. Instead it is an expression of her love, "as she seeks to honour the Lord Jesus Christ," and it "will *ultimately* lead to divine blessing for herself and others."⁵⁶ So, while the act of submission may seem negative, the bigger picture for the wives is they are called to submit to the Lord as Paul wrote in Eph 5:22.

⁵⁵ Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999).

⁵⁶ O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 418.

Paul then says that the husband to love his wife as Christ loves the church: “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Eph 5:25). The love that Christ has for the church is the greatest example of love because he sacrificed his life for the church. This is the love that Paul describes when illustrating the love a husband must have for his wife. Similar to the act of submission by the wife, the act of love by the husband is also focused towards the Lord. Focusing on the Lord not only with words, but also with actions, is critical when trying to establish Christ as the center of the marital relationship. As Christian youth focus on establishing Christ as the center of their dating relationship, they can use the Scripture in order to learn how to think about marriage.

Earlier in his epistle, Paul uses the word *ἀκρογωνιαίος*, proclaiming that Christ is the *cornerstone* on which the church is built.⁵⁷ As Christ acts as the cornerstone of the church, he displays his love through both his Word and deed. And yet his love is most amplified by the words “and gave himself up on behalf of it” (Eph 5:25). Christ gave his life for the church, the truest example of sacrificial love. A husband is directed to imitate this love when loving his wife. Although a husband may not need to sacrifice himself physically, he is still called to sacrifice himself in other ways as an example of his love. Understanding this intimate relationship, which a husband and wife share, will attract the youth towards striving to share in the biblical idea of marriage. This also helps clarify that the husband should not take his wife’s submission as a sign of his dominance, but instead as a sign of his willingness to self-sacrifice because of his love for her.⁵⁸ Paul goes on to explain how a husband should love his wife as he loves his body; once again in the same way that Christ loves the church.⁵⁹ In order to encourage the husband’s love for his wife, Paul continuously refers to Christ and the love he has for the church.

As Paul concludes this chapter in his epistle, he delivers a message with a direct correlation to the Old Testament: “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh” (Eph 5:31). This reference is to the original institution of marriage as found in Gn 2:24. In the same way that Christ holds tight to the church, a man must hold tight to his wife. A man displays this oneness in the love

⁵⁷ “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord” (Eph 2:19–21).

⁵⁸ Walter F. Taylor Jr., *Ephesians*, Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985).

⁵⁹ Eph 5:29.

he has for his wife. It is a sacrificial, covenant-love, and coming together as one flesh is the culmination of the promise made between a husband and a wife when they are married.⁶⁰ The promise made between a man and a woman in marriage is a promise made with and before God. Thus the act of submission from the wife and display of love from the husband are explicitly directed towards each other, as to the Lord.

2. 1Co 7:1–15

Paul's writing serves as a prominent source when discussing marriage as he again discusses the topic in his first epistle to the people in Corinth. He presents new information that specifically acknowledges the issues in Corinth at the time. The two main issues Paul addresses are sexual immorality and divorce in relation to marriage. He starts his explanation saying, "Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: 'It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.' But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband" (1Co 7:1–2). Paul explicitly claims marriage as the only option if a man and woman wish to be involved sexually and want to remain sexually pure. The original Greek ἔχω, "to have," is in the imperative form ἐχέτω. This verb acts as a command to the people in Corinth, to stop their fornication. In this case, the imperative is hortatory, which acts to involve the speaker in a course of action he already decided upon; therefore this imperative is not merely permissive.⁶¹ So in order that the Corinthians remain sexually pure, Paul instructs each man should have his own wife and each woman should have her own husband, if it is God's will. As his instructions continue, he says that in marriage, the husband's body belongs to the wife, and the wife's body belongs to the husband. He warns them to make sure they do not deprive each other of their bodies. But he also allows them, by mutual agreement, to deprive each other of their bodies if they wish to set aside a time for prayer, as their coming together is a gift from God. But after devoting time to the Lord, they should be together again in order not to fall into Satan's temptation.⁶² He also concedes that if a person is not bothered by sexual temptation, he or she may remain single, as he himself did. But then he expresses his concern about the sexual immorality that is already happening: "But if they cannot exercise

⁶⁰ Klara Butting, *Pauline Variations on Genesis 2.24: Speaking of the Body of Christ in the Context of the Discussion of Lifestyles*, trans. Brian McNeil, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* no. 79 (2000), 79–90.

⁶¹ Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, [1998]), 361.

⁶² "Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control" (1Co 7:5).

self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion” (1Co 7:9).

Paul then addresses divorce amongst the married: “To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife” (1Co 7:10–11). Paul clearly states neither man nor woman should separate from one another. If they separate, the wife should remain single or else go back to her husband. This concept reiterates what the Gospel of Matthew states.⁶³ Paul clearly establishes the only reasons for divorce, so marriage in all other cases is to last until death.⁶⁴

For Christian youth, the marital guidelines Paul provides are especially important because many of them consider marriage an option in a dating relationship.⁶⁵ Paul’s marital guidelines in both Ephesians and 1 Corinthians allow not only the youth, but also all Christians, to understand what it means to be married. Reading these passages in contrast to what social media display illustrates that marriage is a gift from God and hopefully removes the youth’s belief that at least their first marriage will end in divorce.⁶⁶ Youth who trust in God can develop the belief that marriage is a lasting institution. Thus, Scripture will cause youth to approach a dating relationship with Christ as the foundation. And while they may not all receive the gift of marriage, it is important they all remember the most important relationship is the one they have with God.

C. Importance of Understanding Love

1. Meaning of Love according to Scripture

As scriptural passages discuss marital guidelines, they also serve to define what love is and how to love. Understanding love is important not only in a dating relationship, but also in all relationships, as Jesus teaches: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another” (Jn 13:34). Love is a word often associated with marriage. Yet love is a word that has many meanings and, more often than not, people are inclined to create their own definition of love in order to feel justified in a dating relationship. According to

⁶³ “So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate” (Mt 19:6).

⁶⁴ As mentioned previously this is one of two occasions found in Scripture where divorce is an acceptable action. See footnote 50.

⁶⁵ See footnote 34.

⁶⁶ See footnote 34.

Merriam Webster's Dictionary, the three most common definitions of love are, "a feeling of strong or constant affection for a person; attraction that includes sexual desire; a person you love in a romantic way."⁶⁷ These three definitions are very ambiguous and lead to people attempting to define love however they please. As Timothy Messenger states, "Some say that love is a feeling. Some say that love is an emotion. Some say that love is whatever you want it to be as long as you feel good."⁶⁸ In comparison, Scripture discusses love in a variety of contexts leading to different ways of understanding love. In the context of a dating relationship, especially one with marriage as the focus, Paul describes the true nature of Christian love.⁶⁹

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (1Co 13:4-7).

This depiction of love provides a clear example of how to show love. It reflects the actions of Christ who endured everything as he sacrificed himself for all. There is no ambiguity left by these scriptural definitions; so when a Christian uses the word *love*, especially in relation to marriage, it comes with a clear understanding. For Christian youth, it serves as a reminder that there is no greater love than the love Christ has for all people. And although Jesus never explicitly says, "I love you," he gives examples of his love throughout Scripture just like the passage above.

2. Using the Meaning as It Applies to Marriage

As Scripture provides a clear meaning of love, the application of love as it affects marriage can also be found in Scripture. Love seems to emerge from many different outlets when dealing with a marriage. Whether it is staying up late to discuss a stressful day at work, waking up early to help each other prepare for the day, or even preparing a romantic evening to share together, each of these are often described as a display of love. Love, whether within or without the context of marriage is "meant to be

⁶⁷ *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, s.v. "Love" <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/love> (accessed February 11, 2015).

⁶⁸ Timothy Messenger, "How Does God Define Marriage?" *Thoughts of a Catholic Youth Minister*, <https://timothymessenger.wordpress.com/2014/02/09/how-does-god-define-marriage-3/> (accessed January 15, 2015).

⁶⁹ Cliff and Helen Leitch, "What Does the Bible Say About Love?" Christian Bible Reference Site, http://www.christianbiblereference.org/faq_love.htm (accessed April 15, 2015).

a reflection of the love of God.”⁷⁰ So within the context of marriage, Paul compares the love between a husband and wife in marriage with the love between Christ and the church. As Paul illustrates it, the truest display of love does not come from anything that a husband or wife does for one another, but what Christ did for all people. Even though it did not come without hesitation, Christ gave himself up according to God’s will.⁷¹

Paul concludes his section about love by saying, “So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1Co 13:13). For Christian youth, understanding the meaning of “loving as Christ loves” is particularly important within the context of a dating relationship that has marriage as the goal. The bond formed in marriage is not only through the love shared between husband and wife, but also through the love shared for Christ and the grace received from Christ. Jesus gave up his life as a sign of his love. As Christians, we attempt to reflect his love in the context of relationships leading towards marriage as well as in all aspects of our lives.

III. Educating in the Face of Secular Perspectives

A. Relationship Intentions

As social media describe the intentions of a dating relationship as finding happiness with someone or enjoying someone’s company, the significance of the relationship is lost. When considering being in a dating relationship, Christian youth should not look to social media for guidelines, but towards Scripture. If youth are looking for a dating relationship that does not have marriage as a goal, they are getting into the relationship for the wrong reason. One writer says, “Dating without the intent of getting married is like going to the grocery store with no money. You either leave unsatisfied, or you take something that isn’t yours.”⁷² This is not to say that the first relationship leads to marriage, or that the first relationship is going to be perfect, but it should be approached in a God-pleasing manner.

Even though *friends with benefits* is a popular option amongst the youth, it is certainly not God-pleasing. *Friends with benefits* includes a physical

⁷⁰ Messenger, “How Does God Define Marriage?”

⁷¹ “And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will” (Mt 26:39). Jesus said this three times in the Garden of Gethsemane before he was arrested.

⁷² Jefferson and Alyssa Bethke, “Why Should You Date Someone?” Youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFkX75yrdZl> (accessed March 25, 2015).

relationship that should not be shared outside of the context of marriage, and hence is a form of sexual immorality. As the thought of becoming friends with benefits becomes an intention for the relationship, Scripture can help refocus Christian youth towards God-pleasing actions. Paul writes to the people in Corinth,

Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body (1Co 6:18–20).

Paul clearly states that sexual immorality is defiling to the body, and as explained earlier, being friends with benefits includes a sexually immoral connection. As the church teaches this, it can address the sinful nature of being friends with benefits and can express how social media mislead youth when attempting to express this relationship option in a positive way.

B. What It Means to Be Married

Being married is much more than being able to have a physically intimate relationship. Social media strongly advertise physicality as an integral part of a relationship, yet while it is important, it must be practiced in a way that is God-pleasing and not solely for satisfying the desires of the flesh. As it says in Scripture,

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever (1 Jn 2:15–17).

As social media popularize the sharing of a physical relationship, whether dating or just as friends with benefits, this only satisfies the desires of the flesh. Yet those desires are not according to God's will. In the *Lutheran Service Book*, the Rite of Matrimony includes the following words in relation to marriage:

The union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for the mutual companionship, help, and support that each person ought to receive from the other, both in prosperity

and adversity.... Therefore, all persons who marry shall take a spouse in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust, for God has not called us to impurity but in holiness.⁷³

So while social media express some romantic notions of what it means to be married, social media turn away from using the word *marriage* and discuss these feelings in the context of a physical relationship, with a minimal potential for an emotional attachment from either person involved.⁷⁴ According to Scripture, if two people share these sentiments and wish to live a God-pleasing life, then they should be married.

C. Marriage Is the Goal

As two people become involved with a dating relationship, the goal for the outcome of the relationship should be marriage. This does not mean that every dating relationship is going to end in marriage, as people often experience break ups throughout their dating experiences. However, when approaching a dating relationship, a person must keep God as the center and foundation of the relationship. While explaining how to act in a relationship can often be very difficult because of sinful nature, the proper approach to the situation is to revert back to Scripture. Passages such as the Ephesians 5 and 1 Corinthians 7 texts mentioned above are both great examples of how to approach relationships in a godly manner. So if these passages as well as other scriptural references are taught and explained properly, marriage will no longer be seen as just an option. Relationships will be seen with a perspective that highlights the important values according to Scripture. This will cause marriage to regain its significance as an institution created by God and to reemerge as the goal of dating relationships.

D. Education and Application

For Christian youth, having a clear understanding of marriage as it relates to the context of a dating relationship is important. But without knowing how to apply that knowledge, it becomes irrelevant. As social media are continually developing new ways to influence the youth, the church can use these developments to their benefit. The use of Facebook and Twitter is becoming more popular for churches, especially churches

⁷³ "Holy Matrimony," in *Lutheran Service Book*, prepared by the Commission on Worship of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004), p. 275.

⁷⁴ See *Friends with Benefits* relationship as described above in section I. *How Social Media Affects Attitudes About Marriage*, subsection C, *Marriage as an Option*.

led by younger pastors.⁷⁵ These sites are used to displaying a web page or profile for the church with basic information such as address and location. They also provide a brief background of the church's history and updates regarding current events. According to a recent survey, over 50 percent of pastors believe the Internet can be a powerful tool for ministry.⁷⁶ When dealing with the youth of church, especially the high school and college aged youth, using social media is vital.

Using social media can help the pastor to connect with the youth outside of the church. It allows the pastor to see the issues regarding dating relationships and intentions that are "trending," or influencing the youth on social media. Then the pastor can address these issues and connect with the youth on their medium while also tying in Scripture. This allows the pastor to make a connection to how Scripture can relate to what is influencing the youth today. Setting up a time to meet with these youth and making it a habit to discuss the popular issues they are facing is helpful towards nurturing their faith as well.

Another great feature of social media is finding other pastors or even inspirational speakers that address the issues that Christian youth are facing. As mentioned before, Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr all have search engines that allow the user to search who has written something relating to a specific topic on the site. By using these search engines, the pastor can share with the youth that there are other people talking about the same thing and addressing it from a Christian perspective. Jefferson Bethke, a Christian motivational speaker who travels around the nation, discusses many topics that the Christian youth face, especially in regards to dating relationships and marriage. While he is present on Twitter, he also uses YouTube in order to share his videos relating to these topics. The pastor can use these videos as a helpful tool towards showing the youth that they are not alone in facing and talking about these issues. By connecting with the youth on their social media and showing them how it can relate to what they read in Scripture, the pastor is helping to remove the negative influence social media have on the intentions of a dating relationship. For Christian youth, being educated in Scripture and knowing how to apply it will shift the intentions from what social media display back towards what God intends.

⁷⁵ Barna Research Group, "The Rise of the @Pastor," Barna Group, <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/congregations/615-the-rise-of-the-pastor#.VRuDtpPF-Xx> (accessed March 24, 2015.)

⁷⁶ Barna Research Group, "Cyber Church: Pastors and the Internet," Barna Group, <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/congregations/706-cyber-church-pastors-and-the-internet#.VRuDd5PF-Xy> (accessed March 24, 2015).

Conclusion

In this age of technology, new forms of social media and technological advances appear on a daily basis. As social media portray marriage as just an option, they devalue the significance of one of God's amazing institutions. Understanding marriage with a common and legal definition as well as with a biblical perspective illustrates the various ways marriage is viewed for both Christians and non-Christians. For the youth of the church, it is also important to have knowledge about the marital guidelines and purpose in Scripture. Along with these marital guidelines, Scripture also provides the meaning of love both within and outside of the context of marriage. Directing youth towards Scripture will hopefully cause them to use Scripture as guidance. It will also allow youth to use the Scripture to share the importance of dating relationships and marriage on the various social media outlets.

Though there are differences in their origins, the church and social media can work well together. The church is known for using Scripture as its ultimate foundation because it is unchanging. The church is one body in Christ, no matter where the members are gathered: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them" (Mt 18:20). Similarly, social media connect people all around the world and allow people to interact with one another no matter where they are in the world. Scripture is good and it is from God. It is clear in what it states. Social media are secular; they address worldly views with worldly opinions, and are always changing.

In order to face these secular perspectives, the church must continue to educate its youth. Addressing dating relationship values as presented by social media, and not avoiding them, is the first step. The next step is equipping the youth with the resources they have around them, especially the Bible, about how to tackle these views in a God-pleasing manner. Educating the youth early will allow them to feel comfortable addressing these secular ideas as they face them in various situations. Then the youth can take to social media the truth that they are being taught. Now social media can be used as a tool to share the Gospel, which will not only lead to the reestablishing of marriage as the goal of a dating relationship, but also to truth that Scripture provides about everyday living.

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Book Reviews

Posset, Franz. *Unser Martin: Martin Luther aus der Sicht katholischer Sympathisanten.* Muenster, Germany: Aschendorf Verlag, 2014.

Review by Timothy Maschke

Note: A book review of this work will be published in our next issue of this journal. In the meantime, here is a foreword prepared for an anticipated English translation.

The Augustinian friar and evangelical reformer, Martin Luther, continues to offer exceptional insights for ongoing ecumenical conversations, particularly as the subject of scholarly scrutiny from a Roman Catholic perspective. Ever since Vatican II, a recognized rapprochement ebbs and flows between Luther and Roman Catholic scholars. Significant and strong scholarly leadership in this venue was given by Dr. Kenneth Hagen, professor emeritus, during his long and successful tenure at Marquette University in Milwaukee as a Lutheran Luther-scholar on a Roman Catholic (Jesuit) campus. His students, including Dr. Franz Posset, continue to carry the torch for such enterprising studies and opportune dialogues. As an independent Roman Catholic Luther-scholar, Franz Posset possesses the proclivity for producing exceptional research outside the political and theological limitations of an academic institution. He has demonstrated through numerous publications his unique ability to contextualize Luther in a way that is beyond denominational delimitations and parochial peculiarities.

Having a breadth and depth of educational and ecclesiastical experiences, Posset brings his ecumenical insights to the fore in this masterful work on Luther's Catholic sympathizers. Ecumenical Luther research in America can be labeled more accurately trans-confessional study, since the goal is not so much to create a corporate ecclesiastical unification between the diverse religio-political entities as it is the humble, yet real recognition of the common confessional beliefs which are held by various individuals and communities and which often suffer under the mislabeling of denominational distinctiveness. Nor is this work an exercise in the now passé analysis of confessionalization. To use the term "confessionalization" in reference to these early years of the sixteenth century, that is, prior to 1530, would be anachronistic to say the least. And, in one sense, this present volume belies such modernistic characterization and instead asserts the substance of Luther's search for the biblical truth in Christ Jesus.

Many Catholic admirers of Luther have been under-recognized in academic circles. A lacuna in the recent *Luther Handbuch* (2005), as Posset

notes in his Introduction, and the more recent research guide, *Reformation and Early Modern Europe* (2008), is evident as both works omit mention of Catholic clergy who admired Luther's theology and bold confessions, yet who remained members of the Roman Catholic Church. This present study by Posset addresses this glaring omission in an initial, yet significant way. Not only are the four men in this study inclined to agree with much of what Luther had advocated, but they also extended his message in several ways in the geographic region surrounding the important city of Augsburg. Let's consider that community for a moment.

Augsburg was one of the heartlands of the Lutheran Reformation outside of Wittenberg. Luther had been summoned here to defend his 95 Theses a year after they were posted in Wittenberg in 1517. Augsburg itself stood as a microcosm of the European communities which were, as yet, not distinctly nationalistic. The millennial-and-a-half old city of Augsburg was becoming increasingly urbanized in the sixteenth century and was long recognized as a mercantile center. Augsburg was also a burgeoning secular and scientific magnet for various scholarly studies and experimentations. The religious diversity of Augsburg, even for a strong Catholic society, allowed for several dozen religious communities – not all of which were recognized under the papal ensign – to thrive and exercise their religious commitments. Here the nascent evangelical Lutherans found great reception as they proclaimed their commitment to the biblical confessions of the Church catholic on June 30, 1530. This important region in south western Germany is a significant setting for the following study on these four noteworthy Roman Catholic Luther-sympathizers.

Salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone is the truth of the Gospel that rang loudly and clearly throughout Germany in the sixteenth century and continues to ring true to those who understand that central message of Holy Scripture. The liberating love of God was experienced profoundly by Martin Luther, although it did not remain a personal experience. Luther's recognition of the Gospel freedom was such that it was appreciated and embraced by many others in the Church catholic. Among those who were sympathetic to and grasped the significance and power of this Gospel message were many Roman Catholic clerics, not only in Germany but throughout the northern European continent including the Netherlands and Scandinavian provinces. Posset in his first chapter gives a grand introduction to one such cleric, Bernhard Adelman, who not only recognized the central message of the Gospel, but boldly confessed it at a critical time in the early days of the Reformation.

Considering the significant place that Holy Scripture held as God's inscripturated Word at the heart of the Reformation movement, translating

the Bible into the language of the common people drove and continues to drive much of the expansion and expression of the Christian faith throughout the world. Luther's translation of the New Testament in 1522 and his subsequent collaborative work with his Wittenberg colleagues provided a treasury of truth for the German people. As Posset notes, the Augustinian biblical humanist, Kaspar Amman, was the first to make a direct translation of the Psalter from the Hebrew original into German. The importance of his initial endeavor cannot be overlooked, yet the impact of Luther's work certainly is noteworthy as part of a larger publication of his German Bible.

Historians have noted that the publication of Luther's writings enabled his views to spread speedily throughout Europe. As Luther productively utilized the new media of print in his time, he drew admirers beyond his own community. Undoubtedly, the extension of Luther's ideas was beyond his own expectation or even consciousness. Yet, they were disseminated quickly and effectively beyond Wittenberg to the major cities, including Augsburg. The Benedictine monk, Vitus (Veit) Bild, exemplifies the subtle, yet significant impact Luther had on the readership of his day and age through his many publications.

Kaspar Haslach, a diocesan priest and preacher at Dillingen in the Diocese of Augsburg, serves as a final biographic example of those indispensable individuals who typified Luther's reception among Roman Catholic clergy in sixteenth century Germany. Luther himself, besides being a profound teacher and prolific writer, was a powerful preacher who proclaimed and taught God's people the Gospel truth. For him, the Word of God was the spoken word of God. Luther understood the church not as a *Federhaus*, but as a *Mundhaus*. The truth of the Gospel, God's unmerited gift of forgiveness for the sake of Christ, again comes through clearly in Posset's final chapter on Pfarrer Haslach. The preaching of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection alone gives hope and fulfillment for Christians. This was Luther's chief theme and the life-changing message heard both within and outside of the Roman Catholic Church.

Ecumenists, academics, historians, and particularly early modern scholars of the sixteenth century in Europe and North America will benefit from the original research and the contemporary relevance of Posset's insights into the lasting legacy of Luther among Catholic clergy in southern Germany. This volume will assuredly serve as a guide and model for scholarly studies for many decades. Placing this work in the larger context of contemporary Luther scholarship and ecumenical studies provides a venue and encouragement for continuing scholarly research into Luther's half-millennial influence on Christian theology and the lives of those who seek to follow Jesus, the Christ, and the Truth of His Gospel.

H. Gaylon Barker, *The Cross of Reality: Luther's Theologia Crucis and Bonhoeffer's Christology*.
Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015.
480 pp. \$44.00 paper.

Review by Theodore J. Hopkins

For too many today Dietrich Bonhoeffer is a religious genius forged solely by National Socialism during the regime of Adolf Hitler. Bonhoeffer seems to appear in history as a Christian martyr and prophet. What is missing in this view, among other things, is Bonhoeffer's relationship to Luther and the Lutheran tradition. Gaylon Barker's book is not the first recent work on Bonhoeffer to explore Bonhoeffer's theology from the Lutheran tradition, but it is one of the most comprehensive. A few helpful recent pieces of scholarship on Bonhoeffer and Luther include Klaus Grünwaldt, Christiane Tietz, and Udo Han, eds., *Bonhoeffer und Luther: Zentrale Themen ihrer Theologie* (Velkd, 2007); Wolf Krötke, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Luther," in *Bonhoeffer's Intellectual Formation: Theology and Philosophy in His Thought*, ed. Peter Frick (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 53–82; and Michael P. DeJonge, *Bonhoeffer's Theological Formation: Berlin, Barth, and Protestant Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Barker's reworked dissertation exhibits a deep engagement with Bonhoeffer, a reflection of Barker's position as the President of the English language section of the International Bonhoeffer Society. Most impressively, *The Cross of Reality* displays a comprehensive understanding of Luther and the Lutheran tradition, a trait not always found in Bonhoeffer literature.

Barker argues that Christology stands at the center of Bonhoeffer's theology and provides the continuity to Bonhoeffer's disparate theological directions from his early work in his dissertation to his late reflections in the *Letters and Papers from Prison*. It is not merely Christology as such that is so important to Bonhoeffer, but "Jesus is always the crucified Christ. In other words, the cross looms on the horizon, casting its shadow over Bonhoeffer's entire theological enterprise" (4). Barker contends that "Bonhoeffer's 'cross of reality' will emerge as the thread that holds his life and theology together," providing "the continuity to Bonhoeffer's thoughts" (23).

Before covering (almost) the entirety of Bonhoeffer's life and writings, Barker endeavors to understand Bonhoeffer's reception of Luther, especially in relation to Karl Holl. Although Holl provides Bonhoeffer with a crucial

introduction to Luther and an emphasis on justification, Bonhoeffer departs from Holl on the matter of Christology. In fact, unlike Holl, “the cross becomes the key to [Bonhoeffer’s] understanding of Christology and the foundation for all theology” (75–76). Barker, with most Luther scholars after Holl, sees this focus in Luther himself—recovered by Bonhoeffer—tracing the contours of Luther’s *theologia crucis* (81–112). Luther’s theology of the cross is both a deep “critique of the world” and a gracious “source of hope for the world” (107). It is oriented to this world, yet interested in God and God’s self-revelation alone as found in the man Jesus Christ (102–06). Bonhoeffer takes this direction from Luther and expands on it.

Beginning with Bonhoeffer’s University studies, Barker shows how the cross of Jesus Christ marks all of Bonhoeffer’s theology. From his dissertation *Sanctorum Communio* through *Act and Being*, *Discipleship*, *Ethics*, and the late prison writings, “the cross is key to both Christ’s identity and God’s presence in the world” (156). Through deep study of numerous Bonhoeffer texts, Barker illustrates Bonhoeffer’s consistent focus on Christ as the revealer of God who brings salvation through his death and resurrection. For Barker, Bonhoeffer’s theology of the cross is “a cross of reality,” which is seen in five ways. First, the cross of Jesus Christ rejects all abstractions about God, focusing on the concrete revelation of God in Scripture, the suffering God who dies on the cross for his creation (420). Second, the cross “deals with the real world and not an ideological construct,” meaning that the cross sees the world as it is, lost in sin and called to repentance by a gracious God. Third, Bonhoeffer’s understanding of the cross of Christ orients theology decisively to the earth, concerned for the “struggles” of real life; thus, “it is a contextual theology” (420). Bonhoeffer’s theology seeks to address the current situation of the church, calling it to repentance and focusing it on Christ and his work in the world. Fourth, Bonhoeffer’s “cross of reality rejects two-realms thinking,” refusing to separate God’s reality from the reality of the world (421). God and the world must be kept together and must be understood together, which makes it a “very this-worldly theology,” taking seriously God’s world because it takes God seriously (422). Finally, Bonhoeffer’s cross of reality calls God’s people “back into this world with a sense of responsibility for the world’s future” (422). Christian discipleship is a calling to the world for the sake of the world. Bonhoeffer’s theology exhibits these features in and through Christ and his cross, similar to Luther before him, with a stronger emphasis on contextual theology and the need to connect faith and life. Hence, Barker comments, “If there is anything we have learned from Bonhoeffer, it is that genuine theology must take the context of its world seriously” (433).

Barker’s book is a deep and engaging book, well worth the read. Not

nearly enough study has been done on Bonhoeffer's relationship to Luther, and Barker's *Cross of Reality* provides a remedy. Barker's reflections on Bonhoeffer's Christology and how this Christology becomes practical in the life of the church are particularly important for the church today. With Barker, Bonhoeffer, and Luther, the church must proclaim the center of all truly Christian theology: one of the Trinity, Jesus of Nazareth, has come down for us and for our salvation. In his suffering, death, and resurrection—his cross—we see and know God, ourselves, and God's mission to his world. His cross is the reality of God and the world and must become our own.

McGowan, Andrew B. *Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practices in Social, Historical, and Theological Perspective.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014. 298 pp. Hardcover. \$34.99.

Review by Timothy Maschke

McGowan, Anglican priest and Yale professor, provides a resource for anyone interested in the early origins of Christian liturgical practices. Drawing upon many earlier studies, McGowan also includes his own analysis of these early sources from the first four centuries of Christianity that illumine the worship life of God's people. After an introduction on origins, he deals with foundational evidence for various parts of liturgical and extra-liturgical practices.

According to McGowan, the origins of Christian worship in these first centuries "involves both continuity and change" (17). Acknowledging that the early Christians undoubtedly followed their pagan neighbors in celebrating a banquet with food and drink and conversation, he asserts an interesting point that Paul's reference to "discerning the body" in 1 Corinthians 11 had a double reference—"not only the body of Christ identified with the bread, but the body thus constituted by those who shared the bread" (31). He then notes that baptism "was also the requirement for participation in the meal" (44). Augustine's Eucharistic liturgy is then given as an exemplar of western Christian worship practice. He continues by pointing out that preaching was just as important as the meal and followed a reading of early Christian letters, but only in a second- or third-generation was the Jewish scripture included. A Jewish lectionary, he argues, was unknown and even among Christians a lectionary was not evident until fragmentary evidence of such an organized reading appeared in the fourth century (102).

Song and dance are introduced in chapter four under the category of music. "The precise forms of that Christian singing, its performance in particular, remains mysterious..." (113), he notes. Much of what is known about the musical texts flowed from descriptions of the responsibilities of the lectors. What might be called "processional dancing" was described by some early preachers both by way of condemnation as well as affirmation, particularly as new members were drawn into the community through baptism (chapter five). He concludes with an exploration of a variety of practices associated with baptism, including anointings, consuming milk and honey,

and footwashing.

Canonical hours and festivals are the focus of chapters six and seven. The scheduling of regular hours of prayer had roots in Judaism, but Christians readily adapted themselves to prayer three times a day—morning, noon, and evening. As communal prayer developed, especially among widows and monastics, variety became the norm, although McGowan reports that “the centrality of the Lord’s Prayer and the Psalter are the most consistent and distinctive elements of ancient Christian practice” (214), particularly as established sites (cathedrals) became central features of Christian worship. Calling into question several assumptions about the development of the Christian calendar, McGowan affirms that neither pagan nor Jewish or even practical explanations are definitive. Christians did, however, see their history as part of God’s greater plan for the world and centered in Jesus Christ who came into human time.

Harmonizing the various worship experiences is provided in McGowan’s brief “Epilogue: The Making of Christian Worship.” He concludes, “Christian liturgy...is the sum of very specific and concrete performances, undertaken because they are believed by the members of the church to be constitutive of their faith, their allegiance, and their identity. These actions, offered as service to God, constitute Christian worship” (262).

Knowing that the first four centuries of Christianity do not present absolutely clear models for Christian worship is obvious for most students of early Christianity. That is what makes the tentativeness in almost all McGowan’s chapters frustrating. He peppers his paragraphs with probabilities: “suggests...we are uncertain...may have been...probably developed...are likely to have been third-century developments...” (99), “may have been...perhaps generally...whether or not...”(104), “we do not know quite how it relates” (129), “it is unlikely that...of course could and would change, when and where...may have been...sometimes...no evidence to suggest...may have been...may suggest...seems to be...would apparently have been...would probably have been...is hard to discern...” (131). These distracting qualifiers were obviously frustrating to this reviewer (and could have been alleviated by a more critical editor).

End materials, besides the Epilogue, include a very thorough bibliography (over 15 pages) and three very helpful indexes (subjects, modern authors, and “scripture and other ancient writings”). The latter materials are helpful for further study, since he does provide some English translations. In spite of the uncertainties in style, the content of this book deserves consideration of anyone interested in the origins of early Christian origins. McGowan has indeed provided a breadth of information with a gentleness of persuasion.

Peters, Albrecht. *Baptism and the Lord's Supper*. Commentary on Luther's Catechism series. Translated by Thomas H. Trapp. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2012. 248 pages. Paperback. \$44.99.

Review by Timothy Maschke

Thomas Trapp, retired professor from our sister school, Concordia University—Saint Paul (Minnesota), now pastoring Emmaus Lutheran Church, has provided a readily readable translation of the fourth of five volumes of Albrecht Peter's commentaries on Luther's Small and Large Catechisms. These volumes, published by CPH, are presented as study documents, since they did not go through the normal doctrinal review process of our LCMS. As such, their production should be seen as an encouragement for all pastors and theology students to study Luther's catechisms more closely. This volume is divided into three main parts—an introductory section on Luther's witness to the importance of the sacraments followed by a section each on baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Reformation reflections resulted in a renewal of the appreciation of the "sacramental witness," as Peters calls Luther's restoration of a biblical understanding of the sacraments. Highlighting Luther's four-fold connection of events, Peters draws together the importance of God's Word of promise, followed by the Spirit's creation of faith, and the gift of grace in Christ, which produces the good works which conform to the divine will of the Father. Particularly important, notes Peters, was Luther's shift away from the mere sign of the sacrament (an Augustinian emphasis) to the actual gospel gifts contained therein. Peters notes that "for Luther the 'Office of the Keys' is the fourth, central institution of Christ, along with Baptism and the Lord's Supper and the gospel that permeates all activities" (55). He adds "Every one of them deliver to us the eschatological gift of the one Gospel, the forgiveness of sins and acceptance into eternal life with God, renewal in the Holy Spirit and protection against the onslaughts of the powers of death" (65).

Already in his sermons on baptism, Luther noted the three essential descriptors for defining baptism—"the element, the Word of Distribution, and the Word of Institution" (78). Luther described these simply as "water, Word, and God's command or ordinance" (79)—an earthly gift, the baptismal formula itself, and Christ's divine mandate in Matthew 28. But

particularly interesting is Luther's shift in terminology, as explained by Trapp, from "'in den Namen' [Tr.: article as accusive, expressing object] to 'im Namen' [Tr.: article as dative, expressing means]" (86). Thus, for Luther, baptism is primarily God's activity on the person through the administrator. Explaining Luther's understanding of the need for practicing infant baptism, Peters points out that Luther used ritual exorcism as an affirmation of God's powerful Word in baptism, which creates saving faith alone.

Peter's third section is surprisingly short in comparison to the significant controversies of the sixteenth century. He summarily states: "Luther concentrates on the relationship between sacrament and faith, Word and the body of Christ, Christ's body and the forgiveness of sins, the forgiveness of sins and eschatological renewal" (151). Addressing twentieth-century unionistic issues in Germany, Peters refers to the Arnoldshaim Theses (produced in the 1950s by several European Protestant groups) and the Leuenberg Concord (1973 between some Lutherans and the Reformed), which do not take Scripture or Luther at his word. Luther rejected both transubstantiation and consubstantiation, notes Peters (164), emphasizing the gifts received. Peters quotes Luther's remarks about the supper being the Lord's, "He Himself makes it and presents it and is the cook, the waiter, Himself being the food and drink" (173). Although Peters follows some historical critical approaches (as noted by the editor of this series), Peters asserts that Luther would reject most historical criticism as out of hand, since they do not respect the actual words of Christ (183-188). This section concludes with several longer quotations from Luther's communion sermons, underscoring the great blessings of the Lord's Supper—the forgiveness of sins and the assurance of eternal life.

Pastoral conferences or circuit gatherings will be edified by a study following Peters' exploration of Luther's sacramental theology in the catechisms. Peters (via Trapp) provides innumerable topics for discussion, which would lead to further exploration into biblical and confessional sources. The only criticism I have with this work is the lack of indexes—a scripture index and a topical index would have been a useful resource for careful study. However, with the present volume, catechists and confessional pastors will be able to plumb the depths of Luther's simple, yet profound exploration of the sacraments in the catechisms.

Sánchez Merino, Leopoldo A. *Receiver, Bearer, and Giver of God's Spirit: Jesus' Life in the Spirit as a Lens for Theology and Life.*

Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015.

271 pages. Paperback. \$34.00

Review by Timothy Maschke

Lutheran theology has always wrestled with the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Regin Prenter's *Creator Spiritus* (Fortress, 1953) gave voice to Luther's understanding of the Spirit, but little has been done to clarify the Spirit's relationship to the person and work of Jesus, the Christ, at least in Lutheran circles. Sánchez has met that challenge with a work which will influence future conversations not only on pneumatology, but also Christology and ecclesiology. Expanding his doctoral dissertation, Sánchez proposes (a word he uses fairly regularly throughout the book) "to investigate more closely the usefulness of such a Spirit-oriented dimension of Jesus' life as a lens for Christology itself, Trinitarian theology, and three areas of Christian life—namely, proclamation, prayer and sanctification" (ix).

Engaging theologians from the second to the twentieth century, Sánchez provides a carefully crafted exploration of how Lutheran theology, with its strong Christology, can restore a proper recognition of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's life. Always aware of his innovative, yet intentionally and faithfully traditional approach, Sánchez is careful to relate his Spirit-oriented Christology to the more standard Logos-Christology, without compromise or distraction. He begins with the assertion that the Spirit has been partially eclipsed over the centuries in the church's attempt to preserve a strong Christology.

Orienting a theological perspective through the Spirit is a unique endeavor. In chapters one to three, Sánchez explores and explicates the early Church Fathers' understandings of the relationship of the Spirit to Christ, particularly His baptism. Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Athanasius are called upon as witnesses to the importance of a Spirit Christology as evidence in their understandings of Christ's baptism in the Jordan. Looking at Christ's conception, baptismal anointing, and also His resurrected exaltation, Sánchez demonstrates the importance of restoring the truly Trinitarian understandings of Basil, Tertullian, Augustine, and Aquinas, while also considering the atonement models of Abelard, Anselm, and Gustaf Aulén.

Rejecting the adoptionist and Arian heresies, the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed provided the necessary corrective by adding an article on the Holy Spirit, yet that did not completely bring out the significance of the Spirit in Christology.

Perichoresis is seldom a major topic even in most Trinitarian discussions. Yet through chapters four through six, this idea of the mutual indwelling and reciprocal work (or, to use Sánchez' word, "joint mission") of the persons of the Trinity takes precedence. Undergirding his presentation of Christ as the receiver, bearer and giver of the Spirit, Sánchez distinguishes between the traditional *filioque* and an *in spiritu* model of understanding the Spirit's activity in Christ's life. He then proposes, following Martin Chemnitz, "a Lutheran Christology in ecumenical perspective [which] can bridge contributions in the East and the West for the sake of the church at large" (179).

Of the nine chapters in this book, the last three provide some very practical, yet theologically sound applications. Chapters seven through nine, as noted above, deal with preaching, prayer, and the Christian life. Regarding preaching, Sánchez asserts: "The Spirit is the mediating agent that allows for the ongoing and dynamic movement from God to us through the word that points to Jesus and from us to God in response for such a gift through its faithful, articulate, and timely appropriation for our congregations" (185). Drawing upon both Eastern and Western theologians, Sánchez connects our prayer life to that of Christ as exemplary of "filial trust...in a loving Father who has given us the Spirit of his Son..." (217). And, finally, the Christian life is one of sacramental pneumatology where the Spirit is active incarnationally in the ongoing life of each believer through God's gracious means of grace.

Lutheran pastoral theologians will need to reflect on their own understanding and expression of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. For me, the experience of reading Sánchez book is reminiscent of my reading Lorenz Wunderlich's little book, *The Half-Known God* (CPH 1963). By drawing all theological ideas together under the activity of the Holy Spirit in a Christological context provides a unifying appreciation of the divine economy of our God's gracious and dynamic work in the world.

Disagreements may arise in some corners of Christianity with Sánchez' proposals. His Christological emphasis may distract some from appreciating the pneumatological implications of this work, but the conversations will be worthwhile. As an exercise in theological construction, the synthesis of a wealth of historical understandings is risky, yet valuable and commendable. I found this work to be both thought-provoking and faith-comforting.

One can only hope that this book will be read, reviewed, and, then, regaled with praise. As one of our CUW graduates, Leo Sánchez exhibits the achievements of a deep thinker, who is committed to a rigorous Lutheran theological expression. I am pleased with the carefully nuanced presentation in this project and know our church will be blessed with the results. I believe that readers of this journal will find the challenges of this book refreshingly revitalizing of their theological study and personal ministry.

Stroud, Dean G. (ed.) *Preaching in Hitler's Shadow: Sermons of Resistance in the Third Reich.*

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013.
203 pages. ISBN 978-0-8028-6902-9

Review by John Oberdeck

The purpose of a book review is to provide the reader of the review with sufficient reason to obtain a copy of the book and read it, or to convince the reader that time is much too valuable to waste on this particular tome

Why should you, or should you not, read this book? You should read this book because there exists the possibility that within your lifetime, if you happen to be a young pastor, you could find yourself living this book. How do you preach Law and Gospel in an oppressive environment? How can you gain a foothold in the hearts and minds of the people when a false messiah has stolen the stage, or the pulpit? What is it like to lead a worship service when there is genuine risk involved, risk not only to oneself but to one's family? What mixture of courage, faith and mercy is necessary to pray for one's enemies when the enemies might just be your neighbors or even your own members?

The context of prewar Germany in the 1930's is, of course, vastly different from our own, though the number of similarities seems to continually rise. The first fifty pages of Stroud's book consists of his introduction, and is worth reading even if you never get to the sermons preached by names you are familiar with (Karl Barth, Martin Niemoeller, Gerhard Ebeling, Rudolph Bultmann, Dieterich Bonhoeffer) and names you have never heard of (Helmut Gollwitzer, Wilhelm Busch, and Paul Schneider – the first confessing pastor to die in a concentration camp).

Stroud communicates clearly how "German Christianity" supplanted genuine Christian faith, and how Hitler used the language – the words – of the Christian faith to deceive and lead astray. "Positive Christianity" exalted the communal nature of the *volk*, while "Negative Christianity" centered on the individual's relationship to God (p. 6-7). Their *Fuehrer* was a leader who brought tangible change and multiple benefits to the people. "If Hitler replaced Christ, and if the Third Reich replaced the kingdom of God, then it followed that Germanic blood and not Christ's blood was salvific" (11).

You read the introduction and you can't help but grasp the courage required to continue as a pastor in the confessing movement preaching

Jesus to your people, while the majority of protestant Christianity, at least in its public form, abandons the Gospel around you. Stroud points out that “A Nazi criticism of Christianity was that it was ancient, out of date, and prescientific” (p. 66, footnote 9), a litany of reproach that could just as easily come from the new atheists of this century. Indeed, parallels can be conceived today in form though not in intensity as faithful Christians find themselves marginalized or worse for holding to traditional marriage, while liberals in the church swallow the *Zeitgeist* hook, line and sinker.

The first sermon is Bonhoeffer preaching about Gideon. The sermon takes you deep into the reality of the doubts. Can such a small number have any impact on the huge Midianite army? The subtext is not even subtle. Can the small number of confessing pastors maintain the Gospel against the forces of Nazi totalitarianism? With Gideon as the example, the answer is obvious.

Paul Schneider’s message is drawn from the miracle of the stilling of the storm. Yes, the waves are enormous and disciples cry out, “Lord, do you not care if we drown?” But Jesus is there. The disciples are with Jesus, and Jesus is with his believers. The hearer can make the connection. Stormy waters cannot, and will not, overcome baptismal waters. Though we drown we live.

Barth’s sermon is the most confrontational in many respects, not the least of which is the theme of his Second Sunday in Advent message at the Schlosskirche in Bonn, 1933. Drawn from Romans 15:5-13 “That Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision” (p. 65) the central theme is that Jesus was a Jew. Barth proceeds to tie the precious word *volk* to the Jewish people in a manner that would no doubt infuriate the anti-Semites in the crowd. The next year Barth was out of Germany and in Switzerland.

Gollwitzer, who survived the war and died in 1990, preached a sermon on Luke 3:3-14 following the *Kristallnacht* pogrom, the night in November 1938 when Jewish businesses and synagogues were destroyed throughout Germany. His message was a call to repentance.

It is inside us all; this truth that upright men and women can turn into horrible beasts is an indication of what lies hidden within each of us to a greater or lesser degree. All of us have done our part in this: one by being a coward, another by comfortably stepping out of everyone’s way, by passing by, by being silent, by closing our eyes, by laziness of heart that only notices another’s need when it is openly apparent, by the damnable caution that lets itself be prevented from every good deed by every disapproving glance and every threatening consequence, by the stupid hope that everything will get better on its own without our having to become courageously involved

ourselves (123).

The purpose of this review, then, is to convince you to read the book. You may very well need models of what it means to preach with personal risk involved. You may want strong images of the Gospel's power to encourage and embolden in difficult and dire circumstances. At one point in his introduction, Stroud makes an effort to place the failure of the church at the beginning of Nazi Germany in its context. "Today, as we read the sermons below, and as we look back on the timid Christian response to the Holocaust and other Nazi crimes, we need to remember how unforeseen the evils of Nazi Germany were and how unprepared Christian tradition was to respond to them" (36-37). Given our own context, we won't have this excuse.

Wengert, Timothy J. *Reading the Bible with Martin Luther: An Introductory Guide.*
Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013.
134 pages. Paperback. \$17.99.

Review by Timothy Maschke

Timothy Wengert, retired professor from The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, continues to offer insights and perspectives on the work of Martin Luther. In this brief work, Wengert draws the reader into a practical and pastoral conversation regarding Luther's understanding and use of the Scriptures. Although more of a homiletics exercise than a truly historical study of Luther, Wengert provides encouragement for all readers of Scripture to understand the text as God's Word and then to apply it to one's daily activities.

In five readable chapters, Wengert explores several aspects of biblical hermeneutics under the framework of the Wittenberg reformer's practice, beginning with the authority of Scripture in chapter one. Subtitled, "Putting James in Its Place," Wengert draws together Luther's more favorable comments on James. He also points out that Luther was not alone in his concern with James' apostolicity, a criterion for canonicity. However, the key to this chapter is Wengert's desire to shift the focus from Scripture as an authority to the content of Scripture, Christ. He affirms Luther's German phrase, *Was Christum treibet* ("What carries Christ"), as a key reformation and Lutheran norm. (While doing so, he makes a short excursus on fundamentalist approaches to biblical authority, asserting them as Law-oriented distractions from Christ.) Curiously, in spite of repeating Luther's *sola Scriptura* emphasis, Wengert suggests that a better phrase would be *solo Verbo* ("Word alone").

Methodology is the focus of the second chapter. The key elements of discerning (and not separating) Law and Gospel is acknowledged by Wengert, especially as these two divine messages affect the hearers of the Word. While affirming the two uses of the Law (civil and theological), Wengert continues his own rejection (albeit less vociferously) of a third use of the Law as distinct from the first two. He asserts that the "third use" is merely the law applied to believers, a phrase adopted by Calvin from Melancthon and not Luther (37-40). Although this chapter is more of a homiletics lesson than listening to Luther, Wengert does provide several beneficial examples of Law-Gospel illustrations.

One's interpretation of scripture requires a recognition of its weakness as well as its power, claims Wengert in chapter three. A strong focus on the cross of Christ is key to one's interpretation of the biblical text. Describing the cross

as “God in the brokenness of the cross, the emptiness of unbelief, the guilt of sin” (49), Wengert encourages Lutheran preachers to proclaim that aspect of the gospel in the face of contemporary power-broker TV evangelists. Wengert then concludes this chapter with a survey/summary of each of the Gospels’ “central weakness” for gospel proclamation.

Theologically, ethics flows from a solid biblical basis. Four areas are considered under this theme—rejecting a legalistic use of the Law, the implications of the “bound conscience,” the necessity of faith for living a Christian life, and the role of community in developing a truly beneficial ethical behavior. Wengert concludes his exploration of these themes: “So Luther’s ethics may be reduced to three simple words: *Gleichmut*, *Gewissen*, and *Glaube*, or, translated...reasonableness, weakness, and trust in Christ alone, all done in the context of Christian *Gemeinschaft*...or assembly” (91).

Honing in on Luther’s two major Galatians commentaries (1519 and 1535) as examples, Wengert demonstrates changes in approach as well as in emphasis over that fifteen year period. Focusing on Galatians 3:6-14, Wengert deals specifically with the Law and Christ’s atonement in a way that exhibits the previous chapter’s themes from Luther’s approach. “For Luther,” says Wengert in his *Afterword*, “three things converged to make sense of the Pauline arguments: the conviction that meaning converged in definition and effect (law and gospel); the even-greater conviction that the paradoxical nature of the text brought about the death of the old, reasonable creature (theology of the cross); and the experience of the God who justifies the ungodly. The text authorizes itself by producing faith in the hearer” (126). Again, the hermeneutics of this chapter are set to undergird the proclamation of the Gospel.

Yet, there are some concerns that this booklet raises. Already noted was the less-than-confident recognition by Wengert of Luther’s understanding of the Law’s third effect. Wengert also plays with the theme of biblical authority, subtly moving away from the text itself to a message he deems necessary for its historical context (122). The work itself claims to be a reading of Luther’s biblical approach, yet much is in the realm of homiletics (not a bad focus, just not the expectation of the content from its title).

Martin Luther continues to be the subject of an increasing number of books as we approach the five-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation. This book, while claiming to be an introduction, has greater value for the non-Luther scholar and the parish pastor. Luther was truly a Bible-believing and Bible-proclaiming pastor and theologian. Wengert is to be commended for this study and encouragement to continue to use the Bible as the basis for one’s proclamation, faith, and life. One only wishes that his own denomination (ELCA) followed suit!

**CONCORDIA
THEOLOGICAL
JOURNAL.....**

Chapel Sermons

September 16, 2015

**Text: Epistle for Proper 19 (B Series)
James 3:1-12**

CUW Campus Pastor - Steve Smith

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water. (ESV)

Friends in Christ,

Talk is cheap. That's what people say sometimes. The irony is that to say that, they have to be talking. So you might ask if what they're saying is worth anything if talk is cheap.

Most of the time what people mean by that phrase is that it's easy to say something but to actually do something is much more difficult or significant—"put your money where your mouth is," don't just "talk the talk" but "walk the walk."

But this morning, I'd like to consider with you whether talk is really cheap here at Concordia. Take classes for instances. While it's rare to have a class where only the professor talks, students are basically paying for words

to be spoken. And if you trust me for a little loose calculating of the cost per undergraduate credit hour with the number of minutes spent in a classroom over the course of a semester with the average number of words that are spoken per minute in a lecture or a discussion equally divided between the hours in class it is not too far off to say that it is probably about a penny per word spoken in the pursuit of education and wisdom here.

So, “a penny for your thoughts”? Talk can seem cheap but it actually adds up...at least the way some professors operate. That’s actually a fascinating tie into the first verse of this text from James: “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.”

It’s not exactly the theme verse for recruiting in the School of Education, huh? But once you’ve been teaching awhile, words just start flowing like water and you find out that you’re talking and you can’t shut up.

But in a very different way, I want to argue based on these words from James that talk *isn’t* cheap. In fact, it can be very costly. Or, it can be of great value. Did you hear the words from the text? They are honestly some of the most powerful words we could hear about what we say. In fact, if we take these words to heart, they could almost make us afraid to speak.

It says that if we never stumbled in what we say, we’d be perfect. But while our tongues are so small in size, comparatively, they control us. Did you hear the verses about our tongues? They are “like fire,” v. 6 and then v. 8 refers to the tongue as “a restless evil full of deadly poison.” Yikes!

The conscientious person might try to refrain from saying anything. Maybe the Trappist monks or Carthusians or Cistercians taking vows of silence are on to something.

But even our thoughts are stained with in. We think things that are unkind and even when they don’t make it to our lips, they pollute our minds and our souls and even our communities.

We are caught up in the flames of fire in what we say. The inferno that rages in all the interactions of people every day makes the devastating wildfires in California look tame. I’ve said it before, and I’ll say it again: if there is a collective sin at Concordia for which we can daily repent, it’s the sin of gossip and what comes out of our mouths. The unkind or unthinking or uncaring words that would destroy others—fat, lazy, stupid, slutty... Or sometimes the words are just gutter talk—cursing, swearing. Rappers aren’t the only ones who defend their right to say what they want.

Or maybe we use our great vocabularies to make them sound nicer so we can feel better about ourselves while cutting others down...

Oh, you've seen the movies: *Mean Girls*. *Easy A*. Rumors and gossip can destroy.

Maybe you want to claim that you're just caught up in society. Good ol' Billy Joel said it pretty memorably in just 621 words: "We didn't start the fire...."

But we contribute to the fire. And you know all too well that when you're playing with fire, you can get burned pretty easily too. If you're talking to someone about someone else, saying unkind things, they are probably just as easy to listen to or say things about you to someone else. Wow. Didn't think of that, huh?

So this is all easy to point out and easy to say, but hard to do, right? Talk is cheap.

But let's consider that phrase in another way too. It costs nothing to say something kind to someone, does it? If you made it a goal to say something kind to a few people each day or even just one, how amazing would that be?

If you refused to listen to gossip and said something kind instead like, "Oh let's not bother talking about fill in the blank..." that would be something.

Now why would you do that? Oh, didn't we just sing about it? There's maybe 10,000 reasons. I read that the average 14 year old has a vocabulary of about 10,000 words. Highly educated people can be upwards of 50-75,000.

Using some of those 10,000 words to build each other up and encourage each other. That's what we're called to do.

Because we follow the one who was called the Word. Isn't that interesting? Jesus, the Word made flesh, dwelt among us to give us example of how to speak in a world that's full of fire and greed and selfishness.

The Bible has recorded the words of Jesus and there are about 40,000. Search them all and you don't find an unkind word among them. They are words of love and kindness and forgiveness and sometimes rebuke but He always spoke the truth in love.

Think about how valuable the words of Jesus are to you. When you most need to hear or know that you are forgiven or loved. They are there: the words from the cross—it is finished. Your sins are paid for and you're forgiven.

So we'll continue to talk about the Word using words that aren't cheap—but they're free. Just like the grace they offer.

So this 1300 or so words didn't cost a thing. That's the great thing about Chapel—it's free. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Good Friday, 2015

To Be, and not Not To Be

Text: John 18:2-11, 15-18, 25-27; 19:25-27

Rev. Dr. Jonathan Mumme

I. N. I.

Hamlet: “To be or not to be, that is the question.” Also with names, of vehicles. “Gus” is parked outside, named after Gustavus Adolphus, Lutheran Kind of Sweden, who came to the aid of southern kinsmen in the Thirty Years War. (What else would a Lutheran pastor name a Swedish car?)

My first vehicle was named “Marty,” but – surprise! – not for Martin Luther, but for the headlights of that 1989 Honda Accord, which *flipped up* when turned on, like the doors of the *Marty* McFly’s time-traveling DeLorean, in the Movie *Back to the Future*.

What a film!: ast, present, future ... the threat of non-existence ... and the high pressure of a ticking clock, somewhere in time.

In the movie a young man (a young Michael J. Fox) travels back in time only to discover that if he can’t bring his parents together at the high school dance where they fell in love, he will cease to be. If Marty McFly’s Dad isn’t with his Mom, and his Mom with his Dad, then Marty McFly simply ... *is not!*

How important the IS! ... the little verb, the first building blocks of any language we learn: “I am”; “you are”; “he/she/it is”; “Ich bin”; “du bist”; “er/sie/es ist”; “sum”; “es”; “est. The English translation of Jesus’ passion as recorded by St. John obscures profound simplicity for us today! It obscures, “Is” as “Is” is.

I read again:

John 18:4-9

⁴Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, “Whom are you seeking?” ⁵They answered Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “**I am.**” {There is no “He”!; the translators are just smoothing out the text!} And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. ⁶Now when He said to them, “**I am.**” they drew back and fell to the ground. ⁷Then

*He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." ⁸Jesus answered, "I have told you that **I am**. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way." ⁹that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none."*

Jesus may be the man that Judas and this crowd are seeking, he may be their "He," but he is much, much more, and he shows this by saying less, by saying, "**I am**," and not "I am he."

"I am," is God's way of talking about himself. It's his name.

When God revealed himself to Moses in a burning bush, and Moses inquired after his name, God responded, "I am" (Ex 3:14).

We all need to put something behind that verb for it to say anything: "I'm the mailman." – "I'm Joe." – "I'm from Wisconsin." God does not. His identity is synonymous with his being. "I am" does just fine all by itself.

And "I am" more than holds its own – his own, in the Garden of Gethsemane. **I am** parries swords and snuffs out torches. **I am** casts a whole cohort of soldiers to the ground. Before this mob arrests Jesus, they kneel before him. **I am** is no one's victim.

It is only by willfully obscuring who he is in fleshly word – "I have worded to you that I am" (Jn 18:8) – that Jesus is arrested and those who are given to him go free. Jesus, who simply IS, is in complete control of this situation.

So first, dear brothers and sisters, hold on to this: Jesus **IS**, period.

That may sound strange, and so is the next thing that St. John shows us in recounting the passion and death of Jesus: though we usually think of Peter as denying Jesus, which he did, as St. John records these events, Peter actually denies *himself*!

I read again:

John 18:17

*Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also one of this Man's disciples, are you?" He said, "**I am not**"*

John 18:25

Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, "You are not also one of His disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not!"

When a disciple of Christ misses who Christ is, he will miss who he is. She will is-not – she will deny herself.

At the dramatic scene in the garden, we are inclined to see Judas and Peter on opposite sides; their swords are, after all, pointed at one another.

And they are different: Judas is an unbeliever; he is giving Jesus up. Peter is a believer, but his faith is not full, because his Jesus is not full; and so he is propping Jesus up.

If Jesus is not full, if his being, his "I AM," is not full and true and heard, then disciples of Jesus end up as Judas, or as Peter:

– "*Jesus is promising; he has potential, power. Makes sense to latch on to him, see what comes of this. I take what I can get along the way. And if he flops, I do what I do; I cash in my chips and play elsewhere.*" That's Judas; that's disciples who finally believe in nothing but a better or worse set of fleeting advantages in a game where everyone finally meets his or her end. That ends in destruction. Is that how you live life? There's room for a church pew in that.

– Or, "*Jesus is great! I love Jesus! I'm committed to Jesus! My faith is the most important thing in my life.*" That's Peter; that's disciples who identify Jesus as a firm part of their lives. They're set on the fact that who they are and what they're going to be – Jesus is going to be a part of that. Though not for destruction, this is a recipe for disappointment; it will end in weeping.

Judas' Jesus and Peter's Jesus are similar. For one he's at the point of the sword. For the other he's somewhere behind its hilt. For both, Jesus is only who he is in relation to the swords that they themselves are holding. For one Jesus is interchangeable, disposable. For the other Jesus is indispensable and so defensible. For neither is Jesus simply IS – is he I AM.

Dear brothers and sisters, two things are true of Peter, and of disciples like Peter, whom you know well. First, Jesus is not simply IS – is not what and who he says himself to be: "I AM." Second, who and what Jesus is, depends on who and what such disciples are. And the result is confusion, disorientation, doubt, despair, a sense of loss and being lost, disappointment. It is darkness. Weeping is natural.

How many of you think thoughts like these?

What happened to me? What happened to the happy, beautiful person I used to be? What happened to strength and hopefulness I once felt? What happened to the existence I had, and to the life of which I dreamed? These are lost to me; they are not. And I sense but darkness, and though I carry a smile, I can but weep.

These question ring:

Are you a success? Are you beautiful? Are you strong? Are you the parent you want to be? The spouse you intended to be? The person you hoped to be?

And the answer?

I ... am not.

Perhaps if we could only go back, somewhere, we might have a different future. That's why Marty McFly and his time-traveling DeLorean could capture such attention, such imagination. The critical scene in *Back to the Future* comes with Marty, on stage as the stand-in guitarist at the high school dance, unable to strike basic bar chords, much less tear off into a Chuck Berry boogie, as his own hands fade away before his eyes.

"To be or not to be?" may be a fun question for the names of cars, but it is threateningly real for each of us, for us who feel ourselves fading away, for every disciple who is the kin of Peter.

God is. That is the simplest truth about him. Nonsense as a stand-alone for you and me, is spot-on with him; He can simply say, "***I am.***"

The wondrous mystery of God that we celebrate this day, this hour, is that this "***I am.***" is to be found on the lips of Jesus, a man, who throws an armed mob to the ground, who allows himself to be arrested, and who in doing both lets none given to him come to harm.

Yes, he *is* arrested; he *is* denied; he *is* questioned; he *is* mocked; he *is* beaten; he *is* crucified; he *is* killed. And yet through all of this, even through the death, he ***IS***. At no point does Jesus cease to be God. At no point does any of this become too much for him. At no point does he not reign. John tells of the cross as Jesus' throne; there he is fully come into his kingdom.

The point of Judas' sword, the point of the soldiers' spear cannot change that; dead he may be, but dead he still ***IS***; Sunday will vindicate his claim, will show that his "***LAM***" is true.

For those of you for whom Jesus is behind the hilt, hear this: John 18:9 – “[Father,] of those whom You gave Me I have lost none.” To this Jesus who **IS**, disciples are given. That means that Jesus is not a part of your life and your future – fading realities; instead, you are a part of his. First and foremost Jesus is not given to you, but rather you to him. Who he is does not depend on who you are, rather your *IS* is attached to his. And because he **IS** – because his **LAM** is true (vindicated on Sunday!) – you *are*.

Hear this: Jesus is not behind your hilt; you are behind his. And today he launches an assault duplicitously fearsome in its passivity on that enemy who would negate your *IS*, on death. He who *IS*, who cannot not be, gives himself into the nothingness of death. He is the negation of your negation. He is the “*NOT*” to your “*NOT*.”

Take this away from our celebration of the death of the God-Man, Jesus Christ – everything that is true of you gets worked out from Him to whom you have been given, from the fact that *he IS*. So ...

Are you beautiful?

“I am!”

Are you loved?

“I am!”

Are you living?

“I am!”

Are you on your way to the culmination of life, to the best of all futures?

“I am!”

Because Jesus **IS**.

You don’t need any need any time-traveling DeLorean for that. You don’t need to get back somewhere to have the best future. Hamlet, finally, poses you *no* question. You *are*, and you will be, for Christ crucified **IS**. Amen.

Jonathan Mumme preached this sermon on Good Friday, April 3, 2015, at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Adell, WI.

**Dedication of the
Martin Luther Statue**
Text: Psalm 119:105-112

Rev. Dr. Patrick Ferry ◀

Psalm 119:105-112

- ¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp for my feet,
a light on my path.
- ¹⁰⁶ I have taken an oath and confirmed it,
that I will follow your righteous laws.
- ¹⁰⁷ I have suffered much;
preserve my life, LORD, according to your word.
- ¹⁰⁸ Accept, LORD, the willing praise of my mouth,
and teach me your laws.
- ¹⁰⁹ Though I constantly take my life in my hands,
I will not forget your law.
- ¹¹⁰ The wicked have set a snare for me,
but I have not strayed from your precepts.
- ¹¹¹ Your statutes are my heritage forever;
they are the joy of my heart.
- ¹¹² My heart is set on keeping your decrees
to the very end.

The other morning when I was driving toward campus southbound on Lake Shore Drive, I noticed a car closing in very fast behind me. I checked my speedometer and noted that I was going a little over 40 mph—which is the posted speed limit on the sign right along that road. The Concordia person that I saw in my rearview mirror was zipping along lots faster than 40 (in a hurry to get into the Wittenberg parking lot, I guess). Later that same day I turned into the same Wittenberg parking lot and noticed a sign indicating that pets were prohibited on campus. That was just before I saw a guy walking his dog up by the athletic field. As I left that day and went out the front entrance on Highland, turned and headed north on Lake Shore Drive toward home, I had to slow down as I again approached the Wittenberg driveway for somebody making a right hand turn in front of me—this in spite of the no right turn sign posted there. Sometimes when I am running along the west side of campus people will turn right illegally out of the Wittenberg lot and wave to me as they go by. I even caught my wife,

Tammy, turning right illegally right there just last Monday. Truth be told, I did it twice this year, too. Maybe three times.

The speeding on Lake Shore Drive, the disregard for the no right turn, the dog walkers often on campus—and all of this despite signs posted clearly prohibiting such things is pretty much a daily occurrence. I observe the same behavior all the time. I even participate. But, this got me thinking earlier this week as once again I turned into the Wittenberg lot and glanced at another sign posted right there are you arrive—the one prohibiting weapons on campus. If our disregard for these other signs is so blatant, then I fear there must be an enormous stash of weaponry here at Concordia. We may have a veritable arsenal in this room right now!

Clearly rules, requirements, laws—whatever you want to call them—do not always define our actual way of doing things. At least the ones that I have mentioned seem to be treated more as advisory than authoritative—prescriptive, or even proscriptive but not descriptive. Rules, requirements, laws (whatever you want to call them—following the Psalmist’s language here let’s call them statutes)—our statutes do not seem to be set in granite.

By contrast the Psalmist says of the Lord’s statutes, “Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart. My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end.” Maybe when it comes to the Lord’s statutes we feel the same way. Silly rules about speed limits and no right turns are not compelling enough. But, God’s Word is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path. The Psalmist says, “I will follow your righteous laws. I do not stray from your precepts.” Statutes set in granite.

This morning we will dedicate not a statute set in granite, but a statue set in concrete. I kind of wonder, though, whether the statue will make any difference. If signs and statutes don’t get our attention, will statues signify anything that causes us to notice or care? It occurs to me that Martin Luther standing with an open Bible in hand is an artistic representation of what the Psalmist describes in the words of our text. God’s Word is really the focal point. It was for the Psalmist, and it was for Luther. God’s Word is the lamp for our feet, the light for our path, the joy of our heart, and our heritage forever. Is that what we will take with us each time we pass by the Luther statue, or will we just ignore the artist’s work and the message that it conveys? If the statutes that we read on signs entering the Wittenberg lot don’t matter, will the statue of the Wittenberg professor and Wittenberg reformer preaching God’s Word matter to us?

For his part, Martin Luther took very seriously the Word of God and the message that it conveyed. Quite frankly, when he opened his Bible and read the Word did not always bring great joy to his heart. The lamp and

light of the Word also shines in some of the dark places, the hidden places in our soul that we would prefer to keep hidden. Discovered disregarding directives, reprov'd resisting regulations, struck by the sin of setting aside statutes—instead of laughing off laws Luther lamented. The Word of God left him no room for excuses. The Word of God was no mere light and lamp—it was a laser that penetrated to the corrupted core of a sinful man's sinful heart. I assure you, that message brought pain, not joy, to his heart.

When we open the Bible, or hear the Word of God taught or preached, the same penetrating and painful laser-like incision will cut us to the core, if we are paying attention. Sin creeps around every corner. No matter which way we turn, right or left, we can't avoid it. It doesn't belong, and we can't keep it leashed—sin runs rampant. You might prefer to ignore that truth, but it remains true nonetheless. The Law always accuses. God's statutes are set in granite.

The statue set in concrete—Martin Luther holding open the Word of God and preaching stands for that truth. However, and Luther would have been the first to say, the accusation of the Law is not the whole truth. Luther's legacy is not that he was a good man who did a good job of following God's righteous laws and living up to divine expectations. Neither is his legacy that Luther was a poor, miserable sinner though that describes his life and our lives accurately enough. Rather, what Luther stands for, and what his statue stands for is what that open Bible in his hand stands for and what he stood and preached and taught is that Jesus is the Word made flesh. This is the Word that shines as the Light of the world, the Word that shows us the way, the truth, and the life because Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Luther's study of the Word of God brought him into an encounter the Word made flesh—the Light that brought the illumination of the whole truth. Not only the truth of our sin and sinfulness, though the Word exposes that well enough, but also and especially the truth of God's forgiveness of sins and forgiveness of sinners in Jesus Christ. Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.

Luther's legacy, and that which lives on in this Lutheran university, is really not about Luther at all. Rather, it is about Jesus whose suffering and death on the cross to remove our sin and guilt is represented on this great statue before us. Luther's legacy, and that which lives on in this Lutheran university, is really not about Luther at all. Rather, it is about Jesus raised from the dead—Christ Triumphant for whom this chapel is named and whose victory over sin and death is reflected in stain glass on the window behind us.

This is the Word of God that that the Psalmist proclaimed and that

Luther preached—the Word that is a lamp to our feet and light for our path, the joy of our heart and our heritage forever. In his letter to the Ephesians St. Paul refers to the Word as the “Sword of the Spirit.” Indeed, the Book of Hebrews says the “Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the heart.” It cuts to the heart. So, as it turns out, the weapons ban on campus is not a statute set in granite either. The Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit, and we are well armed to fight the good fight of faith. May the statue set in concrete remind us of the power of the Word of God not only to show us our sin, but above all to point us—as Luther does—to our Savior from sin and death—Jesus, and in Jesus’ name, Amen!

Romans 14:5-8

One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's." (ESV)

Friends in Christ,

TGIF! Do you remember when you first figured out that acronym meant "Thank God it's Friday"? When you were really little, days of the week didn't mean a whole lot, did they? Every day, your to-do list looked kind of the same: Wake up. Eat breakfast. Play. Have a snack. Play some more. Have lunch. Have a nap. Play some more. Eat dinner. Fight going to bed because you're having so much fun playing that you can't wait to wake up tomorrow and play some more.

It's kind of like being on vacation. In my opinion, one of the true joys of vacation is when you can be so totally free from the regular routine that you forget which day it is. Ah, are you longing for summer? Or a nap? Or being a child again?

But here, we're pretty tied to schedules. Tuesday/Thursday classes, Monday/Wednesday/Friday classes. For me it usually takes a good week or so to not have to think so hard about what class is next or what room you're going to. Maybe at the end of the first week, you're ready for a hearty, TGIF!

Maybe you'd even admit to a little of that Rebecca Black song today—that was 4 years ago already. You know... "It's Friday, Friday, gotta get down on Friday." It's kind of educational, isn't it?—"yesterday was Thursday, Thursday. Today it is Friday...."

Anyway, it begs the question of whether one day of the week is better

than another and why. Is today just a good day because there's no classes tomorrow? Is your busiest day of the week not a good day? It's kind of interesting when you think about what makes a day good.

When Paul wrote to the Romans, he addressed the customs of the ancient world and that some groups had traditions related to eating or holidays—literally “holy days.” Basically Paul said in this text that it's fine to have varieties of customs but that it's most important to know *why* we're doing things and that when they are tied to our faith, they can be of greater meaning and value.

So it brings me to daily Chapel. For most people, having a large worship service everyday—even a brief 20 minutes—is something new. Not many places have that. So it begs the question of why? If you went to Opening Service last Sunday you heard our preacher talk about his days at Concordia fifty years ago when there were two Chapels a day that were mandatory.

So do we have Chapel now just because we've always had it? What's the point of Chapel besides job security for me as the campus pastor to plan all of these?

Well maybe you would say the answer is obvious: because every day is a day to worship God and thank Him for His goodness to us and look to Him for help and sing His praises. Yes. But it is an interesting thing to weave our faith lives together into each day.

Our faith and connection to God isn't dependent on Chapel. It may sound strange or even shocking but I have often said, “If we never had another Chapel service here at Concordia it would not be the end of anyone's faith.” You would do personal devotions if you wanted to; you would find a place to worship on Sunday. **But if we never had another Chapel service here at Concordia it would fundamentally alter what this university is and the character of it.**

We are a community—a group of people tied to each other. Coming together is what reminds us that we are Concordia: as I am fond of pointing out, the word *concordia* means “hearts together.”

So when we come together it is a reminder—as we also heard at Opening service—of who we are and whose we are.

So when you come to Chapel, it is partly for yourself, I would guess: to grow in faith and praise God. But it is also for others, I hope. As you look around and see others here, I hope it encourages you here. I wonder if you have ever considered that you coming to Chapel or worshipping could be as much for others as it is for you. Maybe your roommate who wonders why you got up to go to Chapel when you don't have a class until 1:00 will be

inspired by your example, or even more, a friendly invitation, to come here and feel included in a great part of what CUW is. You know, there are lots of people who are intimidated to come to Chapel, especially by themselves. They don't know if they're welcome or they feel self-conscious because they don't know the hymns.

But the reason we come here is to be reminded that we are forgiven. That we belong to God. That whatever day of the week it is or the best day or the worst day of our lives, God is with us. The hope we have in Him is boundless. That's something we need every day!

So I want to bring things together with a final illustration. When we come together, we are not honoring a day but a person. Perhaps you have read or know the classic story by Daniel Defoe called *Robinson Crusoe*. Written almost 300 years ago in 1719, it tells the story of Robinson Crusoe who was shipwrecked on an island and was by himself for 24 years until he helped rescue a captive about to be eaten by cannibals. His life is changed because of this person in his life and Crusoe names his companion "Friday" because he first meets him on a Friday.

So, thank God for Friday, huh? Do you know the day that Jesus first came into your life? The day you were baptized might have been when you were an infant and didn't even realize your life had changed by God bringing faith and life to you. It was maybe the first chance to wake up and live!

But it was a Friday when Jesus took your place, hung on a cross and died for your sins. He became sin for you and died only to rise again. Friday changed your life.

So I'll say it again: TGIF! Thank God it's Friday. In Jesus' name. Amen.

