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***Grapho* cover art:**

The cover explores this year's theme, drawing on imagery of repentance and eschatology from the Gospels, especially Luke 3:8-10 and Matthew 24:32.

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The Student Publications Committee would also like to offer a special thanks to Concordia Seminary's staff from Creative Services and Publications for their help and guidance in bringing this project to fruition.

Letter from the Chairman

Letter from the Chairman: Lift Up Your Hearts!

Benjamin Vanderhyde

For hundreds of years, in various countries, through various languages, Christian pastors have exhorted their people to lift up their hearts in the liturgy of Holy Communion. Whether or not every church has always used these precise words, the exhortation is universal among Christians. We are called to put our faith and trust in the one who is above us; to set our hope firmly on the one whose second advent is on the verge of dawning; to aim all of our desires and affections toward the one who made us. In short, we lift up our hearts to the Lord in faith, hope and love.

The articles, poetry, devotional materials and the artwork in this issue invite the reader to consider how lifting our hearts to God bears fruit in our earthly life and activity in the world. In the cover art, "Bear Fruit in Keeping with Repentance," Grace Vanderhyde places our theme in the context of wealth and poverty. In their preaching, John the Baptist and Jesus both associated eschatological expectation with care for the poor (Luke 3:8–14; Luke 16:19–31; Matt 25:31–46). The poor remind us to humble ourselves before God, since whether we are rich or poor, we are all beggars before him. The artwork complements my own article which shows one way the early church viewed lifting hearts to God as inseparable from serving the neighbor, namely, in the practice of mercy work, or almsgiving.

Sebastian Grünbaum's article entitled Sursum Corda gives a brief history of our theme, "lift up your hearts," and examines how Chemnitz interpreted this Eucharistic dialogue as a confession of the true presence of Christ in the Supper. Futao (Gary) Liu explores how a Lutheran understanding of righteousness can be helpful for Christians in China as they navigate their responsibilities in the public square. Hayden Lukas suggests that American Christians, living in a liberal democratic state can learn from French Catholics who have devoted a great deal of attention to the role of the church in a modern context.

Finally, we are pleased once again to publish a pair of articles: one by Ben Leeper of Concordia Seminary Saint Louis, and one by Ben Janssen of Concordia Theological Seminary Fort Wayne. In the spirit of unity and collaboration, the Bens both tackled the question of the relationship between the Divine Service and everyday life. How does lifting our hearts to God play out at home or in the community or workplace? I am grateful to Ben Leeper for his enthusiasm about the topic (a passion which leaps from the pages of his article) and for his work in making this collaborative effort between the two seminaries possible. This is the second year we have worked together with the Fort Wayne seminary's student publications through the collaborative essay as well as by sharing each other's printed journals on both campuses.

We hope that the articles, poetry and devotional materials presented here encourage you in the faith and build you up in love. This Eastertide may you be filled with the hope which springs ever-new because Christ is risen.

Ben Vanderhyde
Student Publications Chairman
Easter 2023

Essays

Sebastian Grünbaum is a PhD student at Concordia Seminary St. Louis. He holds an MA in Theology from Åbo Akademi University and has served as a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Diocese of Finland for eleven years in Turku, Finland. Sebastian specializes in Systematic and Historical Theology.

Sursum Corda as a Call for Repentance and Faith

Sebastian Grünbaum

On most Sundays in church, we hear and say the words:

P: The Lord be with you.
C: And with thy spirit.
P: Lift up your hearts. (sursum corda)
C: We lift them up unto the Lord. (habemus ad dominum)
P: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.
C: It is meet and right so to do.

The admonishment of the Sursum Corda is without doubt the oldest documented part of the liturgy of the Lord's Supper. It can be found in Hippolytus *Apostolic Tradition* which means that this dialogue was common and recognized in the church as early as the third century.[1] It is not clear which passages in Scripture this dialogue is primarily based on. Some patristic authors like Augustine think that it is related to Colossians 3:1-2, "Seek the things which are above." Earlier commentators do not refer to any specific passages but speak more about the weight of the mind and soul being with God before coming to the Lord's supper.[2]

This article examines Chemnitz's understanding and interpretation of the Sursum Corda in his work the *Lord's Supper*. Chemnitz's theological adversaries had been claiming that the Sursum Corda was evidence that the early church did not believe that the true body and blood were on the altar. They argued that the believer had to *go up* to the Lord (who sits on the right side of the Father) *in faith* and eat mere bread in this faith.[3] Chemnitz aimed to correct this understanding by showing that the Fathers did not understand the Sursum Corda in this way but rather as an admonition to faith in Christ who is present when the bread and wine are distributed from the altar.

Important for this examination of Chemnitz's understanding of the Sursum Corda is an examination of his quotations of the Canons of Nicaea and of the

fathers. That is why the second part of this article will analyse how he viewed the ancient understanding of the Sursum Corda in the early church. Finally, the article will discuss how to use and understand the Sursum Corda in a modern Lutheran congregational context and how to apply it in both preaching and teaching.

Chemnitz's Argumentation in the Lord's Supper

In his book on the Lord's Supper (*De Coena Domini*) Chemnitz's main opponents are Reformed theologians. This is clear since the book is focused on the correct understanding of the words of institution (*verba*). Chemnitz explains questions regarding the proper interpretation of the *verba* and the benefits of the Supper. Chemnitz concludes that the Lord's Supper is the true body and blood of Christ.[4] For his explanation, Chemnitz uses many fathers to convince his adversaries of the correctness of his interpretation. A special role, in this case, is given to John Chrysostom as the main theologian that Chemnitz quotes on this topic.

In commenting on the Sursum Corda Chemnitz refers to the canons of Nicaea: "For the Nicene canon, when it teaches us to raise our minds, says that faith must recognize that on the table has been placed the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world."[5] Chemnitz argues that those who participate in the Lord's Supper should not consider only the things that are apparent to the senses but the things that the Bible teaches are present. Thus, the mind should be elevated in faith to see not only bread and wine on a table but the true body and blood of Christ.[6] Chemnitz writes quoting John Chrysostom:

> "In a long speech, it is interpreted to mean that we should approach our participation in the mysteries by laying aside all earthly thoughts, cares, and preoccupations, set aside our vices, and with a pure mind consider the greatness both of the Giver and the gift". And in the same place he (Chrysostom) not only says to lift up our hearts but also that we ought, "as though we had been made eagles, to soar to heaven itself, 'for where the carcass is, there the eagles are gathered.' He [Jesus] calls the *body of Christ* a 'carcass,' because of His death; for if He had not fallen, we could never rise. And he uses the term 'eagles' to show that he who approaches *this body* ought to be high or lifted up and must have no communion with earthly things, nor cling to the earth or seek it, but always fly to the heights and seek the sun of righteousness."[7]

This supports Chemnitz's argumentation in the sense that Chrysostom is not guiding his audience away from the Lord's Supper which is celebrated on earth, in favor of the heights of heaven. Instead, Chrysostom is stating that when they think about

the Supper, they should consider that now something divine and holy happens on earth in the middle of them. This would imply that the hearer should not fly away somewhere but focus on the divine in the concrete bread and wine. Chemnitz also quotes a sermon of Chrysostom's on First Corinthians where he explicitly states "we celebrate the mysteries so that the earth may be heaven for us because that which is most precious in heaven has now been placed on earth."[8] This argument fortifies Chemnitz's position in the sense that it reveals that in Chrysostom's theology, heaven can exist on earth, or at least there can be heavenly things on earth when the Lord's Supper is celebrated. The fact that Chrysostom writes about what is most precious in heaven indicates that he is speaking about Christ himself.[9] This can also be confirmed by other quotes that Chemnitz takes from Chrysostom.[10] Chemnitz has a strong argument for the case that Chrysostom believed Christ to be bodily present in the Lord's Supper. Further, it strengthens Chemnitz's overall argument that the Sursum Corda is about lifting the minds to a heavenly realm that is truly present when the Lord's Supper is celebrated, that is elevating the eyes of faith to see the crucified and risen Lord Jesus in the bread and wine.

The literal translation of *sursum corda* is "upwards hearts." In the explanation of the Lutheran Service book Paul Grime has argued that to better reflect the intention of the Sursum Corda it should be translated as: "Have your hearts up." This is plausible. As Grime translates it, the hearer can better understand that it is not about rising somewhere but recognizing Christ who is present on the altar. Grime, in fact, quotes Chemnitz explicitly on this question.[11] Chemnitz summarizes his own argument with the words: "Therefore the Sursum Corda does not lead the minds away from the table which has been spread; but this is to lift the hearts high, when in the celebration of the Supper we consider not only those things which are apparent to the senses but in accordance with the Word hold that Christ Himself with His body and blood is present at the table."[12]

The Fathers and the Sursum Corda

This article now turns to examine the context of the sources that Chemnitz quotes, which in many ways, is very different from Chemnitz's own. Chemnitz appeals to the Council of Nicaea where he states that "faith must recognize that on the table has been placed the Lamb of God."[13] Chemnitz most likely referring to canon 18 of the first council of Nicaea. This is because it is the only other canon that speaks about the Lord's Supper and it is not related to the altar in any way.[14] The 18th canon of Nicaea reads as follows:

> It has come to the knowledge of the holy and great Synod that, in some districts and cities, the deacons administer the Eucharist to the presbyters, whereas neither canon nor custom permits that

> they who have no right to offer should give the *Body of Christ* to them that do offer. And this also has been made known, that certain deacons now touch the *Eucharist* even before the bishops. Let all such practices be utterly done away, and let the deacons remain within their own bounds, knowing that they are the ministers of the bishop and the inferiors of the presbyters. Let them receive the *Eucharist* according to their order, after the presbyters, and let either the bishop or the presbyter administer to them. Furthermore, let not the deacons sit among the presbyters, for that is contrary to canon and order. And if, after this decree, anyone shall refuse to obey, let him be deposed from the diaconate.[15]

The 18th canon of Nicaea is speaking about church discipline. It instructs the order of how the Lord's Supper or Eucharist should be celebrated. That is, the one who has been consecrating the bread and the wine (i.e., offering) at the altar should administer the Lord's Supper to the deacons and not the other way around. The reason for the canon is simply to preserve good order in the church and, thus, it concludes by admonishing the congregations to hold fast to a certain order where there is a clear difference between clergy and other servants of the church. In this quote, the problem that the council is trying to address is not unbelief in Christ's bodily presence in the Lord's Supper but disorder in the congregations. Even so, the bodily presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper is self-evident in the language of the canon because the canon itself uses the terms Eucharist and the Body of Christ as synonyms, as shown above. The language of the canon strengthens the argument for the bodily presence of Christ further by stating that good order is especially important during the Lord's Supper, thus implying that this is a more holy place than other places.

The same pattern of interpretation as above can be seen in the longer quotes that pertain to the Sursum

Corda. Chemnitz quotes Chrysostom in explaining that to lift up the hearts is done

> "by laying aside all earthly thoughts, cares, and preoccupations, setting aside our vices, and with a pure mind considering the greatness both of the Giver and the gift." And he (Chrysostom) uses the term eagles to show that he who approaches *this body* ought to be high or lifted up (ὑψιλὸν εἶναι) and must have no communion with earthly things, nor cling to the earth or seek it, but always fly to the heights and seek the sun of righteousness.[16]

Chrysostom assumes in this passage the bodily presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. He then uses this to admonish people who approach the Lord's Supper but are occupied by this world, i.e., do not take Christianity seriously, and those who do not live in repentance but still commune regularly. The purity of the mind does not come primarily from faith but from a life that is characterized by sanctification.

Chemnitz has himself noted the same pattern because, in the place where he explains the Sursum Corda, he refers to Chrysostom's *Homilia de Encoeniis*. Here Chemnitz says that Chrysostom complains about people saying the Sursum Corda before Communion but engaging in idle talk afterwards. The complaint of Chrysostom here is that the congregation is not living a Christian life. One can express this in another way by saying that the congregation is believing that they are receiving the true body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper, but they are not living in a manner that is worthy of the reception of this great gift. In conclusion, it is possible to say that the fathers assume that Christ is bodily present and use the language of Sursum Corda as an argument for sanctification.

Sursum Corda: Two Interpretations

If one compares Chemnitz's reception of the fathers with the fathers themselves then two different kinds of understandings emerge. The first one is Chemnitz's understanding that he presents in the Lord's supper that the Sursum Corda is an admonishment to faith in Christ that is present in the Lord's Supper. The second understanding is that of the fathers which is more holistic, that is the Sursum Corda as an admonishment to holy life and sanctification because Christ is bodily present in the Lord's supper. The aspect of the need for repentance before the Lord's Supper is

not lost in Chemnitz, even though it is not a main theme. The explanation is simply that Chemnitz's major conflicts are not essentially connected to this theme. The fact is that in Chemnitz's writings about the Lord's supper, this plays a minimal role.[17]

Even though he addresses it minimally, Chemnitz argues very strongly for repentance before receiving the Lord's Supper. In his *Enchiridion* he explains the unworthy eating of the Lord's Supper with the following words:

> They that continue in sins without repentance and have and retain not the intent to lead a better life, but rather continue in sin, as Paul rebukes this very thing in some Corinthians. For such people make a mockery of the very bitter passion of our Lord, as though sin were, as it were, something trivial, and not so great an abomination, for which the Son of God suffered such an ignominious death. In fact, he that comes to that holy table in this spirit regards Christ as a patron of sin, as though in the Supper He supplies fuel for the fires of sin with His body and blood and wants to nourish and strengthen it. And therefore, they eat unworthily."[18]

Consequently, the right kind of eating and drinking consists of repentance and grievance over sins and a willingness to improve in the Christian way of life.[19]

While Chemnitz does advocate repentance, it is important to note that in Chemnitz's writings one can see also a clear reluctance to make any kind of formal demands of holiness, that is, that people must reach a certain level of sanctification before they can come to the Lord's Supper.[20] After all, the Bible teaches that Christ came to save sinners and that the Lord's table is a table for forgiveness.[21] The natural emphasis is therefore laid on repentance. It is not a table for holy people (*coram mundo*) but for people who want to be holy and strive towards holiness.[22] The Lord's Supper is also a means that encourages the believer to repentance and good works.[23] Thus, the Lord's Supper is not limited in the wrong way for sinful people but remains open for Christians who repent from their sins.[24]

A Holistic Lutheran Interpretation of the Sursum Corda?

This article has shown that Chemnitz emphasized different things regarding the Sursum Corda compared to the fathers. Chemnitz's development consists in arguing that the main thing about the Sursum Corda is that Jesus Christ is coming bodily in the bread and wine. This development is related to controversies about the Lord's Supper. Because it is not an issue in his theology of the Lord's Supper, Chemnitz does not comment on the fathers when they state that the Sursum Corda is primarily an admonishment to repentance and life in holiness. This is with the awareness that the fathers also recognized, like Chemnitz, that on the altar is the body and

blood of Christ even though they did not make a specific argument since it was simply assumed as true. We have also seen that Chemnitz's theology has no problem with the understanding of a need for repentance before the Lord's Supper. Instead, Chemnitz understands this very well and strongly emphasizes repentance from all sins before a person eats and drinks the Lord's Supper.

Likewise, Grime ends his article about the Sursum Corda in the *Lutheran Service Book, Companion to Services* by quoting Chemnitz (and through this making the argument) that the central aspect of the Sursum Corda is that Christ is coming to us bodily in the Lord's Supper. The critical question is: did Chemnitz actually want to change the interpretation of the Sursum Corda or did he merely use it to argue for the bodily presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper in the 16th-century controversy of the Lord's Supper?[25]

The Fathers dealt with a need to ensure genuine repentance through admonition and interpreted the Sursum Corda accordingly. Chemnitz needed to stress the bodily presence of the risen Lord in the Sacrament and therefore stressed the recognition of the bodily presence in the words of the Sursum Corda. In today's context when we must deal with both issues, a more holistic interpretation of the Sursum Corda may be called for. In the Lutheran tradition, this relates very well to the understanding of law and gospel. Thus, there should not be a problem in thinking about the Sursum Corda both as indicating the bodily presence of Christ, as Chemnitz emphasized, and as an admonishment to repentance, as Chrysostom emphasized. These two interpretations might be combined into one holistic statement: the Sursum Corda is a call for repentance, to turn away from our sins and look to Christ who has been slain and lifted up for us.

Endnotes

1 Paul Grime, *Lutheran Service Book: Companion to the Services* (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2022), 564. Some scholars think that this could have been a part of the apostolic practice of worship. See also Luther D. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy, A Study of the Common Liturgy of the Lutheran Church in America,* 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1947), 324; and Philip Pfatteicher, *Commentary on the Lutheran Book of Worship: Lutheran Liturgy in Its Ecumenical Context* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990), 158–9.
2 Pfattreicher, *Commentary on LBW*, 159. These commentators include Cyprian and Origen.
3 Grime, *LSB Companion*, 566. Calvin comments on the Sursum Corda: "Let us raise our hearts and minds on high, where Jesus Christ is, in the glory of his Father and from whence we look for him at our redemption. Let us not be bemused by these earthly and corruptible elements which we see with the eye, and touch with the hand, in order to seek him there as if he were enclosed in the bread and wine…. Let us therefore be content to have the bread and the wine as signs and evidences, spiritually seeking the reality where the word of God promises that we shall find it."
4 Martin Chemnitz, *The Lord's Supper* (*De Coena Domini*), J.A.O. Preus trans. (Saint Louis: Concordia,1970), 21, 35-36 (hereafter, LS).
5 LS, 160.
6 LS, 160.
7 LS, 160 (emphasis added).
8 LS, 161.
9 This can also be confirmed by other quotes that Chemnitz takes from Chrysostom. Chemnitz has a strong argument for the case that Chrysostom believed that Christ is bodily present in the Lord's Supper.
10 LS, 162-163, 177, 179,
11 Grime, *LSB Companion*, 566.
12 LS, 160.
13 LS, 160.
14 The Canons of the First Council of Nicaea 325, Nicene Canon 13. This canon is speaking about how the dying should have the right to receive communion before they depart this life.
15 The First Council of Nicaea 325, Canon 18 (emphasis added).
16 LS, 160 (emphasis added).
17 Chemnitz has written about 500 pages about the Lord's Supper of which maybe 20 pages are focused on repentance before the Lord's Supper. See Martin Chemnitz, *Ministry, Word and Sacraments: An Enchiridion*, Luther Poellot, J.A.O. Preus, J.A.O. and Georg Williams trans. (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1981), 130 (hereafter ENC); Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of Council of Trent, Volume II*, Fred Kramer trans. (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2007), 317–8 (hereafter EX II).
18 ENC, 130. See also EX II, 317–8.
19 ENC, 131.
20 Werner Elert, *Abendmahl und Kirchengemeinschaft in der alten Kirche hauptsächlich des Ostens* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1954), 73–4. Chemnitz's theology is in this sense a correction to the practice of the early church, which had very clear demands of outward holiness before someone could be admitted to the Lord's table.
21 It is interesting to note that Chemnitz does not emphasize the aspect of the forgiveness of sins when he explains the Sursum Corda. This is probably because the discussion is not about the forgiveness of sins but about the presence of the true body and blood of Christ.
22 ENC, 130–131.
23 "For Christ instituted His Supper for this purpose, that repentance may be kindled and increased in us by the remembrance of His death, in order that faith may be strengthened and invigorated by the giving and sealing of the New Testament in the use of the Supper" (EX II, 320).
24 EX II, 320.
25 Grime, *LSB Companion*, 5.

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A Lutheran Perspective on Righteousness in China

Futao (Gary) Liu

The recent history of China cannot get away from the impact of western thoughts and industrialization, including Democracy, Marxism, Republicanism, etc. For two millienium or so, the Chinese philosopher, Confucius (551–479 BCE), had dominated Chinese society through his philosophy (commonly called Confucianism) in every respect, from the hierarchical structures of governments and states to familial relations. Confucianism met its real challenge only in the recent history of China. At the collasping edge of the last feudal society (the Qing Dynasty which fell in 1911), patriotic Confucians had tried to bring what is useful of the West into traditional values and the moral milieu of China in order to save or even renew the historically dominating Confucianism they cherished so much. The total collapse of Confucianism finally happened due to the Cultural Revolution that was carried out by Chairman Mao in the 1960s to destroy everything that was from the past and revolutionize Chinese culture with the materialistic and communistic ideology. However, the direction has been shifted dramatically in favor of the ancient philosophy, Confucianism, in recent years, as the Chinese government is determined to resist the influence of the West. Neo-Confucian scholars have tried to restore Confucianism alongside the Communist government, hoping that they could use it to resist the ideological and religious invasion or penetration of the West and restore the moral order of the society. Regardless, their efforts are not as successful as expected, largely because Chinese society has already been highly-westernized and technologized.

In 2012, Fang Zhaohui, a historical scholar in Tsinghua University (one of the two top schools in China, observed that "when 'gain/benefit'[1] is elevated to the primary status over 'righteousness,' all orders will be interrupted, and a tendency that weighs everything based on monetary values will be cultivated so that the heart of people becomes rotten, and the order of society collapses."[2] For Confucius, righteousness is one of the five virtues that a gentleman or whole man practices in fulfillment of his social responsibilities.[3] In other words, Fang is saying that with-

out a moral system restraining the ever-growing greed, a capitalistic society loses its internal order and faces its inevitable destruction.This is the reality of China even now ten years later. A dominant supposition held by Chinese scholars is that the reason why profit-oriented capitalism works in the West is the religious background lying behind the profit-oriented culture and individualism, which somehow restrains the wild expansion of covetousness. In opposition to the imbalance that capitalism has wrought in China, the restoration of Confucianism that views righteousness and gain holistically is supposed to be the answer for Chinese neo-Confucians and government policy-makers. However, reality does not permit this illusion to move forward into any tangible realization.

Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism, as they have been in the past centuries and today as well, do not acknowledge a personal God or any god who has his or her will to intervene in human history. Instead, the highest moral judge of Confucianism is an impersonal Heaven. Stephen Oliver observes in his PhD dissertation, "Zhongyong's metanarrative is that of Confucian cosmology and ultimate goals, which looks forward to the human moral effort to bring about harmony between Heaven, humans and all things ... In Zhongyong, Heaven is ... an impersonal entity."[4] Furthermore, Oliver observes, "Zhongyong starts with a reverence for Heaven. Then, because it is from Heaven, a person is to revere one's own moral nature."[5] For Confucius, the constitution of man or a whole person lies in a balanced view or righteousness-prioritized moral life, apart from any relation with a supreme judge or deity who can personally intervene in the presence. "But what is the necessity for a complete man of the present day to have all these things? The man, who in the view of gain, thinks of righteousness; who in the view of danger is prepared to give up his life; and who does not forget an old agreement however far back it extends—such a man may be reckoned a complete man [note: whole person]," [6] says the Master, Confucius.

Righteousness from a Lutheran Perspective

The Lutheran Confessions are able to address the debates about China's future because they speak to the nature of righteousness and the personhood of God. Because Confucianism uses these same categories but has different judgements about them, the Confessions are a suitable conversation partner to speak to China's future. Luther's Small Catechism offers a thorough explanation in terms of the personhood of God in the first article of the Apostle's Creed,

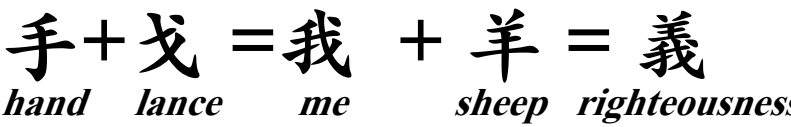
> God has created me ... and given me and still preserves my body and soul: eyes, ears ... ; reason and all mental faculties ... God daily and abundantly provides shoes and clothing ... and all property—along with all the necessities and nourishment for this body and life ... All this is done out of pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness of mine at all!"[7]

This very personal God creates us and sustains us; thus, all the necessities and nourishment which constitute the concept of "gain/benefit/profit" in Confucianism are a divine gift out of the fatherly love from God. The very essence of our physical needs does not depend on our striving to take whatever is needed or desired from nature or the so-called "Heaven." It lies only in the divine bestowing of the personal God who creates and provides out of "divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness of mine at all!" On the contrary, because of the non-personhood credited to the highest subject of the cosmos in Confucianism, the reverence called forth by Confucius toward Heaven ultimately is the self-referential moral nature of human beings.[8] Thus, what constitutes a whole man is the dualistic combination of physical and social needs, i.e., gain and righteousness for which there is an inherent and insurmountable conflict of interest. A person's gain inevitably hinders the extension of his or her righteousness to neighbors in social and communal relationships. For instance, a businessman is thought to be inevitably unrighteous since his gain is accumulated by the sacrifice of his duties of fullfilling the virtues of a whole man, among which there is the virtue of righteousness.

However, summarized in his Small Catechism, Luther offers a harmonization instead of a conflict. There is the vertical definition of both gain and righteousness through the lens of God's personal creation and providence as the ultimate source of all things. Gain is the reception from the divine gift of God in physical needs, while righteousness is another reception of God's sacrificial gifting through Jesus Christ on behalf of our unrighteousness and need for forgiveness. And this reception of righteousness is included in the first article as well, according to Luther, which is part of "reason and all mental faculties [that meet] all the necessities and nourishment for this body and life."[9] Gain and righteousness merge in the divine source of eternal life as gifts for all creatures, including human beings. There is no conflict of interest at all from this divine perspective. In other words, Christianity offers the Chinese a drastically different view of gain and righteousness that make the constitution of a whole man dependent upon God, who has always been gracious toward His creatures since creation. On the contrary, Confucianism defines a whole man through his balanced practices of economic activities and communal relationship. According to Confucianism, there are not many gentlemen or whole men who can strive a balance between these two conflicted categories in reality. That is not

the case with Christianity and its defintion of gain and righteousness. For Christians (especially Lutherans), the foundation of a whole man lies in the reception of the divine gift with the thankful recognition of it in order to fulfill neighborly needs and communal love.

Melanchthon articulates the two kinds of righteousness, in which one is the "civil righteousness that reason understands,"[10] in contrast to the other righteousness, which is of God. The civil righteousness, apart from the righteousness of God, is identical to the Confucian righteousness, so to speak, since it is primarily involved in community life. To be fair to Confucians, this civil righteousness has its worth. Melanchthon says, "And to a certain extent, reason can produce this righteousness by its own powers ... Moreover, we willingly give this righteousness of reason the praises it deserves, for our corrupt nature has no greater good than this ... God even honors it with temporal rewards."[11] But this temporal or civil righteousness that both Christians and non-Christians can do, does not constitute what a whole man/person is. Fundamentally, it is the righteousness of God alone that constitutes who or what a person is from the beginning of the world and still today, especially when dealing with evil things inside and outside ourselves. And this righteousness of God as the foundation of a whole man can only be received through faith, just as the profit or gain of the nourishment for life needs to be acknowledged by faith from the Christian perspective. According to Lutheran Confessions, this righteousness of God is also called the righteousness of faith simply because it is faith alone that receives this gift or promise of the delivery of the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ. Christian faith is to acknowledge the divine source and bestowing of the needed



gain and righteousness which supposedly make a person whole by virtuous practices according to Confucianism. The difference lies in that there is already the righteousness being counted to Christians by faith, that is to say, simply acknowleding the offer of God apart from any practiced virtues, including the righteousness towards neighbors.

A Lutheran Perspective on Righteousness in China

Back to Fang's observation and his proposal for the restoration of Confucianism: it is easy to point out that the future of Chinese individuals, regardless of how the society as a whole moves forward politically and ideologically, cannot depend on the civil righteousness alone, since it has proved powerless in front of social evils and personal failures in a Communist world mixed with Capitalistic theories and practices. For example, nowadays there is almost no respect for elderly people since they

are not economically productive any longer either for society as a whole or for their own children. Without a nationwide social security system to support elderly people to have an independent retired life, their dignity is greatly harmed when there is not any benevolence from their children to carry out the caring support. According to the Confucian virtues, it is obligatory and filial to support aging parents. That is one of the reasons why the Chinese government encourages Neo-confucians to revive an old-fashioned philosophy in a progressive Communistic and Capitalistic society.

From the Christian perspective, the answer to the foundation of a whole person lies in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the righteousness that is ready to be credited to whoever believes in Him to become righteous in the eyes of God and men as well. This righteousness of God has proved powerful in forming tangible communities full of brotherly love and enduring societal evils and individual darknesses throughout the ages. As Christianity grows rapidly in China, there is a glimmer of hope that the moral order of the great society will be restored to some extent by the witnessing power of the Holy Spirit, who works in all Christian believers.

Another issue that needs to be addressed in relation to the concept of righteousness in Chinese culture is the parameter of civil righteousness in light of the Christian faith. In very recent years, the Reformed churches in China seem to have strong opinions about getting involved in civil movements, i.e., being the leading voice in public against social evils. Among those Christian leaders who had been very vocal in public protests is Wangyi, a Reformed pastor who was sentenced to nine years in prison.[12] The theological rationale of Wangyi and his colleagues can be found in the Manila Manifesto of the Lausanne Movement. Affirmation 9 states, "We affirm that the proclamation of God's kingdom of justice and peace demands the denunciation of all injustice and oppression, both personal and structural; we will not shrink from this prophetic witness."[13] Under section A: the Whole Gospel, they clarify that

> The proclamation of God's kingdom necessarily demands the prophetic denunciation of all that is incompatible with it. Among the evils we deplore are destructive violence, including institutionalized violence, political corruption, all forms of exploitation of people and of the earth, the undermining of the family, abortion on demand, the drug traffic, and the abuse of human rights.[14]

Where there is sufficient freedom of speech, such as in the U.S., the Manila Manifesto does not need to be discerned at all since Christians and church leaders can exercise this "prophetic witness" in the public space. A slight deviation outside the proper boundaries does not lead to legal consequences or sentences to prison, at least for now. However, the consequences for the Christian church in China can be

catastrophic as leaders are jailed, and sheep are chased around from city to city and town to town, where freedom of speech or religious practices are suppressed.

At the same time, the Confucian parameter of righteousness does not help in this situation either, since its advocacy for the practice of righteousness in the social realm for the sake of being a whole person, has been reflected among Christian leaders, who are well educated in the Chinese traditional literature, especially Confucianism. For example, The "Analects" records, "Tsze-lu [a disciple of Confucius] then said to the family, 'Not to take office is not righteousness ... A superior man takes office, and performs the righteous duties belonging to it.'"[15] According to Confucius, if a man or person is righteous and whole, i.e., being a superior man, he has to run for governmental offices (or to be vocal about social affairs in public) for the sake of the communal benefits, even though it might mean a sacrifice of his own life or his family. There is this kind of subconscious understanding of civil righteousness among some Christian leaders who are heavily involved in civil movements—it is a duty or divine call for the Christian Church to publicly denounce social evils as though the prophetic denouncement made by Israelite prophets in the OT period still applies to the NT church throughout the world regardless of the political circumstances. In other words, it would be sinning against God and His evangelical will when this prophetic office is not publicly carried out by the church. Now, the Lutheran Confessions can shed further light on this issue of the parameter of civil righteousness, whereby, properly speaking, leaders of the Christian church do not have the authority to lead the whole church into political and civil movements even though some of those movements do apply to individual Christians according to their duties related to their citizenship in this world and governmental offices properly carried by them.

Concerning the power or authority of bishops, the Augsburg Confessors publicly declare:

> [12] For spiritual power has its command to preach the gospel … [13] It should not invade an alien office. It should not set up and depose kings. It should not annul or disrupt secular law and obedience to political authority. It should not make or prescribe laws for the secular power concerning secular affairs … [29] Whatever other power and jurisdiction bishops have in various matters, such as marriage or tithes, they have them by virtue of human right [not by divine right which gives them only the office of Gospel].[16]

The proper parameter of righteousness' manifestation in the social realm for the Christian Church concerns only the Gospel, the dutiful administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of the Office of the Keys, not anything mandatory in

the political and earthly realm, even though church leaders and lay people do have their proper calls to fulfill as citizens, or rather as sojourners, in this civil realm or political world. It is permissible for the Christian church not to voice public protest against political issues and institutional evils, especially in places where Christianity is heavily restricted by the secular government. In fact, the patriotic three-self state church has practiced a legitimate position through their cooperative and non-critical attitude towards the Chinese government. Now, the compromise of Christian doctrines by the state church is a different issue that is worthy of serious discusssion but not here. The Lutheran Confessions acknowledge that "…[O]ur people distinguish the offices of the two authorities and powers and direct that both be honored as the highest gifts of God on earth."[17]

Some Christians would ask this question: can we remain silent and respect the government even when it is not fulfilling this highest gift as the secular authority? The Lutheran Confessions and the practices of the Augsburg Confessors offer us a positive answer to it. With good conscience and standing before God, we can remain silent in the public realm and show our respect to the government that is doing evil things even against the Christian Church and her Gospel proclamation. The Augsburg confessors diligently showed their respect toward Emperor Charles V, who even threatened to militarily defeat the evangelical cause: "Most serene, most mighty, invincible Emperor, most gracious Lord. A short time ago, Your Imperial Majesty graciously summoned an imperial diet to convene here in Augsburg," acclaimed the confessors in 1530. Of course, there was the Schmalkaldic league under the subscription of the Smalcald Articles ready to counter back with military forces a few years later. However, the point I try to make here is that it is possible and necessary for Christians to be respectful towards persecuting secular authories. Not only the reformers in the 16th century but also the early church fathers before Constantine, who made Christianity the legal religion, practiced this kind of piety in front of governmental leaders who did carry out some institutional evils.

While the withdraw into the private realm for righteous people makes them unrighteous according to Confucianism, Christians have freedom of conscience before God to withdraw themselves from the political and public realm or any civil movements that are critical against government policies and rules as long as they are not asked to denounce the Christian faith and the practice of loving neighbors in a micro-scale. Social movements and reformation efforts, properly speaking, do not belong to the Christian church since the kingdom of God is not here. The proper parameter of the manifestation of Christian righteousness lies in the good works according to the ten commandments and love toward neighbors. The practice of neighborly love, i.e., our righteousness that benefits friends and neighbors, can always be carried out on a micro-scale among families and church communities. Macro-scale social movements do not necessarily constitute the righteousness

God calls us to fulfill in our Christian callings. To clarify the definitions here, I will give an example in the pro-life and anti-abortion context. To help a friend, family member, or a stranger you encounter to make a choice of life instead of abortion by offering them the financial aid that is needed out of your own pocket (or the local congregation's collective effort); or to make your house a fostering family would be the micro-scale. To conduct an organized anti-abortion protest in the public space or in front of hospitals would be the macro-scale. While the macro-scale is not condemned per se, the lack of the macro-scale efforts by Christians certainly does not constitute disobedience of God's commandments.

Conclusion

In terms of the understanding of righteousness and its historical usage in Chinese culture, the Lutheran Confessions has its unique contribution to the theological conversation that is needed for good discernment of how righteousness as a divine gift can resolve the conflict between gain and righteousness. Meanwhile, it firmly speaks to Chinese people who seriously reflect on the traditional value of the virtue of righteousness with the evangelical gospel that is the good news of delivering the righteousness of God that tangibly manifests itself through God's people and Christian communities. Not only so, the manifested righteousness of God provides a healing mechanism and buffering cushion in a society that inevitably faces evils and injustice by carrying out the power of forgiveness through Christians who are already personally tasting this reign of righteousness. They are the salt of the earth that hinders the rottenness of humanity and the light of the world that brings in the fresh air of righteousness. Furthermore, the Lutheran Confessions offer the Christian church at large a proper parameter of righteousness that Christians can freely fulfill in various circumstances. Further research can be directed toward other aspects of the concept of righteousness in the Scriptures and Chinese culture, especially through a survey on the translation history of the Chinese bible concerning how the term righteousness has been handled. In that way, we may shed further light on the doctrine of justification and how the gospel can be effectively proclaimed and witnessed to Chinese people as well. Afterall, evangelism rather than politics is the ultimate concern here, which I hope is clear to my readers.

Endnotes

1 'gain/benefit': A Confucian concept similar to *profit* in its capitalistic definition
2 Zhaohui Fang, "The Way of Governing in Chinese Culture," *Chinese Reading Weekly*, 2012, https://www.waxhawyoga.com/pubinfo/2020/04/28/200001004001/1f481cd8171044dc91441a9e2163af06.html.
3 Five virtues: benevolence, righteousness, ritual propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness. For more information about Confucianism, see Mark Csikszentmihalyi, "Confucius", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta ed. (Summer 2020), accessed March 27, 2023, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2020/entries/confucius/.
4 Stephen Oliver, "The Moral Visions of the Epistle of James and Zhongyong," (PhD diss., Concordia Seminary, 2002), 130–1, accessed March 27, 2023, https://scholar.csl.edu/phd/43. *Zhongyong* is one of the main documents of Confucianism.
5 Oliver, "Moral Visions," 133.
6 Confucius, "Analects" XIV, 13. Four Books and Five Classics of Confucianism, trans. James Legge, 1st edition (Delphi Classics, 2016).
7 SC Creed I. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds. The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 354.
8 See note 3.
9 SC Creed I. Kolb-Wengert, *Book of Concord*, 354.
10 Ap IV 33. Kolb-Wengert, *Book of Concord*, 125.
11 Ap IV 24. Kolb-Wengert, *Book of Concord*, 124.
12 See the article, "Outspoken Chinese Pastor Wang Yi Sentenced to 9 Years in Prison," by *Associated Press*, quoted in *Christian Today*, December 30, 2019, accessed March 27, 2023, https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2019/december/chinese-pastor-wang-yi-early-rain-house-church-sentence-pri.html.
13 See "The Manila Manifesto," https://lausanne.org/content/manifesto/the-manila-manifesto.
14 Ibid.
15 Confucius, "Analects" XVIII 7.
16 CA XXIII. Kolb-Wengert, *Book of Concord*, 64–68.
17 Ibid.

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Pierre Manent: The Empire of Modernity and the Church's Response

Hayden Lukas

My mother used to work in the bed management department at a large hospital near our home. Her job was to coordinate with nurses, doctors, and other administrative staff to manage which patients were assigned to which beds and to ensure the patients were transported to the right places at the right time. Her department had a joke that every day their job was to solve a gigantic jigsaw puzzle whose picture was always changing. New situations are always arising in a hospital: some patients are discharged; others arrive. Some people die; some are born. Some have infectious diseases and need to be contained. It was her department's job to solve the puzzle as its picture shifted, to make sure everyone remained or got to where they needed to be safely and efficiently.

"A gigantic puzzle whose picture is always changing" is an apt description of the modern world. Historian James Simpson describes the continual change of forms in culture, economics, and politics since the late medieval period to the present as a "permanent revolution."[1] That is to say, *change* is the only predictable thing about the modern world; the only certain thing about the future is that it will look different than the present, and the definitive feature of the present is that it is different from the past.

All the same, the Church is compelled to address and engage this ever-changing world. Because the Church must fit into a puzzle whose picture is always shifting, she is left feeling alienated from a world she (theoretically) once felt at home in. More pressingly, Christians often get caught up in the rapidly-changing circumstances of the modern world, finding themselves pulled into economic, social, or political changes they did not foresee and, for the most part, cannot control. What is a Christian to do in such a world?

The French Catholic political philosopher Pierre Manent (b. 1949) identifies two responses to the ever-changing situation of modernity that have not worked. The first is a capitulation to the modern world. Under this first response to modernity, Christians are allowed go along with any and all changes to the picture of the

modern puzzle. If modern man can incorporate himself into whatever cultural or political movements that arise with a spotless conscience, so can the Christian. The terms "modern man" and "Christian" are, roughly, equivalent. Manent believes that for the Christian, the temptation to go along with whatever new movement arises should be dismissible as a result of modernity's "inflated confidence" in itself which tends to "leave us prey to arbitrary prevailing opinions and the current state of knowledge."[2] When modern man blindly follows any "new" political, social, or cultural arrangement, he is often falling into arbitrary pressures—and, as Manent tries to show, an inflated view of man's place in *history*.

But the opposite is just as much a temptation for the Church. This is to commit to whatever came before the present—Lutheran orthodoxy, scholasticism, Thomism, or some reconstruction of the early church. Manent will not let this second "conservative" or "traditional" position off the hook either. He calls such a position "cowardly, […] a refusal to face the question honestly."[3] By depending entirely on the past without creatively facing the present, we will either be consigned to the endless historical research necessary to reconstruct the past accurately or be filled with a zeal for a false construction of the past we imagine to be true. The process of retrieving history informs but cannot exhaust one's engagement with that history; concerning the past, there must always be a statement made in and for the present age. The history of ideas is a provisional refuge, not our home.

Manent's body of work often problematizes the modern conservative impulse to draw on the history of thought with modernity's conception of history, and this essay will attempt to explain this dynamic. To do this, I will explain the basics of Manent's account of modernity as a way of evaluating history, drawing on the work of other political philosophers to supplement Manent's account. Then I will examine how the work of Manent and Emile Perreau-Saussine, with the Catholic response to the Enlightenment, can contribute to the Church's strategy to engage with the puzzle of modernity.

Modernity: History vs. Nature and Grace

Modernity tells a particular story about the history of world. According to the modern scheme, the drama of civilized human life is depicted in three acts: ancient, medieval, and modern. Discussing these eras, we have become more and more accustomed to using the terms pre-modern and modern. There are ready markers for the transition from the *pre-modern* to the *modern*, usually in the form of major figures or events in world history or the history of ideas: Luther and the Reformation in *religion*; Hobbes, Locke, and the (somewhat later) revolutions against absolute monarchism in *political theory* and *politics*; Descartes in *speculative philosophy*; Galileo, Bacon, or Newton in *natural philosophy*; and Bacon, Smith, and the ascendency of modern capitalism in *economics*. All these mark a transition from the pre-modern to

the modern era.

This account of history, like any account of history, is not obvious or natural, but constructed. The medieval Christian conceptualization of history had a different division of time than the modern periodization. Instead of "pre-modern" and "modern," the history of the world was roughly construed as following the two testaments of the Christian Scriptures. There is time before Christ's birth and after Christ's birth. It is in the middle of the 6th century, the period that begins the transition from the classical era to the medieval era, that the Scythian monk Dionysius Exiguus started counting time using the words *anno Domini*, the Lord's year. In the medieval Christian view, past, present, and future events were measured with reference to the Incarnation of the Lord, whose life was the central turning point in historical existence.

Sergio Cotta (1920-2007) argued that modernity is distinct from the medieval Christian view of history exactly because "the religious event of the Incarnation stops being regarded as the decisive turning point of historical existence."[4] But what, exactly, is put in the place of the Incarnation? We might only say, "the events of the 16th and 17th century." In his study *The Crisis of Modernity*, Italian political philosopher Augusto Del Noce (1910-1989) demonstrated that genealogies or definitions of modernity which rest on sifting out what is "modern" and what is "pre-modern" in Descartes or other foundational modern figures are never entirely successful in exorcising the pre-modern demons out of any modern philosopher.[5] That is, modernity is never able to find an *entirely modern* philosopher, but only philosophers who contribute to modern philosophy. It is up to the present interpreters of modernity to decide what is and what is not characteristically modern. The same is true in political and natural philosophy, as well as in religion—modernism is identifiable as a phenomenon but there are no philosophers who speak for all of modernity when they say "x is modernity." Modernity, then, is recognized as a *historical phenomenon* before it becomes recognizable as a set of beliefs (and it is dubious that modernity ever has become strictly identifiable with some definite set of beliefs). While this problem of defining a civilization-wide system of belief in history is not unique to modernism, it is worth asking: What exactly happened in the 16th and 17th centuries that qualify them as the central turning point in historical existence?

This question is where Manent starts his explorations of the foundations of modernity. According to Manent, modernity is some *thing* that arose in the 16th and 17th centuries in Europe that identifies itself as a new period in history. Apart from this, Manent offers no strict definition.[6] Because modernity is primarily identified by its role as a historical phenomenon, Manent is interested in what other ways we might interpret a system that is (theoretically) identifiable in economics, politics, religion, philosophy, and science. Instead of evaluating a philosophy or a science or an economic arrangement by its place in *history*, Manent argues that there are other

standards of judgement originating from before modernity that help us to evaluate the significance, fittingness, or truthfulness of a system.

For the West, among the most prominent and consistently used options available to evaluate the significance of a civilization-wide system of beliefs were *nature* and *grace*. Manent's entire reading of Western history is framed as the dialectic between nature and grace. As Ralph C. Hancock explains:

> Although Manent is often at pains to emphasize [the] polemical opposition between modernity and Christianity, in fact his deeper and more original thesis is that it was the reciprocal critique of classical nature and Christian grace—the erosion of both natural and supernatural substance effected by this critique—that produced modernity, a denaturalized nature that yields waves of radicalization, that is, History.[7]

Manent's thesis is that *history* became the measure which was employed in the modern period to decide what was right and what was wrong. This supplanted the measure which existed in the pre-modern period—the dialectic between the antique pagan conception of nature and the revealed conception of Christian grace. Modernity, for Manent, is the triumph of history over nature and grace, and thus the period in which nature and grace are measured according to history, not the other way around.

The dialectic between nature and grace, as Hancock says above, is constituted by their reciprocal critiques. The critiques go something like this: (1) grace is the critic of nature insofar as grace claims nature is not enough in itself. But at the same time, (2) nature is the critic of grace insofar as nature claims that grace offers nothing that nature is not already capable of receiving or doing on its own.

On Manent's reading of Western history, these two critiques exist side-by-side and are used as tools to evaluate political, economic, and philosophical theories *as a general rule*. In medieval Christendom, there was some stability in the dialectic between nature and grace best exemplified in the Thomistic synthesis. Manent maintains something like Aquinas's view: "Grace has meaning only if it presupposes nature: it corrects and perfects nature, without destroying it."[8] But he also admits this synthesis is "unstable and fragile," held together only by Aquinas's "architectonic genius, later reinforced by the approval given to it by some institution as, in the case of Thomism, the Catholic Church, the institution par excellence."[9] As the institutions which supplied stability to the relationship between nature and grace broke down through the complex history of the Western Church and Western politics, what Hancock described as "waves of radicalization" more and more consistently shot through the modern world. These "waves of radicalization" are what we

see in the transition from the pre-modern to the modern period—paradigm shifts in natural and speculative philosophy as well as violent incursions for the sake of economics, religion, and political philosophy.[10]

One key architect of radicalization whom Manent engages with extensively is Montesquieu (1689-1755). Montesquieu was one of the first modern theorists who claimed that law is purely instrumental. For Aquinas, virtuous living (according to the law) is a vehicle for perfecting our nature. This perfection of nature can only be effected by God's grace, but is measured according to the law. But for modernists, law was only meant to ensure one's rights are protected. Law is understood not as something which is necessary to perfect nature, but only an instrument employed by humans who seek to protect the rights they have according to their human nature. Even though law is not essential to perfect human nature, the human individual cannot live without law altogether. "He needs law, but only to protect his nature as it is prior to the law. The law of the modern state, liberal law, is a simple instrument of nature and does not, in principle, modify or perfect nature."[11]

What we mean by "nature" becomes very important at this juncture. Manent notes that "nature" had two meanings in the ancient world. "Whereas Aristotle studied human beings whose virtues and vices were so many expressions—dispositions—of [a] common nature, Cicero considers this diversity for its own sake; he detaches individual particularity from common nature."[12] For Cicero, "human nature" usually means "individual personality" rather than a common "human nature." The concept of a unique personality *qua* human nature is picked up many centuries later, Manent shows, by the founders of modernity.

This is significant when modern humans must make policy decisions for their communities. A major tension in the modernist instrumental law is whether it should be combined with Aristotle's view of a "common nature" or Cicero's view of a "particular nature." This decision changes a regime's philosophy of law drastically. The force of the state employing the instrument of law for the purpose of protecting a common rational nature is very different from the force of the state protecting the peculiar natures of individual humans. In this choice, we find the tensions inherent in liberal democracy beginning to bud.

The paradox at the heart of modernity is the instrumental law: We will use the law to liberate us from all laws. The ancient law set out to perfect human nature, and so the law strove to be contiguous with human nature even as it exceeded that nature. The new law of modernity turns this situation on its head, seeking to ensure that man's nature is never repressed by a law of virtue. Modern man strives after "the promise of eternal nature, which is at last itself, only itself and entirely itself; and of the new law, nature's efficacious and docile instrument. […] The world ought to be—it will be!—a free state of nature."[13] The state of nature can only be regained through the imposition of a law which does not repress nature, but allows it to be recovered. To adapt the phrase of Rousseau: Man is essentially free, but *under the law* of virtue he finds himself everywhere in chains. Modernity presents a new law which is a *grace* meant to help us attain our true nature *apart from works of the law*. In this way, grace and law are equivalent terms for the modern just as much as they were for Aquinas.

Manent observes that the dialectical tension between nature and grace/law ends, for the modern man, in complete paradoxical negativity. Modern man flees law, but by doing so ends up fleeing nature as well because the new conception of law necessitated an equally new conception of nature. Because nature was increasingly identified with what is repressed by laws which, according to the Christian tradition, brought the soul closer to virtue, the view that virtue is *a perfection of nature* became incoherent. In the new modern arrangement, both nature and law become the enemy of the total freedom modern man seeks to establish for himself. Manent explains in the famous closing passage of *The City of Man*:

> Modern man, as modern, both flees from and seeks out law. He flees the law that is given to him and seeks the law he gives himself. He flees the law given to him by nature, by God, or that he gave himself yesterday and that today weighs on him like the law of another. […] The law he seeks ceaselessly and continually become the law he flees.
>
> In this enterprise, the nature of man is his principal enemy. […] Nature is the condition and summation of all that one must flee. Modern man thus affirms the difference between the law he seeks and the law he flees by ever more completely fleeing and subjecting nature, including his own nature. He subjects nature to his "liberty," his "autonomy," to the law that is always new and of which he is forever the author. This is to say that he subjects nature to the continual affirmation of the difference itself.[14]

This "continual affirmation of difference" is the difference between one's liberty and one's nature. The two exist in a zero-sum game, where the "law" of liberty is always striving to be the victor over nature.

Modern Liberal Democracy and the Christian

If the instrumental view of law is what led to the foundations of the modern world-view, what tools do Christians have to evaluate modernity? At the beginning of this paper, I noted Manent believes that the triumph of the modern will is associated with a certain view of history. But it turns out that *history* is itself the evaluative tool which makes modernity possible; the historical moments which comprise the arrival of modernity are able to justify the new forms of life they bring *by virtue of being what happened*—they are a pure expression of liberty's triumph over nature. If we were to judge modernity by nature or grace (or law), it would cease to be a modern evaluation of modernity.

Manent's most original thesis (per Hancock, quoted above) is that modernity is the result of nature and grace losing their ability to credibly interpret the world. Modernity simply maintains its power by asserting control over the interpretation of history in the vacuum of credibility. As Augusto del Noce notes, it does this by no ultimate basis in reason, nature, or law, because modernity is exactly the negation of these. It stays in power only by a totalitarian assertion of power, because it "rests on no evidence."[15] History is a paltry *tertium quid* which asserts that those forms and practices which arise from the freedom of the will are right and true. According to what standard? The standard of what appears by the workings of the freedom of the will: history.

Because this rests on no evidence, we are right to question our own regime: liberal democracy. The translator of del Noce, Carlo Lancellotti, summarizes del Noce's position concerning the problematic aspects of liberal democracy *qua* modern democracy as follows:

> Whereas older totalitarianisms politicized reason on the basis of a philosophy of history (Communism) or a mythical racial narrative (Nazism), the new one does so through the ideological invocation of 'science' in a very broad sense. The result is...a 'subordination of culture to politics,' which to Del Noce is precisely the defining characteristic of totalitarian societies and is also perfectly compatible with the preservation of the formalities of democracy.[16]

Liberal democracy is totalitarian to the extent that it wishes to bring every aspect of life under the ability of the state to control through its self-legitimating *instrumental law,* including the Christian religion.

Manent comes to a very similar conclusion, arguing that modernity exerts imperial control over our interpretation of history:

> There is no more natural or noble idea than that of empire, of gathering of the human race under one sole governor who is the instrument and symbol of its unity. Once man defines himself as a historical being who lives essentially in the element of history, he gives this idea the greatest ever conceivable extension by integrating the succession of generations into a unified whole. … Humanity gathered in this way no longer needs any visible head: with no emperor, it is the truly universal empire.[17]

This historical imperialism of modernity seeks to have all eras interpreted under its frame. But this frame is only, as Manent says, the continual affirmation of difference between nature and liberty, a triumph of the will. Placing history as the determinative factor of truth is the acknowledgement of the stalemate between the reciprocal critiques of nature and grace. History "displaces" man's relationship with nature and grace, and only throws him into the paradox of the two without hierarchized guidance.[18]

The Church and Liberal Democracy

The Christian in a liberal democracy faces the modern challenge to evaluate existence in terms of an ever-changing history. And as this ever changing puzzle continues to shift, we find that the church is often being coopted or cast out by modernity. This is, of course, nothing new. The church has always needed to decide how to act in response to a world that seeks to absorb it in some way. From the Church's perspective, "among its very enemies are concealed its future citizens, and even among its most sworn enemies lie hidden predestined friends, who as yet do not know it themselves."[19] But the same is true from the world's perspective: the present members of Christ's body can become totally beholden to the world, to the point of becoming *of* the world rather than of Christ. These mutually opposing perspectives are always intermingled. As Augustine had it, "In truth, these two cities are entangled together in this world, and intermixed until the last judgement effects their separation."[20] As such, even if the church is to be *in* the world and not *of* the world, the church is still caught in the world's matrix. Our world is a liberal democracy and we are caught up in its matrix.

The Church might be tempted to say "Liberalism, that's the enemy!" With these words, American anti-liberals such as Alasdair MacIntyre and Stanley Hauerwas have created impressive bodies of work. For all their virtues, Hauerwas and MacIntyre's views on our political, social, and economic situation amount to

little more than those four words. MacIntyre is such an "eminent case" of this anti-liberal anger that Manent's associate Emile Pereau-Saussine wrote a biography on MacIntyre to showcase this anti-liberal anger.[21]

One of the central pillars of MacIntyre's work is how he employs Aristotle and Aquinas in his attack on liberalism. Perreau-Saussine observes that MacIntyre will often pit Aquinas's understanding of man as a "social animal" against Aristotle's understanding of man as a "political animal." The difference between the two represents for Perreau-Saussine "the Christian diminishment of the city of men, and the universalism of the city of God." By siding with Aquinas, "MacIntyre aligns himself with a tradition that has never placed politics at the center. [… This] tradition insufficiently confronts the questions that the founders of liberalism raised."[22] In adopting this (admittedly venerable) tradition in Christianity, "MacIntyre is always 'for' the sub-political community threatened by the political community that rises to power, and 'against' the latter."[23] Indeed, in this respect, MacIntyre is "as un-Aristotelian as possible, interested neither in political form nor in political regime… there is no trace in [MacIntyre's] work of the Aristotelian debate on political justice, holding in tensions the demands of a small number and those of a great number."[24] It can be noted that the same is true of Stanley Hauerwas's political platform of pacifism. Political form and justice are ignored for the sake of reflection on virtue and tradition, the latter pair being used as a bludgeon against the former.

If the Aristotelianism which MacIntyre recovers through Aquinas is apolitical and antiliberal, Perreau-Saussine observes the strangeness that MacIntyre should find himself an immigrant to the postwar cornerstone of liberalism's empire, the United States.

> Why did MacIntyre leave Europe in 1969? Why did he need to immigrate into the United States, into the most liberal of the commercial republics? Beyond the Atlantic, MacIntyre discovered not being of his time. European homogenization entails an imperious demand for presentism. Yet, in its origins, America was intended precisely as a land where different temporalities could coexist without melting together. … MacIntyre's America is the same as that which gave asylum to the Puritans of the 17th century: the territory not ruled by the treaty of Westphalia.[25]

Manent riffs on this point: "MacIntyre escaped from the powerful by taking refuge in the world's most powerful country, from money by taking refuge in the world's richest country, and from the nation-state by taking refuge in the last nation-state in the West."[26] In doing so, MacIntyre was able to retreat into one of the many "social segments into which American democracy is subdivided," allowing him to

"forget liberalism."[27]

The Church, following the lead of MacIntyre (or Hauerwas), should be asking herself if in reality she amounts to nothing more than an "Aristotelianism of the opposition." Is the church's existence *only* meant to critique the power structures of the world she finds herself in? Manent argues this, too, is a strange form of cowardice:

> It leaves the great city in the power of practical heresies, and to be happy, it takes refuge in the pores of liberal society—as, in the Middle ages according to Marx, commerce took refuge in the pores of feudal society. But this is to flee combat while claiming to fight on. The critique of liberalism that would only define it by its errors lacks plausibility. We need to explain a bit why liberalism is stronger than our good Aristotelian reasons.[28]

If the church wants to address the empire of liberalism, she must at least admit what benefits she is willing to accept by living under liberal law. And she must be willing to explain whether these are *goods* which the Church so willingly accepts—that is, the accumulation of wealth, the relative power of self-determination, and a unique degree of social stability.

If MacIntyre's "Aristotelianism of the opposition" is the eminent case of anti-liberal anger, Perreau-Saussine believes the institutional Catholic Church is the eminent case of Christians striking an acceptable bargain with liberalism. In his excellent *Catholicism and Democracy*, Perreau-Saussine examines how the French Catholic Church wrestled with the appearance of liberal democracy:

> If, over the past two hundred years, the Catholic Church has been confronted with a political system—liberal democracy—whose triumph it did not foresee, and for which it was therefore ill prepared, it has nevertheless adapted to it. The Church has come to appreciate the political system of which it was at first suspicious, but without falling prey to a naive political enthusiasm.[29]

Perreau-Saussine argues a limited affirmation of liberal democracy is a necessary corollary of Vatican II.

He also observes that Vatican Reforms worked in tandem to dismantle the Catholic Church's role in European politics. The penalty of vesting infallible spiritual authority in the Pope at Vatican I (1869–70) was the loss of political power by the time of Vatican II (1962–65). By Vatican II, Catholics were even affirming the right to religious liberty! No longer is it the Catholic's dream that the pope

exclusively decides the political fate of all of Europe, or all the world. While the Pope might intervene politically with recommendations to political leaders for many years to come, the Roman Pontiff is not likely to lead a campaign against the proverbial Normans in Civitate in the next few centuries, if ever again.

Perreau-Saussine characterizes Manent's position on how the Church should fit into a liberal democratic regime in a few words: "The church should teach, not give orders."[30] Unlike Hauerwas, Manent does not believe the Church is the perfect polity. He agrees with anti-Catholic political thinkers like Machiavelli and Rousseau: "The church governs badly."[31] In this way, Manent's political vision is not a Schmittean political theology which tries to make the world into a theocracy. Rather, it identifies the state as legitimate apart from the church. The Catholic Church is closer to liberal Aristotelianism than it is to a MacIntyrean Aristotelian anti-politics. Liberal democracy is, in part, what the Catholic Church reconciled itself to in the Vatican Reforms. As such, the Catholic Church affirms that the city of man is worth something in itself, even if it is built on a megalomaniacal interpretation of its own grandeur. That is, the city of man—as ridiculous, incoherent, disastrous, and violent as it is—is able to exist under the watchful eye of God, and Christians should respect this.

To say that the city of man is determined by history is to say with Augustine that it is wholly ruled by an arbitrary "lust for power."[32] The modern world seeks to control an empire not through the application of the virtues of law, reason, or nature, but through a transparent power play. Perreau-Saussine observes that for the Christian, the problem is clear: "History does not receive its final meaning from itself but it has a meaning, and its content is certainly not morally indifferent. The meaning of history is that history transcends itself. Human longings are only satisfied in the heavenly city."[33] All the same, "the eschatological dimension of God's kingdom cannot be absorbed into the realization of a Christian Empire. Communities are formed by sinners: earthly peace is fragile because there is no true *concordia*. Human happiness here and now is mixed with fear. Societies want peace but mostly on their own terms."[34] That is, society will do what it wills, to their benefit or their detriment. Christians need to recognize that their voice might not matter.

Whether we are ruled by the law of virtue and the liberal instrumental law, St. Augustine was serious that the city of man is only ruled by lust for power. What Manent and del Noce expose as the transparent power politics of modernity are, under a broadly Augustinian framework, no different than how the city of man has always been governed—the overturning of one law for another for the love of power. In this sense, there is something fundamentally broken about politics as a discipline and an institution. This only makes politics all the more important to get closer to "right" and further away from "wrong." By *right* I roughly mean more stability,

more justice, less murder and death, and by *wrong* I roughly mean less stability, less justice, more murder and death. To put this another way: Christians need to be able to acknowledge the relative good of a society finding peace on its own terms, even if they are modern terms in the bare assertion of power. Insofar as they are integrated into that society, Christians are able to participate in promoting these relative goods. This is because the relative political peace and stability of a society make the practice of the virtues possible. Even if Hauerwas or MacIntyre would contest this, their actions (accumulating wealth in roles at the most prestigious educational institutions in the most prestigious liberal democracies) prove it to be false. Peace and stability are not conjured from thin air or by cordoning peace and stability off into the realm of a non-political church. Christians must pay close attention to both political form and political virtue without playing one against the other.

That being said, we are ruled by a regime whose lust for power leads to immense real-world suffering. This real world suffering is related to the modern critique of two important Christian teachings: law and grace. In his desire to not be co-opted by liberalism, MacIntyre lashes out against a system that has provided one of the most stable environments in human history. Lutherans could instead learn from their Catholic brothers: keep a calm head. Reject the people who want politics to be a zero-sum game where Christians are either agents of subversion in a relatively stable liberal society or theocratic heretic-hunters that seek to turn the American Empire into a theocracy. Perhaps a theocratic regime was possible at one time and perhaps a desert-dwelling church is a possibility, but neither of these are honest responses to our ever-changing modern world.

By allowing ourselves a comfortable existence in the pores of the stable liberal democracies of the West, stable teaching positions in liberal arts universities, or the dedicated study of theology on a beautiful campus like Concordia Seminary, we are hypocrites if we only denounce the society that makes this possible. Our society—certainly built on much suffering—has also made important forms of human flourishing possible, which the Church also enjoys. Allow that the world must find its own peace, and that we as Christians are caught in the matrix of this lesser peace. This matrix, of course, is what Augustine called *time*. *Time* is related to but not exactly what Manent calls *history*. When Christ returns, we will dwell in eternity, not in time. That eternity is *always* coming soon, and it was and is and will be so much better than the compromised existence we must continually work in today.

Endnotes

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3 Manent, *City of Man*, 5.
4 Sergio Cotta, quoted in Augusto del Noce, *The Crisis of Modernity*, trans. Carlo Lancellotti (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 4.
5 Del Noce, *Crisis of Modernity*, 5.
6 Pierre Manent, *City of Man*, 8–9.
7 Ralph C. Hancock, "Pierre Manent: Between Nature and History," in *Reason, Revelation, and the Civic Order: Political Philosophy and the Claims of Faith*, Paul R. DeHart and Carson Calloway eds. (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2014), 121.
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14 Pierre Manent, *City of Man*, 204.
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17 Manent, *City of Man*, 205–6.
18 Ibid., 204.
19 Manent, *Metamorphoses of the City*, 274.
20 Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (Peabody, Mass 2014: Hendrickson), I.35, 35.
21 Pierre Manent, *Foreword to Alasdair MacIntyre: An Intellectual Biography* by Emile Perreau-Saussine, trans. Nathan J. Pinkowski (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2022), xi.
22 Perreau-Saussine, *Alasdair MacIntyre*, 122.
23 Manent, foreword to *Alasdair MacIntyre*, xii.
24 Ibid., xiii.
25 Perreau-Saussine, *Alasdair MacIntyre*, 120-121.
26 Manent, foreword to *Alasdair MacIntyre*, xvi.
27 Manent, foreword to *Alasdair MacIntyre*, xvi.
28 Ibid.
29 Emile Perreau-Saussine, *Catholicism and Democracy*, trans. Richard Rex (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 151.
30 Perreau-Saussine, *Catholicism and Democracy*, 124.
31 Ibid.
32 Augustine, *The City of God*, I.1, 3.
33 Emile Perreau-Saussine, "Heaven as a political theme in the City of God," in *Paradise in Antitquity: Jewish and Christian Views*, Markus Bockmuehl and Guy G. Stroumsa eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 191.
34 Ibid., 189.

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Almsgiving in Early Christian Catechesis

Ben Vanderhyde

To say simply that almsgiving was a part of early Christian catechesis would not say much that is new to the Lutheran church today. Our own catechism includes this idea in its explanation of the 5th commandment: "We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need." It is not so much significant that the Apostolic Fathers taught almsgiving but how they did so. Almsgiving played such a central role in the life of the early church that it came to be one of the distinguishing features of the Christian community. This was not an accident. Such giving stemmed from their understanding of the Christian duty to care for the poor and needy as a non-negotiable aspect of Christian life and godliness.

Almsgiving is the most common gloss of eleemosune, a word related to the verb ἐλεέω, to have mercy. We might also translate ἐλεημοσύνη as "gift of mercy" or perhaps "charitable giving," but generally "almsgiving" is the accepted translation. Today, the term "almsgiving" evokes an image of coins being placed into the hands of a beggar, but in second-temple Judaism as well as in the early church, the word encompassed many more merciful activities than this alone. For instance, Sirach 3:14 refers to the care that is given to an aging parent as ἐλεημοσύνη, that is, the bestowal of mercy. In *On Work and Alms*, Cyprian ties almsgiving to Isaiah 58:7,[1] in which Isaiah is exhorting the people to true spiritual fasting: "Is [this fasting] not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?" Thus, when encountered in the Apostolic Fathers, almsgiving is not to be understood as a mere transaction. The term accesses a host of interrelated expressions of mercy and compassion. In this paper, however, I will retain the gloss of "almsgiving" since it accurately describes the fact that works of mercy generally require money.

The Apostolic Fathers demonstrate the centrality of almsgiving to the spiritual life of the church. They offer a glimpse into how Jesus's rigorous instructions about care for the poor and needy became imprinted upon the early

Christian mindset and communal sense of responsibility. These Christian leaders lived and taught in the church which the apostles left behind. It was a crucial period in the history of Christianity, in which the church was just beginning to be recognized by the world as something distinct from Judaism and paganism, a new faith, a new way of life.

As they taught almsgiving as part of the "core curriculum" of Christianity, moreover, the Apostolic Fathers were teaching Christians to lift up their hearts. They were teaching them to know fully the infinite love of God and to imitate that love for those in need. They were teaching them to be generous in light of the infinite heavenly wealth stored up for them in heaven. They were teaching them to give alms in repentant expectation of the return of Christ. Each of these aspects of almsgiving ties this essential practice to the heart of what it means to be a Christian.

Divine Philanthropy in the *Epistle to Diognetus*

Almsgiving features centrally in the portrayal of the Christian faith given by the mid-to-late second century *Epistle to Diognetus*. Diognetus was a pagan who was interested in Christianity but had a lot of questions. His Christian friend wrote him a letter answering his questions and explaining to him the basics of Christianity. He begins,

> Since I see, most excellent Diognetus, that you are extremely interested in learning about the religion of the Christians and are asking very clear and careful questions about them—specifically, what God they believe in and how they worship him … ; what is the nature of the heartfelt love they have for one another; and why this new race or way of life has come into the world we live in now and not before—I gladly welcome this interest of yours, and I ask God, who empowers us both to speak and to listen, that I may be enabled to speak in such a way that you will derive the greatest possible benefit from listening, and that you may listen in such a way that the speaker will have no regrets.[2]

Chief among Diognetus's observations of these Christians is that their community is marked by a peculiar love. Diognetus's Christian friend is more than happy to answer these questions and explain the basics of the faith, including this Christian love and care for the needy which is so central to their life together. He explains what it is that produces such compassion among the church's members:

> If this faith is what you too long for, then first of all you must acquire full knowledge of the Father. For God loved humanity…

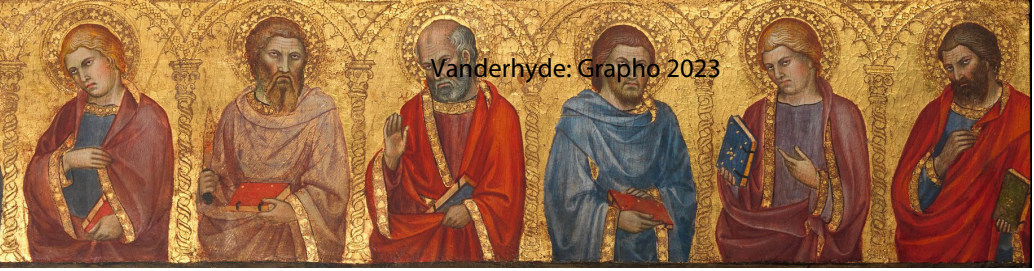
> And when you have acquired this knowledge, with what joy do you think you will be filled, or how will you love the one who so loved you first? By loving him you will be an imitator of his goodness. And do not be surprised that a person can become an imitator of God; one can, if God is willing. For happiness is not a matter of lording it over one's neighbors, or desiring to have more than weaker people, or possessing wealth and using force against one's inferiors. No one is able to imitate God in these matters; on the contrary, these things are alien to his greatness. But one who takes up a neighbor's burden, one who wishes to benefit someone who is worse off in something in which one is oneself better off, one who provides to those in need things that one has received from God, and thus becomes a god to those who receive them—this one is an imitator of God.[3]

In summary, if Diognetus wants to become a Christian, he will need to come to know God's love for humanity — God's divine *philanthropy* — in Christ. Knowing God's love will change Diognetus; he will become an imitator of that philanthropy. As he comes to love God, he will come to love his people as well, not in self-aggrandizement but in self-emptying through the bestowal of mercy on those in need.[4] If Diognetus learns the love of God and becomes a Christian, then he too will bear the mark of that peculiar love distinguishing Christians from all others.

The *Epistle to Diognetus* shows us how a second-century Christian viewed the task of catechizing a pagan. It is a beautiful letter, an apologia of the Christian faith extending far beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, these quotations sufficiently demonstrate that an account of the Christian faith in the early days of the church would have been incomplete without the subject of almsgiving.

Almsgiving and the "Two Ways"

One of the most conspicuous aspects of catechesis among the Apostolic Fathers is their common employment of the "two ways" motif. This was a useful pedagogical device for distinguishing the Christian Way from all others. There is a way of life and a way of death, a way of light and a way of darkness. This bears sharp resemblance to Paul's life in the flesh versus life in the Spirit (Romans 8) and Jesus's narrow way leading to life and broad way leading to death (Matthew 7:13–14).



The full title of the Didache is "The teachings of the Lord to the Gentiles by the twelve Apostles."

These similarities are more than coincidence. The "two ways" motif can be traced all the way back to Moses, who said to Israel at the close of his final sermon:

> See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God … the Lord your God will bless you…. But if your heart turns away … you shall surely perish. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live. (Deut 30:15–19)

The Apostolic Fathers employed this "two ways" motif to make a sharp distinction between paganism and Christianity. Anyone who entered the faith would need to change directions, to do an about face, and to follow in a new track. But this catechesis was not for initiates only. Pagan culture was invasive, permeating public life. Therefore, even mature Christians needed to be reminded that they belonged to a holy nation, a way of life that was set apart. All Christians needed to be called to repentance, and to remember and keep the purity of their baptisms.

The *Didache* is one of the earliest and most thorough examples of this kind of catechesis. It begins with a lengthy tract of moral instruction that was supposed to be learned before baptism. The *Didache* begins, "There are two ways, one of life and one of death, and there is a great difference between these two ways." Then follows an extensive catalogue of things to do and things to avoid, pertaining to the way of life and the way of death.

> Now this is the way of life: First, you shall love God, who made you. Second, you shall love your neighbor as yourself; but whatever you do not wish to happen to you, do not do to another. […] If someone gives you a blow on your right cheek, turn to him the other as well and you will be perfect. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles; if someone takes your cloak, give him your tunic also; if someone takes from you what belongs to you, do not demand it back, for you cannot do so.

Here the "two ways" teaching turns to the subject of alms.

> Give to everyone who asks you [Luke 6:30; Matt 5:42], and do not demand it back, for the Father wants something from his own gifts to be given to everyone [Matt 5:45; Luke 6:35]. Blessed is the one who gives according to the command, for such a person is innocent. Woe to the one who receives: if, on the one hand, someone who is in need receives, this person is innocent, but the one who does not have need will have to explain why and for what purpose he received, and upon being imprisoned will be interrogated about what he has done, and will not be released from there until he has repaid every last cent. But it has also been said concerning this: "Let your gift sweat in your hands until you know to whom to give it."[5]

Clearly many of the teachings of the "way of life" are taken from sayings of Jesus. Important for our purposes is this one: "Give to everyone who asks you, and do not demand it back, for the Father wants something from his own gifts to be given to everyone."[6] The first part of this line corresponds word for word with Jesus's teaching in Luke 6:30 and Matthew 5:42, "Give to the one who asks." The second part corresponds sense for sense with Jesus's theological justification for giving to the one who asks. Jesus says in Matthew 5:45, "For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust," and this same idea is present in Luke 6:35, which states that "he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil." The *Didache* rightly interprets Jesus's words in the Sermon on the Mount (Sermon on the Plain in Luke) as teaching that Christians should imitate God's providential generosity by giving to those who ask for it. God's care for his creatures does not depend on a thorough investigation of their character or worthiness.[7] He makes it rain and shine for the good and the bad equally. Both the *Didache* and the *Epistle to Diognetus* teach that Christians are to imitate God's love for humanity by caring for the poor and needy. That is how Christians can become "gods" to their neighbors, as the Epistle to Diognetus puts it, because they are extensions of God's providential care for his creatures. The *Didache* puts this in terms of gift-giving. God generously doles out his gifts, and wants Christians to acknowledge his generosity and goodness, and then imitate it, extending His gifts towards others.

The *Didache* goes on to address other subjects of catechesis, focusing especially on the Ten Commandments. But the teaching of the way of life returns to the subject of almsgiving with the following instructions:

> Do not be one who stretches out the hands to receive but withdraws them when it comes to giving. If you earn something by working with your hands, you shall give a ransom for your sins. You shall

> not hesitate to give, nor shall you grumble when giving, for you will know who is the good paymaster of the reward. You shall not turn away from someone in need, but shall share everything with your brother or sister, and do not claim that anything is your own. For if you are sharers in what is imperishable, how much more so in perishable things![8]

The final line of this quotation captures a beautiful image for the kind of unity and fellowship that is supposed to be at play in the body of Christ. Christians share in the promised inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading (1 Pet 1:4). They share the spiritual gift of communion enacted in the Eucharist. But the *Didache* is saying that there ought to be a fellowship in the present, temporal things to match this. Moreover, it's in view of the Christian's imperishable inheritance that they can hold their earthly possessions lightly, as the *Didache* puts it: "Do not claim that anything is your own." It's in view of that imperishable inheritance that Christians can be ready and eager to give, can "stretch out [their] hands" when it comes to *giving* and not be greedy when it comes to receiving.

Almsgiving as Repentance and Eschatological Readiness

Two of the items which the *Didache* connects with almsgiving present a significant challenge to the reader, especially the modern Lutheran reader. These are the ideas of reward and redemption: "You shall give a ransom for your sins," "you shall know who is the good paymaster of the reward." It is helpful to recognize that the *Didache* and other documents were reflecting their own scriptural milieu when they used such evocative language. The apocryphal books of Sirach and Tobit contain a high concentration of texts attributing almsgiving with atonement of sins and deliverance from death.[9] From our own canon, Daniel 4:27, in the Old Greek translation, records Daniel exhorting Nebuchadnezzar to redeem

(λύτρωσαι) his sins and injustices with gifts of mercy (ἐλεημοσύναις). The fact that the Didache and other Christian commentators were relying on an accepted pool of scriptural language helps to explain why they spoke the way they did.

Seeing almsgiving from the perspective of a "two ways" worldview, moreover, goes a long way toward accounting for such elevated rhetoric. Almsgiving delivers from death, one might say, because it belongs to the way of life. It is the opposite of greed, oppression of the poor, and neglect, which belong to the way of death. "Two ways" catechesis emphasizes a turning from the way of death to the way of life. This turn is not only cerebral but is characterized by tangible evidences of true repentance. As their names indicate, the two ways were viewed in terms of their endpoints. The way of life culminates in life; the way of death culminates in death. There is a great sense of urgency, then, among the early Christian writers, that Christians should be diligent and vigilant to be walking by the way of life. The return of Christ was (and still remains) just over the horizon.

The early homily known as *Second Clement* picks up the image of the clay and the potter from Jeremiah 18 and Romans 9 as an image for the end times. He says, now is the time to be shaped and formed in the hand of the potter, before you are thrown into the kiln and can no longer be repaired. Now is the time for repentance, obedience to the commandments, and keeping the seal of baptism.[10] *Second Clement* places almsgiving into this context of preparation for the end times.

> But you know that the day of judgment is already coming as a blazing furnace, and some of the heavens will dissolve, and the whole earth will be like lead melting in a fire, and then everyone's works, the secret and the public, will be revealed. Charitable giving [ἐλεημοσύνη], therefore, is good, as is repentance from sin. Fasting is better than prayer, while charitable giving is better than both [Tob 12:8], and love covers a multitude of sins [1 Pet 4:8], while prayer arising from a good conscience delivers one from death. Blessed is everyone who is found full of these, for charitable giving relieves the burden of sin.[11]

This quotation attributes both prayer and almsgiving with great power. Once again, the author of *Second Clement* relies on scriptural rhetoric to inculcate almsgiving.[12] While this rhetoric obviously offends Lutheran sensibilities, it is important to assert that *Second Clement* was viewing almsgiving as part and parcel with true repentance and faith.[13] The Greek text of this homily in fact encourages this assertion.[14] It might accurately be rendered, "Charitable giving, therefore, is good, *as* repentance from sin." For this teacher, faith is inseparable from its accoutrements. Repentance, prayer, fasting, almsgiving — all of these make up in *Second Clement* what it means

to be vigilant for the return of Christ. All of these things belong to the way life.

Conclusion

Between the Scriptures that the Apostolic Fathers employed and their "two ways" perspective on the Christian faith, they engaged in strong rhetoric promoting charitable giving. It would be a mistake to think that they believed they could "buy off" God and effect their own forgiveness, however. They are clearly aware of and articulate salvation by Christ alone.[15] But they are deeply concerned with taking that salvation seriously. They know that Christ has paved the way to life by his own death and resurrection, and they seek to encourage saints to walk in that way, throwing off, as it were, the unfruitful works of darkness, and living in the light.

This paper recommends we seek to emulate these fathers, if not their exact choice of words—which might cause no small disturbance in the pews—then their zeal for the way of life and for the teachings of Jesus. Because of our Reformation history, Lutherans do not resonate with rhetoric that sounds like works-righteousness. The Reformers demonstrated that passages such as Tobit 4:10 could be taken in an orthodox sense. Still, announcing to the congregation that "charitable giving delivers from death" would probably raise eyebrows. And yet we ought to resonate with the Apostolic Fathers' *zeal* for almsgiving, *especially* in light of our Reformation history. It was the replacement of the Christian practice of almsgiving by indulgences which, among other things, prompted the young Martin Luther to pen the 95 Theses. As Luther wrote later, in his explanation to the 5th commandment:

> In the second place, this commandment is violated not only when we do evil, but also when we have the opportunity to do good to our neighbors and to prevent, protect, and save them from suffering bodily harm or injury, but fail to do so. If you send a naked person away when you could clothe him, you have let him freeze to death. If you see anyone who is suffering from hunger and do not feed her, you have let her starve. Likewise, if you see anyone who is condemned to death or in similar peril and do not save him although you have means and ways to do so, you have killed him. It will be of no help for you to use the excuse that you did not assist their deaths by word or deed, for you have withheld your love from them and robbed them of the kindness by means of which their lives might have been saved.
>
> Therefore God rightly calls all persons murderers who do not offer counsel or assistance to those in need and peril of body and life.

> He will pass a most terrible sentence upon them at the Last Day, as Christ himself declares. He will say: "I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me." That is to say, "You would have permitted me and my family to die of hunger, thirst, and cold, to be torn to pieces by wild beasts, to rot in prison or perish from want."[16]

On a pedagogical level, the Apostolic Fathers teach us to see almsgiving, care for the needy, works of mercy—along with all of the works of the way of life—in terms of their endgame. Both the coming judgment of Christ and the inheritance promised to the sons of light should be brought into contact with the Christian life here and now, as motivation for Christians to live both in the hopefulness and the sobriety sincere faith. It is the perpetual duty of Christian pastors to exhort their people to lift up their hearts to the unfathomable love of God, to the inheritance prepared for them, and to the imminent return of Christ by showing mercy to those around them. Almsgiving is a non-negotiable mark of the church. Pastors ought to reflect this by connecting this teaching to the central doctrines of the faith: repentance, faith, eschatology, redemption, etc. Conveniently, Jesus did most of the hard work as far as this is concerned, having left behind a plethora of teachings in the Gospels dealing with the subject. In which case, the most effective way for us to follow the example of the early church is simply to preach the text!

Endnotes

1 Saint Cyprian, *On Works and Alms* 4.
2 Ep. Diog. 1.1–2. Michael Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3rd edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).
3 Ep. Diog. 10.1–6.
4 See Luke 6:36, "Be merciful even as your Father is merciful."
5 Did. 1.2–6.
6 Did. 1.5.
7 Chemnitz recognizes that many of the philosophers and church fathers (including Ambrose and Augustine) taught that we should examine the character of the recipient. He agrees that we should do this, but that the examination should not be excessively rough or prying. After all, "alms are often deceived." Martin Chemnitz, *On Almsgiving*, trans. James A. Kellerman, 2nd edition (St. Louis: LCMS World Relief and Human Care, 2019), 13–14.
8 *Did.* 4.5–8.
9 Cf. Sirach 3:14, 3:30; Tobit 4:10, 12:9, 14:11.
10 *2 Clem*. 8.1–6.
11 *2 Clem* 16.4
12 *Second Clement* interprets 1 Peter 4:8, "Love covers a multitude of sins" as referring to the love of almsgiving covering the sins of the one giving alms. The earliest commentators on 1 Peter 4:8 are unanimous in interpreting it thus (David J. Downs, "'Love Covers a Multitude of Sins': Redemptive Almsgiving in 1 Peter 4:8," *Journal of Theological Studies* 65, no. 2 [October 2014]: 489–514).
13 This exactly how the Reformers handled such passages. See AP IV, par. 252.
14 κάλον οὖν ἐλεημοσύνη ὡς μετάνοια ἁμαρτίας.
15 See, for instance, *2 Clem.* 1.6–8; Ep. *Diog.* 9.2–6.
16 LC I v 189–191.

Collaborative Essays

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Learning the Liturgy with Mr. Miyagi: The Case for Liturgical Catechesis

Benjamin Leeper

"You're the best around! Nothing's gunna ever keep you down!" Joe Esposito's famous rock anthem plays in the background. The sweaty gymnasium is filled with a cheering crowd, watching as sparring matches play out around the room. A 16-year-old boy in a white uniform and a black belt, Daniel LaRusso, looks nervously around until he spots his girlfriend Ali and his teacher, Mr. Miyagi. Mr. Miyagi nods confidently at him, assuring him silently that he is prepared for this moment. Mr. Miyagi has trained Daniel for weeks and is confident that he taught him everything he needs to know. Daniel turns toward his opponent, a Cobra Kai member whose uniform is marked by their sleeveless black and gold jackets, intimidating fist icon, and icy cold stare. Daniel squares off against him as the referee drops the flag. Daniel suddenly confronts a flurry of incoming blows. Fear crosses his face. What is he supposed to do? The punches are coming so fast, and Daniel has no idea how to defend himself. Mr. Miyagi said that he was teaching him karate, but faced with actual combat, Daniel doesn't know what good any of it was. Bam! A sudden kick to the face and Daniel goes down, knocked out in the first round. Mr. Miyagi shakes his head, wondering where it was that he went wrong. The credits roll.

Daniel LaRusso faces off against a Cobra Kai member.

For those that have seen the 1984 film *The Karate Kid*, I suspect that this scene is both familiar and foreign. I confess, that is not how the movie really ends. Instead, underdog Daniel LaRusso works his way up in the tournament, overcoming a leg injury to prevail against his long-time rival, Johnny Lawrence, with the now-famous crane

kick, winning the tournament and respect of his peers. But I propose that the alternative ending of *The Karate Kid* which I sketched above is an apt image of what is happening in the church today. Christians in the West are facing extraordinary challenges and many of them seem to be losing, knocked out in the first round. Why do our people look no different than their neighbors, "except that we go to church on Sunday mornings while they're home reading the paper"?[1] They gossip, divorce, and lie at seemingly the same rate as non-Christians. They struggle to "contemplate that there might be irresolvable tensions between being Christian and being 'a good American.'"[2] They relegate Christianity to a Sunday morning activity instead of a daily way of life. Pastors and church leaders are baffled. Haven't we prepared them? Don't we worship every Sunday? Don't we teach them in Bible studies? Don't we run our youth through two years of confirmation? We shake our heads and wonder where we went wrong. But it is not that what we are doing is wrong. We have taught our people karate—the problem is they *don't know they know it*.

Using the narrative of *The Karate Kid* as a guide, I will demonstrate that Christian formation is a matter of recontextualizing liturgical practices in the daily life of the believer, so that she knows when, where, and how to use the precognitive spiritual habits formed by Word and Sacrament in Christian worship. This understanding challenges prevalent liturgical theology, which tends to assume an automatic connection—or worse, no connection at all— between worship and daily life, by highlighting the necessity of locating for believers the telos of the church's rites and ceremonies in discipleship. Finally, I will provide concrete examples of the many forms that liturgical catechesis takes to holistically address the head, heart, and hands of Christian disciples. A right understanding and application of liturgy is the key to bridging the gap between Sunday and Monday.[3]

The Broad and Narrow Sense of Liturgy

What is meant by the word "liturgy"? While the term is used in a wide variety of ways, most usages can be sorted into two main categories: narrow and broad. The referent of liturgy in the narrow sense is the rites and ceremonies performed in Christian churches during formal public worship services. Timothy Maschke explains the narrow definition of liturgy well, writing, "when we speak of *the* liturgy, we mean the corporate structure of the worship experience and practice, which is centered in hearing God's Word and the proper administration of the sacraments."[4] Liturgy is the pattern by which worship is done. If one speaks of "parts of the liturgy," they are operating within this category by describing the ordering and elements which provide the structure and shape of worship. While the term is technically neutral (and originally secular), many worship patterns share as their source a common *ordo*, or narrative structure, which has been derived from particular historic, cultural, and theological factors.[5] While elements of the *ordo* are Biblical, the structure itself

is not mandated by Scripture, nor are specific elements commanded to be included. This does not mean that these elements are superfluous or optional—far from it. Rather, it means that one will need a criterion beyond tradition or divine command to either remove or add to the practices that one has inherited. These patterns of worship are part of a centuries-long conversation between God and his people, in which he speaks his promises and commands to them, and they respond by speaking God's words back to him.[6]

This is not the only way to define liturgy. Broadly speaking, liturgy refers to the pattern of the entire Christian life. Authors such as James. K. A. Smith, Aidan Kavanagh, and Jim Marriott have, in various ways, located liturgy within this category. In his primer to his Cultural Liturgies Series, *Desiring the Kingdom*, Smith writes that liturgies are "rituals that are formative for identity, that inculcate particular visions of the good life, and do so in a way that means to trump other ritual formations."[7] Smith wants to expand liturgy beyond Sunday worship to include—often unconscious—patterns of formation in daily life. Smith's argument is that "Liturgies make us certain kinds of people, and what defines us is what we *love*... every liturgy constitutes a pedagogy that teaches us, in all sorts of precognitive ways, to be a certain kind of person."[8] Meaning trickles down not through cognition, but through habits and practices which shape the imagination and dispositions of individuals. In this way, Smith advocates for a liturgical anthropology in which a person's *telos*—that is, their ultimate orientation toward a '"vision of the good life"— is shaped by the patterns of their life. Aidan Kavanagh has similarly advocated for the importance of imagination in liturgy, writing that "a liturgy of Christians is thus nothing less than the way a redeemed world is, so to speak, done."[9] Liturgy refers cosmically to the ultimate pattern of a rightly ordered world. Jim Marriott, drawing from both Smith and Kavanagh, thus argues that "Liturgy, then, is not merely a pattern of rites and ceremonies that we enact as community on a consistent basis…It is performing our redemption, living out God's story, 'doing' the world rightly. It is the performance of our faith—not by 'our own understanding or strength,' but by the Spirit's work in and through us as the Church in the world."[10] The broad definition of liturgy is not divorced from the narrow. Rather, as Marriott explains, "Sunday morning becomes a microcosm of daily life—a true 'little world' that is neither removed from the real world nor positioned as the destination for the world. Instead, Sunday morning is aimed at the real world."[11] Sunday worship shapes the gut (*kardia*) of those who participate in the liturgy of the world done right, such that they are formed into people oriented towards God's vision of "the good life." Thus, the telos of worship can be said to be toward discipleship, as one's life is patterned in and after Christ.

Both the narrow and broad uses of liturgy are present in Lutheran Confessional literature. In Article XV of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession,

Melanchthon writes, "we gladly keep the ancient traditions set up in the church because they are useful and promote tranquility…We can claim that the public liturgy in the church is more dignified among us than among the opponents."[12] Here, Melanchthon makes the argument that the Lutheran practice of public worship through the ancient rites and ceremonies of the church is more faithful than their Roman counterparts because Lutherans do not have an *ex opera operato* view of those rites. The rites themselves do not justify by the mere act of performing them. In fact, the rites themselves are *adiaphora*, although the means of grace given in worship are not. Under the Lutheran reformers, worship shifted from a supernatural rite to one in which God's gifts were clearly given and God's people were intentionally formed. They wrote of these didactic elements, boasting, "The children chant the Psalms in order to learn them; the people also sing in order either to learn or to pray."[13] Liturgy was used to refer to Sunday worship and the practices therein, but was oriented toward discipleship and paired with catechesis. In this way, the Reformers also use "liturgy" in the broad sense. In the original quarto edition of the Apology, Melanchthon writes, "the service and worship of the Gospel is to receive good things from God…the highest worship in the Gospel is the desire to receive forgiveness of sins, grace, and righteousness."[14] By this reception, Melanchthon is referring to the entire life of faith which receives imputed righteousness. His scope is far larger than Sunday worship, but includes the life of the Christian in discipleship, in which they honor God by trusting in his promises.

Many prefer to use only the narrow or broad definition of liturgy. But by allowing both to stand, the connection between the two becomes sharper. One cannot hope to encourage discipleship in the parish without a richly patterned worship life. Likewise, one cannot call their Sunday liturgical worship "good" if it fails to produce people who live lives which are patterned in and after Christ, Monday through Saturday. If this is *not* happening, why? We need a way to help Christians recognize the role liturgy in the narrow sense plays in shaping their lives in liturgy in the broad sense. Unfortunately, Smith's original proposal that this happens automatically is insufficient in a church body which has—for the most part—retained historically rich patterns of worship yet struggled with connecting Sunday to Monday just as much, if not more, than any other church body. Neither can a purely rationalistic solution be employed, in which the liturgy is simply explained cognitively, as this tries to solve a heart and hand problem with the head. Perhaps a certain part-time karate instructor may be able to help us address this issue.

Wax On, Wax Off

At the beginning of this article, I compared our current liturgical crisis to an alternative ending to the 1984 film, *The Karate Kid*. Why didn't the movie end in that way? For those that have not seen the film, the main character, Daniel LaRusso, finds

himself the ruthless target of a group of bullies known as the Cobra Kai gang. One night, while the bullies are beating him in retaliation for a prank, the handyman in Daniel's apartment appears and defeats the Cobra Kai bullies with his far superior karate skills. Daniel convinces the man—Mr. Miyagi—to train him in karate as a means of self-defense, but he soon finds himself slated to compete against the Cobra Kai dojo in an upcoming regional Karate Championship. Daniel shows up at Mr. Miyagi's house, expecting a rigorous training regimen. Instead, Mr. Miyagi hands Daniel a rag and tells him to wax his car. He gives specific instruction on the technique he wants Daniel to use— "Wax on, wax off"—making an inside-out circular motion with his hands. In the coming days, Mr. Miyagi has Daniel do a wide variety of other tasks—sanding his deck, painting his fence, and re-painting his house. Eventually, Daniel becomes frustrated and explodes at Mr. Miyagi after Mr. Miyagi returns from a day of fishing while Daniel is sore from working on the house all day.

> DANIEL: Maybe I would have wanted to go, you ever think of that?
> MR. MIYAGI: You karate training.
> DANIEL: I'm what? I'm being your G-damn slave is what I'm being man. Now we made a deal here.
> MR. MIYAGI: So?
> DANIEL: So? So you're supposed to teach and I'm supposed to learn, remember? For four days I've been busting my ass and I haven't learned a G-damn thing!
> …
> MR. MIYAGI: Not everything is as seems.

The problem is that Daniel does not know what he is learning. He becomes frustrated by the ritual practice Mr. Miyagi puts him through. He does not understand

why Mr. Miyagi will not let him accomplish the tasks in a more efficient manner. Not understanding the *telos* of this ritual, Daniel believes that Mr. Miyagi may even be taking advantage of him. So, Mr. Miyagi guides Daniel to a moment of discovery, in what turns out to be the crux of the entire film. He asks Daniel to show him the hand motions he used in his chores over the past week. "Show me wax on, wax off." Confused, Daniel kneels to make the circular motion on the ground, but Mr. Miyagi pulls him to his feet, making him perform that action he has repeated and practiced hundreds of times. As he does so, Mr. Miyagi recontextualizes these actions, showing him that each ritualized movement is actually a specific defensive karate move. Finally, after working through all the motions, Mr. Miyagi attacks Daniel, who responds with the "wax on, wax off" motion, moving his hands in a circular movement to block the incoming blow. This whole time, Daniel has been building a habit that laid dormant, awaiting activation through recontextualization. Daniel realizes that the ritual has a purpose because he now knows where to use it.

If Mr. Miyagi had never told and shown Daniel where this practice belonged, the movie would have ended exactly as I imagined in the beginning of this article. That does not mean that Mr. Miyagi was not teaching Daniel karate until he informed Daniel of the meaning behind the rite. Nor does it mean that Daniel was not practicing karate until he cognitively knew the purpose of his actions. Rituals form regardless of our awareness of them. Rather, it means that rituals, which form our gut, must be awakened by being recontextualized. Recontextualization names the moment when a habit formed by rituals is enacted in a new context. Without recontextualization, habits stay in our gut and never become action. One must discover where, when, and how to apply a ritual for it to become a useful, embodied habit.

Christian worship works in much the same way. The church asks her members to do practices that may look very strange to them: stand for the Gospel reading, recite the Nicene Creed, respond with "and also with you." These ritualized practices can frustrate members who do not understand the *telos* of worship. "You are in discipleship training," the confused pastor hopefully responds. Perhaps he assumed that was obvious, or perhaps he assumed that there was a simple one-to-one transference of the ritual to everyday life. But not everything is as it seems. If the church expects her members to be liturgically formed (in the broad sense), then pastors must guide their parishioners to discover the purpose of liturgy (in the narrow sense).

I enjoy the image of *The Karate Kid* to illustrate this point, but Luther uses another: a builder and his plans. In "On Christian Freedom," Luther compares the ceremonies of the church to the plans a builder uses to construct his building. The plans are certainly necessary, but they are not themselves the telos, or the end goal of the task. Luther writes, "Who would be so silly that they would care for nothing in life other than plans that they had most lavishly, carefully, and stubbornly prepared

while never thinking about the structure itself and only being pleased with and boasting about their work in making plans and such vain first steps?"[16] Luther is not denigrating the rites and ceremonies of the church, but is more concerned with the gifts received and the character formed by such worship. Many "high church" and "contemporary" worship services ironically share this error, getting so caught up in the rite itself that they lose sight of the end goal. To return to *The Karate Kid*, this is the equivalent of worrying about the kind of wax to use on the car—Carnauba, resin, or polymer? The point is the performance of the rite by the Christian, not the achievement of the rite itself. Luther condemns the rite-focused view, as "they waste their whole life by tying their life to works, and yet they never arrive at the goal for which works are done. As the Apostle says, they 'are always being instructed and can never arrive at knowledge of the truth.'"[17] The purpose of the narrow liturgy is not self-contained, but finds its goal in the promises of God and the life of the believer.

A very clear example of this would be the performance of Confession and Absolution. Many assume that they confess their sins and receive absolution every Sunday to do exactly that—confess and be forgiven. This is certainly true. But if that were the only purpose, then there would be no need for that practice to be liturgical. The words used in the confession could be changed every week while keeping the rite in place. This might even be more effective, as it prevents people from getting into a rut and simply going through the motions. But the benefit of reciting the same confession and hearing the same absolution over and over again is that it builds a habit. Consider the words of Divine Service Setting I in the Lutheran Service Book: "Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and what we have left undone…"[18] Saying those words, week after week, does not only produce the effect of confession and forgiveness. It forms a certain type of people—a people who recognize their own sinful nature and the limits of their fallen humanity, who realize that sin is more than action but also thought, and that sins of omission are as serious as those of commission. One could cognitively inform the congregation of these facts, but it is no substitution for the formation to the gut—the precognitive disposition of the believer. One only has to bring a non-believer into a church service that says these words to realize how strange a people they make us. But what would happen if, on a Tuesday morning, a husband comes into the pastor's office because he is having trouble in their marriage and the pastor says, "Show me Confession and Absolution!" As many pastors know, they might as well have said "wax on, wax off!" The parishioner freezes, unsure exactly what to do. They know the rite, but this is a new context, and they aren't sure how to apply it—and this location is still within the church building! Now imagine that the pastor tells the husband to go home and "do confession and absolution" there. He tries it, but it feels clunky and unnatural. "I have sinned against you and against God in

thought, word, and deed." He's done this hundreds of times, but never at home. But then he hears his wife say, "Christ forgives you and so do I" and it clicks. Confession and Absolution is not only an event that happens on Sunday—it is a way of life that brings reconciliation and peace to those that follow after Christ.

These moments of discovery are always aided by the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit works through means. As Chad Lakies argues, the pastor has a responsibility to catechize the congregation on the narrative of the liturgy. "If you're not telling the story, your liturgy is probably doing something else. Context is necessary. And it is up to the shepherd to actually be doing the shepherding in this regard."[19] It is a responsibility of the pastor not only to bring Christ's forgiveness through absolution in the worship service, but to help form God's people into a people of forgiveness, which includes both building the routine through liturgical enactment and the facilitation of the moment of discovery through recontextualization of the established habit. Sometimes this recontextualization of rites really does happen automatically, such as when a teenager takes their 2nd grade math skills and applies them to their 1st job working a cash register. But for the thickest, most important rituals which get at the center of our identity, such as Christian worship, we dare not assume that this will happen without a guide.

Performing the Liturgy as though We Had Enemies

One of the best ways to assist with this recontextualization is to reveal the enemies which oppose Christian liturgy—that is, the way of discipleship. The devil is liturgical too. He uses rival liturgies which form people—often without their knowledge.[20] There are many rich practices all around which are centered on forming our desires, imagination, and identity in ways counter to the will of God. But by exposing these rival liturgies, they are robbed of some of their power. The point of this is not the demonization of culture but the recognition of a lack of neutrality. Once again, *The Karate Kid* can help illustrate this point.

Before training with Mr. Miyagi, Daniel has only ever seen one way of learning karate—that embodied by the Cobra Kai dojo. At that dojo, the students wear special uniforms, recite a creed (Strike first! Strike Hard! No Mercy!), and practice fighting each other. John Kreese, the sensei of that dojo has meticulously formed his students in the way of the fist. They move with precision and purpose, motivated by fear of Kreese and the message that anyone on the street may be their enemy. No doubt they are good at karate. But when Mr. Miyagi observed them—both in their ritual practice and their everyday life—he noticed that these boys were liturgical animals. They had been

John Kreese threatens Daniel and Mr. Miyagi.

habituated into a way of life—the way of the fist—and they lived that liturgy on and off the mat. Mr. Miyagi realizes that what he is up against is not a few school bullies, but a rival liturgy. So, when he sets out to train Daniel, he takes an entirely different approach. Instead of being formed by fighting others, Daniel is formed in service. He learns karate by helping Mr. Miyagi. This is reinforced by Mr. Miyagi's rival creed: "Rule Number 1: Karate for defense only." Mr. Miyagi realizes that winning a trophy in a local tournament is not what matters—what matters is combating the harmful liturgy of the way of the fist with the good liturgy of karate which protects others. To do that, Mr. Miyagi not only has to teach Daniel karate, but make him into a specific kind of person. Mr. Miyagi does not teach Daniel how to punch and kick until right before the tournament, after he has learned all the other skills, because offense is the last resort. Daniel's liturgical formation relies on rich ritualistic enactment, practice and repetition of virtue forming habits, the order of the elements, and recontextualizing catechesis.

In an essay originally titled "Preaching as Though we had Enemies," Stanley Hauerwas argues that "Most of us do not go to church because we are seeking a safe haven from our enemies; rather, we go to church to be assured we have no enemies."[21] This will have to change if the narrow liturgy is to have stakes. We must recognize that there are rival liturgies vying for our identity—that these are real enemies which have an ultimate spiritual antecedent in the devil and his goals.[22] We have very real liturgical enemies, but just as Mr. Miyagi attacked Daniel to help him recontextualize his habits, so can we use the assaults upon liturgical living as moments which activate our gut and bring us to action. There is no greater mockery of the devil than that he be used as an instrument in spiritual formation. Arguing for the importance of catechesis, Luther writes that God,

> knows our danger and need; he knows the constant and furious attacks and assaults of the devil. Therefore, he wishes to warn, equip, and protect us against them with good "armor" against their "flaming arrows," and with a good antidote against their evil infection and poison. Oh, what mad, senseless fools we are! We must ever live and dwell in the midst of such mighty enemies like the devils, and yet we would despise our weapons and armor, too lazy to examine them or give them a thought![23]

We must not despise our weapons and armor. We cannot reject the value of liturgical formation, nor should we neglect to demonstrate when, where, and how to use it. We must perform the liturgy as though we had enemies.

One example of a "liturgical enemy" is the liturgy of privatized belief. In his book American Babylon, Richard John Neuhaus writes, "The confinement of

the question of God or of the gods to the private sphere constitutes what might be described as political atheism. Many today who are believers in private have been persuaded, or intimidated, into accepting political atheism."[24] In other words, many Christians have bought into the narrative that their faith is a personal, private matter which they should keep to themselves. So, they confine their faith to an hour on Sunday, careful not to let it overflow into the rest of the week. The reason so many Christians look like atheists Monday through Saturday is that functionally, they are. This rival liturgy is affirmed by such creeds as "separation of church and state," "personal Lord and savior" and "Well I don't believe in that Jesus." The reason we need intentional liturgical catechesis is because there is a massive chasm between Sunday morning and Monday created by this "keep your beliefs to yourself" liturgy. There may have been a time when the narrow liturgy just "worked," automatically creating the broad liturgy, but the pre-enlightenment era was not hampered by the present distinction between sacred and secular life. The social imaginary of our people prevents them from even seeing that they should—or even can—bring their liturgical practices into their public life beyond the walls of the church. This fact has become unavoidable, and it must be acknowledged as the liturgical enemy it is.

Imagining Liturgical Catechesis

Liturgical catechesis is not a program or a class but a practice that encompasses a pastor's entire ministry. Pastors need to *teach and preach* on the purpose of the liturgy, giving special attention to worship as both a habit and a "vision of the 'good life.'"[25] Rather than pitting "rationality" against "habituality", liturgical catechesis focuses on recontextualizing the established practice in the life of the believer. Liturgical catechesis reveals that which is *already present* in the liturgically formed believer.[26] They already know karate. They have been practicing it for years. Liturgical catechesis is not explanation but *confirmation and revelation* of the habits they have already been formed in. They just need to be taught where and when to use it. Thus, liturgical catechesis is not purely—or even primarily—cognitive. Rather, it includes a holistic, bodily training which acknowledges the human person as more than their thoughts and believes, but also their feelings and actions.

This means that the narrow liturgical practice must be rich enough that it has a positive formative depth. Liturgical catechesis does not require the use of a specific worship style, but it does require intentionality. With the rise of the Liturgical Movement, there are now liturgically conscious songs which did not exist ten years ago that are written for guitar or praise band.[27] The metric for determining whether a liturgy is good or bad is faithfulness to the gospel and formative impact. Because liturgy compounds like interest, we should be reticent to interrupt the liturgical practices of a congregation and instead focus on enriching them and catechizing around them. Preach on intercessory prayer on the Sunday when Abraham inter-

cedes for Sodom and Gomorrah, teach a Bible study on the Lord's Supper, record a podcast reading the Scripture readings for the week so that they can be in the parishioner's ears all week long. Get creative!

We also need to demonstrate how to concretely *identify* rival liturgies which impact our parishioners. It is the pastor's role to "unveil and unmask the idolatrous pretensions of the *polis* that can be all too easily missed since they constitute the status quo wallpaper of our everyday environment."[28] This could be done by watching and discussing a popular movie or other cultural artifacts as a group. I have modeled this practice within this article by carefully dissecting *The Karate Kid*. While on the face of it *The Karate Kid* is hardly theological at all, it has helped bring into sharper focus the necessity of discovering hidden formation. Other artifacts can help by revealing a commonly held cultural attitude, raising questions about our faith, or telling stories which positively and negatively shape our imagination of what is possible.

Another key aspect of liturgical catechesis is modeling liturgical living with parishioners by bringing them back to liturgical practices (in the narrow sense) in contexts *outside* of worship so that they can see that it has a place beyond an hour on Sunday morning. Jim Marriott has connected elements of the Divine Service to specific liturgical discipleship behaviors, offering a guide for Christians to understand the points of intersection between discipleship and worship, so that they can practice recontextualizing the spiritual habits formed in worship in their daily lives. Pray the Lord's prayer when they feel tempted to look at pornography. Demonstrate intercession for others in prayer by concretely praying for the individual needs of others in daily life. Practice generosity by letting kids offer a gift to a stranger in need, experiencing the joy of helping others. This is best done as a community, as most discipleship practices are not solo endeavors, but communal ones. Formation does not happen alone—there is a reason that worship is corporate and not individual.

If Marriott is right—and I believe he is—then Sunday worship is the world done right. It is the prototype—or to use Luther's language, the building plans—of Christian discipleship. But if we are going to connect Sunday to Monday, then we need to start living liturgically. We need to teach, preach, identify, and model what performance of the world done right looks like inside and outside of Sunday worship. We have been having our people "wax on, wax off" for a long time. They already know karate—they just *don't know they know it*. But by recontextualizing these practices, we allow people to defend themselves against the devil's rival liturgies. We need to practice the liturgy as though we had enemies, but also as though the God who became Man is really present in our worship, giving his gifts and forming us to be disciples who follow after Him.

Endnotes

1 James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*, Volume 1 of Cultural Liturgies (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 208.
2 Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 12.
3 James F Marriott, "Inside This Issue: Monday's Coming . . .," *Lutheran Mission Matters* 30, no. 1 (May 2022): 8.
4 Timothy Maschke, *Gathered Guests: A Guide to Worship in the Lutheran Church*, 2nd ed (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Pub. House, 2009), 125.
5 The specific content of the *ordo* will not be debated here. Some, such as Jim Marriott, prefer a more general description, such as the fivefold *ordo* of Gather, Word, Prayer, Sacrament, and Sending while others such as Arthur Just prefer to let the ordinary elements, such as Invocation, Kyrie, Gloria, Creed, Word, Sanctus, Angus Dei, Sacrament, and Blessing, represent the transcultural *ordo*. I suspect that the first is too broad to be helpful and the latter two specific to be universal.
6 As Norman Nagel said in the introduction to *Lutheran Worship*, "Saying back to him what he has said to us, we repeat what is most true and sure…The rhythm of our worship is from him to us, and then from us back to him. He gives his gifts and together we receive and extol then… Each generation receives from those who went before and, in making that tradition of the Divine Service its own, adds what best may serve in its own day—the living heritage and something new." *Lutheran Worship* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), 6.
7 Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 86.
8 Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 25. Italics original.
9 Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology*, Repr., The Hale Memorial Lectures of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary 1981 (New York: Pueblo Publ. Co, 1992), 100.
10 James F Marriott, "How the Redeemed World Is Done: Charting the Relationship between Liturgy, Discipleship, and Mission," *Lutheran Mission Matters* 30, no. 1 (May 2022): 26.
11 Marriott, "Redeemed World," 26.
12 Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 228.
13 Kolb-Wengert, Book of Concord, 229.
14 Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Churc*h (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 155.
15 Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 81. This is not to say that Smith does not acknowledge this critical problem. At the end of *Imagining the Kingdom*, he quotes John Witvliet who asks, "'If liturgical participation shapes us, why in the world are lifelong participants in worship not better people?" James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works, Cultural Liturgies*, Volume 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 188. He tackles this criticism in the greatest depth in chapter 6 of *Awaiting the King* under the heading "Our 'Godfather' Problem."
16 Martin Luther, *The Roots of Reform*, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand, Kirsi Irmeli Stjerna, and Timothy J. Wengert, The Annotated Luther, Volume 1 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 536.
17 Luther, *The Roots of Reform*, 537.
18 Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, ed., *Lutheran Service Book*, Pew ed (St. Louis, Mo: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 151.
19 Chad Lakies, "Candy Machine God, or, Going to Church without Going to Church: Millennials and the Future of the Christian Faith," *Missio Apostolica* 21, no. 1 (May 2013): 26.
20 Smith masterly illustrates this through an inductive demonstration of the mall's liturgical power. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 93–103.
21 Stanley Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them in the Truth: Holiness Exemplified* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 195.
22 It is important to note that any human propagator of these liturgies should not be treated as the devil himself—even though Luther was prone to this rhetorical move. Rather they are neighbors in need of our love, so that they can be oriented toward the greater love of Christ and his kingdom.
23 Kolb-Wengert, *Book of Concord*, 382.
24 Richard John Neuhaus, *American Babylon: Notes of a Christian Exile* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 93.
25 Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 18.
26 "We don't need to come up with a theological 'justification' for connecting worship and public life, because worship narrates an understanding of public life *internal* to its practice. Our task is simply to make explicit what is already implicit in the liturgy" James K. A. Smith, *Awaiting the King: Reforming Public Theology,* Cultural Liturgies, Volume 3 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2017), 56. Italics original.
27 By "liturgically conscious," I mean that these songs are designed for a specific place within the plot of the worship service. Many so-called contemporary songs focus on thanksgiving and praise, but artists such as Greg LaFollette, Kip Fox, Andrew Peterson, Liturgical Folk, and Cardiphonia Music (to name a few) have expanded the available repertoire worship of songs written for guitar, piano, etc. to include lament, confession, cries for mercy, intercessory prayer, songs of glory, and blessings. There are also an increasing number of albums which attend to the church's calendar, following the narrative journey of the church year.
28 Smith, *Awaiting the King*, 195.
29 The pairings are: Invocation—Hospitality; Confession and Absolution—Reconciliation; Kyrie—Advocacy; Reading of Scripture —Submission; Sermon—Proclamation; Prayers of the Church—Intercession; Offering/Offertory—Generosity; Preface, Sanctus, Prayer of Thanksgiving—Sacrifice (praise and thanksgiving); Distribution—Communion/community; Benediction—Blessing/sending. Marriott, "Redeemed World," 29–30. It is important to note that these practices are both active and passive. They are often both behaviors done by and to the believer. Luther's Two Kinds of Righteousness, as exposited by Robert Kolb, can help maintain this distinction well. Robert Kolb, "Luther on the Two Kinds of Righteousness; Reflections on His Two-Dimensional Definition of Humanity at the Heart of His Theology," *Lutheran Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1999): 449–66.

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Liturgy & Life: How the Divine Service Connects with the Rest of the Week

Benjamin Janssen

On vicarage, I was blessed to spend many hours with a faithful member named Ginger, who, alongside her husband Walter, runs and operates the congregation's robust food and clothing distribution center. This center is completely run by volunteer efforts out of the undercroft of the church and successfully feeds and clothes 150 families a month. This work both serves the neighbor in need and brings the congregation into contact with many of those living in the immediate community. In short, it is a blessing to the congregation and the surrounding community. Therefore, at the end of each service day, I would personally thank the many volunteers, including Walter and Ginger, for their wonderful work and loving service toward their neighbors. Upon hearing my thanks, Ginger always responded with a statement similar to, "Oh Vicar, I don't want any thanks. All of the credit goes to Jesus." With this simple statement, Ginger proclaimed the scriptural truth that God's work of grace, mercy, and love found in the weekly Divine Service pours out and continues in her everyday life and the lives of those around her. This is why St. Paul implored the baptized believers to be "ambassadors for Christ" in their daily vocations (2 Cor 5:20). Everything the reborn Christian does is rooted in and flows out of the work first done to him by God, namely, redemption from sin (Eph 1:7–8; John 3:16). Therefore, Confessional Lutherans teach that God serves His people daily by feeding their body and souls in Word and Sacrament located in the weekly Divine Service.

First, time must be taken to define what is meant by the term, "Divine Service." Translated from the German word *Gottesdienst*, the "Divine Service" is the public worship of God's people where God Himself forgives the sins of His people with His Holy Word and blessed sacraments. This definition of public worship provides a needed corrective to the reigning view of Christian worship in America which believes that going to church is merely a work the Christian does for God. By using the title "Divine Service," Lutherans proclaim that public worship is not merely the work of Christians in rendering thanks and praise to God, but that it is also and primarily the work of Christ, who gathers Christians in His name to receive the forgiveness of sins won by Him on the cross. Having received this forgiveness, Christians return to their various vocations and share that forgiveness with their neighbors. The introduction to *Lutheran Worship* states, "Our Lord gives us His

body to eat and His blood to drink. Finally His blessing moves us into our calling where His gifts have their fruition."[1] Lutherans understand public worship as the place where our divine Lord serves His people. This begins at the font, altar, and pulpit and pours out into the community each week where God continues His work of extending His kingdom through His people. Martin Luther summarizes this well in his hymn *These are the Holy Ten Commands* which states,

> You shall observe the worship day
> That peace may fill your home, and pray,
> And put aside the work you do,
> So that God may work in you.
> Have mercy Lord![2]

The Divine Service connects with everyday life as our Lord Jesus Christ carries out His will through Christians in their various vocations. But this is not merely a teaching of the Lutheran church, rather, this is taken directly from God's Holy Word. In fact, the Scriptures have a few things to say about Christian worship and how God uses it both to forgive sins and to extend His kingdom into the world on a daily basis.

First, the baptized believer receives the forgiveness of sins in the Divine Service (Eph 1:7–8). It is here where the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are delivered to His people. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, individuals are baptized for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38), receive the absolution of their sins (John 20:22–23), and the body and blood of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins (Matt 26:26–29). This is the foundation and rooting for the Christian.

Then, having been served by God and receiving His grace given for us in the Divine Service (1 Cor 10:16), the Christian carries the Divine Service into their everyday life. On these grounds, they present themselves as living sacrifices (Rom 12:1–2) and members of the body of Christ (Rom 12:3–8) who engage their neighbors with the love won for all on the cross and delivered to them first through Word and Sacrament in the Divine Service (Rom 12:9–21; 1 Cor 13).

Second, being rooted in the Divine Service, God's work extends into the daily life of the Christian. Each and every day, the will of God is fulfilled in the Christian as God the Father defends His children from all danger and guards and protects them from all evil. Then having received this protection, Christians respond with prayer and thanksgiving, even if they are not in public worship (Dan 6:10). St. Paul even reminds us to "rejoice in the Lord always," and bring everything before God by "prayer and supplication with thanksgiving." For in all times and places, St. Paul reminds the Christian to "let your requests be known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:4–7).

Lastly, the Holy Scriptures teach that God's Work continues in our lives throughout the week. For through His Word and Sacraments, God grants His peace (Num 6:26), continuously guides His children (Ps 119:105), and permeates all daily vocations (Luke 10:38ff). All of these things force the Christian to remember and take to heart how God is both faithful to His promises and continues to deliver His people through all affliction. Consequently, this remembrance brings the Christian back to the source of it all, the Word and Sacraments given out in the weekly Divine Service. The Christian never graduates from this cycle of receiving, going out, and returning to the Divine Service. Rather, the Christian is conformed by this cycle into the image of Jesus (Rom 8:29; Col 3:10). For this reason, the Divine Service is carried out in the daily life of the Christian and the life of their neighbor as they continuously gather together with others in Jesus' name to receive God's forgiveness (Heb 10:25). In summary, the Christian, having been made righteous by the forgiveness of sins received in Word and Sacrament, lives by faith (Rom 1:17).

Next, as stated above, this is not only a biblical teaching, but is a teaching upheld by the Lutheran Confession. Therefore, it is appropriate to analyze how the Lutheran Confessions expound upon these texts. According to the Augsburg Confession,

> It is taught that we cannot obtain forgiveness of sins and righteousness before God through our merit, work, or satisfactions, but that we receive forgiveness of sins and become righteous before God out of grace for Christ's sake through faith when we believe that Christ has suffered for us and that for His sake our sin is forgiven and

> righteousness and eternal life are given to us. For God will regard and reckon this faith as righteousness in His sight, as St. Paul says in Romans 3[:21–26] and 4[:5].[3]

Expounding on this article, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession explains that seeking the forgiveness of sins is the "highest way to worship Christ."[4] The AC then continues by confessing, "To obtain such faith God instituted the office of preaching, giving the gospel and the sacraments. Through these, as through means, He gives the Holy Spirit who produces faith, where and when He wills, in those who hear the gospel."[5] In the Lutheran Confessions, just as in Holy Scripture, the forgiveness of sins and its distribution to God's children is the foundation for God's Work in the daily life of the Christian. It is only after laying this foundation that the AC continues into Article VI which confesses,

> It is also taught that such faith should yield good fruit and good works and that a person must do good such good works as God commanded for God's sake but not place trust in them as if thereby to earn grace before God. For we receive forgiveness of sin and righteousness through faith in Christ, as Christ Himself says [Lk 17:10]: "When you have done all [things]... , say, 'we are worthless slaves.'" The Fathers also teach the same thing. For Ambrose says: "It is determined by God that whoever believes in Christ shall be saved and have forgiveness of sins, not through works but through faith alone, without merit."[6]

Therefore, the Lutheran Confessions follow the same trajectory as Holy Scripture. First, Jesus Christ conquered and defeated sin, death, and the devil through His death and resurrection. Then, Christ instituted the Office of preaching to deliver this salvific work to His people. And finally, the faith given to us yields good works and fruit. All of this is the Divine Service being carried out in the everyday life of the Christian.

Even today, the congregations of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are blessed to confess this reality on a weekly basis. In the *Lutheran Service Book*, the post-communion collects reads as follows,

> We give thanks to You, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one

> God, now and forever.[7]

Each week, after having orally received Jesus' crucified and resurrected body and blood for the forgiveness of sins, Lutherans both confess and pray that God would not only continue to daily forgive their sins, but also strengthen them to love and forgive their neighbor as Christ first loved and forgave them (1 Jn 4:19).

In commenting on the post-communion collect, John Pless writes, "The post-communion collect has a pivotal place in the liturgy. It is the hinge that connects God's service to us in the sacrament with our service to the neighbor in the world."[8] The Divine Service permeates the daily life of Christians and their neighbors who receive the same love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ won by His death and resurrection. Pless hits on this relationship between the weekly "Divine Service" and the ongoing Divine Service in the life of the Christian when he writes,

> Thus we see an ongoing rhythm between liturgy and vocation. Served with Christ's gifts in the liturgy, we are sent back into the world to live sacrificially as His royal priesthood. This is not a life that is lived by our own energies or resources but by the gospel of Jesus Christ alone. It is a life that is lived by the daily return to baptism in repentance and faith. It is a life sustained by Jesus' words and nourished with His Body and Blood.[9]

Martin Luther also summarized the daily ongoing aspect of Christ's salvific work in the life of the Christian when he wrote,

> For it is necessary for each one to know that Christ has given His body, flesh, and blood on the cross to be our treasure and to help us to receive the forgiveness of sins, that is, that we may be saved, redeemed from death and hell. That is the first principle of Christian doctrine. It is presented to us in the words, and His body and blood are given to us to be received corporally as a token and confirmation of this fact. To be sure, He did cause this only once, carrying it out and achieving it on the cross; but He causes it each day anew to be set before us, distributed and poured out through preaching, and He orders us to remember Him always and never forget Him. The second principle is love. It is demonstrated in the first place by the fact that He has left us an example. As He gives Himself for us with His body and blood in order to redeem us from all misery, so we too are to give ourselves with might and man for our neighbor. Whoever knows this and lives accordingly

> is holy, and has not much more to learn, nor will he find anything more in the whole Bible.[10]

Following the Biblical text, Luther sheds light on the beauty found in God utilizing the Christian to perform His loving will in the lives of others. Therefore, having been forgiven, the Christian is freely motivated by the Gospel to daily receive Christ's forgiveness, love God, and love their neighbor (Matt 22:37–39).

In conclusion, Holy Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, Martin Luther, and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod teach that in the Divine Service, Christians receive the forgiveness of sins. Then, Christians carry this forgiveness with them out into the world where they serve their neighbor. The cycle repeats every week in the Divine Service, confessing the truth that God works in us each and every day according to His will. Thanks be to God, that the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation won by Jesus' atoning death and resurrection are provided to the Christian weekly in Word and Sacrament. For by this, God daily serves His people in their various vocations.

Endnotes

1 *Lutheran Worship* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), 6.
2 *Lutheran Service Book*, Prepared by the Commission on Worship of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (St. Louis, Concordia, 2006), 581.
3 AC IV.
4 Ap IV 154.
5 AC V 1–2.
6 AC VI.
7 LSB, 201.
8 John T. Pless, "Vocation: Fruit of the Liturgy," *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* 11, no. 3 (2002): 4.
9 Pless, "Vocation," 7.
10 AE 36:352.

Poetry

The Holy Heart

Cody MacMillan

Let every member fall in line
And all remember, call to mind,
From Holy Heart at dawn of time,
His simple call with love divine,
Came every creature each in kind
And all but one from speech derived.

From Holy Heart and heaps of dirt
Is bundled, built, and breathed to birth
The lonely man to reap the earth,
And from his sleep and side disturbed
An Eve to life - yet evils lurk!
His help to keep yet leads to curse.

The Holy Heart returns to hell,
A rebel's break from richest wealth,
And so with fire, flame, and swell
Comes flashing sword and
judgment dealt,
Yet 'fore the garden's fruit is felled
A word of Hope and gracious Help.

The Holy Heart will come to bear
Those battered, broken, beaten bare,
Their battles claim and feasts prepare,
From blackened hell and fiendish flare.

The Holy Heart is lifted up,
Is pained and pierced. It is enough
To break the curse and wake the dust
And raise all hearts to face the Judge.

And those who take the Holy Heart,
Who trust in Him to face the dark,
Shall take their place in heaven's arms,
And raise their songs, their praise,
to God.

Currently serving his vicarage, Cody MacMillin is a third-year M.Div student at Concordia Seminary. He received his bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University in 2020 with a major in English.

Bounding Down the Mountain Peaks

A Translation of Peter Abelard's *In Montibus Hic Saliens*

Andrew & Lindsay Bloch

This Latin Ascension hymn was written by Peter Abelard, medieval philosopher and lawyer. In our translation, we sought to recreate Abelard's depiction of Christ the bridegroom as a chivalrous prince claiming his bride, the Church. Abelard bolsters his courtly love motif with inspiration from the texts of Song of Solomon 2 and Psalm 45. The Latin text is found in the critical edition of Joseph Szöverffy's *Peter Abelard's Hymnarius Paraclitensis*, 133-34. Our translation can be set to the tune of "Gott sei Dank" (see LSB 830, 900).

1. Bounding down the mountain peaks
Springing from the heights, he speaks,
Sounding down the mountainside,
"Rise and follow me, my bride!"

2. Scaling up the heights, they roam
To his Father's castle home.
"Dearest, hurry to our land;
Sit with me at God's right hand."

3. "See the hosts of all his land;
See my Father's kingdom band.
They with him await you there,
In our wedding joys to share."

4. "All that suits a royal bride,
Queenly clothing I provide.
Golden dress and precious stones—
All that's mine is now your own."

5. Glory be to Christ on high
Raised above the starry sky,
Father, Spirit— One God reigns
Over heights and deepest plains.

Andrew and Lindsay Bloch live on campus at Concordia Seminary where Andrew is a PhD student. Andrew and Lindsay met at Concordia University Nebraska and were married in 2018. They have three children: Philip, Leona, and Rhoda. When they are not playing with their kids they enjoy translating Latin and talking theology together.

Members of One Holy Body

Text: Benjamin Leeper
Tune: AR HYD Y NOS (LSB 877, 922) or EAST ACKLAM by Francis Jackson (b.1917)

1. Members of one holy body,
Christ as our head.
We who feast on his true body
Share in one bread.
Christ's true presence, God locating,
Diff'rence met by congregating.
Christ between us, mediating,
knits us like thread.

2. Chosen people, called to Zion,
from Abraham.
They are promised Judah's lion,
Passover lamb.
We are grafted on that old tree,
branches from the root of Jesse.
Now by faith we join their story,
Praise to I AM!

3. Gathered 'round both Word and Mystery,
all who believe.
Here we share and learn our history,
faith to receive.
We his church as sisters, brothers,
share as one Christ's love for others.
When we bear with one another,
burdens relieve.

4. God's Salvation, found among us,
His own household.
Death's blunt sting will not remove us,
Sheep of his fold
From beyond the end of endings,
Calls the Bride of Christ, descending
with the Spirit, kinship mending:
"Come and behold!"

Benjamin Leeper is a STM student at Concordia Seminary with interest in the field of ecclesiology and the works of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He graduated from Concordia University Nebraska with a degree in communication and theatre and completed the MDiv program in 2022. Ben and his wife Emily are looking forward to starting his first call as a pastor in the summer of 2023.

Ariel

Hayden Lukas

You couldn't hide yourself in death.
You couldn't stretch your limbs
across Procrustes' bed
In a deal struck with the tomb.

You built a stronghold out of lies.
I think He finally found
a way to get inside,
And He'll be coming home soon.

Oh Ariel!
Oh Ariel!
The city where David encamped
Year after Year,
Your feasts never end.

Oh Ariel!
Oh Ariel!
Can you find a voice for lament?
Although it's been fun,
Every circus must end.

I tried to get a look inside
The secret counsels of
the Holy God on High,
But I couldn't climb the walls to see.

I'm like a fly stuck on the glass
Of a one-way mirror where
my eyes are staring back,
But He looks right through me.

Oh Ariel!
Oh Ariel!
The city I loved laid to rest,
Although it's been fun,
Every circus must end.

Oh Ariel!
Oh Ariel!
When will you understand?
The tomb cannot hide
from God what he demands.

You made a covenant with death.
You tied your fate to what
you thought you could accept,
But He'll be coming home soon.

When the Living God will raise the dead,
The Firstborn Foundation Stone
has already gone ahead,
And we'll be coming home, too.

Oh Ariel!
Oh Ariel!
He'll come to you in your distress,
When all that's you've sown
Rains down hard on your head.

Oh Ariel!
Oh Ariel!
When will you understand?
The tomb cannot hide
From God what he demands.

The tomb cannot hide
From God what he demands.

Hayden Lukas is a graduate student pursuing a PhD at Concordia Seminary. After earning a bachelor's degree in Philosophy at Concordia Wisconsin, he graduated with his MDiv in 2021 at Concordia Seminary. He, his wife Rebekah, and their three children—Oswald, August and Flannery—live in Saint Louis.

Devotional Materials

Jaron Melin is an STM-student at Concordia Seminary. He earned a bachelor's and a master's degree in Mathematics at Wichita State University in Wichita, KS. He and his wife Elizabeth are blessed with three children and live on seminary campus.

Catechism Service

Jaron Melin

According to Charles Arand, Luther's ordering of the catechism provides an overarching narrative which provides a Law-Gospel, Trinitarian view of life in this world.[1] According to James Marriott, liturgy is the performance of faith in the story of everything through rites and ceremonies which enact God's means of grace.[2] The Catechism Service given here aims to provide a rite which is structured by the Small Catechism and to enact the catechism in worship. The ordering of the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer as well as the ordering of Baptism, Confession, and the Sacrament of the Altar are interwoven into the very fabric of worship. Thus, the catechism provides the structure of worship rather than being just an element of worship, and that structure tells God's story in a Trinitarian, evangelical manner. Furthermore, as the practice of Lutheran worship cares deeply about the formation of disciples in the church,[3] this service aims to form disciples with the basics of the Christian faith. Thus, the catechism also acts as liturgical formation, forming disciples to be witnesses for Christ in their daily lives throughout the whole week.[4] This service could be paired with daily devotions which follow a similar structure.[5] In this way, the Catechism Service can serve as a model and training ground for daily devotion and for Christian living in the world.

This service is organized in a simple manner for any congregation to use. Pastors and congregations are encouraged to use and adapt it for their worship. It was made brief to be printed as a worship-bulletin onto both sides of a single sheet of paper. Any part can be expanded to include more of the Small Catechism for further instruction and formation (e.g. questions and answers). Furthermore, Phillip Magness has put the Small Catechism to music which could be incorporated into this service so that people can learn the catechism by heart to music even in the midst of worship.[6]

As much as possible, portions of Luther's Small Catechism were taken from CPH's translation in 1986, which became available online in 2019.[7] Some portions are based on Luther's Baptismal Booklet, which was included in some editions of

the Small Catechism.[8] Words in italics indicate an insertion into the text, which was done only for the sake of clarity and significance. Words in bold are spoken by the congregation while words in regular font are spoken by the liturgist. When there are two columns, a pastor leads the service with the left column, and a non-ordained liturgist leads the service with the right column, in which case the Sacrament of the Altar is also omitted.

Endnotes

1 Charles P. Arand, *That I May Be His Own: An Overview of Luther's Catechisms* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Academic Press, 2000), 129–141.
2 James Marriott, "How the Redeemed World Is Done: Charting the Relationship between Liturgy, Discipleship, and Mission," *Lutheran Mission Matters* 30, no. 1 (2022): 24–32.
3 Ibid., 27.
4 Ibid., 30.
5 For an example, see Jaron Melin, "Greek and Hebrew Catechetical Devotions," *Grapho: Concordia Seminary Student Journal* 4, no. 1 (2022), https://scholar.csl.edu/grapho/vol4/iss1/8.
6 Phillip Magness, *Sing the Faith* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2008).
7 Martin Luther, *Luther's Small Catechism* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2019), catechism.cph.org. For example, the confession and absolution are primarily based on Luther's Short Form of Confession; however, a variation of the Jesus Prayer and the Kyrie are also included for smooth, liturgical flow. Quotations of Scripture are from ibid., which uses *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984).
8 WA 19:537–41; LW 53:106–9 with 101–3. See also Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 371.n147. For example, the blessing from Psalm 121:8 and the declaration after Titus 3:5–8 are based on their usage in Luther's Baptismal Booklet. For comparison, see ibid., 374.18 and 375.30.

Catechism Service

The service may begin with an opening hymn, psalm, or spiritual song.

WE BEGIN *Matthew 28:19b, Romans 6:4, Luther's Small Catechism*

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Saint Paul writes in Romans chapter 6: "We were therefore buried with Him through Baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." *Baptism* indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

TEN COMMANDMENTS *Exodus 20:2–17*

I am the Lord your God. **You shall have no other gods.**
You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
Honor your father and your mother.
You shall not murder.
You shall not commit adultery.
You shall not steal.
You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
You shall not covet your neighbor's house.
You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

CONFESSION *Luther's Small Catechism, Luke 18:13, Mark 10:47*

Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments: Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or worker? Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy? Have you been hot-tempered, rude, or quarrelsome? Have you hurt someone by your words or deeds? Have you stolen, been negligent, wasted anything, or done any harm? Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments. *A moment of silence for reflection and personal confession.*

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, be merciful to me, a sinner. **I, a poor sinner, plead guilty before God of all sins. I am sorry for all of this, and I ask for grace. I want to do better. Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Amen.**

OFFICE OF THE KEYS

This is what Saint John the Evangelist writes in chapter twenty: The Lord Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

John 20:22–23

POWER OF BAPTISM

As Saint Paul says in Titus, chapter three: "He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying."

Titus 3:5–8

By the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Jesus Christ has given us new birth through water and the Holy Spirit and has forgiven us all our sins. The almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen us with His grace to everlasting life. **Amen.**

READINGS

A sermon may follow after the readings or after the Creed. A hymn may be sung.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose

again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER

Luther's Small Catechism

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

EVENING PRAYER

Luther's Small Catechism

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

PRAYERS

1 Timothy 2:1

LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6:9–13

Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

If there is no Communion, then the service continues with the BLESSING.

SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR *Luther's Small Catechism*

The holy Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Saint Paul write:

> Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."
>
> In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." *Mt. 26:26–28, Mk. 14:22–24, Lk. 22:19–20, 1 Cor. 11:23–25*

ASKING A BLESSING *Luther's Small Catechism*

Lord God, heavenly Father, bless us and these Your gifts which we receive from Your bountiful goodness, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

DISTRIBUTION

RETURNING THANKS *Luther's Small Catechism*

We thank You, Lord God, heavenly Father, for all Your benefits, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING

Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good.
His love endures forever. *Psalm 136:1*

The LORD *bless* and keep your coming in and going out from now on and forevermore.

The LORD *bless* and keep our coming in and going out from now on and forevermore. *Ps. 121:8*

Go in peace. **Amen.** *Luke 7:50b*

The service may end with a closing hymn.

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16 Portrait of Martin Chemnitz, half-length, turned to the left, looking at the veiwer, wearing a gown with tall collar and ruff, holding a book in his left hand; illustration to Reusner's "Icones sive imagines virorum literis illustrium". 1587, Woodcut © The Trustees of the British Museum.

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56 *The Karate Kid.* Images, fair use.

60 Ibid.

63 Ibid.

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