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CONCORDIA SEMINARY
SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

BECOMING LUTHERAN: EXPLORING THE JOURNEY OF AMERICAN
EVANGELICALS INTO CONFSSIONAL LUTHERAN THOUGHT

A MAJOR APPLIED PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY STUDIES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY
REV. MATTHEW R. RICHARD

SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

BECOMING LUTHERAN: EXPLORING THE JOURNEY OF AMERICAN
EVANGELICALS INTO CONFSSIONAL LUTHERAN THOUGHT

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PREFACE

Often jokingly I have said that I grew up as a spiritual mutt. I was baptized in the American Lutheran Church and raised in a pietistic church with revival fervor. My Father is Roman Catholic, and my Mother has roots in the American Lutheran Church and the Church of the Lutheran Brethren. Through my childhood Christian education, as well as during my college years working at an Evangelical Christian Bookstore, I developed what I've come to refer to as 'folk Lutheranism.' My folk Lutheranism was a mixture of Lutheranism and Fundamentalistic Finneyism, coated with Evangelicalism and saturated with Pietism. Needless to say, a lot of my young adult years were steeped in legalism, which led me to the constant taking of my 'spiritual temperature' to see if I loved Jesus enough. I virtually had no assurance of my salvation for I continually was looking to my own behavior to determine my standing with God.

After college, I applied to Lutheran Brethren Seminary in Fergus Falls, Minnesota (2001). While at seminary I came upon a mixture of theological positions. I encountered some very solid Lutheran teaching from the systematic professor while simultaneously being taught the theology of the Church Growth Movement by the mission and evangelism professor. Therefore, when I received a call in 2004 (right out of seminary) to go to Rancho Cucamonga, California, as an associate pastor, I was a Fundamentalistic, Finneyistic Lutheran Pastor, coated by Evangelicalism, saturated with Pietism, and driven by Church Growth Purpose.

While in California, Rob Bell's book *Velvet Elvis* and Brian McLaren's book *A Generous Orthodoxy* were released, and I embraced these too. Yes, add the Emergent Church Movement to my pastoral repertoire.

How can all these 'isms' be embraced cohesively? They can't. As much as I tried, the plethora of theologies were beginning to make up a perfect storm; that is to say, an epistemological crisis. Painfully, my folk Lutheranism began to collapse. My house of 'isms' was collapsing, and Confessional Lutheranism was fast becoming a new place to call home.

Over the next seven years I began to journey into the house of Confessional Lutheranism by extensively interacting with *The Book of Concord*. I also was impacted deeply by C.F.W. Walther's *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel* as well as Gerhard Forde's book *On Being a Theologian of the Cross: Examining Martin Luther's Heidelberg Disputation*, and Gene Edward Veith's *The Spirituality of the Cross: The Way of the First Evangelicals*. My interactions with these books proved to be interesting, to say the least. While it was rather painful experiencing the collapse of my house of 'isms,' I also came to experience the difficulty and timely work that is involved in moving into the new home of Confessional Lutheranism. I experienced struggles with my emotions, confusion over linguistics, changes to my worldview, and shifts in where I acquired Christian teaching.

As I was brought along this journey from my folk Lutheranism into Confessional Lutheran thought I happened to begin blogging. The blogging started out by simply posting journal thoughts, devotions, and pithy articles for my local congregation that I was serving at the time. However, as I blogged I began to receive a tremendous amount of positive feedback from others who had journeyed or were still on the path into Confessional Lutheranism. The

most common feedback that I received was, “Pastor Matt, you are speaking my language!”

Lo and behold, I was not alone in this journey! Others too were shedding their various 'isms' and were journeying into Confessional Lutheran thought. This led me to wonder how similar our journeys were, if there were any patterns, how long the journey was, and if others experienced epistemological, worldview, linguistic, and emotional challenges like I had.

Thus, the idea for this Major Applied Research Project was conceived.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Undertaking a project such as this obviously requires help from many individuals. Therefore, saying thank you is not something I casually say, but it is said with a deep sense of gratitude.

First of all I want to thank my family. Serenity, my beloved, you have been a wonderful support to me in this endeavor. You have listened, read, interacted, and helped me immensely in this research project. You are not only my wife and best friend, but a theologian who I truly respect. Matthias and Anya, thank you for giving of your time and being gracious to Daddy during those times when playtime had to wait just ten more minutes. Finally, I wish to thank my parents for their hospitality this past summer in allowing me to write the majority of this research paper from the comfort of my childhood home.

I want to thank my Analysis Team that helped analyze the hundreds of pages of data: T.R. Halvorson, Leif Halvorson, Kim Halvorson, Hans Halvorson, Matthew Nelson, Lori Nelson, Cheryl Peterson, Darcy Prevost, Jason Toombs, David Warner, Shelee Warner, Carl Wendorff, and Serenity Richard.

Furthermore, I want to thank Janelle Leader Lamb for her proofreading and writing help of this project. Your professionalism and editorial understanding have been most beneficial to this project, as well as to me as a writer.

Specifically, I want to thank all 334 research participants for all the time they devoted to filling out the surveys. I do understand and know that the surveys were time consuming, and I am grateful to the thorough details that you included in each of the 714 surveys.

Finally, I want to thank Dr. David Peter, Dr. Wally Becker, Dr. Gerhard H. Bode, JR., Dr. David Maxwell, and Dr. Robert Kolb. I am grateful for their oversight, mentorship, and

assistance with this Major Applied Research Project. I am especially appreciative for Dr. Kolb agreeing to be my advisor, as well as his insights, constructive criticism, and encouragements.

Sub Cruce

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this Major Applied Research Project was to examine the journey of American Evangelicals into Lutheran thought. Otherwise stated, the research project studied the emotional struggles, linguistic confusion, worldview changes, and epistemological shifts that happen during the pilgrimage between two theological traditions.

The research findings are intended to identify valuable insights and provide avenues of comfort for those who are making this transition. Furthermore, the findings of this research are intended to aid Lutheran pastors as they care for and shepherd individuals who are coming into Lutheranism from American Evangelicalism.

The primary components of this study were the surveys. Three surveys were administered to 334 different individuals who have or presently are entering Lutheran thought. In total, 714 surveys were completed by the research participants.

The surveys confirmed that there is indeed emotional struggles, linguistic challenges, worldview changes, and epistemological shifts for individuals going from American Evangelicalism into Lutheran thought. The surveys also yielded valuable sociological insights and patterns, as well as identified key areas of theological struggle for those moving from American Evangelicalism into Lutheran thought.

On the basis of this study, the researcher was able to create a catechesis tool, as well as several resources for those wanting to better understand this complex journey.

CHAPTER ONE

THE BECOMING LUTHERAN PROJECT INTRODUCED

Introduction

American Evangelicalism is struggling. Numerous books have been released over the last several years examining this struggle. For example, Michael Horton released a book in 2008 titled *Christless Christianity: The Alternative Gospel of the American Church*. In this book he states, “My argument in this book is not that evangelicalism is becoming theologically liberal but that it is becoming theologically vacuous.”¹ Professor Phillip Carey from Eastern University, a university associated with the American Baptist Churches USA, also speaks to this struggle in his new book *Good News for Anxious Christians: 10 Practical Things You Don't Have to Do*. He states:

Every era in the history of Christianity has its own dangers and failures, which include its own particular ways of distorting God's word. This book is about the distortions of time, as found in a new theology that has more or less taken over American Evangelicalism in recent years. It is a theology I don't read about in books, but hear from the lips of young people telling me why they're anxious. The words on their lips are ones you can hear in sermons and Bible studies and in TV and other media, and they make plenty of adults anxious too. They are the words of what you might call a “working theology,” which is not an academic theory but a basis for preaching and discipleship, prayer and evangelism and outreach. It's a theology that tells people how to live. It gives people practical ideas and techniques they're supposed to use to be more spiritual.²

¹ Michael Horton, *Christless Christianity: The Alternative Gospel of the American Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008), 23.

² Phillip Cary, *Good News for Anxious Christians: 10 Practical Things You Don't Have to Do* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazo Press, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2010), xvi-xvii.

In 1996 the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals released *The Cambridge Declaration*. The introduction to this document says:

Evangelical churches today are increasingly dominated by the spirit of this age rather than by the Spirit of Christ. As evangelicals, we call ourselves to repent of this sin and to recover the historic Christian faith. . . . Today the light of the Reformation has been significantly dimmed. The consequence is that the word "evangelical" has become so inclusive as to have lost its meaning. We face the peril of losing the unity it has taken centuries to achieve. Because of this crisis and because of our love of Christ, his gospel and his church, we endeavor to assert anew our commitment to the central truths of the Reformation and of historic evangelicalism. These truths we affirm not because of their role in our traditions, but because we believe that they are central to the Bible.³

I could reference numerous books that raise the same concerns over the state of American Evangelicalism; however, these three quotes summarize well the cacophony of theological warnings for our time. These concerns should not only alarm us, but they show us the increasing theological divide between American Evangelicalism and its historic Protestant roots. For the purpose of this Major Applied Research Project, I am specifically interested in what happens when individuals from American Evangelicalism find themselves leaving and journeying across a large theological chasm into conservative churches governed by the central truths of the sixteenth-century Reformation. What happens when an American Evangelical makes a transition into Confessional Lutheran thought?

Two years ago, Christian Smith, a former Evangelical, released a book titled *How to Go from Being a Good Evangelical to a Committed Catholic in Ninety-Five Difficult Steps*. In his book, he examines the difficulties that he encountered in leaving American

³ "The Cambridge Declaration of Confessing Evangelicals," 20 April 1996, <http://www.monergism.com/The%20Cambridge%20Declaration.pdf> (1 July 2013).

Evangelicalism and joining the Roman Catholic Church. More specifically, Smith's book description on Amazon.com shares the following:

American evangelicalism has recently experienced a new openness to Roman Catholicism, and many evangelicals, both famous and ordinary, have joined the Catholic Church or are considering the possibility. This book helps evangelicals who are exploring Roman Catholicism to sort out the kinds of concerns that typically come up in discerning whether to enter into the full communion of the Catholic Church. In simple language, it explains many theological misunderstandings that evangelicals often have about Roman Catholicism, and suggests the kind of practical steps many take to enter the Catholic Church. The book frames evangelicals becoming Roman Catholic as a kind of "paradigm shift" involving the buildup of anomalies about evangelicalism, a crisis of the evangelical paradigm, a paradigm revolution, and the consolidation of the new Roman Catholic paradigm. It will be useful for both evangelicals interested in pursuing and understanding Roman Catholicism and Catholic pastoral workers seeking to help evangelical seekers who come to them.⁴

From this book's summary we can see that the journey from one faith tradition to another is difficult. So difficult, in fact, that in this case there are ninety-five steps. Thus, it is important to examine if this is also true within the sphere of becoming Lutheran. Otherwise stated, what is actually going on when individuals journey out of American Evangelicalism, which has wavered from its historical Protestant heritage as asserted by some modern authors, into Confessional Lutheran thought?

The Problem Identified

How is an individual impacted when they make the shift from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheran thought? The research results from this Major Applied Research Project will show that this transition is a long, difficult, and sometimes

⁴ Amazon.com, "How to Go from Being a Good Evangelical to a Committed Catholic in Ninety-Five Difficult Steps," <http://www.amazon.com/Evangelical-Committed-Catholic-Ninety-Five-Difficult/dp/1610970330> (5 June, 2013).

daunting road. The voyage from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheranism is neither something that just happens overnight nor is it easy. Like journeying into Roman Catholicism, there may indeed be ninety-five difficult steps; however, I have decided to focus on only four dimensions. The four areas that produce challenges are the struggles with emotions, the confusions with linguistics, the changes with worldviews, and the shifts in epistemology.

These changes also present a challenge for Lutheran pastors in knowing how to minister to parishioners coming out of American Evangelicalism into their parishes. Furthermore, conversations between longstanding Lutheran pastors and Lutheran parishioners with former Evangelicals actually can produce a ‘lost in translation’ scenario. Borrowing an old cliché, it is quite possible that American Evangelicals are from Venus and Confessional Lutherans are from Mars. Words are spoken and are heard, but not completely understood in the same way.

So who are these journeying American Evangelicals? I agree with Carl R. Trueman who asserts that twenty-first-century American Evangelicalism is difficult to clearly define and study.⁵ It is difficult to study because it is often described as a large melting pot of spirituality with a wide breadth, lack of official denominational lines, and very minimal doctrinal confessions. More will be discussed on defining American Evangelicalism in Chapter Three.

Even though there is vagueness to the larger context of American Evangelicalism, the participants of this study thoroughly identified themselves. They stated that they were, on the

⁵ Carl R. Trueman, *The Real Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2011), Kindle Edition Location 109-219.

average, impacted by 3.8 different theological movements and influences. The top four movements and influences were/are: Revivalism (61%), attitudes flowing from certain streams of Pietism (60.3%), Dispensationalism (55.1%), and Fundamentalism (52.8%). Furthermore, the participants stated that before beginning the journey towards becoming Lutherans they were in American Evangelicalism for 15-30 years (49.8%). More details about the makeup of the participants will be expounded in Chapter Three and Chapter Five.

The Purpose Identified

The purpose of this Major Applied Research Project (MAP) was to first verify if there were indeed emotional struggles, linguistic challenges, worldview changes, and epistemological shifts for American Evangelicals journeying into Confessional Lutheranism. Once these struggles, challenges, changes, and shifts were verified, it then provided a platform to learn qualitatively about these categories.

More specifically, my desire in this MAP was to learn about these four dimensions of emotions, linguistics, worldviews, and epistemologies in order to:

1. Identify what common emotional struggles and/or emotional patterns emerge in individuals due to their journeys from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheran thought.
2. Identify which words provide the most significant amount of linguistic confusion to individuals in their journeys from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheran thought.
3. Identify what changes are occurring in individuals' worldviews due to their journeys from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheran thought (i.e., How did my worldview change in regard to the Christian faith, other Christians, the world, and myself?).
4. Identify what shifts are happening to individuals' epistemologies due to their journeys from American Evangelicalism into Lutheran thought (i.e., shifts in

where they acquire knowledge and shifts in material principles).

5. Identify possible patterns and common characteristics with individuals due to their journeys from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheran thought (i.e., how long the journey was, at what point did participants join a Lutheran church, etc.).

As noted above, the intention of the research was to identify valuable insights and provide avenues of comfort for those who are making this transition. Another purpose of this research was to gather information that can aid Lutheran pastors as they care for and shepherd these individuals who are coming into Lutheranism. Finally, in order to communicate the results of these findings, a series of resources and tools have been published online through various blogging venues to inform, aid, and equip both those who are making the journey to Lutheranism and the pastors/churches who are receiving these, 'Evangelicals in transition.'⁶

The Process

The first step in the process of this study was to gather research participants who are making or have made the journey from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheranism. Individuals were gathered mainly through online venues such as my personal blog,⁷ as well as other media venues such as Facebook and Twitter. Once the research participants were gathered, they were given a quantitative survey to verify some of the assumptions of this study (i.e., Do American Evangelicals journeying into Confessional Lutheran thought experience emotional struggles, linguistic confusion, worldview changes, and epistemological shifts?).

⁶ See Appendixes Two, Four, and Six.

⁷ PM Notes: www.pastormatrichard.com

After the participants completed their quantitative surveys, I organized an Analysis Team to examine the findings of the quantitative surveys. From the analyzed results I had a statistical basis for the second and third surveys, which were of a qualitative nature. Thus there were two stages of research implementation. The first stage was quantitative research and the second stage was qualitative. In both cases, the survey results were analyzed by the Analysis Team to ensure objectivity, and the results were published online through my personal blog.

The final part of the process was to use the survey findings in order to produce a series of resources and tools to inform, aid, and equip both those who are making the journey to Confessional Lutheranism and the pastors/churches who receive these journeying Evangelicals. I even was able to share the results through an online TV program hosted by Rev. Jonathan Fisk called, *Worldview Everlasting TV*.

Project Parameters

The parameters of this Major Applied Research Project were to focus on what is going on within the realms of epistemology, worldview, linguistics, and emotions in regard to the journey from American Evangelicalism to Confessional Lutheran thought. Otherwise stated, the two bookends of this study were ‘leaving Evangelicalism’ on the one side and ‘arriving within Confessional Lutheranism’ on the other side. Both Evangelicalism and Lutheranism obviously contain their own set of knowledge sources, worldviews, linguistics, and emotions, but for the sake of this study, the focus is on the 'changes' that do or do not occur as a direct result of the changeover.

Assumptions

Since the Major Applied Research Project is only focusing on the actual journey from American Evangelicalism to Confessional Lutheranism, there was a great deal of assumptions in this study in regard to both American Evangelicalism and Confessional Lutheranism.

As already stated, defining American Evangelicalism is rather difficult. In Trueman's book/essay *The Real Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, he appeals to David Bebbington, as well as his own insights, to share that Evangelicals lack an official denomination, are focused on the primacy of experience, are very minimal on doctrine, uphold conversionism, and embrace activism, that is, the living out of the Gospel. While this is a good starting definition, Trueman goes on to share that Evangelicalism has blurred boundary lines, thus making it difficult to clearly define and study it.⁸ Thus, as I attempt to define the current national-cultural form of American Evangelicalism, I do so in humility and with flexibility, knowing that my definition may be too broad in some cases and too narrow in other cases. My assumption is that my definition, which is printed in Chapter Three, is not a one-size-fits-all definition.

Besides my definition in Chapter Three, the participants of this study thoroughly identified themselves, which means that I am assuming the participants have a firm grasp on what it means to be an American Evangelical in their particular times and places. Thus, I

⁸ Trueman, *The Real Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, Kindle Edition Location 109-219.

have let their definitions paint the picture of the current national-cultural form of American Evangelicalism as well.

In regard to Confessional Lutheranism, this study did not have the time or resources to evaluate every church that former American Evangelicals are journeying into/have joined. However, there were some safety guards within the survey to eliminate individuals from the survey who did not qualify for the study criteria. Besides those who were disqualified, I am assuming that what the participants have joined and are journeying into is indeed conservative Confessional Lutheranism. When I use the term Confessional Lutheranism I believe this term to embrace the following criteria.

A Confessional Lutheran is one who:

1. believes “the Bible, including both the Old and New Testament as originally given, is the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God and is free from error in the whole and in the part”⁹ and the Bible is the only rule and norm of faith and of practice.
2. views the Lutheran Confessions as, “a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God.”¹⁰
3. holds to the following presuppositions for Lutheran exegesis:¹¹
 - a. Lutheran interpreters regard the Scriptures as the Word spoken by God Himself; they know that God is addressing them in every word of the Bible and that his talking in oral, written, and sacramental forms of His Word are performative speech.

⁹ “Church of the Lutheran Brethren Doctrinal Statement of Faith, Paragraph A,” in *We Believe: Commentary on the Statement of Faith*, Timothy Ysteboe (Fergus Falls, MN: Faith and Fellowship Press, 2009), 11.

¹⁰ *2010 Constitution and Bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation as amended by the 2010 LCMS Convention* (St. Louis, MO: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 2010), 13.

¹¹ Ralph Bohlmann, “Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Lutheran Confessions,” *Concordia Theological Monthly* (No. 1, 1966), 21.

- b. Lutheran interpreters know that God Himself must enlighten their understanding, in order for them to believe what God is saying in Holy Scripture; they read the Scriptures as one who has the Spirit and expects the Spirit.
- c. Lutheran interpreters know that in Holy Scripture, God speaks a condemnatory word (i.e., Law) and a forgiving word (i.e., Gospel)—the former for the sake of the latter; they therefore seek to distinguish rightly between the two words of God, lest the word of Gospel become a word of Law.
- d. Lutheran interpreters read the Scriptures as ones who have been justified by God's grace for Christ's sake through faith; they know that Jesus Christ is the center of all the Scripture and that justification by grace through faith is the chief doctrine of Scripture.

The final assumption of this study has to do with the growing divide occurring between American Evangelicalism and its historic Protestant tenets, as will be discussed in Chapter Three. While this study will not be examining the reasons for the growing divide, I am certainly assuming that the current ethos and status of American Evangelicalism are partly responsible for making the journey into Confessional Lutheranism difficult. Otherwise stated, the growing distance between American Evangelicalism and its historical Protestant roots may not be the primary causes of the difficult journey into Confessional Lutheran thought, but surely these distresses contribute by not making a person's pilgrimage any easier or any less confusing. The simple assumption is that the more different a background a person comes from, the more difficult the journey will be. Otherwise stated, the greater the difference in epistemic assumptions and worldviews, the greater the difficulty it will be for a person to journey into new epistemological systems and dissimilar worldview lenses.

Limitations of Study

This Major Applied Research Project was conducted through several surveys hosted by a web-based company called SurveyMonkey. The surveys consisted of questions that used a five point likert scale, as well as essay boxes for written responses from participants.

The first quantitative survey was conducted from December 11, 2012, to January 20, 2013. This survey received 340 responses, of which 33 responses were disqualified due to the survey being either fairly incomplete or not meeting the criteria of the study (i.e., from a non-North American continent, no Evangelical background, etc.). Assuming a population of 100,000 individuals who have journeyed from American Evangelicalism into Lutheran thought, 307 participant responses gives this first survey a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5.585%.

The second survey was conducted from February 9, 2013, to March 11, 2013. While the first survey captured quantitative data, this second survey attempted to provide reason, motives, and insights to the quantitative data. This survey received 252 responses, of which 28 were disqualified due to the similar reasons as the first survey, leaving 224 accepted surveys. It is also worth noting that 200 participants of the 224 also participated in the first quantitative survey (i.e., 65.15%).

The third survey was conducted from February 9, 2013, to March 11, 2013. While this third survey was also a qualitative survey, the third survey focused on questions pertaining to advice for pastors and those in the journey toward Confessional Lutheranism. This survey received 183 responses of which no one was disqualified. It is worth noting that 180 participants of the 183 also participated in the first and second surveys.

Participants for all of the surveys were gathered mainly through online venues. Table 1.1 below shows the efforts used to gather participants for all the surveys.

Internet Venue	Views	Date
PM Notes www.pastormatrichard.com	5,256 Pageviews	10/21/2012 Post to 02/12/2013 Post
White Horse Inn Blog http://www.whitehorseinn.org/blog/	2,770 Pageviews	12/03/2012 Post
Steadfast Lutherans www.steadfastlutherans.com	9,457 Pageviews	12/02/2012 Post
Cyberbrethren www.cyberbrethren.com	1,500 Est. Pageviews	12/12/2012 Post
WEtv Live www.worldvieweverlasting.com	3,000 Est. Streams	02/06/2013 Vlog
Facebook Ad www.facebook.com	26,186 Ad Reach	12/17/2012 to 01/05/2013
Misc. Facebook Group Pages Table Talk Radio, Fighting for the Faith, Confessional Lutheran Fellowship, etc.	3,000 Est. Views	10/2012 to 01/2013

As it can be seen from above, several websites and blogs helped in publicizing the study and the need for participants. I also took out advertisements on Facebook, published the need for participants on Twitter, and even sent out emails to various churches. All in all, I estimate that approximately 50,000 blog messages, posts, tweets, vlogs, emails, ads, and so forth went out to inform people of this research project. Of the 50,000 venue communications, the research project received a total of 714 surveys from 334 different individuals.

The Content of Upcoming Chapters

In Chapter Two I explore the theological foundation for this study, as well as sourcing epistemology, worldview, linguistics, and emotions within a Biblical framework.

In Chapter Three I examine the makeup of the research participants in regard to their definitions of who they are as American Evangelicals. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, I also will demonstrate the growing divide between American Evangelicalism and the tenets of the sixteenth-century Reformation according to concerned American Evangelicals such as: Mark Noll, D.A. Carson, Michael Horton, Tullian Tchividjian, and so forth. As already stated, this divide is assumed to be one of the contributing factors to the challenges of journeying into Confessional Lutheranism. Finally, I will conduct a brief literature review showing the lack of literature written on the subject of American Evangelicals journeying into Lutheran thought, thus validating the need and importance of this study.

Chapter Four will cover the research process that was conducted for this Major Applied Research Project. The fourth chapter also will examine the design of the study, the research tools used, and the implementation of the project.

Chapter Five will evaluate the findings of the research, as well as an analysis of the data in regard to the learning desires listed in the purpose section on pages five and six.

Finally, Chapter Six will contain my conclusions and a summary of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BECOMING LUTHERAN PROJECT IN THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

What is Epistemology?

Epistemology is the study of how a person obtains knowledge and how a person assesses and learns from that knowledge.¹² Epistemology “deals with questions of knowledge: What is truth? . . . How do we know? Concerns of this sort probe into the nature and validity of human knowledge.”¹³ Epistemology is important for it “presents the theory of knowing and knowledge and therefore is closely related to teaching and learning.”¹⁴ Each person’s epistemological framework can be thought of as a knowledge system that gathers data from one source or a plethora of sources. In other words, every person derives knowledge from somewhere, sources such as:

- Authority (e.g., How do I know? Because Albert Einstein told me.)
- Pragmatism (e.g., How do I know? Because I welded it up that way in my shop, tried it out in the field, and it has never failed me since.)
- Conventional wisdom (e.g., How do I know? Because nearly everyone in my community thinks so.)
- Observation (e.g., How do I know? Because I was there and saw it for myself.)
- Senses (e.g., How do I know? Because I touched it, and it felt hot, and it smelled as if something were burning.)
- Logic (e.g., How do I know? Because, since A was greater than B, and B was greater than C, I concluded that A was greater than C.)

¹² The two parts of the word Epistemology are episteme and ology. Episteme means "knowledge and understanding" and ology means "study of."

¹³ William C. Reitschel, *An Introduction to the Foundations of Lutheran Education* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 46.

¹⁴ Warren S. Benson, “Philosophical Foundations of Christian Education” in *Introducing Christian Education: Foundations for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Michael J. Anthony, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2001), 27.

- Empiricism (e.g., How do I know? Because many studies that used very large samples of the total population of people who have this disease confirm a high statistical correlation between salt intake and the aggravation of this disease.)
- Revelation (e.g., How do I know? For the Bible tells me so; or, thus saith the Lord.)

Consequently, the knowledge that we gather answers ontological questions such as the existence of God, the meaning of being human, and the nature of truth/reality.

The Need of the Word as the Quintessential Source of Knowledge

Genesis 3:9-19 is the most tragic section in the whole Bible. It talks about the fall of Adam and Eve. In the text, Eve, who could be called the first enthusiast, departs from the quintessential source of knowledge, God's Word, and eats the forbidden fruit. She believed Satan contrary to God's Word. This was the Devil's plan: to distance her from the Word. Adam, being the head of the family, should also have trusted God's Word, put Eve over his shoulder, brought her to God, confessed her sin, and said, "Now take my life." However, Adam took the fruit as well, disobeying and distancing himself from God's Word. Therefore, "since the fall of Adam, all human beings who are born in the natural way are conceived and born in sin. This means that from birth they are full of evil lust and inclination and cannot by nature possess true fear of God and true faith in God."¹⁵ Mankind, who was created in the image of God, now has an image that "is not lost, but turned to its opposite."¹⁶ Otherwise stated, because of the fall "sinners have further diminished their ability to comprehend who

¹⁵ The Augsburg Confession, Article II, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, eds. Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 37-38.

¹⁶ Gerhard Forde, *Theology is for Proclamation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 49.

God is and what his disposition toward his human creatures is.”¹⁷ Mankind’s nature is weak, his view of truth is tainted, his reason warped, his worldview blurred; mankind loves carnal things because man is bound in sin and the deception of the evil one. Therefore, in regard to the Word, we confess that the “words of Scripture are not spoken merely in order to elicit agreement of noble feelings among the hearers, but rather to form, reform, the hearers.”¹⁸

Because of mankind’s need for the Word, after the fall, God did not abandon His creation but rather “entered into conversation with his human creature immediately after they had broken off their relationship with him, and God has continued to make contact with fallen sinners in order to reveal himself to them as well.”¹⁹ Simply put, “The Word of God invades the world of sinners”²⁰ and continually functions as the only source, rule, and norm of the church’s faith and practice. The Word must invade; it must be the church’s source of knowledge and faith. For apart from the Word, the church and the world are left in despair with counterfeit and fallen sources of knowledge.²¹

¹⁷ Robert Kolb and Charles Arand, *The Genius of Luther’s Theology: A Wittenberg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2008), 144.

¹⁸ William H. Willimon, *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 113.

¹⁹ Kolb and Arand, *The Genius of Luther’s Theology: A Wittenberg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church*, 144.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ See John 15:1-ff.

The Message of the Cross in the Midst of Other Epistemological Frameworks

As already stated, the truth of God's Word is the quintessential source of knowledge for the church and world. "According to Scripture the Church has no doctrine of its own, no doctrine alongside and without Christ's Word."²² However, the Word of God is not without competition; other counterfeit sources of truth confront individuals and the church. For example, while logic, scientific method, and the tenets of rationalism do contain elements of truth, these systems have inflicted substantial consequences upon church and culture by diminishing the authoritative status of the Word. The Scriptures are even abrogated "by substituting for it the regenerate reason, or, as it is also called, pious self-consciousness, Christian experience, Christian Ego, faith consciousness, faith, spirit, etc. . . . all these sources and norms, when they are used alongside and apart from the Bible, are simply illusions."²³

In 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, the Apostle Paul discusses the message of the cross in the midst of other knowledge sources saying:

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly

²² Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics: Volume 1* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 202.

²³ *Ibid*, 200.

standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

In this text, Paul identifies three different epistemological systems; networks on which all else rested. The first is the Jewish epistemological system, the second is the Greek epistemological system, and the third is the Theology of the Cross as an epistemological system. Concerning the first two ways of thinking, Paul is saying that, "the Jews seek for 'miraculous signs,' and the Greeks seek wisdom and through these means they hope to find the answers to questions about God and life."²⁴ Otherwise stated, the Jewish way demanded external signs and wonders in order to judge whether or not a messenger was of God. They demanded and wanted tangible signs, subsequently laying forth criteria of what is truth and what is not. The Greek way held to their love of philosophy and knowledge. They held to the wisdom of the world as their epistemological system. What both of these epistemological systems have in common is that the learner/knower is ultimately in control. In both cases, knowledge and truth need to be validated by set expectations.

The third option that Paul describes is the cross of Christ. Interestingly, the cross was rejected by the Jewish *and* the Greek way of thinking. W. Harold Mare comments on this saying:

To the unsaved Jews, however, this message of a crucified Christ was a 'stumbling block,' an offense for they expected a political deliverer. To the non-Jewish world the

²⁴ W. Harold Mare, *Romans through Galatians: Volume 10*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary with the New International Version. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976), 194.

cross was ‘foolishness’—criminals died on crosses, and they could not see how the cross provided any moral philosophical standard to help them toward salvation. Furthermore, the Greeks and Romans looked on one crucified as the lowest of criminals, so how could such a one be considered a savior? From their viewpoint, the Greeks would have had difficulty in conceiving of how a god, being spirit, could become incarnate and thus provide a god-man atonement for sin.²⁵

Both the Greek and the Jewish epistemological systems, which are impacted by mankind's fall, cannot process the message of the cross. Furthermore, the message of the cross is still a stumbling block today. Robert Kolb and Charles Arand state:

God's saving and life-restoring Word causes those whose minds are trying to master life on their own terms to stumble. People are accustomed to controlling their lives and their environments by learning through signs and empirical testing or through logical and rational analysis. Such people are offended by having to learn about the most important aspects of life, God, and their relationship to him just by simply listening and receiving God's gifts. They think the cross of Christ reveals nothing but the end or absence of wisdom and power. They are wrong. Into sinful chaos and darkness, God's Word speaks the might and the prudence of his way of recreating fallen, straying human creatures in order to restore light and life.²⁶

Contrary to the competing messages of various knowledge sources, the word of the cross is the Christian's message.

The word God speaks from the cross leads them back to listening to him and taking him at his word. It permits them to acknowledge him in the midst of death and despair. This word from the cross enables them to fill in the blanks in their lives. It clings to his promise when everything else contradicts the word of his love from the cross. It enables his people to confront and describe themselves and the world around them honestly and forthrightly. The theology of the cross liberates God's children from having to construct falsehoods in order for life to make sense. The truth of the cross sets them free to speak the truth, no matter how bad it is, so that God's truth in Jesus may restore the good.²⁷

²⁵ Ibid, 195.

²⁶ Kolb and Arand, *The Genius of Luther's Theology: A Wittenberg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church*, 146.

²⁷ Ibid, 147.

The message of the cross is the Christian's source of knowledge in the midst of other sources. Keep in mind, though, that "the 'theology of the cross' does not mean that for a theologian the church year shrinks together into nothing but Good Friday. Rather, it means that Christmas, Easter and Pentecost cannot be understood without Good Friday."²⁸ Otherwise stated, "Always it is from the cross that everything is understood, because hidden in the cross is the deepest essence of God's revelation."²⁹ Thus, the Scriptures are the church's formal principle, and within the pages of the Scriptures, the message of the cross functions as the church's material principle.

Formal and Material Principle as Sources of Knowledge

Formal principle and material principle are two categories in Christian theology. It is a way to identify and distinguish the authoritative source of theology from the theology itself, especially the central doctrine of that theology, religion, religious movement, tradition, body, denomination, or organization. A formal principle tends to be texts or revered leaders of the religion, while material principle is its central teaching and central focus, as often expressed in things like sermons, Bible studies, other parishioners, etc.³⁰ These material principles often provide rules for dealing with epistemological sources.

²⁸ Hermann Sasse, *We Confess: Anthology*, trans. Norman Nagel (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 38.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 39.

³⁰ F.E. Mayer, *The Religious Bodies of America: Fourth Edition* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), *passim*.

In regard to the Major Applied Research Project, it must be noted that both the formal principle and the material principle of a church body serve as sources of knowledge to a person's epistemological system. For example, two different church denominations can hold to the Word of God as the quintessential knowledge source (i.e., formal principle), however, different epistemological systems and different worldviews can emerge due to a variance in the denominations' material principles. For instance, both Lutheranism and Methodism subscribe to the Bible as the authoritative source of their theologies. However, Lutheranism's material principle is the 'justified man,' whereas Methodism's material principle is the 'perfected man.'³¹ Consequently, the diversity in material principle within Lutheranism and Methodism bring about unique epistemic assumptions, worldviews, linguistics, emotions, and practices. Therefore, it is not enough to merely assess formal principles in regard to individuals journeying into Confessional Lutheranism, but material principles are just as influential, perhaps subtly more. As Chapter Five will show, shifts in material principles can and do lead to epistemological crises and worldview conflicts. In summary, both formal and material principles function as sources of knowledge; they are very significant.

Why Sources of Knowledge Are Significant

William Willimon shows why sources of knowledge are important when he says in his book *Shaped by the Bible*:

A Christian and a Buddhist differ, not because one is sincere and the other is not, nor because one is necessarily a 'better person' than the other. We differ because we have listened to different stories, lived our lives by different words. While there may be certain similarities among people of different religions, they will be different because

³¹ Ibid, 289.

their sacred writings are different, because they have attended to different accounts of the way the world is put together.³²

This concept is especially vital to understanding the results of this major applied research process due to the shift in knowledge sources of those who are becoming Lutheran. While individuals exist within American Evangelicalism their epistemological systems are dependent and influenced by many things—such as hymnals, worship songs, sermons, Bible studies, other parishioners, study Bibles, and other Christian books—each with their own central focus. However, when they shift into Confessional Lutheranism these sources change. The change is especially intensified due to the increasing theological divide between American Evangelicalism and its historic Protestant roots, as will be demonstrated in Chapter Three and Chapter Five.

Keep in mind that the average parishioner's epistemic assumptions are often undiagnosed; they are relatively unaware of all the sources that form and shape their epistemological frameworks. In other words, the receiving, gathering, and formation of knowledge often happen subconsciously. Even though the working out of a person's knowledge happens intuitively, it does express itself often with lasting implications. T.R. Halvorson speaks to this, saying:

Although most people have never heard of epistemology, everyone has an epistemology that usually combines several sources of knowledge or bases of knowledge, sometimes using them sort of mashed together, and other times alternating between them. This is a lack of epistemological self-consciousness: having an epistemology, but not being conscious of what it is; deciding whether I

³² William H. Willimon, *Shaped by the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990), 12.

know something, but not being conscious of how I made that decision. We could call this implicit or unself-conscious epistemology, as opposed to explicit epistemology.³³

Therefore, epistemology matters because “knowledge systems are embedded in worldviews. . . . feelings are manifested through material objects and behavioral patterns, which are often shaped by people’s worldviews.”³⁴ Like falling dominos, sources of knowledge and their messages have drastic consequences upon worldviews, linguistics, and emotions. The four dimensions of epistemology, worldview, linguistics, and emotions are therefore interconnected.

Worldviews, a Result of Epistemology

A worldview is a person’s perception of reality. In other words, each person views the world through a particular lens. These lenses “are deep, they are generally unexamined and largely implicit. Like glasses, they shape how we see the world, but we are rarely aware of their presence. In fact, others can often see them better than we ourselves do.”³⁵ According to Paul Hiebert, our worldviews provide us with “mental models of deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or pictures and images that shape how we understand the world and how we take action.”³⁶ I have heard it said that worldviews provide ‘maps’ of how we view reality and life.

³³ T.R. Halvorson, personal e-mail message to author, (27 July 2012).

³⁴ Paul G. Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, a division of Baker Publishing Group, 2008), 85.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 46.

³⁶ *Ibid*.

How Are Worldviews and Epistemologies Related?

People's epistemological frameworks 'form' their worldview and their worldviews 'inform' their epistemological frameworks. They both are connected, intertwined, and create what is called 'circularity.' In other words, the knowledge system forms the lens and the lens processes and delivers knowledge back to the system. Around and around they go, working together.³⁷

A person's epistemological framework lies at the foundation of the person, followed by a person's worldview. As previously stated, they 'form' and 'inform' each other in a circular fashion. As an outpouring of this circular relationship, manifested feelings, values, linguistics, and practices emerge from the person's worldview. Therefore, what we see on the surface is a person's behavioral patterns, values, practices, and feelings that are shaped from a worldview that is formed by one's epistemological system. The reason why this is important to understand is that behind a person's feelings, practices, and behaviors always lays another two layers.³⁸

Worldview Collisions

What happens when two individuals with two opposing worldviews interact? This may happen when an American Evangelical encounters different material principles in the

³⁷ Alasdair MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science," in *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1989), 140.

³⁸ Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*, 85.

preaching and teaching of a Confessional Lutheran pastor and/or congregation. Hiebert answers this, saying:

We are similarly largely unaware of our own worldview and how it shapes our thoughts and actions. We simply assume that the world is the way we see it, and that others see it in the same way. We become conscious of our worldviews when they are challenged by outside events they cannot explain.³⁹

Until people's worldviews are held up in comparison with others', they are relatively unaware of their own points of view. The interaction with an opposing perspective of reality causes the people to self-reflect on their own lenses making them attentive to their own points of view. Take, for instance, Jesus interacting with the crowds in John 6. The day after Jesus miraculously multiplied fish and bread, the people in the crowds came again to Jesus seeking more miraculous gifts of multiplied fish and bread—not Jesus, the bread of life. As a result, a worldview conflict happened as Jesus confronted those who were seeking a mere bread king and not the bread of life. He challenged the way that they perceived Him, saying, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.”⁴⁰ Jesus was exposing their faulted worldviews in relationship to Him.

When these worldviews are challenged by events and situations that are too difficult to comprehend, great anxiety can come forth. Hiebert comments on this, saying:

To question worldviews is to challenge the very foundations of life, and people resist such challenges with deep emotional reactions. There are few human fears greater

³⁹ Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*, 47.

⁴⁰ John 6:26 (ESV).

than a loss of a sense of order and meaning. People are willing to die for their beliefs if these beliefs make their deaths meaningful.⁴¹

In general, worldview conflicts do and should happen in individuals regardless of whether or not they are transitioning into a new denomination. As parishioners interact with each other, there will be point-of-view collisions. Furthermore, as a pastor faithfully preaches the Scriptures and applies the Word to the flock, he will be laying forth a particular way of viewing the world that has been shaped by the truths of the Scriptures. The grand meta-narrative of the Scriptures will form the parish continually, as well as the pastor's own worldview. Therefore, we should not be surprised when the Scriptures conflict with assumptions in the church, due to worldviews that have not been formed solely by the Bible. As previously stated, many times worldviews of parishioners are formed by the Scriptures 'and' a variety of other influences in life, such as personal experiences, cultural norms, the media, traditions, folk Christian theology, and so forth.

Defending a Worldview

When a person's worldview is confronted, especially in the case of an American Evangelical interacting with the Confessional Lutheran thought, one should not be surprised when a person's defenses are raised immediately. As shared by Hiebert, there will be deep emotional reactions when a person is confronted. Furthermore, Hiebert shares that there will be long-lasting and powerful themes in place to reinforce a person's worldview when conflict arises. The themes will act as a defense mechanism, defending and reinforcing a person's

⁴¹ Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*, 85.

particular point of view.⁴² Therefore, in the case of an American Evangelical struggling through the journey into Confessional Lutheranism, one should not be surprised when the tenets and material principles of Lutheranism are resisted; minimized and rationalized away, or even reinterpreted to fit into the parishioner's own longstanding worldview. The tension must be resolved for the parishioner. These themes must reinforce and comfort the parishioner, affirming that the person's current American Evangelical worldview is sufficient and accurate.

The Result of Worldview Conflict: Questioning the Epistemological System

If people's worldviews cannot be defended through their own powerful themes, and if the opposing reforming perspective cannot be rationalized away, then the conflict will force the people to examine their epistemological systems that lie beneath their long-held worldviews.

Keep in mind that a worldview is formed by the epistemological knowledge system. Therefore, when the worldview is challenged, the next logical step is to investigate the system and the source of knowledge from which it flows. Commenting on how worldview conflicts cause us to go back and rethink our epistemologies, I believe William Willimon summarizes it best:

Christian thought is a collision with the world's epistemologies, a challenge to worldly ways of making sense. Once we have said something such as, 'Jesus is Lord,' or 'The church is God's answer to what is wrong with the world,' or 'The Bible is truthful in a way that, say, the United States Constitution is not,' then we must go

⁴² Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*, 59.

back and rethink much that we have taken for granted. This is the task of all teaching that is Christian.⁴⁴

Indeed, a person can muddle on through life without a consistent, harmonious, and united epistemological framework due to justifications often subconsciously being enacted to neutralize the co-existence of conflicting sources of truth. Thus, taking time to think about conflicting sources of knowledge does not always happen and probably is always, at least more often than not, provoked by a worldview crisis, which then leads to another crisis: a crisis of epistemology.

The Epistemological Crisis

As previously mentioned, if there is a conflict over worldviews and the powerful themes imbedded within those worldviews cannot defend them, the conflict will bleed back into the realm of epistemology, where knowledge and its source will be questioned. Most likely, what one will find behind opposing worldviews are opposing epistemological systems and opposing sources of knowledge. The clash between the two creates an epistemological crisis. John Wright shares with us that an epistemological crisis occurs when

a person's narrative account is no longer an adequate account for the data at hand. . . . The collapse of a previously held narrative brings with it a new and often awkward self-consciousness and vulnerability . . . An epistemological crisis grants a self-knowledge that otherwise would escape our own understanding of ourself. As in tragedy, we stand exposed in front of new data. The new data interrogates us.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Willimon, *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry*, 220.

⁴⁵ John Wright, *Telling God's Story: Narrative Preaching for Christian Formation* (Intervarsity Press: IVP Academic, 2007), 41.

From personal experience, I can attest that worldview conflicts are uncomfortable, however, an epistemological crisis can be paralyzing. Wright states, “The pain of an epistemological crisis, while ultimately helpful, initially sends shock waves through individuals and congregations.”⁴⁶

Essentially what is at stake in an epistemological crisis is the assessment and comparison of two or more different and competing sources of knowledge (i.e., American Evangelicalism’s knowledge sources competing with Confessional Lutheranism’s knowledge sources). These different sources of knowledge yield different assumptions that yield different worldviews that will yield different behavioral patterns and feelings. Thus, it is evident the profound impact and far-reaching scope of this crisis.

Looking back to John 6, after the worldview conflict occurred between Jesus and the people, it is interesting to see that the people began to question Jesus. In this text it can be observed that the people are trying to make sense of the worldview collision. Their questions, though, did not result in a successful worldview defense but resulted in Jesus injecting divine truths into their epistemological system. This not only resulted in their worldviews being exposed as erroneous, but it also resulted in an epistemological crisis where the people grumbled about Jesus and His teachings. Their grumbling eventually led to the beginning of their epistemological defense, where they questioned Jesus Himself: “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’”⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Ibid, 43.

⁴⁷ John 6:42 (ESV).

Epistemological Defense

When American Evangelicals are listening to, reading, and interacting with Confessional Lutheranism, they are continually introducing new knowledge and different material principles from Lutheran sources into their epistemological systems. As previously stated, this continually will bring about an epistemological crisis, as it logically should. In simple terms, the introduction of Lutheranism will contend with other sources of knowledge gathered by the individuals, resulting in this individual facing a crossroad. According to Alasdair MacIntyre, the “conflict tests the resources of each contending tradition.”⁴⁸

Because it is difficult for a parishioner to live within the ongoing tension of an epistemological crisis, the crisis will have to be solved or neutralized. What can and often does happen is that individuals will compartmentalize their longstanding knowledge in such a way to remove it from the conflict. This epistemological defense is a way that allows an individual’s current knowledge and tradition to be free from being challenged or found to be in conflict with the reintroduced statement of faith.⁴⁹ Like the defense that happens with

⁴⁸ MacIntyre, “Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science,” 147.

⁴⁹ The motives behind an epistemological defense tactic can vary from paralyzing fear over the potential loss of one’s source of truth to the sinful nature simply opposing God’s revealed Word. Also pride and self-investment can prevent individuals from being receptive to God’s Word. In other words, too much might be at stake for the individual to accept the new knowledge. The new Biblical knowledge would unravel and expose years of behavioral actions that were a result of a faulty worldview and a faulty knowledge source. The cost is simply too much.

one's worldview, this epistemological defense accomplishes the same results by preventing the necessary epistemological crisis from happening.⁵⁰

If American Evangelicals cannot compartmentalize their longstanding epistemic assumptions, tragically they will do several things to defend their epistemological system and worldview. The first option is that they may disregard Confessional Lutheranism and return to their American Evangelical congregations so that their epistemological system and worldview can be in harmony once again. By disregarding Confessional Lutheranism or giving up on the journey into Lutheranism, they eliminate the epistemological crisis, worldview tension, and cognitive dissonance. The second option is that they may attempt to confront the invading knowledge/message by trying to persuade the pastor and leaders to change the message proclaimed in their Lutheran church, in order to reduce the epistemological crisis, worldview tension, and cognitive dissonance. Rather than leave Confessional Lutheranism, the person attempts to change the message so that the tension can be eliminated or reduced.

John 6 and Luke 4 capture the most serious of epistemological defenses, the rejection of Jesus Christ. While the rejection of Jesus is not what is happening, generally speaking, with American Evangelicals who find themselves becoming Lutheran and then turn back to American Evangelicalism, it is worth noting these two Biblical examples of an epistemological defense.

John 6 is the less intense example of an epistemological defense that entails the disciples only leaving Jesus. After hearing further teachings from Jesus and continual

⁵⁰ Ibid.

grumbling, verse sixty states, “When many of the disciples heard it, they said, ‘This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?’” Then verse sixty-six states, “After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.” Therefore, John, chapter six, is an example of an epistemological defense where the individuals disregard Jesus and leave him, which then eliminates their epistemological crises, worldview tensions, and cognitive dissonances.

Luke 4 on the other hand, is a much more intense epistemological defense. In verses sixteen and following it states that Jesus is in Nazareth on the Sabbath reading Scripture to the synagogue assembly. In applying the Scriptures, He showed the people that they could not put God’s grace into their debt. He essentially declared that God’s grace was not and is not dispensed due to nationality, religious heritage, ethnic heritage, cultural values, pious actions, sincerity, repentance, and so forth. As a result, “When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff.”⁵¹ In this second example of an epistemological defense, the synagogue did not disregard or leave Jesus, as was the case in John 6. Rather, the synagogue confronted the invading message by attempting to eliminate the message (i.e., murder Jesus), in order to reduce the epistemological crisis, worldview tension, and cognitive dissonance that they had encountered.

While both of these Biblical examples are regrettable, as we consider those who rejected Christ, they are indeed examples of groups of people attempting to bring about resolution, even though their solutions were not favorable from a Christian perspective. The

⁵¹ Luke 4:28-29 (ESV)

following section, though, will cover epistemological resolution from a positive perspective, as an individual transitions into a new epistemological system.

Epistemological Transition and Resolution

If the knowledge and message of Confessional Lutheranism deconstructs and overrides the established epistemological framework of an American Evangelical, then that individual will experience what is called an epistemological transition. MacIntyre states that the person's "narrative will be brought to a point at which questions are thrust upon the narrator which make it impossible for him to continue to use it as an instrument of interpretation." In other words, the tenets of the new knowledge source and system will make it impossible for the person to depend on the previous knowledge source and system. As a result, the previous sources of knowledge are rejected and the new sources of knowledge are received as the new authoritative source, which results in a change to the individual's worldview, behavior structure, values, and feelings. Like falling dominos, the epistemological transition from American Evangelical teaching into Lutheran thought, brought about by proclamation of the Word, truly impacts all aspects of the person's life.

After the epistemological transition has occurred, resolution takes place. MacIntyre comments on how this epistemological crisis is resolved. He states that the new information must enable "the agent to understand both how he or she could intelligibly have held his or her original beliefs and how he or she could have been so drastically misled by them."⁵²

Within epistemological resolution, the individual then processes the old knowledge and its

⁵² MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science," 140-141.

source in light of the new knowledge and his new worldview. During the crisis, the person did not experience a comprehensive equilibrium where there was rest and continuity between the sources of his knowledge, his framework, his worldview, and his behavioral patterns. In this epistemological resolution stage he now experiences symmetry, which then allows him to reflect upon the path that lies behind and the errors that were believed. As reflection happens, a wide variety of emotions may emerge, such as regret over the old system, anger about believing old knowledge, embarrassment over possible naivety, relief that the crisis is over, joy with a new perspective, and excitement over seeing things from a fresh perspective.⁵³

Two Biblical examples of epistemological transition and resolution are the life of Paul and specifically his encounter with the people of Athens in Acts 17.

As we read of the life of Paul, it is apparent that a radical epistemological transition occurred as he literally journeyed via the Damascus Road from his life in Judaism into his

⁵³ There is a colloquial term used by Calvinist Christians called 'The Cage Stage.' In this stage, Calvinists contend that due to a person's intense epistemological zeal (i.e., zeal resulting from the epistemological transition from Arminianism to Calvinism), the best place for them is in a cage. Reformed Baptist James White comments on this saying, "I've seen it many times. The Cage Stage. A believer's eyes are opened to the majesty of God as the sovereign King of the universe, and their entire life is turned upside down. And for a while, they have more zeal than they have knowledge. We call it the "cage stage." That period in the experience of the new Calvinist where they would be better off kept in a cage until they can gain enough maturity to handle these vitally important topics aright. That time when they are more likely to hurt themselves, and others! You know, when they are all running around smacking someone upside the head with Pink's The Sovereignty of God?" James White, "How to Avoid Cage-stage-it is," 13 September 2007, <http://www.aomin.org/aoblog/index.php?itemid=2269&catid=4> (3 July 2013).

life under Christ. Paul's resolve in being a Christian comes forth zealously as he continually compares and contrasts his life under Judaism with his life under Christ in his writings.⁵⁴

Another example of an epistemological transition is the Apostle Paul's encounter with the Athenians in Acts 17:22. While in front of the Areopagus, Paul attempted to shift the Athenians' morally insignificant narrative to a morally significant narrative. In doing so, he laid forth a platform to talk about God's judgment and the resurrection of the dead. As a result, an epistemological defense occurred among the Athenians. Some people scoffed at him; the beginnings of epistemological transition occurred for others who said, "We will hear you again about this."⁵⁵

The Implications of Epistemology and Worldview upon Linguistics

Words communicate; they deliver information, express feelings, inspire others, give guiding protection, teach, and so forth. It is amazing that "mere puffs of wind should allow men to discover what they think and feel, to share their attitudes and plans, to anticipate the future and learn from the past, and to create lasting works of art."⁵⁶

Indeed words are not mere puffs of wind or sheer sounds with vacuous meaning, but rather they

exercise a wholesome power over our souls, not to control and coerce but to form and to teach, to bring our lives to the point where we may speak the truth and thereby engage in the work of thought. And if our souls are shaped by words, then words can

⁵⁴ See Philippians 2:6-16.

⁵⁵ Acts 17:32 (ESV).

⁵⁶ Eugene H. Peterson, "First Language," *Theology Today* 42 (July 1985): 221.

give adequate expression to what is in them. Indeed, words are just the thing we need to be human, creatures made in the image of God who speaks the truth.⁵⁷

This wholesome power of external words is especially realized with respect to the Word of God, for God's Word "is not a unidimensional, flat, interior, intellectual word. It is a dynamic, eventful Word that goes forth from God into the real world with powerful effects."⁵⁸ God's word is effectual; God's Word makes all things out of nothing; the Word is alive and active.⁵⁹ The Word of God is "energized by the Holy Spirit."⁶⁰ Yes indeed, "all words are eventful, only the Word of God is fully creative and powerful. The Word of God is theologically eventful because in it God is a work doing what only He can do."⁶¹

Besides giving shape and meaning, words also express a person's reason within a specific cultural context. They express truth claims and are manifested signs of people exercising their own reason.⁶² Thus, words communicate more than descriptive information; they are declarative. Robert Sokolowski comments on the declarative use of speech saying:

it captures and expresses me, the rational agent, right in the actual exercise of my reason. It is time-specific and indexical. It is a kind of pinnacle in the manifestation of the person, the person at work here and now. It exhibits me exercising my power to be truthful. . . . Declarative speech gives us the primary intuition of the personal in its

⁵⁷ Phillip Cary, *Outward Signs: The Powerlessness of External Things in Augustine's Thought* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), xii.

⁵⁸ Jacob A. O. Preus, *Just Words: Understanding the Fullness of the Gospel* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 17.

⁵⁹ See Romans 10:17 and Hebrews 4:12.

⁶⁰ Preus, *Just Words: Understanding the Fullness of the Gospel*, 18.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Robert Sokolowski, *Phenomenology of the Human Person* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 13.

actual presence, the rational in its actual exercise, and the original distinction of the person from his context.⁶³

As stated by Sokolowski, words are manifestations of a person's reason. Reason, though, is embedded in a particular worldview and sourced from particular knowledge sources. So words are not independent or autonomous, but have layers of depth behind them and in them. For example, the Word of God is not only effectual, but it also supplies meaning to the Christian's use and implementation of words. Otherwise stated, Biblical words are encoded with meaning. Both the origin of Biblical words and the meaning attached to these words are derived from the Scriptures, accordingly forming the Christian's Biblical semantic package. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit, through the Word, converts the Christian's syntax by training him how to talk about God, himself, and his neighbor.⁶⁴

All of this is important to understand because if a person's epistemological source changes or slightly yields to a different epistemology, the person's epistemic assumptions will change as well. This alters the framework from which language manifests itself. Otherwise specified, encroaching foreign epistemological sources will impact the semantics of words, which then impacts the syntax of sentences, which then impacts the meaning of sentences, and so forth.

Different worldviews and epistemologies are also important to note in respect to receiving and interpreting words. As already stated, both the origin of Biblical words and the meaning attached to these words are derived from the Scriptures, accordingly forming a

⁶³ Ibid, 15.

⁶⁴ Eugene Peterson, *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools for Prayer* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1989), 42-43.

person's Biblical semantic package. However, a person who adheres or gives way to non-Biblical knowledge sources will advertently/inadvertently use un-Biblical semantic assumptions to decode Biblical words, hence yielding/interpreting different word meanings. Otherwise stated, these different semantic presuppositions in essence will change the meaning of a received Biblical message by recoding various Biblical words with the listener's own meanings. This semantic reconfiguration has far reaching implications into the realms of syntax, sentence meaning, and so forth.⁶⁵

Besides semantic reconfiguration, the message of the Bible also may be susceptible to inferences that come about due to a hearer's supplemental context. Hearers have networks of information, backgrounds of information, and specific contexts of time and place that they utilize in understanding incoming messages from others.⁶⁶ Rather than interpreting a Biblical message according to its own semantics, syntax, time, place, and context, a person may regrettably absorb the Biblical message into his own context (i.e., what does this text mean to me, rather than what is this text saying). This will result in a change of the original meaning of the message, which then leads the person to "infer something neither explicitly stated nor necessarily implied."⁶⁷

These examples are most evident in the linguistic confusion that comes about as American Evangelicals encounter words from Confessional Lutheranism, as well as when

⁶⁵ John Searle, "Philosophy of Language: Lecture 6," [n.d.], video clip, accessed 14 July 2013, YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbwAzu8k76c>.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ W.F. Brewer, "Memory for the Pragmatic Implications of Sentences," *Memory and Cognition* 27 (1977): 673.

American Evangelicals shift from particular Evangelical sources of knowledge to particular Confessional Lutheran sources of knowledge. I will delve into this topic more comprehensively with research examples in Chapter Five.

The Implications of Epistemology and Worldview upon Emotions

The last dimension that needs to be addressed is that of emotions. Like linguistics, emotions flow out of and from a person's epistemological framework and worldview. While emotions are governed by a person's epistemological framework and worldview, emotions are also manifestations of a person's particular epistemological framework and worldview within or in connection to diverging sources of knowledge and worldviews. Hiebert states, "On the surface, feelings are manifested through material objects and behavioral patterns, which are often shaped by people's worldviews."⁶⁸ Generally speaking, emotions will trend negatively in the event of cognitive dissonance and dissymmetry, and they will trend positively in the event of cognitive harmony and symmetry. While negative feelings may result due to a worldview or epistemological crisis, one needs to guard from assuming that the negative feelings are evidence that the crisis is bad. Conversely, positive feelings in connection with various foreign messages and worldviews does not constitute that the foreign messages and worldviews are indeed whole and true. Simply put, feelings are not always a good standard for judging sin, righteousness, and truth. If they were a valid standard, the world would fall hostage to moral relativism, where everybody's individual feelings would constitute what is right and what is wrong.

⁶⁸ Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*, 85.

The Scriptures are full of emotions, such as joy, trust, fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, anger, and anticipation.⁶⁹ Many of these emotions come forth within the Biblical narratives when either positive or negative interaction happens between Biblical characters. However, there are other times when specific Biblical truths and revelations from God invade the person's epistemological system and worldview, which results in the outpouring of emotions. Several examples include, but are not limited to: the rich young man going away grieving after Jesus called Him to sell all that he had and follow Him in Matthew 19; the high priest tearing his cloak after hearing Jesus confess that He was the Messiah in Matthew 26; and Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome fleeing the empty tomb with terror and amazement following the message of the young man dressed in a white robe in Mark 16.

The emotional patterns of those becoming Lutheran need to be studied. While emotions are indeed manifestations of a much deeper framework, these manifestations will draw attention to areas of importance to be further studied, areas where epistemological shifts and worldview changes may be occurring. In Chapter Five of this manuscript I will investigate emotional trends of those who are making the shift into Lutheran thought.

Conclusion

The message of the cross, God's Word, is the source of knowledge for the Christian. As the Word of God establishes the Christian's epistemological system and worldview, language will be formed as well. As will be demonstrated in Chapter Three, American Evangelicals have very different material principles than those in Confessional Lutheranism.

⁶⁹ Robert Plutchik, "The Nature of Emotions," July-August 2001, <http://web.archive.org/web/20010818040222/http://americanscientist.org/articles/01articles/plutchikcap6.html> (4 July 2013).

Furthermore, as evidenced by several current concerned theologians and authors, American Evangelicalism also has drifted from its Protestant historical roots and even embraced alternative concerning knowledge sources.

The research evaluation in Chapter Five will reveal that twenty-first-century American Evangelicals becoming Confessional Lutherans indeed are experiencing drastic epistemological shifts, worldview changes, linguistic confusions, and emotional struggles as a result of the chasm between their current sources of knowledge and the sixteenth-century Reformation truths.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BECOMING LUTHERAN PROJECT IN THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The field research that was conducted for this Major Applied Research Project obviously was not conducted in a vacuum. It has three major contexts: American Evangelicalism, Confessional Lutheranism, and the voyage between them. As previously stated, this study is interested in the developments and changes that occur when individuals journey between these two positions. As a part of my assumptions for this MAP, Confessional Lutheranism is fairly definable: being anchored in the Scriptures, The Book of Concord, and the Lutheran exegesis presuppositions listed on pages 9-10. On the other hand, American Evangelicalism is a bit more difficult to precisely define. Due to this ambiguity, it is most necessary to attempt to expound on American Evangelicalism's doctrine, roots, and ethos.

Attempting to Define American Evangelicalism

Harold L. Senkbeil's Definition

In his book, *Sanctification: Christ in Action*, Harold Senkbeil attempts to define Evangelicalism by appealing to the analogy of various streams converging into a large river. I believe that the analogy is most fitting. More specifically, after streams come together, it is virtually impossible to separate the different waters, which means that the only way to begin to assess the makeup of the river is to move backwards in history to examine the streams. Thus, it is the same with American Evangelicalism.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Harold L. Senkbeil, *Sanctification: Christ in Action* (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2005), 19-20.

In assessing the various streams that make up American Evangelicalism, Senkbeil identifies four streams. They are: the New England Calvinists, the Arminian Revivalists, the European Pietists, and the Fundamentalistic/Modernist Controversy. While expounding on each of these streams could yield four distinct doctoral dissertations, it is not completely beneficial to exhaustively do so. Keep in mind that for the purpose of this study I am not interested in ‘isolated’ separate streams but in the river’s maquillage. Otherwise stated, I am not interested in each quarantined stream but what happens when they converge. While respecting the convergence of the streams into the river, Senkbeil offers an assessment of the river (i.e., Evangelicalism) saying, “We have now completed our expedition in to the historical background of modern Evangelicalism. Though selective, our stops along the way have shown one consistent theme: all of the movements which have led to modern Evangelicalism have focused on the renewed Christian life.”⁷¹ Therefore, according to Senkbeil these four streams bring forth a focus within American Evangelicalism of the renewed Christian life. While there is obviously much more to say about these four streams, this consistent, overarching theme of the ‘renewed life’ will suffice for the time being.

⁷¹ Ibid, 52. Senkbeil goes on to say that there are also soteriological differences between Lutheranism and Evangelicalism saying, “Lutherans and Evangelicals may share a common respect for the authority of the Word of God and a common vocabulary in the proclamation of Christ’s atoning work, but they each breathe a different atmosphere. Like Luther and Zwingli before them, they may shake hands but must unhappily conclude that they have a ‘different spirit.’ The differences are not incidental to, but rather integral to the gospel: Is salvation God’s action or the believer’s? That has been the basic issue all along. It continues to be.”

R.C. Sproul and Michael Horton's Definition

Two popular and respected Calvinist theologians in America, R.C. Sproul and Michael Horton, have defined American Evangelicalism not by the influences of a movement but by a man, a man named Charles Finney. Sproul states that Finney could be classified as “the patron saint of 20th century Evangelicalism; a Hall of Famer for Evangelical Christianity in America.”⁷² Horton states that Finney is “the tallest marker in the shift from Reformation orthodoxy, evident in the Great Awakening (under Edwards and Whitefield) to Arminian (indeed, even Pelagian) revivalism, evident from the Second Great Awakening to the present.”⁷³

Even though Finney lived during the nineteenth-century Second Great Awakening, his influence in the twentieth-century was still recognized. He was warmly accepted among Evangelicals and Evangelical institutions such as: Billy Graham, Jerry Falwell, Wheaton College, Promise Keepers, the Vineyard Movement, and so forth.⁷⁴ While Finney can be commended for his evangelistic fervor, there is a disturbing theological legacy that remains in his absence. For example, both Horton and Sproul referencing Finney's theological works shows that Finney denied the doctrine of original sin, denied Christ's imputed righteousness, and purported what can only be classified as Pelagian theology. Furthermore, with this man-

⁷² R.C. Sproul, “The Pelagian Captivity of the Church”
<http://webzoom.freewebs.com/pastormatrichard/The%20Pelagian%20Captivity%20of%20the%20Church.pdf> (19 June 2012).

⁷³ Michael Horton, “The Disturbing Legacy of Charles Finney”
<http://pastormatrichard.webs.com/Disturbing%20Legacy%20of%20Fenney.pdf> (4 August 2013).

⁷⁴ Ibid.

centered theological and practical disposition Finney, emphasized Christian perfectionism through moralism, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He introduced many new measures within the revival ethos of the nineteenth-century, inventions such as the anxious bench and altar calls. The obvious impact of Finney's theology was that the spiritual condition of mankind was elevated due to: sin being downplayed, the means of grace being replaced with new measures, and the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion being exchanged for the workings of mankind's will, as well as an increased influence of Christian perfectionism.

As stated in the previous section, the purpose of this historical overview is not to exhaustively study isolated streams that flow into American Evangelicalism, but to understand the river's maquillage in the twenty-first-century. Thus, what elements are carried forth from the stream of Finneyism into the current river of American Evangelicalism? According to both Horton and Sproul, Finney's Pelagianism is definitely something permeating in the current waters of American Evangelicalism. While a full-fledged Pelagianism is certainly not fully embraced by all American Evangelicals, Sproul asserts that the semi-Pelagian view of free will is especially prevalent.⁷⁵ Horton adds to the semi-Pelagian free-will concerns by asserting that Finney's perfectionistic theology, as well as his pragmatism, have infiltrated certain aspects of American Evangelicalism. Otherwise stated, Finney puts forth a 'gospel that works,' a pragmatic gospel that is malleable to contemporary perfectionistic movements and the Church Growth Movements.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Sproul, "The Pelagian Captivity of the Church."

⁷⁶ Horton, "The Disturbing Legacy of Charles Finney."

Phillip Cary's Definition

In attempting to define American Evangelicalism thus far, the character of the river consists of five tributaries. While these tributaries certainly have some overlap, they each bring a different aspect to American Evangelicalism as a whole. While there is a danger of allowing the definition of American Evangelicalism to get too broad, I believe it is necessary to address several more movements that have been influential in shaping American Evangelicalism as it is known today.

In my personal visits with Dr. Phillip Cary he has suggested that a major characteristic within what he calls 'New Evangelicalism,' a term to be explored later, comes forth from the Keswick movement. According to Cary, in the course of the interaction between the nineteenth-century American Revivalism and the holiness tradition growing out of Methodist perfectionism, "you get the crucial innovation of the doctrine of the 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' or 'being filled with the Spirit,' which fed into Pentecostalism, as well as Keswick and various offshoots of the Holiness movement like the Nazarenes."⁷⁷ In regard to Keswick theology though, this theology promoted higher life theology or what is commonly known as the second blessing. Keswick theology tried to answer the problem of sin with what is frequently called the second blessing but steered away from the perfectionism of the American Holiness teaching often found among the Methodists.⁷⁸ Even though it originated in Britain, it was brought to the United States and promoted by D.L. Moody.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Phillip Cary, Facebook message to author (18 June 2012).

⁷⁸ George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: New Edition* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 77-78.

Practically speaking, what this looked like was a two-tiered Christianity. The first stage could be classified as a ‘carnal Christianity,’ and the second stage could be classified as ‘spiritual Christianity.’ “To move from the lower to the higher state takes a definite act of faith or ‘consecration,’ the prerequisite to being filled with the Spirit. This consecration means an ‘absolute surrender,’ almost always described by the Biblical term ‘yielding.’”⁸⁰ Thus the main idea is a movement from the Christian’s original conversion experience to receive a second experience within the realm of living the Christian life. Keswick theology is best explained in the following illustration.

Our sinful nature is like an uninflated balloon with a cart (the weight of sin) attached. Christ fills the balloon and the resulting buoyancy overcomes the natural gravity of our sin. While Christ fills our lives we do not have a *tendency* to sin, yet we still are *liable* to sin. Were we to let Christ out of our lives, sin would immediately take over.⁸¹

The resulting material principle of Keswick theology is the pressure to yield, surrender, and/or empty oneself to God in order that one can be filled. This filling would then free the Christian from committing any known sin and certainly would eliminate any excuses for tolerating sin.

With the addition of the Keswick Movement, the Evangelical river now has six contributing streams. It is my intention to add one more stream to this river before a comprehensive assessment of the whole river is conducted.

⁷⁹ Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1987), 104-106.

⁸⁰ Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: New Edition*, 78.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

Jonathan Fisk's Definition

One of the privileges of this study was the opportunity to present the research results to a wide audience of interested people. Two such opportunities were the two Google Hangout interviews that I had with Rev. Jonathan Fisk, the author of the book *Broken* and the host of the Worldview Everlasting vlog. During both of my interviews on WEtv, Rev. Fisk made the observation that present-day American Evangelicalism is effectively eighteenth-to nineteenth-century Wesley-Methodism with a strong emphasis of Baptist theology of baptism, along with premillennial dispensationalism.⁸² Otherwise stated, the tenets of Methodism in regard to its soteriology, evangelistic methods, and emphasis on holiness provide a picture of American Evangelicalism. However, this is an incomplete assessment of Evangelicalism. Therefore, in order to accurately reflect American Evangelicalism, Methodism's view of baptism and Methodism's view of the end times need to be replaced with a Baptist view of baptism and premillennial dispensationalism.⁸³

Using Fisk's definition, two more aspects are gleaned that help in describing American Evangelicalism. The two aspects are American Evangelicalism's disregard for and struggle with the Lutheran view of the sacraments, as well as the embracement of premillennial dispensationalism. I suppose it could be argued that a disregard for and a struggle with the Lutheran sacraments should not be listed as a separate tributary due to this

⁸² Jonathan Fisk "WEtv Live – Becoming Lutheran, part Deux – With Matt Richard," Youtube video, 5:29, posted by "Jonathan Fisk," 15 May 2013, <http://youtu.be/HXHkFlrrp6U>.

⁸³ Jonathan Fisk "WEtv Live: Becoming Lutheran, with special guest Pastor Matt Richard," Youtube video, 14:06, posted by "Jonathan Fisk," 6 February 2013, <http://youtu.be/Km5OeBKpLXQ>.

disregard and struggle already being present in certain strains of Calvinism⁸⁴ and Pietism.⁸⁵ In other words, it could be argued that Senkbeil's identification of Calvinism and Pietism as streams already assumes aloofness for the Lutheran view of the sacraments within American Evangelicalism. However, I believe Fisk's assessment of American Evangelicalism's disregard and struggle of the Lutheran sacraments is certainly worth highlighting at this time, especially since it is a major theme prevalent in much of the research data that will be expounded in later chapters. Thus, the disregard and struggle with the sacraments shall not be considered a separate stream, but simply an important aspect of the river that needs recognition.

In regard to dispensationalism, this ideology can be listed as a stream due to it being a rather substantial movement in the United States, dating all the way back to John Nelson Darby in the nineteenth century. It is currently very prevalent in Pentecostal theology and has a prominent place within American Evangelicalism's material principle, as seen by the plethora of books in Evangelical bookstores such as the *Left Behind Series* and others.

Carl S. Trueman's Definition

In Chapter Three I have provided seven theological movements that converge into American Evangelicalism from five different theologians and pastors. They are: New England Calvinists, Arminian Revivalism, European Pietism, Fundamentalism, Finneyism, Keswick Holiness, and Dispensationalism with a special note to sacramental indifference.

⁸⁴ Cary, *Outward Signs: The Powerlessness of External Things in Augustine's Thought*, passim.

⁸⁵ Valentin Ernst Loescher, *The Complete Timotheus Verinus*, trans. James L. Langebartels and Robert J. Koester (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2006), 63-92.

Obviously the merging of these seven rivulets creates a massive flowing river; a river that is somewhat wide at some points and narrow at others, as well as having many twists and turns. Therefore, Carl Trueman's thoughts in his book *The Real Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* are most understandable. He states:

When asked if I am an evangelical, I generally respond with a question: What exactly do you mean by that term? In a world in which everyone from Joel Osteen to Brian McLaren to John MacArthur may be called an evangelical, I want to know into what pigeonhole my answer will place me.

The implications of evangelicalism's lack of definition are manifold. . . . Without a clear definition, how can evangelicalism be studied in connection with phenomena that are, comparatively speaking, much easier to identify and analyze? Furthermore, if evangelicalism has no substantive existence in the present but is merely an oft-used term, then how can it have a future worth speaking of?

More importantly, evangelicalism's lack of definition makes the drawing of boundary lines very difficult, if not impossible. Given that orthodox doctrine has provided a set of basic boundary lines for Christianity since biblical times, the lack of a clear theological identity for evangelicalism means that, whatever boundaries are drawn, they are probably not typical of historic Christianity.⁸⁶

Even though Trueman speaks of Evangelicalism's apparent indefinability, is it completely undefinable?

I do not believe that American Evangelicalism is totally undefinable; however, I do believe that one's definition of Evangelicalism needs to be set forth with flexibility. It needs to be set forth with flexibility because the term is either perceived as a loose term by some or as a more narrow term by others. For example, a recent Gallup Poll indicated that 47% of Americans loosely identify themselves as Evangelical, while not everyone of that 47% would

⁸⁶ Trueman, *The Real Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, Kindle Edition Location 225.

properly constitute as such (i.e., Roman Catholics and Atheists).⁸⁷ Thus, American Evangelicalism can be thought of, in the case of this Gallup Poll, as the current national-cultural form of American Christianity. On the other hand, American Evangelicalism can be used more narrowly to define any one of the particular streams that have been laid forth in the previous paragraphs.

Looking back to Trueman, he does give characteristics of the river makeup asserting that Evangelicals focus on the primacy of experience, are minimal on doctrine, have a high emphasis on conversion, and embrace activism, that is, the living out of the Gospel.⁸⁸ As with Fisk's observation about the sacraments, Trueman does not provide another stream but mainly a pulse of Evangelicalism's current ethos.

Summary

Seven streams have been identified by six different theologians and pastors. Before moving toward a definition of American Evangelicalism though, it is most important to stop and ask the question: "Do these streams actually interact and converge?" Yes, they do converge and interact in some interesting ways. The following paragraphs give a very brief overview of the stream's interactions.

In 1738 John Wesley entered into conversation with a leading Pietist named Peter Bohler, and he eventually "went on a three-month trip to Germany, where he met with many

⁸⁷ Frank Newport and Joseph Carroll, "Another Look at Evangelicals in America Today," 2 December 2005, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/20242/Another-Look-Evangelicals-America-Today.aspx> (6 August 2013).

⁸⁸ Trueman, *The Real Schandal of the Evangelical Mind*, Kindle Edition Location 109-219.

Pietists. In the years to follow he was to work out the implications of pietist theology in his own linguistic tradition.”⁸⁹ Therefore, according to Senkbeil, “John Wesley, an Anglican priest, is the link between European Pietism and American Revivalism.”⁹⁰ European Pietism and American Revivalism are connected.

In regard to Revivalism, obviously there is a connection with Finney and the revivals, for it is common knowledge that Finney was the father of the Second Great Awakening during the early nineteenth century. Revivalism and Finney are connected.

The Keswick theology of ‘surrendering and emptying’ was born out of interaction between American Revivalism and Methodist perfectionism, as stated by Cary. Keep in mind, though, that the father of Methodism was Wesley, and Wesley was deeply impacted by European Pietism. Even though Pietism and Keswick theology are separated by Wesley, it is important to note that these movements converge in or through Wesley. Pietism and Keswick theology are connected.

D.L. Moody was a progenitor to Fundamentalism and contributed immensely to its emergence.⁹¹ Moody also was considered one of the greatest enthusiasts of Keswick teaching.⁹² Thus we see a convergence of Keswick teaching and Fundamentalism in Moody. There is also a convergence of Keswick teaching and Fundamentalism in the person of C.I. Scofield and his very popular Scofield Reference Bible. Scofield, a Fundamentalist, clearly

⁸⁹ Peter C. Erb, ed., *Pietists: Selected Writings* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1983), 24.

⁹⁰ Senkbeil, *Sanctification: Christ in Action*, 29.

⁹¹ Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: New Edition*, 33.

⁹² *Ibid*, 79.

taught Keswick theology in his footnotes of Romans 7-8, and it is also important to note that Premillennial Dispensationalism is found throughout his reference Bible.⁹³ Keswick theology, Fundamentalism, and Premillennial Dispensationalism are connected.

In regard to Premillennialism, Donald Dayton, in his book *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, shows the influence of John Bengel's teaching and fascination with the Apocalypse upon Pentecostalism's Premillennialism. Bengel was a great Pietist Biblical Scholar.⁹⁴ Furthermore, Dayton shows traces of Millennialism within Finney's theology.⁹⁵ Millennialism, Finney, and certain strains of Pietism are connected.

Finally, it is important to note that Fundamentalism, attitudes flowing from certain strains of Pietism, and Calvinism all contribute to American Evangelicalism's struggle and disregard for the sacraments. "Fundamentalism has no room at all in its system of theology for the Scriptural doctrine of the means of grace."⁹⁶ Secondly, certain strains of Pietism "directed alarmed sinners not to the Word and Sacraments but to their own prayers and wrestlings."⁹⁷ Finally, certain strains of Calvinism are highly impacted by St. Augustine's expressionist semiotics; that words and sacraments are outward signs expressing the inner

⁹³ C. I. Scofield, ed., *The Scofield Reference Bible* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1945), 1200.

⁹⁴ Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 148.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 155.

⁹⁶ John Theodore Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics: A Handbook for Doctrinal Theology for Pastors, Teachers, and Laymen* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1934), 457.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 455.

will of the soul and do not have power to confer grace upon the soul.⁹⁸ Fundamentalism, certain strains of Pietism, and certain strains of Calvinism are connected in regard to their views towards the sacraments.

From this brief sketch, it is noticeable that the seven identified streams certainly flow into and out of each other as they interact through historical situations and persons. They weave through the terrain of history as they move towards converging together into the main river of what is called American Evangelicalism. Therefore, from the seven streams, as well as the feedback from six different theologians and pastors, I humbly set forth a theological definition of the current national-cultural form of American Evangelicalism as:

1. Having a diminished view of original sin and its consequences.
2. Having a semi-Pelagian view of free will.
3. Focusing on the renewed Christian life by encouraging individuals to surrender to God.
4. Emphasizing personal experience over doctrine.
5. Practically functioning with a 'gospel that works' (i.e., pragmatism) in regard to evangelism and activism.
6. Being Premillennial Dispensational.
7. Disregarding the central role of the sacraments and struggling to see them as efficacious.

Let it be said that my definition of American Evangelicalism above is to be taken with flexibility, knowing that it may be too broad in some cases and too narrow in other cases. It is obviously not a one-size-fits-all definition.

A Brief Theological Excursus

It is important to note that individual doctrines are not autonomous. Rather an understanding of a particular doctrine impacts a person's understanding of another doctrine.

⁹⁸ Cary, *Outward Signs: The Powerlessness of External Things in Augustine's Thought*, passim.

Take, for instance, the doctrine of original sin. One's understanding of original sin has a great deal to do with how one shapes the formulation or delivers the doctrine of justification.⁹⁹ Furthermore, how a person understands original sin will impact how the person's 'will' is perceived. If a person is not completely dead in sin but only impaired and left with an element of free will in respect to God, the deduction is then made that mankind is morally neutral—much like neutral gear in an automobile, which can be shifted forward or reverse. The automobile, or will of man, is just idling and waiting for the driver to make a free decision. Logically, this semi-Pelagian free-will theology will preoccupy itself with trying to keep the will in check by appealing to moralism, law, and principles, in order to keep the will out of reverse and in the morally forward position. However, when one begins with and clings to free-will theology, a person inevitably will be led to bondage. Has one actually done enough, acted righteous enough and implemented what is within? Free-will theology always will lead to bondage, for one will never know whether or not he/she has willed enough to stay out of reverse. On the other hand, if one sees original sin and its fruits correctly and understands bound-will theology, the assumption will be that free-will theology is merely a term and not a reality. Thus, mankind is not morally neutral, but it is much worse—mankind is bound and stuck in reverse. The automobile, or will of man, is incapable of putting things into a forward position. It cannot change by itself because it does not want to; rather it is quite comfortable with reverse. Forward and neutral are not even an option on the stick shift. As a result, bound-will theology will preoccupy itself with the proclamation of the Word. For through the Word, the Holy Spirit is the agent to change and free the will from its

⁹⁹ Robert Kolb, personal email message to author (9 September 2013).

bondage/reverse. Mankind cannot change but can be changed as the direct object, the one being acted upon. Inevitably, when one starts from the assumption of bondage, one is more likely to end in freedom.¹⁰⁰

This understanding of original sin and semi-Pelagian free-will theology are of vital importance. For a door that is unlocked or left open even slightly to synergism should not be ignored or dismissed. Rather this is something of utmost concern. For even the slightest amount of synergism in a person's soteriology impacts other doctrines; one cannot underestimate the old Adam's synergistic abilities, for he will wreak havoc on everything he can get his hands on. Francis Pieper states, "Synergism actually degrades the means of grace into mere means to spur man to furnish the thing that will allegedly induce God to grant forgiveness of sins to man."¹⁰¹ This means that synergism diminishes the sacramental character of both baptism and communion. The loss of sacramental character does not stop with the sacraments, but a loss in sacramental character also impacts the preached word, degenerating it "into information about which the continuously existing old being is supposed to do something."¹⁰² This degeneration continues to spread, unavoidably stripping the pastoral office. Rather than giving an extra nos authoritative report from God's Word, a sacramentally degenerated message becomes one where the pastoral office focuses on telling church members to, yield more, pray more, love unbelievers more, read the scriptures more,

¹⁰⁰ Gerhard Forde, *The Captivation of the Will: Luther vs. Erasmus on Freedom and Bondage* (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 47-60.

¹⁰¹ Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics: Volume 3* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 123.

¹⁰² Forde, *Theology is for Proclamation*, 149.

serve more in the church, be a better husband and a better father. The loss of the sacramental character shifts the church's narrative 'from' God doing the verbs towards His bride (i.e., the church) 'to' the bride doing the verbs towards God. Without the sacramental character, God becomes the direct object and the church becomes the subject of the narrative. Without sacramental emphasis in the church, the storyline turns inward, and parishioners unfortunately will develop the following narrative: 'I wonder how I am doing in my life, my submitting, my devotional work, my prayers, my zeal, and my sermon application?' Even though these are good virtues, the narrative is turned internal to 'self,' which then produces the fruits of despair or pride (i.e., I can't do it; I am doing it). Those that despair will give up on the church and leave. Those that are prideful will lose the understanding that they are hungry beggars coming to church to receive the free, warm bread. Rather they will end up going to church denying both their need of the free bread and the gift of the warm bread, yet wanting recipes and pointers on how to make the bread themselves. Otherwise stated, due to pride they will lose the understanding of their sinfulness and the need to go to church to hear the Gospel Word and to be gifted the forgiveness of sins in the sacraments. They will go to church to be encouraged in their pursuit of being more moral, achieving an anthropocentric goal, and actualizing their purpose.

This brief theological excursus is intended to show how original sin, soteriology, the Sacraments, the understanding of the Word, the office of the pastor, and so forth are all interconnected. Yes, even eschatological viewpoints are shaped and formed from people's

fundamental theological assumptions.¹⁰³ Once a person commits to fundamental positions on original sin and soteriology, this inevitably determines much of the rest of his doctrine. Thus, the seven characteristics of American Evangelicalism listed above are indeed related, even though they may be categorically different. The diminished view of original sin in American Evangelicalism clearly impacts soteriology and other doctrines.

American Evangelical Research Participants Define Themselves

Even though American Evangelicalism can be considered to be a wide-ranging term, the research participants of this study thoroughly identified themselves. It is very important to note their self-identification at this time, in order to show that they placed themselves right in the center of my previous definition on page 54. Specifically, they stated that they were impacted by 3.8 different theological movements and influences. Movements and influences included: Revivalism (61%), attitudes flowing from certain streams of Pietism (60.3%), Dispensationalism (55.1%), and Fundamentalism (52.8%). Furthermore, the participants stated that before beginning the journey towards becoming Lutherans, they were in American Evangelicalism for 15-30 years (49.8%) and were a part of approximately two denominational backgrounds. The two most common American Evangelical denominational backgrounds were the Baptist denominations (54.6%) and Non-denominational churches (47.9%). Their self-identification affirms four of the seven streams, as well as Rev. Fisk's identification of the Baptist's 'diminished sacrament' influence. This participant assessment will be expounded in Chapter Five.

¹⁰³ David E. Holwerda, *Jesus & Israel: One Covenant or Two?* (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), x.

Noting the Growing Divide between American Evangelicalism and Its Protestant Roots

A growing divide is occurring between American Evangelicalism and the sixteenth-century Reformation truths. While this study will not be examining the reasons for the growing divide, I am assuming that the current ethos and status of American Evangelicalism are partly responsible for making the journey into Confessional Lutheranism difficult. Otherwise stated, the growing distance between American Evangelicalism and its historical Protestant roots, as well as the increasing theological concerns, may not be the primary causes of the difficult journey into Lutheran thought; but surely these distresses contribute by not making a person's pilgrimage any easier or any less confusing. The simple assumption is that the more different a person's background is, the more difficult the journey will be. Otherwise stated, the greater the difference in epistemic assumptions and worldviews, the greater the difficulty it will be for a person to journey into new epistemological systems and dissimilar worldview lenses. This growing divide will be discussed more in the following paragraphs.

Mark Noll's Assessment

Even though the Lutherans of the sixteenth century and Lutherans in the following centuries in Europe have embraced the label 'Evangelical,' its usage in North America and in much of Christianity shows a quite different direction than originally intended. Thus, if alive today, could the Reformers even identify any remnants of the sixteenth-century Reformation in American Evangelicalism? On *Issues, Etc.*, Dr. Michael Horton answers this question by referencing Mark Noll's book *America's God*, stating that if the Reformers were alive today,

they would find themselves further removed from modern-day Evangelicalism than Medieval Roman Catholicism.¹⁰⁴

A divide between American Evangelicalism and its Protestant/Reformational theological roots has happened, according to the American Evangelical historian Noll.

Phillip Cary's Assessment

Phillip Cary, in his recent book *Good News for Anxious Christians*, speaks to this growing divide saying:

Every era in the history of Christianity has its own dangers and failures, which include its own particular ways of distorting God's word. This book is about the distortions of our time, as found in a new theology that has more or less taken over American evangelicalism in recent years. I suppose it has spread well beyond America by now, but in this book I'm talking about what I know firsthand—the new evangelical theology that is taught in American churches and that comes into my life through the anxieties of my American students.

It is a theology I don't read about in books, but hear from the lips of young people telling me why they're anxious. The words on their lips are ones you can hear in sermons and Bible studies and in TV and other media, and they make plenty of adults anxious too. They are the words of what you might call a "working theology," which is not an academic theory but a basis for preaching and discipleship, prayer and evangelism and outreach. It's a theology that tells people how to live. It gives people practical ideas and techniques they're supposed to use to be more spiritual.¹⁰⁵

Theological confusion among American Evangelicals is occurring, according to Cary, a professor at the American Baptist Eastern University in Pennsylvania.

¹⁰⁴ Michael Horton, Issues, Etc., <http://www.pastormatrichard.com/2011/10/pelagian-captivity-of-evangelicalism.html>, (accessed 4 June 2012), quoting Mark Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*.

¹⁰⁵ Cary, *Good News for Anxious Christians: 10 Practical Things You Don't Have to Do*, xvi-xvii.

The Gospel Coalition's Assessment

Tim Keller and D.A. Carson conceived of the idea of The Gospel Coalition. In 2007 it began with a conference that was attended by 500 individuals. Two years later The Gospel Coalition conference received more than 3,000 participants.¹⁰⁶ However, what is the purpose of The Gospel Coalition? In an introductory video on Vimeo, various Gospel Coalition members, such as Mark Dever, Tim Keller, D.A. Carson, C.J. Mahaney, R. Albert Mohler, Thabiti Anyabwile, and Bryan Chapell, collectively state the following:

The Gospel Coalition exists to promote Gospel centered ministry to the next generation. We are a group of pastors that are committed to getting the Gospel right and getting the Gospel out. We really don't want to become a kind of hegemonic ministry that controls everything or a denomination or in any way take away from the priority of the local church. We are simply a collection of Christian leaders who desire to serve the church. We believe that Evangelicalism is adrift; having become a massive collection of lowest common denominator theological commitments. It has become enamored with commercialism, theological fads, social issues, and other distractions away from the Gospel. Evangelicalism suffers from an identity crisis.¹⁰⁷

These American Evangelical leaders show concern in regard to the placement, role, and understanding of the very Gospel itself within American Evangelicalism.

Tullian Tchividjian's Assessment

Tullian Tchividjian, the grandson of Billy Graham and pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, began an organization—much like The Gospel Coalition—called Liberate.

¹⁰⁶ Susan Wunderink. "What's Next for The Gospel Coalition," May 2009, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/mayweb-only/119-22.0.html> (8 August 2013)

¹⁰⁷ "What is The Gospel Coalition?," Vimeo video, posted by "The Gospel Coalition," 15 July 2011, <http://vimeo.com/26481665>.

In 2011 I had the opportunity to exchange several emails with Pastor Tchividjian, and in January 2012 I attended a conference where he spoke. To my surprise, in his session he said that he saw himself and his calling to be an Evangelist to American Evangelicals, since the many Evangelicals that he had encountered over the years had either lost the Gospel or had the Gospel buried underneath layers of moralism.¹⁰⁸

Like the Gospel Coalition, Tchividjian also has concerns in regard to the status of American Evangelicalism.

The Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals' Assessment

The Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals is another group much like The Gospel Coalition and Liberate. It was formed in the mid-nineties and consists of Anglicans, Baptists, and Christian Reformed.¹⁰⁹ In 1996 the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals released *The Cambridge Declaration*. The introduction to this document says:

Evangelical churches today are increasingly dominated by the spirit of this age rather than by the Spirit of Christ. As evangelicals, we call ourselves to repent of this sin and to recover the historic Christian faith. . . . Today the light of the Reformation has been significantly dimmed. The consequence is that the word "evangelical" has become so inclusive as to have lost its meaning. We face the peril of losing the unity it has taken centuries to achieve. Because of this crisis and because of our love of Christ, his gospel and his church, we endeavor to assert anew our commitment to the central truths of the Reformation and of historic evangelicalism. These truths we affirm not because of their role in our traditions, but because we believe that they are central to the Bible.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Tullian Tchividjian, "White Horse Inn 95 Theses Cruise," (lecture, Fort Lauderdale, FL, 30 January 2012).

¹⁰⁹ R. Michael Allen, *Reformed Theology*, (New York, NY: T&T Clark International, 2010), 6.

¹¹⁰ "The Cambridge Declaration of Confessing Evangelicals," 20 April 1996, <http://www.monergism.com/The%20Cambridge%20Declaration.pdf> (1 July 2013).

According to the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, there is a concern for and about American Evangelicalism.

David Kinnaman's Assessment

David Kinnaman, the president of the Barna Group, recently published a book in which he interviewed thousands of individuals ages 18-29 who are leaving the church. In his book *You Lost Me*, he explores the drop-out problem among these young adults, showing that prior to the 1960s young adults were just as likely to attend church as older individuals. However, Kinnaman shows that after the 1960s the trends diverge, and there began to be a significant disengagement of younger adults in the church. As a result, Kinnaman classifies these disengaged younger adults as nomads and prodigals. Kinnaman says the problem is that the church has abandoned these nomads. Thus, in a very striking conclusion Kinnaman states, "After countless interviews and conversations, I am convinced that historic and traditional practices, and orthodox and wisdom-laden ways of believing, are what the next generation really needs."¹¹¹

Like the previous assessment from the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, Kinnaman shows concerns in regard to the status of American churches asserting that the church has lost her historical roots. His solution, though, is not for the church to become more innovative, but his solution is similar to *The Cambridge Declaration*. Kinnaman asserts that the church needs to return to her historical roots. Thus, this plea from Kinnaman applied to American Evangelical churches is not an easy fix or a shortcut but a serious call for the church to journey to something old and historically deep.

¹¹¹ David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church... And Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 202.

According to Kinnaman, there is concern for and about American Evangelicalism.

Michael Horton's Assessment

In 2008 Michael Horton, the J. Gresham Machen Professor of Systematic Theology and Apologetics at Westminster Seminary California, released the book *Christless Christianity: The Alternative Gospel of the American Church*. In this book he states, "My argument in this book is not that evangelicalism is becoming theologically liberal but that it is becoming theologically vacuous."¹¹² If it is true that American Evangelicalism is becoming theologically vacuous, is there anything that is attempting to fill this vacuous space?

According to Horton, the American Church is captive to Moralistic, Therapeutic Deism. This term is the term coined by the sociologists Christian Smith and Melinda Denton. Both Smith and Denton define Moralistic, Therapeutic Deism as follows:

1. God created the world.
2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and most world religions.
3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
4. God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when needed to resolve a problem.
5. Good people go to heaven when they die.¹¹³

This term/definition is derived from Smith and Denton's major study of the religious lives of contemporary teenagers from the National Study of Youth and Religion from 2002-2003.¹¹⁴

While this study examines the religious makeup of today's youth from a vast range of

¹¹² Horton, *Christless Christianity: The Alternative Gospel of the American Church*, 23.

¹¹³ Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), 162-163.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 6.

American religions, it is extremely interesting to note that when the religious engagement and education is weak, regardless of the specific religion, that the new default for spirituality among teenagers is Moralistic, Therapeutic Deism. One would think that Moralistic, Therapeutic Deism would be prevalent only within certain liberal streams of Christianity; however, Smith and Denton share that Moralistic, Therapeutic Deism happens among conservatives, Protestants, Catholics, Judaism, alike.¹¹⁵ Alas, Moralistic, Therapeutic Deism sets in when religious communities are vacuous. In the case of American Evangelicalism, Horton's assessment is that this is exactly the case; Moralistic, Therapeutic Deism has infiltrated theological vacuous areas of American Evangelicalism.

According to Horton American Evangelicalism's theological vacuum is and has opened the door to Moralistic, Therapeutic Deism.

Summary

These American Evangelical assessments from Mark Noll, Phillip Cary, The Gospel Coalition, Tullian Tchividjian, The Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, David Kinnaman, and Michael Horton show the increasing theological concern and theological divide between American Evangelicalism and the very basics of historic Protestant truths.

While this study is not examining the reasons for the growing divide and theological confusion, I certainly am assuming that the current ethos and concerning status of American Evangelicalism are partly responsible for making the journey into Confessional Lutheranism difficult. Otherwise stated, the growing distance between American Evangelicalism and its historical Protestant roots, as well as the increasing theological concerns and/or confusion,

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 262.

may not be the primary causes of the difficult journey into Lutheran thought; but surely these distresses contribute by not making a person's pilgrimage any easier or any less confusing.

The simple assumption is that the more different a person's background is, the more difficult the journey will be. Otherwise stated, the greater the difference in epistemic assumptions and worldviews, the greater the difficulty it will be for a person to journey into new epistemological systems and dissimilar worldview lenses.

Literature Review: Journeying into Confessional Lutheranism

In Chapter Three I have laid forth a definition of American Evangelicalism on the basis of seven streams and perspectives from six different theologians and pastors. I also have shown the growing divide and/or confusion between American Evangelicalism and its Protestant roots from seven different theologians, pastors, and organizations. Thus, I have defined and set American Evangelicalism within its current context, as well as shown various contemporary concerns that may impact a person's journey from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheran thought.

In this next section I want to examine any ongoing study and current literature on the actual journey that individuals will take from American Evangelicalism to Confessional Lutheranism. What research has been conducted on the journey? What has been written on this subject thus far?

Journeying from Evangelicalism to Catholicism

As indicated in Chapter One, Christian Smith has just released a book titled *How to Go from Being a Good Evangelical to a Committed Catholic in Ninety-Five Difficult Steps*. Besides this book from Smith, I have found two other books that explore the journey from

Evangelicalism to Roman Catholicism. One of the books, *Journeys of Faith*, by Robert Plummer, Wilbur Ellsworth, and others states:

Research indicates that on average, Americans change their religious affiliation at least once during their lives. Today, a number of evangelical Christians are converting to Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy and Anglicanism. Longtime Evangelicals often fail to understand the attraction of these non-Evangelical Christian traditions. *Journeys of Faith* examines the movement between these traditions from various angles.¹¹⁶

Thus, there is research being conducted and documented on the movement between American Evangelicalism and other non-Evangelical traditions. However, has there been any research conducted in the realm of American Evangelicals journeying into Confessional Lutheranism?

Journeying from Evangelicalism into Lutheranism

In my bibliographical research I was able to identify two sources of literature that focus on the journey of American Evangelicals into Confessional Lutheranism. While the limited amount of literature on this subject definitely justifies the need for this research project, the lack of books on this subject should not diminish the richness of information found in these two documents. The first book is *Wittenberg Confessions*, and the second book is *The Defense Never Rests*.

Before I give a brief synopsis of these works, I must note here that they both describe the movement from American Evangelicalism into Lutheran thought from a testimonial and/or qualitative approach. Whereas *Wittenberg Confessions* is a collection of testimonies,

¹¹⁶ Amazon.com, *Journeys of Faith: Evangelicalism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Catholicism, and Anglicanism*, <http://www.amazon.com/Journeys-Faith-Evangelicalism-Catholicism-Anglicanism/dp/031033120X> (5 June, 2013).

Craig Parton's book, *The Defense Never Rests*, is a chronicle of his spiritual pilgrimage into Lutheranism coupled with a depth of academic insights.

The book *Wittenberg Confessions* is a collection of testimonies from eight individuals journeying into Lutheranism. All eight testimonies had either come from or been exposed to American Evangelicalism at some point in their lives. Several of them came directly to Lutheranism from Pentecostalism and Baptist churches, whereas others came to Lutheranism through movement between Atheism, Mormonism, Roman Catholicism, and Evangelicalism. In the conclusion of this work, it is interesting to note the overarching qualitative observations:

In some shape or form, each story in this book has passed along the important truth that the Law, written on the hearts of all, does not give life but kills. It shows us the bondage of the will to sin and points to the fact that it takes a real miracle, the gift of faith given to us by God through hearing the gospel preached in its purity, in order to receive the truth of God's Holy Word.¹¹⁷ Only the Holy Spirit, through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, raises to life those hopelessly dead in sin.

Another common theme throughout these thought provoking accounts has been the despair that decision theology coupled with works righteousness caused each person. The reactions to despair were either that the individual was driven to blasphemy and denying the existence of God, or to sink into self-righteousness, looking for relief from the burden of sins through good works of their own. These works they believed could somehow save them from the inner accuser of their hearts.

It is also fascinating to read the explanations of those coming out of evangelical churches into Confessional Lutheran congregations, who for the first time partaking in a divine service recognized, through Word and Sacrament, Christ coming to them with the forgiveness of sins. In particular I have in mind Stan Palmer's comments regarding his experiences with the so-called "Toronto Blessing" and especially with regard to his description of people involved in that moment who were barking like dogs, roaring like lions, or staggering around as if in a drunken stupor during so-called worship services. What joy he and his family now have in receiving

¹¹⁷ See John 1:13; 6:37, 65; Philippians 1:29; 2 Timothy 2:25; Acts 13:48; Romans 9:15-18; 1 John 5:1.

the forgiveness of sins through Word and Sacrament versus riding the emotional roller coaster of enthusiasm so eloquently described by Dana Palmer.

It is also noteworthy to point out the focus of some churches on the “altar call” as relayed to us through the stories of Kelly Klages and Kaleb Axon. Here we recall the inner turmoil over the constant questioning of whether or not I am Christ’s based upon one’s own works or one’s own feelings at the moment. Did I sufficiently give my life to Christ when I walked the aisle to the altar? Have I done enough to warrant salvation? Here, too, I think back on Larry Hughes’s gripping story of his struggle over knowing whether or not the forgiveness of sins was his. He was misled by the teachings of those who believe that the bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper are merely symbols of the body and blood of Christ who is bodily in heaven, far removed from His creation, and that mere symbols are not efficacious for the forgiveness of sins. Rather, we encounter the risen Christ in the Lord’s Supper who is truly bodily present to us now, for the forgiveness of sins, in, with, and under the bread and wine. We truly have the forgiveness of sins not because of our belief in water, bread, wine, body, and blood, but because of the promise of God’s Word attached to these elements instituted by our Lord, which we receive through faith God Himself has given to us. Indeed, how despairing it is when Jesus is just out of reach and one is not able to receive comfort from His words of forgiveness, when one is unable to know with certainty that yes, I am forgiven because Jesus says so in His Holy Word.

These stories are reminders that the apex of our own inward experiences never rise above God’s Law which is a constant reminder that we are sinners in need of a savior, that any tower we build in an effort to reach heaven will only collapse and leave us with sinful ruin. The peace we desire for our hearts is *extra nos*, residing with Jesus Himself who freely gives us His gift of salvation. Our peace is in knowing that He loves us as we are and not for anything good we might do, but He mercifully picks us up out of the death pit of sin and through His grace carries us in His love, home with Him.¹¹⁸

The second book identified in my bibliographical research is a work by Craig Parton titled *The Defense Never Rests: A Lawyer’s Quest for the Gospel*. Parton’s book is a chronicle of his spiritual pilgrimage from Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheran

¹¹⁸ Jim Pierce and Elain Gavin, eds., *Wittenberg Confessions: Testimonies of Converts to Confessional Lutheranism* (Naperville, IL: Blue Pomegranate Press, 2009), 203-206.

thought. More specifically Parton identifies several key areas of difference between

American Evangelicalism and Confessional Lutheranism. They are:

- From Law-Gospel-Law scheme in Evangelicalisms to properly understanding and dividing the Law and Gospel in Lutheranism.¹¹⁹
- From the central focus within Evangelicalism of the changed life through higher life theology to the central focus of Christ crucified in Lutheranism.¹²⁰
- From the sacramental crisis of seeing the sacraments as symbolic sacrificial acts of obedience in Evangelicalism to seeing the sacraments as means of grace in Lutheranism.¹²¹
- From the diminished view of sin and Law in Evangelicalism to a much weightier view of sin and Law within Lutheranism. This resulted in eliminating the doctrine of free will and consequently amplified the role and understanding of the Gospel.¹²²

Both the *Wittenberg Confessions* and *The Defense Never Rests* highlight several areas of change that happened as these individuals moved from American Evangelicalism to Confessional Lutheranism. There were:

- Changes in the way that they viewed the Law (i.e., that the Law in Lutheranism killed)
- Changes in the way that they viewed the will of man (i.e., that the will was bound in Lutheranism)
- Changes in the way that they viewed the sacraments (i.e., seeing them as means of grace and non-symbolic)
- Changes in how they viewed experiences (i.e., that experience never rises above the Scriptures)
- Change in the central focus of the Christian (i.e., a shift from the main focus of the changed life to Christ crucified)

¹¹⁹ Craig Parton, *The Defense Never Rests: A Lawyer's Quest for the Gospel* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2003), 16-18.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 17, 23.

¹²¹ Ibid, 27-30.

¹²² Ibid, 31-37.

What is rather striking from the bulleted comments above is that these five areas of change correspond with five of the seven key characteristics of my American Evangelicalism definition earlier in this chapter. Furthermore, these two books qualitatively agree with the quantitative and qualitative research results of this Major Applied Research Project as demonstrated in Chapter Five..

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to define American Evangelicalism from the help of seven converging historic movements, as well as the feedback from six different theologians and pastors. I have shown that this definition is in agreement with the self-identification of the research participants of this study. Through a brief theological excursus I have demonstrated how the characteristics in my definition of American Evangelicalism are related. I also have demonstrated the growing divide and/or confusion between American Evangelicalism and its Protestant roots from seven different theologians, pastors, and organizations. I have shown from non-Lutheran sources that others making the journey from American Evangelicalism into different traditions have had struggles as well. I finally have shown from the literature review of two sources that the journey from American Evangelicalism indeed brings about seismic changes and shifts, particularly changes to my definition of American Evangelicalism set forth in this chapter. Thus, Chapter Three has set American Evangelicalism and the journey into Lutheran thought within a theoretic, historical, sociological, and contemporary contextual background.

In Chapter Four I will be describing the design, methodology, and implementation of this Major Applied Research Project. Chapter Five will be evaluating the findings of this research project, as well as analyzing the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BECOMING LUTHERAN PROJECT DEVELOPED

The Design of the Study

The problem thesis that I chose for this Major Applied Research Project is that the journey for American Evangelicals into Confessional Lutheranism thought is a long, difficult, and sometimes daunting road. Otherwise stated, the shift from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheranism is not something that just happens overnight, nor is it an easy shift. The shift has emotional, linguistic, worldview, and epistemological challenges that accompany it, thus producing a great deal of anxiety, stress, and uncertainty for the individual. These struggles also present a challenge for Lutheran pastors in knowing how to minister to parishioners coming out of American Evangelicalism into their parishes.

The problem thesis was developed from my own journey into Confessional Lutheranism, as referenced in the Preface. Furthermore, the problem thesis was developed from my online and telephone interactions with many Evangelicals journeying into Confessional Lutheran thought. With that said, the first purpose of this Major Applied Research Project was to verify if American Evangelicals are indeed experiencing emotional struggles, linguistic confusions, worldview changes, and epistemological shifts as they journey into Confessional Lutheran thought. This problem thesis was confirmed, as will be reported in Chapter Five. Once the problem thesis was verified as true, the intent of the research project was then to learn more about these categories from American Evangelicals who have begun making this shift into Lutheran thought, as well as from Evangelicals who have already made the shift.

By diagnosing and understanding the movement between American Evangelicalism and Confessional Lutheranism, my hope is that the findings will provide insights and comfort for those who are experiencing the journey. Furthermore, my hope is that this study also will glean ways in which Lutheran pastors can more effectively care for and shepherd these individuals who are in the journey towards Lutheranism.

Research Tools and Methodology

In order to verify the problem thesis and learn about the journey into Confessional Lutheranism, I decided to interview individuals who have journeyed or were currently journeying into Confessional Lutheranism. In contemplating what tools to use in order to conduct the interviews, I decided to use three separate surveys.

In regard to the three surveys, my hope was to keep the first survey quantitative in nature, in order to verify the problem thesis, as well as to gather statistical data in the realms of epistemology, worldview, linguistics, and emotions. Once the quantitative data had been gathered, the statistical findings served as a basis to gather qualitative responses in surveys two and three.

In developing the surveys I relied upon my statistical experience from my undergraduate degree in Finance and Economics, as well as consulted my wife, who has a degree in Marketing and Management. More specifically, the four categories of epistemology, worldview, linguistics, and emotions served as the skeletal structure to the surveys, with all three surveys consisting of a very comprehensive section designed to flesh out the participants' sociological and theological contexts. Furthermore, the surveys relied

heavily on a five point likert rating scale, as well as multiple choice questions, matrix of choices, question logic, text boxes, essay boxes, and so forth.¹²³

I originally had hoped to gather only fifty research participants; however, as I explored the online possibilities, I realized that I was able to manage a much larger research pool due to my ability to conduct the surveys through a web-based survey company called SurveyMonkey.com. Furthermore, I realized that I was able to recruit a much larger research pool due to online tools such as Gmail, Blogger.com, Facebook.com, Twitter.com, WordPress.com, Google Plus, and Youtube.com.

Implementation of the Project

After the first survey was developed, it received constructive criticism and feedback from six individuals, mainly on its overall structure, grammar, makeup, and so forth. Once the survey had been edited and adjusted, it was then transferred online to SurveyMonkey, where it was released to about six more individuals to test its online functionality.

Gathering Feedback

Following the editing and testing of the first quantitative survey, it was released and conducted from December 11, 2012, to January 20, 2013. This survey received 340 responses, of which 33 responses were disqualified due to the survey being either fairly incomplete or not meeting the criteria of the study (i.e., from a non-North American continent, no Evangelical background, etc.). Assuming a population of 100,000 individuals who have journeyed from American Evangelicalism into Lutheran thought, 307 participant

¹²³ See Appendixes One, Three, and Five.

responses gives this first survey a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5.585%.

The second survey was released and conducted from February 9, 2013, to March 11, 2013. While the first survey captured quantitative data, this survey attempted to provide reason, motives, and insights to the quantitative data. This survey received 252 responses of which 28 were disqualified due to the similar reasons as the first survey, leaving 224 accepted surveys. It is also worth noting that 200 participants of the 224 also participated in the first quantitative survey (65.15%).

The third survey was released and conducted from February 9, 2013, to March 11, 2013. While this third survey was also a qualitative survey, the third survey focused on questions pertaining to advice for pastors and those in the journey toward Confessional Lutheranism. This survey received 183 responses of which no one was disqualified. It is worth noting that 180 participants of the 183 also participated in the first and second survey.

As previously indicated, research participants for this MAP were gathered mainly through online venues. Table 4.1 below shows the efforts used to gather participants for all three surveys.

Internet Venue	Views	Date
PM Notes www.pastormatrichard.com	5,256 Pageviews	10/21/2012 Post to 02/12/2013 Post
White Horse Inn Blog http://www.whitehorseinn.org/blog/	2,770 Pageviews	12/03/2012 Post
Steadfast Lutherans www.steadfastlutherans.com	9,457 Pageviews	12/02/2012 Post

Cyberbrethren www.cyberbrethren.com	1,500 Est. Pageviews	12/12/2012 Post
WEtv Live www.worldvieweverlasting.com	3,000 Est. Streams	02/06/2013 Vlog
Facebook Ad www.facebook.com	26,186 Ad Reach	12/17/2012 to 01/05/2013
Misc. Facebook Group Pages Table Talk Radio, Fighting for the Faith, Confessional Lutheran Fellowship, Etc...	3,000 Est. Views	10/2012 to 01/2013

As it can be seen from above, several websites and blogs helped in publicizing the study and the need for participants. I also took out advertisements in Facebook, published the need for participants on Twitter, and even sent out emails to various churches. All in all, I estimate that approximately 50,000 blog messages, posts, tweets, vlogs, emails, ads, and so forth went out to inform people of this research project. Of the 50,000 venue communications the research project received a total of 714 surveys from 334 different individuals.

The Analysis Team

From the 714 surveys, the respondents generated approximately 500 pages of multiple choice answers, likert scale choices, text box responses, and essay replies. In order to analyze all of the responses and to ensure objectivity, I recruited and organized an Analysis Team. The Analysis Team consisted of nine men and three women; there were clergy, laymen, and church workers from four different denominations (i.e., The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, The Church of the Lutheran Brethren, The Association of American Lutheran Churches, and Christian Missionary Alliance). The first two surveys

were analyzed by the Analysis Team. The Analysis Team's first meeting to review the quantitative survey results was on February 3, 2012, at Sidney Lutheran Brethren Church of Sidney, Montana. Thus, as implied in previous paragraphs, the analysis from this first meeting was used to formulate the second qualitative surveys. The second meeting of the Analysis Team was conducted on March 17, 2012 at Sidney Lutheran Brethren Church. This second meeting obviously convened after the qualitative surveys were completed by research participants, and at this meeting the results for survey number two were analyzed. Otherwise stated, both the quantitative and qualitative survey results were analyzed by the Analysis Team to ensure objectivity.¹²⁴

All the analyzed results were published on my personal blog, PM Notes (www.pastormatrichard.com), emailed to research participants if they so requested, and were released through Google Hangout interviews on *World Everlasting TV* (<http://www.youtube.com/user/Revfiskj>).

Conclusion

I was truly amazed to get more than 300 research participants for this research project, especially participants that took approximately fifteen minutes per survey. Furthermore, I was rather overwhelmed by the tremendous support and enthusiasm from people who did not participate in the study but were and continue to be interested in this subject.

The input that I received from the three surveys has been extremely beneficial, as well as very insightful. The research results have not only affirmed the problem thesis but

¹²⁴ See Appendixes Two and Four.

also have yielded some profound patterns and provided some valuable sociological and theological data.

In looking forward to the remaining chapters, Chapter Five will analyze the research findings in regard to the problem thesis. Chapter Five also will be providing valuable insights and comfort for those who are experiencing the journey, as well as worthwhile findings for pastors who are attempting to shepherd and care for these journeying individuals.

Finally, Chapter Six will summarize this project and make recommendations for further study of this research project.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BECOMING LUTHERAN PROJECT EVALUATED






As stated in Chapter Four, the research results from both the quantitative and qualitative surveys were assessed by an Analysis Team. The Analysis Team was established to ensure objectivity, as well as provide additional perspectives in assessing the data.

The following evaluation comes from eighty combined analysis hours of considering 714 surveys and approximately 500 pages of multiple choice answers, likert scale choices, text box responses, and essay replies.

Sociological and Theological Synopsis of Participants

Every research participant was given nine sociological and theological background questions. Questions such as their past church affiliation, what theological movements have impacted them, current church affiliation, and so forth. The participants stated that they were impacted on average by 3.8 different theological movements and influences. The top four movements and influences were/are: Revivalism (61.0%), attitudes flowing from certain streams of Pietism (60.3%), Dispensationalism (55.1%), and Fundamentalism (52.8%). Chart 5.1 below shows all the responses.

Of the following movements, which ones have you been impacted by?	Percent
Charismatic/Pentecostalism	46.2%
Church Growth Movement	51.5%
Dispensationalism	55.1%
Emergent Church Movement	12.1%
Fundamentalism	52.8%

Holiness Movement		21.6%
Pietism		60.3%
Revivalism		61.0%
Word Faith Movement		19.7%
Unsure		1.6%

Furthermore, the majority of participants stated that before beginning the journey towards Lutheranism, they were in American Evangelicalism for 15-30 years (49.8%) and were on average a part of approximately two denominational backgrounds. The two most common denominational backgrounds were the Baptist denominations (54.6%) and Non-denominational churches (47.9%). Chart 5.2 below shows the denominational backgrounds.

What is your church affiliation background within Evangelicalism?	Percent
Assembly of God	18.8%
Association of Vineyard Churches	2.8%
Baptist (Southern, Freewill, etc...)	54.6%
Calvary Chapel	9.9%
Christian Missionary Alliance	6.0%
Church of God	2.1%
Congregational Church	3.2%
Evangelical Free	15.6%
Nazarene (Church of)	7.4%
Non-denominational	47.9%
United Brethren in Christ	0.7%
Wesleyan Church	5.0%

The self-identification of the participants affirms four of the seven Evangelical streams as noted in Chapter Three (i.e., Revivalism, Pietism, Dispensationalism, and Fundamentalism). Furthermore, the Baptist denomination was the number one denominational background of participants, which also affirms Rev. Fisk’s identification of the Baptist’s ‘diminished sacrament’ influence among American Evangelicals.

Besides their backgrounds, 51.3% of respondents shared that the journey from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheran thought lasted one to four years. The other 48.7% indicated that the journey lasted from less than three months to more than ten years. Furthermore, the participant responses showed that the individuals came to the Lutheran church at any time in their journey. Otherwise stated, they came into Lutheranism when they first started to understand Lutheranism (32.3%), somewhere in the middle of figuring out Lutheranism (24.3%), and others came to Lutheranism after they had spent a lot of time processing Lutheranism (20.3%). See Chart 5.3 below for more details.

When did you make the decision to attend a Lutheran church?		Response Percent
Before the journey into Lutheran thought began		23.1%
At the beginning of the journey into Lutheran thought		32.3%
At the middle of the journey into Lutheran thought		24.3%
At the end of the journey into Lutheran thought		20.3%

Finally, 82.7% of all respondents that completed their journey into Confessional Lutheran thought found their home in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, while the remaining 17.3% found their home in other Lutheran Synods: The Evangelical Lutheran Synod (2.0%), Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (3.6%), Association of American Lutheran Churches (1.2%), and so forth.

Motives for the Journey

A qualitative question was inserted into the first survey, in order to assess the participants' motives in becoming Lutheran. More specifically, the research participants were questioned why and/or what caused them to begin the journey into Lutheran thought. In response to this question they stated, generally speaking, that they were despairing in works righteousness and had an internal conflict, which resulted in a crisis of faith. While the crisis of faith gave them instability in American Evangelicalism, they were influenced by family and friends, as well as Lutheran media and books, to begin the journey into Lutheran thought. It is important to note that the response to this particular question is consistent with the summary of the *Wittenberg Confessions*. Both the *Wittenberg Confessions* and this study show that there is a degree of despairing works righteousness that seems to dislodge American Evangelicals from their tradition. On the flip side though, respondents explained that it was family, friends, and Lutheran media that pulled them into this journey towards Lutheranism.

General Impressions of the Journey

There were two more qualitative questions asked in the first survey. The two questions inquired about the best and worst things/parts of the journey into Confessional Lutheran thought. Generally speaking, the worst things for the participants were the unsettledness coupled with the loss of family and friends sometimes caused by doctrinal discussion and the switching of churches. Furthermore, they lamented the lost time that they spent in synergistic beliefs. Finally, they struggled to quickly learn new things such as terms, Lutheran worship, music, liturgy, doctrines, etc.

It is interesting to note that both the respondents of this study and Craig Parton comment on the loss of friends in regard to this movement towards Confessional Lutheranism.¹²⁵ Alas, the journey into Confessional Lutheranism, as indicated by respondents, impacts a person's social interactions to the degree where friendships may be lost.

On the positive side, research participants stated that the best thing about the journey into Confessional Lutheranism, generally speaking, is that they felt freedom, peace, comfort, and assurance as they have come to understand the objective Christ-centered Gospel and Sacraments. What is obvious about this positive insight is that the participants found an abundance of assurance in an extra nos Gospel.

¹²⁵ Parton, *The Defense Never Rests: A Lawyer's Quest for the Gospel*, 11.

Analysis of the Quantitative Findings

The basic problem thesis of this study is as follows:

The journey for American Evangelicals into Confessional Lutheranism thought is a long, difficult, and sometimes daunting road. Otherwise stated, the shift from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheranism is not something that just happens overnight, nor is it an easy shift. The shift has emotional, linguistic, worldview, and epistemological challenges that accompany it, thus producing a great deal of anxiety, stress, and uncertainty for the individual.

Is this problem thesis true? According to the research participants, it is true. Regarding emotions, 70.4% of respondents agree and strongly agree that they experienced struggles with their emotions in their journeys from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheran thought. Regarding linguistics, 58.6% of respondents agree and strongly agree that they experienced an overall confusion with linguistics in their journeys from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheran thought. Regarding worldview, 92.5% of respondents agree and strongly agree that they experienced a change in how they view reality. Finally, regarding epistemology, 79.9% of respondents agree and strongly agree that they experienced an overall shift in how they acquire knowledge and how they analyze it. Thus, there was an overwhelming affirmation from the participants that the problem thesis of this study is true.

As specified above, in the first quantitative survey I asked general and/or vague questions about emotions, linguistics, worldview, and epistemology. However, after each of the general questions had been asked, I presented more specific questions pertaining to each of these categories. The following paragraphs are specific responses from the participants, which the Analysis Team identified as key areas of interest.

Quantitative Responses on Epistemology

The most important place to begin assessing the survey results is in the area of epistemology. Epistemology matters because “knowledge systems are embedded in worldviews. . . . feelings are manifested through material objects and behavioral patterns, which are often shaped by people’s worldviews.”¹²⁶ Thus, like falling dominos, sources of knowledge and their messages have drastic consequences upon worldviews, emotions, and linguistics; epistemologies are at the foundation level.

As previously indicated, 79.9% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that they experienced an overall shift in how they acquire knowledge. When asked about specific examples, the respondents tended to agree at a higher percentage than when asked the question of epistemological shifts in general. For example, 94.7% of respondents agree and strongly agree that they shifted in where they acquire their Christian teaching. Otherwise stated, as they came into Confessional Lutheran thought they listened to different pastors and teachers, and they read different authors. This shift in where they acquired their teaching was the highest percentage response in the whole survey.

What was the result of this shift in knowledge sources? The answer is found in the participants’ worldview, linguistic, and emotion responses.

Quantitative Responses on Worldview

A person’s sources of knowledge and epistemic assumptions framework ‘forms’ their worldview. A worldview is a person’s perception of reality. In other words, each person

¹²⁶ Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*, 85.

views the world through a particular lens; these lenses “are deep, they are generally unexamined and largely implicit.”¹²⁷ Therefore, was there a change in worldview due to 94.7% of respondents having a shift in sources of knowledge? Yes, in their journeys from American Evangelicalism into Lutheranism, respondents changed in the following ways, as indicated by Chart 5.4 below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
... in how I view the Christian faith (i.e., God, salvation, etc.).	1.3% (4)	3.3% (10)	2.3% (7)	38.2% (117)	54.9% (168)
... in how I view other Christians (i.e. the Church, other believers, etc...).	0.3% (1)	4.3% (13)	4.9% (15)	44.3% (135)	46.2% (141)
... in how I view the World (i.e. non-Christians, American culture, etc.).	2.3% (7)	7.9% (24)	6.9% (21)	40.0% (122)	43.0% (131)
... in how I view Myself (i.e., my anthropology, opinions of self, etc.).	1.6% (5)	4.3% (13)	7.9% (24)	39.0% (119)	47.2% (144)

As can be seen from above, the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that they experienced changes in their worldviews as they came into Confessional Lutheranism.

Quantitative Responses on Linguistics

As mentioned in Chapter Two, if a person’s source of knowledge changes or slightly yields to a different knowledge source, the person’s epistemic assumptions and worldview will change as well, thus altering the framework in which language manifests itself from and

¹²⁷ Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*, 46.

how language is decoded/received. Otherwise specified, encroaching foreign sources of knowledge will impact a person’s semantics of words, which then impacts the syntax of sentences, which then impacts the meaning of sentences, and so forth.

Overall, the research participants indicated that linguistic confusion was the least concern for them among the other three categories of epistemology, worldview, and emotions. When asked specifically about linguistics, the respondents stated that they were challenged with the following areas, as indicated by Chart 5.5 below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
. . . familiar words having different meanings.	2.6% (8)	20.8% (63)	9.2% (28)	49.2% (149)	18.2% (55)
. . . familiar words having a different emphasis.	1.0% (3)	8.6% (26)	6.3% (19)	58.9% (179)	25.3% (77)
. . . familiar words used in Evangelicalism no longer being used in Lutheranism.	2.3% (7)	19.4% (59)	17.1% (52)	43.4% (132)	17.8% (54)
. . . learning and understanding new words.	4.3% (13)	17.4% (53)	8.9% (27)	48.5% (148)	21.0% (64)

Out of the four specific questions about linguistics, 84.2% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that they were challenged with familiar words having different emphasis. This response was of definite interest to the Analysis Team and was earmarked for further qualitative research in the second survey.

Quantitative Responses on Emotions

Emotions are manifestations of a much deeper framework; these manifestations will draw attention to areas of importance for further study, areas where epistemological shifts and worldview change may be occurring.

In the quantitative survey, I asked research participants to document their overall journeys into Confessional Lutheranism by asking them to discern between basic emotions and the basic opposite.¹²⁸ The respondents stated that they experienced more joy than sadness; more trust than disgust; and more surprise than anticipation. See Chart 5.6 below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided or Not Applicable	Agree	Strongly agree
... experienced more of the emotions of sadness (i.e., feeling dejected, depressed, and down) than emotions of joy (i.e., feeling cheerful, content, optimistic, and relieved).	26.6% (80)	41.2% (124)	15.0% (45)	11.0% (33)	6.3% (19)
... experienced more of the emotions of trust (i.e. feeling hopeful, confident, and accepting) than emotions of disgust (i.e., feeling repulsed, contemptible, and abhorred).	0.7% (2)	6.6% (20)	11.8% (36)	58.4% (178)	22.6% (69)
... experienced more of the emotions of surprise (i.e., feeling amazed, astonished, and caught off guard) than emotions of anticipation (i.e., feeling eager, expectant, and looking forward).	5.3% (16)	23.7% (72)	23.4% (71)	34.5% (105)	13.2% (40)

¹²⁸ Plutchik, “The Nature of Emotions,” (4 July 2013).

However, in regard to anger and fear: 46.8% experienced more fear than anger; whereas 34.8% experienced more anger than fear. What caused the split on this question about fear and anger, especially since the other questions were answered with a fair amount of consistency? See Chart 5.7 below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided or Not Applicable	Agree	Strongly agree
... experienced more of the emotions of anger (i.e., feeling irritable and resentful) than emotions of fear (i.e., feeling doubtful, nervous, and tense).	16.6% (50)	30.2% (91)	18.3% (55)	26.2% (79)	8.6% (26)

The answer was found when the timing of joining a Lutheran church was isolated (see Chart 5.8 below). In other words, among those that decided to attend a Lutheran church at the end of their journey into Lutheran thought, 45.3% experienced emotions of anger whereas 35.2% experienced emotions of fear. Conversely, among those that decided to attend a Lutheran church at the beginning of their journey into Lutheran thought, 53.2% experienced emotions of fear whereas 34.2% experienced emotions of anger.

Emotions of those who decided to attend Lutheran churches at the end of their journeys into Lutheran thought.							
... experienced more of the emotions of anger (i.e., feeling irritable and resentful) than emotions of fear (i.e., feeling doubtful, nervous, and tense).	17.6% (9)	17.6% (9)	19.6% (10)	35.3% (18)	9.8% (5)	3.02	51
Emotions of those who decided to attend Lutheran Churches at the beginning of their journeys into Lutheran thought.							
... experienced more of the emotions of anger (i.e., feeling irritable and resentful) than emotions of fear (i.e., feeling doubtful, nervous, and tense).	15.2% (12)	38.0% (30)	12.7% (10)	26.6% (21)	7.6% (6)	2.73	79

This special focus was an area that would need to be further studied in the qualitative survey. What caused the split on this question about fear and anger? Why did those who waited to join a Lutheran church have more anger? Why did those who joined a Lutheran church immediately have more fear?

Special Focus: Quantitative Details on the Overall Flow of the Journey

Toward the end of the quantitative survey, research participants were asked to assess the overall flow of the journey from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheran thought. They were given several matrixes of drop-down menus at different points in their journeys, in order to assign experiential value at the particular points in their journeys. The respondents indicated that their journeys went from ‘good’ at the beginning to ‘very good’ at the end. However, when isolating those that have completed the journey into Lutheran thought, two interesting things developed. Those that joined a Lutheran church at the beginning of the journey into Lutheran thought had an overall good journey ending with the journey being very good. See Chart 5.9 below.

Those who have finished the journeys into Lutheran thought and joined Lutheran churches at the beginning of the journeys.

	Very Good	Good	Bad	Very Bad	N/A
Considering Leaving Evangelicalism	11.9% (7)	40.7% (24)	32.2% (19)	10.2% (6)	5.1% (3)
Beginning Stage of Leaving Evangelicalism	13.8% (8)	39.7% (23)	31.0% (18)	13.8% (8)	1.7% (1)
Midway Stage of Leaving Evangelicalism	15.5% (9)	51.7% (30)	19.0% (11)	10.3% (6)	3.4% (2)
Final Stage of Leaving Evangelicalism	43.1% (25)	34.5% (20)	10.3% (6)	12.1% (7)	0.0% (0)
Arriving in Lutheranism	81.0% (47)	15.5% (9)	1.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.7% (1)

Conversely, those that joined a Lutheran church at the end of the journey into Lutheran thought had a journey that started out good and then declined until it became very good at the end. Please note Chart 5.10 below, where this decline has been indicated.

Those who have finished the journeys into Lutheran thought and joined Lutheran churches at the end of the journeys.

Overall Experience	Very Good	Good	Bad	Very Bad	N/A
Considering Leaving Evangelicalism	11.9% (5)	40.5% (17)	23.8% (10)	16.7% (7)	7.1% (3)
Beginning Stage of Leaving Evangelicalism	4.8% (2)	42.9% (18)	35.7% (15)	9.5% (4)	7.1% (3)
Midway Stage of Leaving Evangelicalism	7.1% (3)	38.1% (16)	38.1% (16)	11.9% (5)	4.8% (2)
Final Stage of Leaving Evangelicalism	26.2% (11)	33.3% (14)	21.4% (9)	16.7% (7)	2.4% (1)
Arriving in Lutheranism	81.0% (34)	14.3% (6)	0.0% (0)	2.4% (1)	2.4% (1)

This special focus was an area that would need to be further studied in the qualitative survey. Why did those who joined a Lutheran church early on in their journeys into Lutheran thought have an overall positive experience, whereas those who waited to join a Lutheran church at the end of their journeys into Lutheran thought had what seems to be an unpleasant experience at the midway point? Is this related to the anger and fear responses in the previous section?

Quantitative Conclusion

The quantitative research results certainly yielded a plethora of results and answers. The main problem thesis was confirmed by the first quantitative survey. However, the

quantitative results also generated more questions, questions that needed to be addressed in the second qualitative survey.

Analysis of the Qualitative Findings

It could be said that the main intent of the quantitative survey was to prove the problem thesis and that the chief intent of the qualitative survey was to validate and fulfill the purpose thesis. The purpose thesis:

The purpose of this Major Applied Research Project (MAP) is to verify if American Evangelicals indeed are experiencing emotional struggles, linguistic confusions, worldview changes, and epistemological shifts as they journey into Confessional Lutheran thought. If they indeed are experiencing these shifts, changes, confusions, and struggles, the intent of this MAP is to learn about these categories—from American Evangelicals who have begun making this shift into Lutheran thought, as well as Evangelicals who already have made the shift. Furthermore, this MAP will attempt to identify patterns in the journey from Evangelicalism to Lutheranism. By diagnosing possible patterns and identifying common characteristics in the journey, the findings will provide insights and comfort for those who are experiencing the journey. This study also will glean ways in which Lutheran pastors can more effectively care for and shepherd these individuals who are in the journey towards Lutheranism.

Thus, since the problem thesis was verified by the quantitative survey, the findings of the qualitative survey that follow will attempt to flesh out the motives, reasons, and specific answers behind the quantitative data. The following paragraphs are the qualitative findings that have been assessed, prepared, and formulated by the Analysis Team.

Qualitative Responses on Epistemology

As indicated in the quantitative survey, 94.7% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed that they shifted from where they acquired their Christian teaching when journeying

from American Evangelicalism to Confessional Lutheran thought. However, what exactly did this shift entail?

Generally speaking, while in American Evangelicalism survey participants acquired Christian teaching from popular best-selling authors, authors who seemed to be in the Evangelical bookstore top-ten lists at one point or another. More specifically these authors are not historic, but currently alive, with the exception of C.S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer. Participants also acquired a majority of their Christian teaching from what their local pastors were teaching.

Generally speaking, survey participants who are journeying or have journeyed into Confessional Lutheranism seemed to have a balance between present-day teaching sources (i.e., *Issues, Etc.*, *Worldview Everlasting*, *White Horse Inn*, *Fighting for the Faith*, and *Concordia Publishing House*) and historical Lutheran teachers (i.e., Martin Luther, Martin Chemnitz, C.F.W. Walther, Hermann Sasse, and Bo Giertz). Finally, participants seemed to be much more specific and selective in what they read and who they learn from compared to how they operated before in American Evangelicalism.

Before examining the qualitative responses on worldview, I want to note several important things regarding the qualitative responses on epistemology. Because journeying individuals acquire their new knowledge and teaching from dead Lutheran theologians rather than from contemporary American Evangelical authors, it is no wonder why individuals experienced the seismic epistemological shifts and worldview changes. This is most certainly due to many of the tenets of American Evangelicalism arising in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, long after theologians like Luther and Chemnitz. However, in the case of

theologians like C.F.W. Walther and others, these Lutheran theologians often were responding and reacting to many of the streams of American Evangelicalism while they were first beginning. Furthermore, in regard to the Lutheran media sources, it has been commonly stated that they are ‘old theology with new technology.’ Therefore, American Evangelicals journeying into Confessional Lutheran thought are being removed from the blurred river of American Evangelicalism, with its top-ten lists ranging from Pentecostal teachers to Church Growth teachers, to a much narrower spectrum of orthodox Lutheranism. In other words, there is a shift from the formal principle of the Bible and American Evangelical top-ten books to the Bible and the theology of The Book of Concord. This shift is resulting in a move in the material principle as well. The change is with the central focus of the ‘changed life’ in American Evangelicalism to the central focus of ‘Christ crucified for the forgiveness of sins’ in Lutheranism.¹²⁹

Qualitative Responses on Worldview

As indicated in the quantitative and qualitative surveys, there was a shift in sources of knowledge. Therefore, what did this shift in knowledge sources change in the respondents’ worldviews?

When asked what changes happened in how they read and understood the Bible, the research participants in the qualitative survey stated that the biggest change in how they read the Bible was in their new understanding of Law and Gospel. Thus, this understanding of Law and Gospel helped respondents to see that they previously read the Bible as a ‘how to’

¹²⁹ Parton, *The Defense Never Rests: A Lawyer’s Quest for the Gospel*, 17, 23.

handbook on Christian living. Now though, respondents see that the Bible is not about the Christian (i.e., me), but about Jesus Christ and His grace for them (i.e., for me).

This assessment of how the proper distinction between Law and Gospel impacts the reading of the Bible makes theological sense. Indeed, how one distinguishes Law and Gospel “provides a wonderful insight for understanding all of Holy Scripture correctly. In fact without this knowledge Scripture is and remains a sealed book.”¹³⁰

When asked what changes happened in how they viewed the Christian faith (i.e., God, Salvation, etc.), the research participants in the qualitative survey stated that the biggest change was in how they saw salvation not depending on themselves and their works, but on Jesus Christ and his atoning work for them. This change brought about tremendous relief and assurance, according to the participants. Furthermore, there was a change in what respondents viewed as sacraments. While in American Evangelicalism, altar calls, sinner’s prayer, and making decisions for Christ had saving power. Since the journey into Lutheranism though, the Lord’s Supper and Baptism, along with the Word, are now viewed as God’s saving action. When asked what changes happened in how they viewed themselves (i.e., their anthropology, opinions of self, etc.), the research participants in the qualitative survey stated that the biggest change was in how they viewed their fallen-ness; they saw themselves much worse than they previously assessed themselves to be. Also, the respondents expressed feeling relief and contentment since they learned that they didn’t have to strive and couldn’t acquire a sinless condition; they now saw themselves simultaneously as a sinner and a saint.

¹³⁰ C.F.W. Walther, *Law & Gospel: How to Read and Apply the Bible*, trans. Christian Tiews (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2010), 69.

This assessment of seeing oneself more sinful resulting in relief and contentment sounds counterintuitive, but it makes sense theologically speaking. The reason being, “when we realize just how lost we are, then we cling to the cross, trusting Christ to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. This is saving faith, the theology of the cross.”¹³¹

It is important to break at this point and address several things in this qualitative data. The changes in participants seeing themselves much worse than they previously assessed themselves to be is a reversal of American Evangelicalism’s Finneyistic diminished view of original sin and its consequences. The change in the respondents seeing salvation not depending on themselves and their works, but on Jesus Christ and his atoning work for them, is a change from American Evangelicalism’s semi-Pelagian free will paradigm to Lutheranism’s divine monergism. The change in what the respondents viewed the sacraments to be and how they viewed the sacraments, is a movement away from American Evangelicalism’s Baptist disregard of and struggle with the efficacious sacraments to a Lutheran sacramental emphasis. The change in the respondents feeling relief and contentment due to their realization that they couldn’t acquire a sinless condition but were simultaneously sinner-saint is a dismissal of American Evangelicalism’s Keswick focus on the renewed Christian life. The change in how they read and understood the Bible, as not being about the Christian, but about Jesus Christ and His grace, is a movement away from American Evangelicalism’s emphasis of personal experience, as expressed by Carl Trueman, to the objective doctrinal truths of Christianity.

¹³¹ Gene Edward Veith, *The Spirituality of the Cross: The Way of the First Evangelicals* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 60.

I cannot stress enough the importance of the data expressed in the qualitative survey section on worldview; for it actually reverses, overturns, replaces, and/or changes six out of the seven characteristics of American Evangelicalism, the characteristics that I laid forth in American Evangelicalism's definition in Chapter Three. Keep in mind, though, that the definition of American Evangelicalism in Chapter Three is derived from seven historical streams/movements that were identified by six different theologians and pastors. In other words, the definition of American Evangelicalism, with its seven characteristics, has been inadvertently affirmed by the worldview qualitative survey responses given by the research participants, as well as affirmed by the research participants in the sociological and theological synopsis portion of Chapter Five. Therefore, I assert that the definition of American Evangelicalism as expressed in Chapter Three and affirmed in the research is a fair and accurate definition of the national-cultural form of American Evangelicalism today. This means that each of the characteristics of American Evangelicalism are overturned, reversed, replaced, and/or changed due to the epistemological shifts that occur when individuals journey into Confessional Lutheran thought.

Qualitative Responses on Linguistics

From the first survey, 84.2% of respondents stated that the biggest linguistic challenge was that familiar words within American Evangelicalism had a different emphasis in Confessional Lutheranism. In the qualitative survey, respondents were asked which words experienced a change in emphasis. Furthermore, they were asked to share how they understood these words within American Evangelicalism and how they understood the same words in Lutheranism?

Generally speaking, respondents shared that the biggest linguistic emphasis change was in who does the verbs. Otherwise stated, in American Evangelicalism the respondents saw themselves doing the majority of Christian verbs, and within Confessional Lutheranism the respondents now see God doing the majority of the verbs. Though it may seem minor, the shift in who does the verbs in Christianity is typically evidence of a change from ascent theology to descent theology. Otherwise stated, is Christianity some kind of escalator endeavor where mankind strives “to rise up more and more, closer and closer to God’s level?”¹³² It may seem like it when the Christian is never the direct object of the verbs, but constantly the one who is to perform the verbs toward God. Alas, Christianity is not the Christian ascending upon the Holy One; rather it is the Holy One descending to the Christian. As proposed by Luther, Christianity is a pattern of continual receptivity as God delivers forgiveness to mankind.¹³³

Further details of the linguistic emphasis changes are listed below in Table 5.1.

Word	American Evangelical Emphasis	Confessional Lutheran Emphasis
Grace	Connected to my decision	God’s gift alone
Faith	Self-generated	God’s gift to me
Baptism	Mark of my obedience/my action	God delivering forgiving grace

¹³² Eugene F. A. Klug, *Lift High This Cross: The Theology of Martin Luther* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2003), 48.

¹³³ John W. Kleinig, *Grace Upon Grace: Spirituality for Today* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2008), 9-16.

Communion	An act of my remembrance	Christ's true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins
Sanctification	-After Justification -My work	-Christ's action along with Justification -Work of the Spirit
Gospel	What we need to hear in order to make a decision	Christ Crucified for the forgiveness of our sins
Sinner	Unsaved People	All People
Sin	-My Actions -Behavior	-Very core of being -Condition
Vocation	Serving God through a ministerial calling	Serving my neighbor through roles where I am placed
Means of Grace	Sinner's Prayer and Altar Call	Word and Sacrament

As is true for the worldview changes, the changes in linguistics also demonstrate changes to the characteristics of American Evangelicalism, changes in the seven characteristics given in the definition in Chapter Three. The emphasis change shows a strengthening of the participants' understanding of original sin and its consequences. The emphasis change shows a dismissal of semi-Pelagian free will theology. The emphasis change shows a change in their views of the sacraments, and so forth.

Even though 60-70% of participant respondents had other linguistic struggles, the Analysis Team was still interested to hear the qualitative responses to other linguistic confusion arising from the movement into Confessional Lutheranism.

From the first survey, 61.2% of respondents stated that familiar words used in Evangelicalism were no longer being used in Lutheranism. Participants in the qualitative survey were asked which words are no longer being used in Confessional Lutheranism, only if this question was applicable to them. The most consistently listed words no longer used in Lutheranism, as indicated by respondents, are as follows: decision, decision for Christ, free will, saved, baptism of the Holy Spirit, invitation, next level, accountability, rapture, anointed, born-again, revival, living the Gospel, altar call, sinner's prayer, purpose, personal relationship, rededicating life, spirit-led, surrender, and so forth. Generally speaking, respondents indicated a diminishing of directional phrases and feeling phrases as they entered Lutheranism; phrases such as: going to the next level, God led me, the Spirit led me, God laid it on my heart, I feel led, I feel His presence, and so forth.

In the case of what words are no longer used, it is interesting to note the dismissal of Keswick language, as well as the dismissal of semi-Pelagian free will language, and even the dismissal of some Dispensational language and items of Finney's new measures.

From the first survey, 69.5% of respondents stated that they were challenged with learning and understanding new words in Confessional Lutheranism. Participants in the qualitative survey were asked what new words they had to learn in Confessional Lutheranism, only if this question was applicable to them. Generally speaking, respondents indicated having to learn the following new words: Law and Gospel, means of grace, liturgy, vocation, simul iustus et peccator, catechism, synod, absolution, justification, sanctification, Lord's Supper, confession, solas, creeds, 3 uses of the Law, indicative and imperative,

various Latin/Greek phrases, various Liturgy words, and so forth. Generally speaking, respondents indicated that the new words tended to be older and multisyllabic.

In summary, the linguistic alterations are evidence of the epistemological shifts and worldview changes. In other words, the language alterations are linguistic manifestations of the changes to the seven characteristics of American Evangelicalism as the individuals journeyed into Confessional Lutheranism.

Qualitative Responses on Emotions

As indicated in the quantitative findings on emotion, those who started attending a Lutheran church early in their journeys into Lutheran thought experienced more fear (i.e., feeling doubtful, nervous, and tense) than anger (i.e., feeling irritable and resentful); whereas those who waited to join a Lutheran church towards the end of their journeys experienced more anger than fear.

Research participants who conducted most of their journeys into Lutheran thought while attending a Lutheran church were asked in the qualitative survey why they experienced more fear than anger. Generally speaking, participants experienced more fear than anger because there were many new things to process, such as understanding the sacraments, understanding the liturgy, and understanding absolution. More specifically, the fear was due to anxiety of the unknown. Respondents also expressed fear due to not wanting to be deceived. (i.e., I was wrong in American Evangelicalism, could I be wrong and deceived in

my new journey into Lutheranism?). Finally, fear was surprisingly attached to the Gospel; the Gospel seemed too good to be true.¹³⁴

Research participants who conducted most of their journeys into Lutheran thought while remaining in an Evangelical church were asked in the qualitative survey why they experienced more anger than fear. Generally speaking, participants experienced more anger than fear because they felt that they were deceived during all their years within American Evangelicalism. Participants felt they wasted years and finances on false truths. Thus they became angry when, due to family ties to the church (i.e., spouse, kids in youth group, extended family), they had to remain in their American Evangelical churches.

Special Focus: Qualitative Details on the Overall Flow of the Journey

As indicated previously, those that attended Evangelical churches throughout their journeys into Confessional Lutheran thought experienced a decline in experiential quality at the midway stage. For the research participants who indeed experienced a decline at the midway stage, the decline was due to anger and frustration that was a result of the feeling of being stuck in American Evangelicalism. Furthermore, respondents indicated that there was tension at this midway stage because they found themselves at a difficult transition point where they embraced Confessional Lutheranism, yet were finding it difficult to let go of American Evangelicalism for various reasons. Some of the reasons respondents gave were:

¹³⁴ In regard to fear being attached to the Gospel and the Gospel seeming too good to be true, Gerhard Forde, in his book, *On Being A Theologian Of The Cross*, speaks to this fear and hesitancy on page 27: “There is something in us that is always suspicious of or rebels against the gift. The defense that it is too cheap, easy, or morally dangerous is already the protest of the Old Adam and Eve who fear—rightly!—that their house is under radical attack.”

difficulty leaving family and friends, struggle in leaving an official church position, and so forth.

When asking research participants who conducted the majority of their journeys into Confessional Lutheran thought while attending Lutheran church why the overall flow of their journeys went from good to very good, they stated that it was due to having plenty of available resources and a Lutheran community to support them in their journeys. Also, the respondents indicated that the pastors in the Lutheran churches were knowledgeable and able to adequately answer questions.

Qualitative Conclusions

Whereas the quantitative research results certainly affirmed the problem thesis, the qualitative results from the second survey definitely fleshed out the reasons, motives, and descriptions of the quantitative data. Thus, it is in the qualitative data that further insight is gleaned, insights that not only comfort those within the journey to Confessional Lutheranism, but insights for pastors who are attempting to shepherd these journeying individuals.

Comprehensive Qualitative and Quantitative Summary

What has been learned from the quantitative and qualitative research? The research has painted a statistical picture of American Evangelicals journeying into Confessional Lutheran thought, as well as a descriptive picture. Therefore, a conclusive summary of all the survey results can be stated as follows:

The journey for an American Evangelical into Confessional Lutheran thought is a 1- to 4-year journey that is difficult due to Evangelicals moving out of 15-30 years of Evangelicalism and away from approximately four different theological movements. The journey begins when American Evangelicals have a crisis of faith typically due to despair over works righteousness. While the crisis of faith gives them instability within Evangelicalism, they are influenced to examine Confessional Lutheranism by

either coming across Lutheran media or being directed to Lutheranism by family and friends. Thus, the daunting journey begins as American Evangelicals separate themselves from popular top-ten authors and begin to explore the writings of dead theologians, many who are unheard of and unfamiliar. While reading these new authors and wrestling with the Scriptures, they begin to understand the Bible with new categories such as Law and Gospel. This new understanding of Law and Gospel drastically changes how they view the Bible, themselves, and the Christian faith in general. They see themselves as great sinners, but they also see that they have a greater Savior, Jesus Christ. They learn that the sin problem is not resolved by yielding more, surrendering more, or trying harder by their work. They learn that absolution for their sins is not found in decision based means of grace such as the altar call. Rather, they learn and travel to what they once believed to be powerless: God's powerful and efficacious Word and Sacraments. As they are interacting with these new sources and experiencing changes in how they view reality, their language begins to change as well. The biggest change is their emphasis of words and sentences. Instead of talking about themselves as the subject of sentences and doing all the verbs, they begin talking about God as the subject of the sentences and doing all the verbs to them. They also tend to abandon certain words and then are faced with the task of learning new words. Finally, there are emotional concerns that are raised as well. For those who tend to join Confessional Lutheran churches early on, they experience a degree of fear due to the unknown; but overall they have a pleasant journey. However, those who are unable to join Confessional Lutheran churches and stay in Evangelical churches as they process Lutheran thought will experience anger and a negative decline in their journeys. This negative dip typically will occur after two years of wrestling with Confessional Lutheran thought and will be primarily due to them being either stuck in Evangelicalism or having a difficult time letting go. Alas, the letting go is not only a letting go of American Evangelicalism's theology and practice, but for many it is a loss of family and friends coupled with subtle persecution. However, there is a bright side. Even though many of these former American Evangelicals lament the lost time that they spent in synergistic theology, they feel an overwhelming peace, freedom, comfort, and assurance as they come to understand the objective Christ-centered Gospel and Sacraments within Lutheranism.

This summary statement combines the definition of American Evangelicalism, the problem thesis, the purpose thesis, the tenets of Confessional Lutheranism, the theological basis of Chapter Two, the theoretical basis of Chapter Three, as well as the epistemological, worldview, linguistic, and emotional changes that occur when American Evangelicals journey into Confessional Lutheran thought.

Suggestions to Pastors and Journeying Evangelicals

Up to this point, the third qualitative survey has remained relatively unmentioned. The reason being is because the third qualitative survey was a survey asking research participants to give advice, encouragements, thoughts, and/or insight to those who are currently going through the journey and to pastors who are attempting to minister to these journeying individuals.

After examining all the feedback from survey three, I will be taking phrases from the research feedback and compiling it into a comprehensive letter. Thus, the recommendations are not from me personally, but from the research participants as a collective whole.

The collective message from the research participants to those who are currently going through the journey into Confessional Lutheran thought is:

Dear Journeying Evangelical Friend:

As you journey into Confessional Lutheran thought we want to tell you that you are not alone. We have gone through this journey and want to tell you that it is worth it. Indeed, it is difficult and it takes time. If you haven't already, be prepared to feel ignorant as you struggle to unlearn what you were taught in American Evangelicalism and as you are catechized into Confessional Lutheranism. Hang in there and be patient. If you haven't found a Confessional Lutheran church and a Lutheran pastor, do this as soon as possible. Don't try to do it all on your own, there are many Lutherans out there who are ready and able to help you. Study the Word, and study the Lutheran Confessions. Read, read, read, and listen. Ask questions. Be bold in your learning. Cling to the Word of God; your solace is there. This journey

can seem scary, but the Word of God is unchanging, even if your comprehension of it is changing. It's worth it; the Gospel in its clarity as Jesus taught it in simplicity is worth it! Remain steadfast.

In Christ, *The Becoming Lutheran Research Participants*

The collective message from the research participants to pastors who are currently attempting to minister to former Evangelicals joining their churches is:

Dear Confessional Lutheran Pastor,

As you receive former Evangelicals like us, we humbly ask that you be patient with us. While it may not look like it, we have been through a lot to get to your church. To you it may look like we are high maintenance, which is absolutely true. We will be high maintenance at first, but once we are catechized, we are certain that we will be your biggest advocates for the Lutheran theology you preach and teach. Therefore, please don't assume that our questions are meant to challenge you. Don't assume that we know the basics, we often don't. Please hear our questions, and then explain everything; please teach us. You can be theological with us. Not only do we need your patience, but we need you to remain steadfast to your church's confession. Please don't water Lutheranism down. You can preach the Law strongly to us and the Gospel more strongly still. Be Lutheran, and don't be ashamed of this! We don't want Evangelicalism. Teach the liturgy; teach the Small Catechism. Point us to Christ crucified for that is what we all need. Thank you in advance for being our shepherd.

In Christ, *The Becoming Lutheran Research Participants*

Conclusion

Chapter Five has given an overview of the quantitative survey results and the qualitative results. Furthermore, the voices of the research participants have been heard in their recommendations to fellow journeying Evangelicals and to Lutheran pastors.

Chapter Six will conclude this Major Applied Research Project by offering a summary, as well as sharing the contributions of the project and possible further study that is needed.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Chapter Six will be exploring the contributions of this MAP to ministry, as well as its contributions to me personally and professionally. This chapter also will explore recommendations on how additional research should be carried out and what areas need further investigation.

Contributions to Ministry

I believe this Major Applied Research Project has made a valuable quantitative contribution to the study of American Evangelicals journeying into Confessional Lutheran thought. While there is certainly a bibliographical shortage of literature on this subject with respect to Evangelicals moving towards Lutheranism, the two documents that were mentioned in Chapter Three surely do a fine job of describing the qualitative aspects of the journey. Otherwise stated, this MAP agrees with the qualitative assessment of both the *Wittenberg Confessions* and *The Defense Never Rests*. However, this MAP contributes a plethora of quantitative data that is not present in these two books. Furthermore, it statistically confirms the struggles and difficulties of the journey. Finally, instead of the qualitative data only being based on a handful of testimonies, this MAP contributes qualitative data from more than 300 research participants.

This MAP also functions in many practical ways. As mentioned in Chapter Five, it serves as information to aid individuals as they journey into Confessional Lutheranism. It answers questions such as: How long is the journey? What changes will occur? What hardship may befall? What encouragements can one expect? In regard to pastoral care, it

helps pastors understand the journey as well, so as to allow them to better minister to these journeying individuals.

As a result of the findings of this MAP I have been able to do two interviews with *Worldview Everlasting TV* sharing the results of this study. I also have published the results of this study online and even created a Lutheran Catechesis Aid.¹³⁵ The Catechesis Aid was not designed to replace the catechism curriculum of the local Lutheran parish, but was created as an educational tool intended for former American Evangelicals. It is to be laid alongside the Small Catechism and used in catechesis classes. The Catechesis Aid is intended to bring forth the findings of this study, illuminate the findings, and then drive the person back to the Small Catechism for further study.

In regard to future plans, I have been working on a website to host the Catechesis Aid, the research findings, and the WEtv interviews, as well as provide several forums for discussion. I have further plans of creating an abridged version of this Major Applied Research Project for a possible journal article and possibly working this MAP into a book. Finally, the findings of this study have been requested by one of the committee members of the LCMS Colloquy Board, in order to better inform them when dealing with American Evangelical pastors wanting to colloquize into the LCMS. The possible abridged version or the full manuscript will be sent to the committee upon the acceptance of this MAP.

Contributions to Personal and Professional Growth

The task of conducting the research and writing this Major Applied Research Project has been an incredible, yet rewarding, challenge for me. This MAP has not only refined me

¹³⁵ See Appendix Six.

in the areas of conducting quantitative and qualitative research, but has sharpened me theologically speaking. The MAP has provided me with greater discernment with respect to the areas of epistemology, worldview, linguistics, and emotions.

As indicated in the Preface of this Major Applied Research Project, I have been on a journey into Confessional Lutheran thought myself. As I write this research paper, I have just completed the colloquy process into The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. I, like the research participants, have been going through epistemological, worldview, linguistic, and emotional changes over the last seven years.

The implications of this study show me that I am not alone in this transition and have confirmed the shifts, changes, and confusion that I have gone through as well. Furthermore, the findings in this study have helped me articulate myself to the LCMS District and The LCMS National Colloquy Board. I have been given a tremendous gift to study the journey with 300 other individuals, as I have been going through different aspects of this journey too.

As I anticipate future service in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, I believe that this doctoral program and this MAP will enable me to professionally contribute to the LCMS in regard to receiving journeying Evangelicals. If it is true, and I believe it is, that “young Christians are going over to Catholicism and high Anglicanism/Lutheranism in droves, despite growing up in low Protestant churches,”¹³⁶ then I hope that my training through the

¹³⁶ Rebecca VanDoodewaard, “Young Evangelicals Are Getting High,” 17 July 2013, <http://thechristianpundit.org/2013/07/17/young-evangelicals-are-getting-high/> (13 August 2013).

Concordia St. Louis doctoral program and this MAP will allow me to share the research and findings of this study to better position LCMS churches in receiving young Evangelicals coming into Confessional Lutheranism.

Recommendations

In regard to recommendations to American Evangelicals currently on the journey into Confessional Lutheran thought, I commend the research findings and the suggestions ‘to American Evangelicals’ in Chapter Five, as well as the quantitative and qualitative analysis summaries in Appendix Two and Appendix Four.

In regard to recommendations to Lutheran pastors currently ministering or planning on ministering to these journeying American Evangelicals, I commend the research findings and the suggestions ‘to pastors’ in Chapter Five, the quantitative and qualitative analysis summaries in Appendix Two and Appendix Four, and the Lutheran Catechesis Aid in Appendix Six.

I have received four requests from interested participants for further study and work on this subject, during the process of working on this MAP. The first is the question of how American Evangelicals adapt to Confessional Lutheran ‘liturgy.’ The second is to enlist a Lutheran educator to help revise the Lutheran Catechesis Aid so that its language more efficiently communicates to laymen. The third is whether or not American Evangelicals journeying into Confessional Lutheran thought actually remain in Lutheranism or if they continue to journey into Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodox traditions. Fourth, the question has arisen in regard to the disposition of these new Lutherans towards Evangelicals after they have made the journey. More specifically: How do these new Lutherans respond

and react to other Evangelicals? Do they employ an anti-Evangelical polemic due to overt zealotry, or do they exhibit forbearance? Furthermore, what elements of their former Evangelical views do they find hardest to abandon, or perhaps, bring with them in some form or other? Do any of these Evangelical beliefs that they once rejected resurface at some point after joining a Lutheran church? All four of these subjects would constitute valuable areas of study, areas that exceed the parameters of this study, yet areas that I would fully support the development of in future studies conducted by myself or others.

I might add one brief note. With respect to American Evangelicals journeying into Confessional Lutheran liturgy, this past June I took it upon myself to do a study on this topic in fulfillment of an independent study at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. With this study I was able to interview 125 former American Evangelicals who have entered into Lutheran churches and are practicing the Lutheran liturgy. While Chapter Six does not allow me the time to fully disclose all the findings of this liturgy study, let it be said though that there was considerable overlap between the findings of this MAP and that particular independent study.¹³⁷

Summary

This project has brought me to the depths of epistemology and the intricate workings of epistemic assumptions, epistemological circularity, and epistemological defenses. This project has brought me into the subjective areas of emotion and their basic opposite. This project has brought me into the historical streams of American Evangelicalism to the current

¹³⁷ See Appendix Seven for the results of the independent study titled “Becoming a Liturgical Lutheran: Exploring the Journey of American Evangelicals into Confessional Lutheran Liturgy.”

theological concerns within American Evangelicalism today. This project also has challenged me to know what I believe and why I am a Lutheran pastor; it has driven me back to the Confessions and ultimately back to the Scriptures. This project also has brought me into contact with hundreds of people across the United States who have searched, studied, wept, rejoiced, won, and lost so much in their quests for the truth of Jesus Christ. I am so very thankful for this opportunity to learn and humbled by the interactions of so many fine people on their pilgrimage into Confessional Lutheranism.

I hope that the research findings, recommendations, and insights are beneficial to God's church, and all those involved in the journey of *Becoming Lutheran*.

+ Soli Deo Gloria+

APPENDIX ONE

BECOMING LUTHERAN SURVEY #1 (QUANTITATIVE)

Welcome:

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your feedback and insights are most appreciated. The purpose of this survey is to learn about your journey from Evangelicalism to Lutheran thought, in order to gather information for a Major Applied Research Project at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri.

This survey consists of six sections (22 questions) and should take around 10-20 minutes to complete. After answering each question, simply click the 'next' button found at the bottom of the page. Please be assured that this information will be kept confidential.

Again, thank you for your time and input. It is most appreciated.

Rev. Matt Richard
Sidney, Montana

General Information:

In order to know a little more about your context, please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

- 1) What is your church affiliation background in Evangelicalism? (Choose as many as apply to you.)
 - a) Assembly of God
 - b) Association of Vineyard Churches
 - c) Baptist
 - d) Calvary Chapel
 - e) Christian Missionary Alliance
 - f) Church of God
 - g) Congregational Church
 - h) Evangelical Free
 - i) Nazarene
 - j) Non-denominational
 - k) United Brethren in Christ
 - l) Wesleyan Church
 - m) Other: _____

- 2) Of the following movements and influences that may be found within Evangelicalism, which ones have you been impacted by? (Choose as many as apply to you.)

Generalized Definitions:

Charismatism: A movement that emphasizes the Holy Spirit and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Church Growth: A movement that uses certain sociological, psychological and practical principles in order to grow the church.

Dispensationalism: A movement that teaches that God interacts with man throughout time through different dispensations.

Emergent Church: A movement that crosses many denominational/theological lines and desires to reach those who share a postmodern worldview.

Fundamentalism: A historical movement that defended the Bible. Today it is commonly used as a pejorative (i.e., derogatory) term to belittle those that have legalistic tendencies.

Holiness Movement: A movement that teaches the belief that it is possible to live free of voluntary sin through a second work of grace.

Pietism: A movement that emphasizes progress in good works over a right understanding of doctrine.

Revivalism: A movement that seeks to reawaken spiritual fervor. (i.e., origin of altar calls).

Word Faith: A movement that teaches that good health and long life are promised to those who follow God's will.

- a) Charismatic/Pentecostalism
 - b) Church Growth Movement
 - c) Dispensationalism
 - d) Emergent Church Movement
 - e) Fundamentalism
 - f) Holiness Movement
 - g) Pietism
 - h) Revivalism
 - i) Word Faith Movement
 - j) Unsure
 - k) Other: _____
- 3) As you already know, this study is examining the journey of individuals from American Evangelicalism to Lutheran thought. Where would you describe yourself in this journey?
- a) Neither interested in Lutheranism nor the journey into it
 - b) Considering the journey
 - c) Just beginning the journey
 - d) In the middle of the journey

- e) Just finishing the journey
 - f) Finished the journey and growing in Lutheran thought
- 4) Before beginning your journey towards Lutheran thought, how long had you been an Evangelical?
- a) Less than 1 year
 - b) 1-5 years
 - c) 5-10 years
 - d) 10-15 years
 - e) 15-20 years
 - f) 20-30 years
 - g) 30-40 years
 - h) 40-50 years
 - i) More than 50 years
- 5) How long have you been in the journey or how long was your journey from American Evangelicalism to Lutheran thought?
- a) 0-3 months
 - b) 3-6 months
 - c) 6 months–1 year
 - d) 1-2 years
 - e) 2-4 years
 - f) 4-6 years
 - g) 6-8 years
 - h) 8-10 years
 - i) More than 10 years
- 6) Are you currently attending a Lutheran church that upholds the Lutheran Confessions as expressed in The Book of Concord?
- a) Yes
 - b) No

- 7) What is your status at your Lutheran church? (Choose as many as apply to you.)
- a) I am attending, but not a member of the church at this time
 - b) I am a member
 - c) I'm serving in an official capacity (e.g., elder, deacon, Sunday school teacher, etc.)
 - d) I am a pastor of a Lutheran church
 - e) Other: _____
- 8) When did you make the decision to attend a Lutheran church?
- a) Before the journey into Lutheran thought began
 - b) At the beginning of the journey into Lutheran thought
 - c) At the middle of the journey into Lutheran thought
 - d) At the end of the journey into Lutheran thought
 - e) Other: _____
- 9) What is the denominational affiliation of the church that you are now attending?
- a) American Association of Lutheran Churches
 - b) Association of Free Lutheran Churches
 - c) Church of the Lutheran Brethren
 - d) Church of the Lutheran Confessions
 - e) Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
 - f) Evangelical Lutheran Synod
 - g) Lutheran Church Missouri Synod
 - h) Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ
 - i) North American Lutheran Church
 - j) Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod
 - k) Other: _____

Emotional Struggles:

The following questions deal specifically with emotional struggles that may or may not occur in one's journey from Evangelicalism to Lutheran Thought.

10) In my 'overall journey' from American Evangelicalism into Lutheranism, I experienced struggles in my emotions (feelings linked to the changes, shifts, and challenges).

- a)** Strongly disagree
- b)** Disagree
- c)** Undecided
- d)** Agree
- e)** Strongly agree

11) More specifically, in my 'overall journey' from American Evangelicalism into Lutheranism, I:

- . . . experienced more of the emotions of sadness (i.e., feeling dejected, depressed, and down) than emotions of joy (i.e., feeling cheerful, content, optimistic, and relieved).
 - a)** Strongly disagree
 - b)** Disagree
 - c)** Undecided
 - d)** Agree
 - e)** Strongly agree
- . . . experienced more of the emotions of anger (i.e., feeling irritable and resentful) than emotions of fear (i.e., feeling doubtful, nervous, and tense).
 - a)** Strongly disagree
 - b)** Disagree
 - c)** Undecided
 - d)** Agree
 - e)** Strongly agree
- . . . experienced more of the emotions of trust (i.e. feeling hopeful, confident, and accepting) than emotions of disgust (i.e., feeling repulsed, contemptible, and abhorred).
 - a)** Strongly disagree
 - b)** Disagree
 - c)** Undecided
 - d)** Agree
 - e)** Strongly agree

- . . . experienced more of the emotions of surprise (i.e., feeling amazed, astonished, and caught off guard) than emotions of anticipation (i.e., feeling eager, expectant, and looking forward).
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Undecided
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
- . . . am appreciating my overall disposition and personality more than I did before.
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Undecided
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree

Linguistic Challenges:

Words and theological terms in certain traditions often carry different definitions than words and terms from other traditions. This difference can bring about much confusion. The following questions deal specifically with linguistic challenges.

- 12)** In my journey from American Evangelicalism into Lutheranism, I experienced an overall confusion regarding linguistics, i.e., the use of words.
- a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Undecided
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
- 13)** More specifically, in my journey from American Evangelicalism into Lutheranism, I was challenged with:
- . . . familiar words having different meanings.
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Undecided
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree

- . . . familiar words having a different emphasis.
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Undecided
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
- . . . familiar words no longer being used.
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Undecided
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
- . . . learning and understanding new words.
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Undecided
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree

Worldview Changes:

Every person has a view about reality. In other words, each person views the world through a particular point of view. In journeying from one tradition to another, a person's perspective (i.e., assumptions) may change. The following questions deal specifically with worldview challenges.

- 14)** In my journey from American Evangelicalism into Lutheranism, I experienced an overall change in how I view reality (i.e., the world, myself, culture, the Christian faith, truth, etc.).
- a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Undecided
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree

15) More specifically, in my journey from American Evangelicalism into Lutheranism, I changed:

- . . . in how I view the Christian faith (i.e., God, salvation, etc.).
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Undecided
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
- . . . in how I view other Christians (i.e. the Church, other believers, etc.).
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Undecided
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
- . . . in how I view the World (i.e. non-Christians, American culture, etc.).
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Undecided
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree
- . . . in how I view Myself (i.e., my anthropology, opinions of self, etc.).
 - a) Strongly disagree
 - b) Disagree
 - c) Undecided
 - d) Agree
 - e) Strongly agree

Epistemological Shifts:

How people obtain knowledge and learn is classified as their epistemology. Epistemologies are often undiagnosed, yet they are felt by individuals who shift from one framework to another. The following questions deal specifically with epistemological shifts, i.e., transitions.

16) In my journey from American Evangelicalism into Lutheranism, I experienced an overall shift in how I acquire knowledge and how I analyze it.

- a)** Strongly disagree
- b)** Disagree
- c)** Undecided
- d)** Agree
- e)** Strongly agree

17) More specifically, in my journey from American Evangelicalism into Lutheranism, I shifted:

- . . . in where I acquire my Christian teaching (i.e., I now listen to different pastors/teachers, and I now read different authors).
 - a)** Strongly disagree
 - b)** Disagree
 - c)** Undecided
 - d)** Agree
 - e)** Strongly agree
- . . . in how I read and understand my Bible.
 - a)** Strongly disagree
 - b)** Disagree
 - c)** Undecided
 - d)** Agree
 - e)** Strongly agree
- . . . in how I analyze and understand my experiences in light of God's Word.
 - a)** Strongly disagree
 - b)** Disagree
 - c)** Undecided
 - d)** Agree
 - e)** Strongly agree
- . . . in how I analyze and understand my own reasoning in light of the Word.
 - a)** Strongly disagree
 - b)** Disagree
 - c)** Undecided
 - d)** Agree
 - e)** Strongly agree

Reflective Questions:

18) In order to assess the overall flow of your journey, please specify your general experience within each stage of your journey.

- a. Considering leaving Evangelicalism (Very Good, Good, Bad, Very Bad, N/A)
- b. Beginning stage of leaving Evangelicalism (Very Good, Good, Bad, Very Bad, N/A)
- c. Midway stage of leaving Evangelicalism (Very Good, Good, Bad, Very Bad, N/A)
- d. Final stage of leaving Evangelicalism (Very Good, Good, Bad, Very Bad, N/A)
- e. Arriving in Lutheranism (Very Good, Good, Bad, Very Bad, N/A)
- f. Please elaborate on question 19 if so desired

19) Why did you or what caused you to begin this journey into Lutheran thought?

20) In your own words, what has been the best thing about this journey?

21) In your own words, what has been the worst thing about this journey?

22) Is there anything else that you would like to add that hasn't been discussed in this survey, in regard to your journey?

Conclusion & Final Remarks:

Thank you for your participation in this survey. The findings for this survey will be published at the following link:

<http://pastormatrichard.webs.com/apps/blog/>

The final results of the whole research project will be made into a series of articles to be published online, through various blogging venues, as well as published into a small booklet that can be used in Bible-study contexts.

Your input into this survey and potential other surveys will help educate others on this voyage into Lutheran thought. Your input also will provide valuable insights for Lutheran pastors, so that they can more effectively shepherd these journeying individuals.

Note: Click the "Done" icon at the bottom of the page to complete and submit this survey.

APPENDIX TWO

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS SUMMARY

General:

Survey conducted using SurveyMonkey.

Summary:

The quantitative survey is the first of two surveys in the Becoming Lutheran research project. The second survey, to follow, is a qualitative survey that will attempt to provide reason, motives, and insights to the quantitative data presented here.

Problem Thesis:

The journey for American Evangelicals into Confessional Lutheran thought is a long, difficult, and sometimes daunting road. The shift from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheranism is not something that just happens overnight, nor is it an easy shift. The shift has linguistic, emotional, worldview, and epistemological challenges that accompany it, thus producing a great deal of anxiety, stress, and uncertainty for the individual. This also presents a challenge for Lutheran pastors in knowing how to minister to parishioners coming out of American Evangelicalism into their parishes.

Purpose Thesis:

The purpose of this Major Applied Research Project (MAP) is to verify if American Evangelicals are indeed experiencing emotional struggles, linguistic confusions, worldview changes, and epistemological shifts as they journey into Confessional Lutheran thought. If they are indeed experiencing these shifts, changes, confusions, and struggles, the intent of this MAP is to learn about these categories from American Evangelicals who have begun making this shift into Lutheran thought, as well as Evangelicals who have already made the shift. Furthermore, this MAP will attempt to identify patterns in the journey from Evangelicalism to Lutheranism. By diagnosing possible patterns and identifying common characteristics in the journey, the findings will provide insights and comfort for those who are experiencing the journey. This study will also glean ways in which Lutheran pastors can more effectively care for and shepherd these individuals who are in the journey towards Lutheranism.

Date of Survey:

Begin Date: December 11, 2012

End Date: January 20, 2013

Survey Participant Response:

Total Response: 340

Final Admitted Surveys: 307

Disqualified Surveys: 33

- 6 participants were disqualified due to their answers on a screen question.
- 14 participant surveys were discarded due to the surveys being very incomplete (i.e., only 15-20% complete).
- 13 participant surveys were removed from the final calculations for not meeting the criteria of the study (i.e., from a non-North American continent, no evangelical background, etc.).

Statistical Accuracy:

Assuming a population of 100,000 individuals who have journeyed from American Evangelicalism, 307 participant responses gives this survey the following statistical confidence:

- A Confidence Level of 95%.
- A Confidence Interval of 5.585%.

Quantitative Survey Analysis:

The quantitative survey was analyzed by an analysis team to ensure objectivity. The analysis meeting was held on February 3, 2013 at Sidney Lutheran Brethren Church in Sidney, Montana. The analysis team consisted of 9 men and 3 women of whom there were clergy, laymen, and church workers from four different denominations (i.e., CLBA, LCMS, AALC, CMA).

Quantitative Results:

1. What is the church affiliation background of American Evangelicals journeying into Lutheran thought?
 - a. Generally speaking, American Evangelicals journeying into Lutheran thought have more than one Evangelical denomination in their backgrounds (i.e., approximately two denominational backgrounds).
 - b. The two most common American Evangelical backgrounds of those journeying into Lutheran thought were the Baptist denomination (i.e., 54.6%) and Non-denominational churches (i.e., 47.9%).
2. Which movement and influences have respondents been impacted by within American Evangelicalism.

- a. Generally speaking, American Evangelicals journeying into Lutheran thought have 3.8 different movements and influences that they have been impacted by.
 - b. The top movement and/or influence responses are:
 - i. 61% were impacted by Revivalism.
 - ii. 60.3% were impacted by Pietism.
 - iii. 55.1% were impacted by Dispensationalism.
 - iv. 52.8% were impacted by Fundamentalism
 - v. 51.5% were impacted by the Church Growth Movement.
3. Before beginning the journey towards Lutheran thought, how long had respondents been in American Evangelicalism?
- a. 49.8% of respondents marked that they were in American Evangelicalism for 15-30 years.
 - b. The other 50.2% varied from less than a year to more than 50 years.
4. In reflecting on the journey from American Evangelicalism into Lutheran thought:
- a. 51.3% of respondents shared that the journey lasted 1-4 years.
 - b. The other 48.7% specified that the journey lasted from less than 3 months to more than 10 years.
5. When asked when the decision was made to attend a Lutheran church:
- a. Respondents showed that they can come to Lutheran churches at any time in their journeys.
 - i. 23.1% before the journey into Lutheran thought began.
 - ii. 32.3% at the beginning of the journey into Lutheran thought.
 - iii. 24.3% at the middle of the journey into Lutheran thought.
 - iv. 20.3% at the end of the journey into Lutheran thought.
6. Regarding emotions:
- a. 70.4% agree and strongly agree that they experienced struggles with their emotions in their journeys from American Evangelicalism into Lutheran thought.
 - b. Generally speaking, in the overall journey they experienced more emotions of joy than sadness and more emotions of trust than emotions of disgust.
 - c. Special Focus:
 - i. Among those that decided to attend Lutheran churches at the end of their journeys into Lutheran thought, 45.3% experienced emotions of anger, whereas 35.2% experienced emotions of fear.
 - ii. Among those that decided to attend Lutheran churches at the beginning of their journeys into Lutheran thought, 53.2% experienced emotions of fear, whereas 34.2% experienced emotions of anger.
 - iii. See Charts A & B in this Appendix.

7. Regarding linguistics:
 - a. 58.6% agree and strongly agree that they experienced an overall confusion regarding linguistics in their journeys from American Evangelicalism into Lutheran thought.
 - b. More specifically, 84.2% of respondents agree and strongly agree that they were challenged with familiar words having different emphasis.
8. Regarding worldview:
 - a. 92.5% agree and strongly agree that they experienced a change in how they view reality.
 - b. More specifically, 93.1% of respondents agree and strongly agree that they changed in how they view the Christian faith (i.e., God, salvation, etc.)
9. Regarding epistemology:
 - a. 79.9% agree and strongly agree that they experienced an overall shift in how they acquire knowledge and how they analyze it.
 - b. More specifically, 94.7% of respondents agree and strongly agree that they shifted in where they acquire their Christian teaching (i.e., they now listen to different pastors/teachers, and they now read different authors). Note: This was the highest percentage response on the whole survey.
 - c. Special Focus: When asked about epistemology with specific examples, the respondents tended to agree at a higher percentage than when asked the question of epistemological shifts in general.
10. When asked to assess the overall flow of the journeys from American Evangelicalism into Lutheran thought, respondents shared that the journey went from good to very good.
 - a. Special Focus: When isolating those that have completed journeys into Lutheran thought, two interesting things develop.
 - i. Those that joined Lutheran churches at the beginning of the journey into Lutheran thought had overall good journeys ending with journeys being very good.
 - ii. Those that joined Lutheran churches at the end of the journeys into Lutheran thought had journeys that started out good, then declined until they became very good at the end, when they arrived in a Lutheran church.
 - iii. See Charts C & D in this Appendix.

Qualitative Results:

There were several qualitative questions that were asked in this survey. The responses were analyzed and summarized below.

1. Why did you or what caused you to begin this journey into Lutheran thought?
 - a. Generally speaking they were despairing in works righteousness and had an internal conflict, which resulted in a crisis of faith. While the crisis of faith gave them instability in American Evangelicalism, they were influenced by family and friends, as well as Lutheran media and books, to begin the journey into Lutheran thought.

2. In your own words, what has been the best thing about this journey?
 - a. Generally speaking the best thing is that they felt freedom, peace, comfort, and assurance as they have come to understand the objective Christ-centered Gospel and Sacraments.

3. In your own words, what has been the worst thing about this journey?
 - a. Generally speaking the worst things were the unsettledness coupled with the loss of family and friends sometimes caused by doctrinal discussion and the switching of churches. Furthermore, they lamented the lost time that they spent in synergistic beliefs. Finally, they struggled to quickly learn new things, such as terms, Lutheran worship, music, liturgy, doctrines, etc.

Chart A: Emotions of those who decided to attend Lutheran churches at the end of their journeys into Lutheran thought.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided or Not Applicable	Agree	Strongly agree	RatingAverage	RatingCount
... experienced more of the emotions of sadness (i.e., feeling dejected, depressed, and down) than emotions of joy (i.e., feeling cheerful, content, optimistic, and relieved).	27.5% (14)	37.3% (19)	21.6% (11)	5.9% (3)	7.8% (4)	2.29	51
... experienced more of the emotions of anger (i.e., feeling irritable and resentful) than emotions of fear (i.e., feeling doubtful, nervous, and tense).	17.6% (9)	17.6% (9)	19.6% (10)	35.3% (18)	9.8% (5)	3.02	51

Chart B: Emotions of those who decided to attend Lutheran Churches at the beginning of their journeys into Lutheran thought.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided or Not Applicable	Agree	Strongly agree	RatingAverage	RatingCount
... experienced more of the emotions of sadness (i.e., feeling dejected, depressed, and down) than emotions of joy (i.e., feeling cheerful, content, optimistic, and relieved).	30.4% (24)	43.0% (34)	7.6% (6)	12.7% (10)	6.3% (5)	2.22	79
... experienced more of the emotions of anger (i.e., feeling irritable and resentful) than emotions of fear (i.e., feeling doubtful, nervous, and tense).	15.2% (12)	38.0% (30)	12.7% (10)	26.6% (21)	7.6% (6)	2.73	79
... experienced more of the emotions of trust (i.e. feeling hopeful, confident, and accepting) than emotions of disgust (i.e., feeling repulsed, contemptible, and abhorred).	1.2% (1)	6.2% (5)	8.6% (7)	64.2% (52)	19.8% (16)	3.95	81

Chart C: Those who have finished the journeys into Lutheran thought and joined Lutheran churches at the beginning of the journeys.

21. In order to assess the overall flow of your journey, please specify your general experience within each stage of your journey. [Download](#)

Overall Experience	Very Good	Good	Bad	Very Bad	N/A	ResponseCount
Considering Leaving Evangelicalism	11.9% (7)	40.7% (24)	32.2% (19)	10.2% (6)	5.1% (3)	59
Beginning Stage of Leaving Evangelicalism	13.8% (8)	39.7% (23)	31.0% (18)	13.8% (8)	1.7% (1)	58
Midway Stage of Leaving Evangelicalism	15.5% (9)	51.7% (30)	19.0% (11)	10.3% (6)	3.4% (2)	58
Final Stage of Leaving Evangelicalism	43.1% (25)	34.5% (20)	10.3% (6)	12.1% (7)	0.0% (0)	58
Arriving in Lutheranism	81.0% (47)	15.5% (9)	1.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.7% (1)	58

Chart D: Those who have finished the journeys into Lutheran thought and joined Lutheran churches at the end of the journeys.

21. In order to assess the overall flow of your journey, please specify your general experience within each stage of your journey. [Download](#)

Overall Experience	Very Good	Good	Bad	Very Bad	N/A	ResponseCount
Considering Leaving Evangelicalism	11.9% (5)	40.5% (17)	23.8% (10)	16.7% (7)	7.1% (3)	42
Beginning Stage of Leaving Evangelicalism	4.8% (2)	42.9% (18)	35.7% (15)	9.5% (4)	7.1% (3)	42
Midway Stage of Leaving Evangelicalism	7.1% (3)	38.1% (16)	38.1% (16)	11.9% (5)	4.8% (2)	42
Final Stage of Leaving Evangelicalism	26.2% (11)	33.3% (14)	21.4% (9)	16.7% (7)	2.4% (1)	42
Arriving in Lutheranism	81.0% (34)	14.3% (6)	0.0% (0)	2.4% (1)	2.4% (1)	42

APPENDIX THREE

BECOMING LUTHERAN SURVEY #2 (QUALITATIVE)

Welcome:

Former Evangelical,

Thank you for participating in this second survey for the “Becoming Lutheran Research Project.” Your feedback and insights are most appreciated. The purpose of this second survey is to learn more about the specific insights and feedback gathered from the first quantitative survey. The information from this second survey will be useful for gathering information for a Major Applied Research Project at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri.

The survey consists of six sections with the majority of the questions asking for textbox responses. Depending on the amount of questions that apply to your context, it will take you 15-25 minutes to complete. More specifically, as you take the survey many of the questions may not be applicable to your context. If this is the case, please leave the textbox blank.

Finally, please be assured that this information will be kept anonymous.

Again, thank you for your time and input. It is most appreciated.

Rev. Matt Richard
Sidney, Montana
www.pastormatrichard.com

General Information:

- 1) Did you participate in Survey #1 in the “Becoming Lutheran Research Project?”
 - a. Yes
 - b. No (Note: If no, the question logic would take them through a series of background questions.)

Epistemological Transitions

How people obtain knowledge and learn is classified as their epistemology.

- 2) From the first survey, 94.7% of respondents stated that where they acquire their Christian teaching shifted. If applicable, before you began the journey towards and into Lutheranism, where did you acquire your Christian teaching (i.e., authors, teachers, books, music, publishers, television programs, radio programs, blogs, websites, etc.).
- 3) From the first survey, 94.7% of respondents stated that where they acquire their Christian teaching shifted. If applicable, where do you currently acquire your Christian teaching

(i.e., authors, teachers, books, music, publishers, television programs, radio programs, blogs, websites, etc.).

- 4) From the first survey, 91% of respondents stated that they read and understand their Bibles differently due to the journey into Lutheran thought. If applicable, briefly describe what changes/shifts happened in how you read and understand the Bible.

Worldview Changes:

Every person has a view about reality. In other words, each person views the world through a particular point of view. In journeying from one tradition to another, a person's perspective (i.e., assumptions) may change.

- 5) From the first survey, 93.1% of respondents stated that their views of the Christian faith changed (i.e., God, Salvation, etc...). If applicable, briefly explain 2-3 things that changed in your view of the Christian faith.
- 6) From the first survey, 86.2% of respondents stated that how they view themselves changed (i.e., their anthropology, opinions of self, etc.). If applicable, briefly explain how your view of yourself changed.
- 7) Optional: From the first survey, the majority of respondents stated that their views of the World (i.e., American culture, nonbelievers, etc...) and other Christians (i.e., church, fellow believers, etc...) changed. How did your view of these two change?

Linguistic Challenges:

- 8) From the first survey, 84.2% of respondents stated that the biggest linguistic challenge was that familiar words within American Evangelicalism had a different emphasis in Confessional Lutheranism. If applicable, please briefly answer the following questions in the textbox below. **A)** Which words experienced a change in emphasis? **B)** In the way that you understand these words, what did they mean in American Evangelicalism and what do they mean in Lutheranism?
- 9) From the first survey, 61.2% of respondents stated that familiar words used in Evangelicalism were no longer being used in Lutheranism. If applicable, which words are no longer being used? (Please separate the words with a comma.)
- 10) From the first survey, 69.5% of respondents stated that they were challenged with learning and understanding new words in Confessional Lutheranism. If applicable, what were these new words? (Please separate the words with a comma.)

Emotional Struggles:

Generally speaking, those who started attending Lutheran churches early on in their journeys into Lutheran thought experienced more fear (i.e., feeling doubtful, nervous, and tense) than anger (i.e., feeling irritable, and resentful), whereas those who waited to join Lutheran churches towards the end of their journey experienced more anger than fear. (Refer to diagram below.)

... experienced more of the emotions of anger (i.e., feeling irritable and resentful) than emotions of fear (i.e., feeling doubtful, nervous, and tense).	17.6% (9)	17.6% (9)	19.6% (10)	35.3% (18)	9.8% (5)	
... experienced more of the emotions of trust (i.e., feeling hopeful, confident, and accepting) than emotions of disgust (i.e., feeling repulsed, contemptible, and abhorred).	0.0% (0)	5.9% (3)	17.6% (9)	31.0% (26)	25.5% (13)	
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided or No Applicable	Agree	Strongly agree	Rati
... experienced more of the emotions of sadness (i.e., feeling dejected, depressed, and down) than emotions of joy (i.e., feeling cheerful, content, optimistic, and relieved).	30.4% (24)	43.0% (34)	7.6% (6)	12.7% (10)	6.3% (5)	
... experienced more of the emotions of anger (i.e., feeling irritable and resentful) than emotions of fear (i.e., feeling doubtful, nervous, and tense).	15.2% (12)	38.0% (30)	12.7% (10)	26.6% (21)	7.6% (6)	

11) Please complete the following sentence if applicable. “While conducting most of my journey into Lutheran thought while attending an Evangelical church, I experienced 'more anger' than fear because...”

12) Please complete the following sentence if applicable. “While conducting most of my journey into Lutheran thought while attending a Lutheran church, I experienced 'more fear' than anger because...”

Special Focus:

When isolating those who have completed journeys into Lutheran thought from the first survey, two things were observed. Please see the following diagrams below.

A) Those who joined Lutheran churches at the **beginning** of the journeys into Lutheran thought had an overall 'good' journey ending with the journey, being 'very good.' See diagram below:

Overall Experience					
	Very Good	Good	Bad	Very Bad	N/A
Considering Leaving Evangelicalism	11.9% (7)	40.7% (24)	32.2% (19)	10.2% (6)	5.1% (3)
Beginning Stage of Leaving Evangelicalism	13.8% (8)	39.7% (23)	31.0% (18)	13.8% (8)	1.7% (1)
Midway Stage of Leaving Evangelicalism	15.5% (9)	51.7% (30)	19.0% (11)	10.3% (6)	3.4% (2)
Final Stage of Leaving Evangelicalism	43.1% (25)	34.5% (20)	10.3% (6)	12.1% (7)	0.0% (0)
Arriving in Lutheranism	81.0% (47)	15.5% (9)	1.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.7% (1)

B) Those who joined Lutheran churches at the **end** of the journeys into Lutheran thought had journeys that started out 'good.' However, at the midway stage the journeys declined until the journeys became 'very good' at the end, when they arrived in Lutheran churches.

Overall Experience					
	Very Good	Good	Bad	Very Bad	N/A
Considering Leaving Evangelicalism	11.9% (5)	40.5% (17)	23.8% (10)	16.7% (7)	7.1% (3)
Beginning Stage of Leaving Evangelicalism	4.8% (2)	42.9% (18)	35.7% (15)	9.5% (4)	7.1% (3)
Midway Stage of Leaving Evangelicalism	7.1% (3)	38.1% (16)	38.1% (16)	11.9% (5)	4.8% (2)
Final Stage of Leaving Evangelicalism	26.2% (11)	33.3% (14)	21.4% (9)	16.7% (7)	2.4% (1)
Arriving in Lutheranism	81.0% (34)	14.3% (6)	0.0% (0)	2.4% (1)	2.4% (1)

13) Please complete the following sentence if applicable. "While conducting the majority of my journey into Lutheran thought while attending an Evangelical church, the overall flow of my journey declined at the midway stage because..."

14) Please complete the following sentence if applicable. "While conducting the majority of my journey into Lutheran thought while attending a Lutheran church, the overall flow of my journey went from good to very good because..."

Conclusion & Final Remarks:

Thank you for your participation in this survey. The findings for this survey will be published at the following link:

<http://pastormatrichard.webs.com/apps/blog/>

The final results of the whole research project will be made into a series of articles to be published online, through various blogging venues, as well as published into a small booklet that can be used in Bible-study contexts.

Your input into this survey will help educate others on this voyage into Lutheran thought. Your input also will provide valuable insights for Lutheran pastors, so that they can more effectively shepherd these journeying individuals.

Note: Click the "Done" icon at the bottom of the page to complete and submit this survey.

APPENDIX FOUR

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS SUMMARY

General:

Survey conducted using SurveyMonkey.

Summary:

The qualitative survey is the second survey in the “Becoming Lutheran Research Project.” While the first survey captured quantitative data, this survey attempts to provide reason, motives, and insights to the quantitative data. To learn more about the quantitative study, please refer to Becoming Lutheran Quantitative Analysis Summary.

Problem Thesis:

The journey for American Evangelicals into Confessional Lutheran thought is a long, difficult, and sometimes daunting road. The shift from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheranism is not something that just happens overnight, nor is it an easy shift. The shift has linguistic, emotional, worldview, and epistemological challenges that accompany it, thus producing a great deal of anxiety, stress, and uncertainty for the individual. This also presents a challenge for Lutheran pastors in knowing how to minister to parishioners coming out of American Evangelicalism into their parishes.

Purpose Thesis:

The purpose of this Major Applied Research Project (MAP) is to verify if American Evangelicals are indeed experiencing emotional struggles, linguistic confusions, worldview changes, and epistemological shifts as they journey into Confessional Lutheran thought. If they are indeed experiencing these shifts, changes, confusions, and struggles, the intent of this MAP is to learn about these categories from American Evangelicals who have begun making this shift into Lutheran thought, as well as Evangelicals who already have made the shift. Furthermore, this MAP will attempt to identify patterns in the journey from Evangelicalism to Lutheranism. By diagnosing possible patterns and identifying common characteristics in the journey, the findings will provide insights and comfort for those who are experiencing the journey. This study will also glean ways in which Lutheran pastors can more effectively care for and shepherd these individuals who are in the journey towards Lutheranism.

Date of Survey:

Begin Date: February 9, 2013

End Date: March 11, 2013

Survey Participant Response:

Total Response: 252

Final Admitted Surveys: 224 (Note: The 224 participants consisted of 200 participants from the first quantitative survey and 24 new participants.)

Disqualified Surveys: 28

- 3 new participants were disqualified due to their answers on a screen question.
- 23 participant surveys were discarded due to the surveys being very incomplete (i.e., only 10-20% complete).
- 2 new participant surveys were removed from the final calculations for not meeting the criteria of the study.

Statistical Accuracy:

The qualitative survey results represent 65.15% of the participants from the first quantitative survey (i.e., 200 qualitative responses divided by 307 quantitative responses equals 65.15%).

Qualitative Survey Analysis:

The qualitative survey was analyzed by an analysis team to ensure objectivity. The analysis meeting was held on March 17, 2013 at Sidney Lutheran Brethren Church in Sidney, Montana. The analysis team consisted of 3 men and 3 women of whom there were clergy, laymen, and church workers from 2 different denominations (i.e., CLBA, LCMS).

Qualitative Results:

1. Before you began the journey towards and into Confessional Lutheranism, where did you acquire your Christian teaching?

Generally speaking, while in American Evangelicalism survey participants acquired Christian teaching from popular bestselling authors, authors who seemed to be in the Evangelical bookstore top-ten lists at one point or another. More specifically these authors are not historic, but currently alive, with the exception of C.S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer. Participants also acquired a majority of their Christian teaching from what their local pastors work was teaching.

2. Where do you currently acquire your Christian teaching?

Generally speaking, survey participants who are journeying or have journeyed into Confessional Lutheranism seemed to have a balance between present-day teaching sources (i.e., Issues, Etc., Worldview Everlasting, White Horse Inn, Fighting for the Faith, and Concordia Publishing House) and historical Lutheran teachers (i.e., Martin Luther, Martin Chemnitz, C.F.W. Walther, Hermann Sasse, and Bo Giertz). Finally, participants seemed to be much more specific and selective in what they read and who they learn from compared to how they operated before in American Evangelicalism.

3. From the first survey, 91% of respondents stated that they read and understand their Bibles differently due to the journey into Lutheran thought. If applicable, briefly describe what changes/shifts happened in how you read and understand the Bible.

Generally speaking, the biggest change in how respondents read the Bible came about from a new understanding of Law and Gospel. Thus, this understanding of Law and Gospel helped respondents to see that they previously read the Bible as a 'how to' handbook on Christian living. Now though, respondents see that the Bible is not about the Christian (i.e., me), but about Jesus Christ and His grace for them (i.e., for me).

4. From the first survey, 93.1% of respondents stated that their views of the Christian faith changed (i.e., God, Salvation, etc.). If applicable, briefly explain 2-3 things that changed in your view of the Christian faith.

Generally speaking, the biggest shift that occurred in how respondents view the Christian faith is that they see salvation not depending on themselves and their works, but on Jesus Christ and his atoning work for them. This shift brought about tremendous relief and assurance according to the participants. Furthermore, there was a change in what respondents viewed as sacraments. While in American Evangelicalism, altar calls, sinner's prayer, and making decisions for Christ had saving power. Since the journey into Lutheranism though, the Lord's Supper and Baptism, along with the Word, are now viewed as God's saving action.

5. From the first survey, 86.2% of respondents stated that how they view themselves changed (i.e., their anthropology, opinions of self, etc.). If applicable, briefly explain how your view of yourself changed.

Generally speaking, respondents changed in their view of their fallen-ness, seeing themselves much worse than they previously assessed themselves to be. Also, the respondents expressed feeling relief and contentment since they learned that they didn't have to strive and couldn't acquire a sinless condition; they now see themselves simultaneously as a sinner and a saint.

6. From the first survey, 84.2% of respondents stated that the biggest linguistic challenge was that familiar words within American Evangelicalism had a different emphasis in Confessional Lutheranism. If applicable, please briefly answer the following questions in the textbox below. **A)** Which words experienced a change in emphasis? **B)** In the way that you understand these words, what did they mean in American Evangelicalism and what do they mean in Lutheranism?

Generally speaking, respondents shared that the biggest linguistic emphasis change was in who does the verbs. Otherwise stated, in American Evangelicalism the respondents saw themselves doing the majority of Christian verbs, and within Confessional Lutheranism the respondents now see God doing the majority of the verbs. Further details in linguistic emphasis changes are listed below:

Word	American Evangelical Emphasis	Confessional Lutheran Emphasis
Grace	Connected to my decision	God's gift alone
Faith	Self-generated	God's gift to me
Baptism	Mark of my obedience/my action	God delivering forgiving grace
Communion	An act of my remembrance	Christ's true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins
Sanctification	-After Justification -My work	-Christ's action along with Justification -Work of the Spirit
Gospel	What we need to hear in order to make a decision	Christ Crucified for the forgiveness of our sins
Sinner	Unsaved People	All People
Sin	-My Actions -Behavior	-Very core of being -Condition
Vocation	Serving God through a ministerial calling	Serving my neighbor through roles where I am placed
Means of Grace	Sinner's Prayer and Altar Call	Word and Sacrament

7. From the first survey, 61.2% of respondents stated that familiar words used in Evangelicalism were no longer being used in Lutheranism. If applicable, which words are no longer being used?

The most consistently listed words no longer used in Lutheranism, as indicated by respondents, are as follows: decision, decision for Christ, free will, saved, baptism of the Holy Spirit, invitation, next level, accountability, rapture, anointed, born-again, revival, living the Gospel, altar call, sinner's prayer, purpose, personal relationship, rededicating life, spirit-led, surrender, etc.

Generally speaking, respondents indicated a diminishing of directional phrases and feeling phrases as they entered Lutheranism, phrases such as: going to the next level, God led me, the Spirit led me, God laid it on my heart, I feel led, I feel His presence, etc.

8. From the first survey, 69.5% of respondents stated that they were challenged with learning and understanding new words in Confessional Lutheranism. If applicable, what were these new words?

Law and Gospel, means of grace, liturgy, vocation, simul iustus et peccator, catechism, synod, absolution, justification, sanctification, Lord's Supper, confession, solas, creeds, 3 uses of the Law, indicative and imperative, various Latin/Greek phrases, various Liturgy words, etc.

Generally speaking, respondents indicated that the new words tended to be older and multisyllabic.

9. Generally speaking, those who started attending Lutheran churches early on in their journeys into Lutheran thought experienced more fear (i.e., feeling doubtful, nervous, and tense) than anger (i.e., feeling irritable and resentful); whereas those who waited to join Lutheran churches towards the end of their journeys experienced more anger than fear.

While conducting most of my journey into Lutheran thought while attending a Lutheran church, I experienced more fear than anger because...

Generally speaking, participants experienced more fear than anger because there were many new things to process such as: understanding the sacraments, understanding the liturgy, and understanding absolution. More specifically, the fear was due to anxiety of the unknown. Respondents also expressed fear due to not wanting to be deceived. (i.e., I was wrong in American Evangelicalism, could I be wrong and deceived in my new journey into Lutheranism?). Finally, fear was surprisingly attached to the Gospel; the Gospel seemed too good to be true.

10. Generally speaking, those who started attending Lutheran churches early on in their journeys into Lutheran thought experienced more fear (i.e., feeling doubtful, nervous, and tense) than anger (i.e., feeling irritable and resentful); whereas those who waited to join Lutheran churches towards the end of their journeys experienced more anger than fear.

While conducting most of my journey into Lutheran thought while attending an Evangelical church, I experienced more anger than fear because...

Generally speaking, participants experienced more anger than fear because they felt that they were deceived during all their years within American Evangelicalism. Participants felt they wasted years and finances on false truths. Thus they became angry when, due to family ties to the church (i.e., spouse, kids in youth group, extended family), they had to remain in their American Evangelical churches.

13. If applicable, while conducting the majority of my journey into Lutheran thought while attending an Evangelical church, the overall flow of my journey declined at the midway stage because...

Generally speaking, the respondents' anger and frustration was due to the feeling of being stuck in American Evangelicalism. Furthermore, respondents indicated that there was tension at this midway stage because they found themselves at a difficult transition point where they embraced Confessional Lutheranism, yet were finding it difficult to let go of American Evangelicalism for various reasons. Some of the reasons respondents gave were: difficulty leaving family and friends, struggle in leaving official church positions, etc...

14. If applicable, while conducting the majority of my journey into Lutheran thought while attending a Lutheran church, the overall flow of my journey went from good to very good because...

Generally speaking, the respondents indicated that the journey went from good to very good because there were plenty of available resources and a community to support and aid them in their journeys into Confessional Lutheran thought. Also, the respondents indicated that the pastors in the Lutheran churches were knowledgeable and able to adequately answer questions.

APPENDIX FIVE

BECOMING LUTHERAN SURVEY #3 (ADVICE)

Welcome:

Former Evangelical,

Thank you for participating in this third survey for the “Becoming Lutheran Research Project.” Your feedback and insights are most appreciated. The purpose of this third survey is to learn more about specific advice that can be given to those currently journeying into Lutheran thought and also specific advice that can be given to Lutheran pastors trying to serve these journeying individuals. The information from this third survey will be useful for gathering information for a Major Applied Research Project at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri.

The survey consists of simple questions asking for textbox responses. This survey will take you 5-10 minutes to complete.

Finally, please be assured that this information will be kept anonymous.

Again, thank you for your time and input. It is most appreciated.

Rev. Matt Richard
Sidney, Montana
www.pastormattrichard.com

General Information:

- 1) Did you participate in Survey #1 and/or Survey #2 in the “Becoming Lutheran Research Project?”
 - a. Yes
 - b. No (Note: If no, the question logic would take them through a series of background questions.)

Advice:

- 2) In looking at your journey from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheran thought, what advice, encouragements, thoughts, and/or insights can you give to those that are currently going through the journey?

- 3) In looking at your journey from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheran thought, what advice, encouragements, insights, and/or thoughts can you give to Lutheran Pastors so that they might better minister to former Evangelicals joining their churches?

Conclusion & Final Remarks:

Thank you for your participation in this survey. The findings for this survey will be published at the following link:

<http://pastormatrichard.webs.com/apps/blog/>

The final results of the whole research project will be made into a series of articles to be published online, through various blogging venues, as well as published into a small booklet that can be used in Bible-study contexts.

Your input into this survey will help educate others on this voyage into Lutheran thought. Your input also will provide valuable insights for Lutheran pastors, so that they can more effectively shepherd these journeying individuals.

Note: Click the "Done" icon at the bottom of the page to complete and submit this survey

APPENDIX SIX

BECOMING LUTHERAN CATECHESIS AID

Becoming Lutheran Catechesis Aid

By Rev. Matt Richard
May 20, 2013

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Preface

Evangelicals face very large hurdles/obstacles and bring several presuppositions that need to be addressed and resolved during their Lutheran catechesis process. Research conducted in this area through the author's Major Applied Research Project at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, will serve in a foundational manner to this teaching aid.

This catechesis aid is not designed to replace the catechism curriculum of the local Lutheran parish. Otherwise stated, this aid is not to be a substitute for the Small Catechism nor does it function independently from a more comprehensive catechism curriculum. Rather it is an educational tool intended for former American Evangelicals that is to be laid alongside the Small Catechism (i.e., *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*, published by Concordia Publishing House, 1984) and any additional material that will be presented in a new member's class/catechesis class.

Introduction

Welcome to the Lutheran Faith! If you are reading this, chances are that you have just completed the journey from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheran thought. You may have received this document from the new member's/catechism class at your new Lutheran church. If this is the case, this catechesis aid is designed to help you in this journey as you catechize into the Lutheran faith.

Questions:

What is meant by catechism? What do you know about Luther's Small Catechism?

While your catechesis class is an example of a nonformal education, an educational venue where you do not obtain college credit, it is nonetheless extremely important. The catechesis class will lay forth a systematic and comprehensive picture of the Lutheran faith through what is called Luther's Small Catechism. This nonformal education will provide a valuable foundation for you as you continue to receive knowledge from other nonformal education opportunities in the church (i.e., Adult Sunday School, Divine Service, and Bible studies). Furthermore, this nonformal education also will provide a vital foundation that will help you process informal learning opportunities that happen inside and outside the church; learning that is "spontaneous, unstructured learning that goes on daily in the home and

neighborhoods, behind the school and on the playing field, in the workplace, marketplace, library and museum, and through the various mass media.”¹

Homework:

Take time to study questions #9-12 in Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation, for these questions and answers deal directly with the issues of what a catechism is and the Small Catechism in general.

Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 52-53.

So, is this journey from American Evangelicalism into Lutheran thought a big deal? Research has shown that the journey is indeed a rather large transition. This is most especially true when it comes to multiple layers of how you learn, think, act, and talk. Many testimonies from individuals who have made this transition point out that what you have gone through and will continue to go through will include many radical shifts, changes, and transitions.

In the upcoming sections, we will explore some of the radical shifts, changes, and transitions that you are faced with as you continue to be catechized into the Lutheran faith. In fact, it is the belief of the author that without a catechetical aid, such as this document, you and your pastor may find yourselves ‘lost in translation.’ In other words, because of the differences between American Evangelicalism and Confessional Lutheranism you and your pastor may be speaking the same words, but may have a totally different meaning attached

¹ Sharan B. Merriam, Rosemary S. Caffarella, and Lisa M. Baumgartner, *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide, Third Edition* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 35.

to those words. It is the intent of this catechism aid that many of those ‘lost in translation’ moments may be reduced and that your catechesis journey will run smoother for you and your instructing pastor.

Defining American Evangelicalism

Before we progress any further, it is necessary to define what is meant by being a former American Evangelical. Evangelicalism in America can be thought of as a large melting pot of spirituality. There is a wide breadth to American Evangelicalism, which makes it difficult to pinpoint a concise definition. Furthermore American Evangelicalism lacks official denominational lines and has very minimal confessions. Does this mean that it is completely undefinable? No, but it must be defined with broad brush strokes. For the sake of this catechesis aid, a former American Evangelical is defined as someone who has a background in a number of varying Evangelical churches, churches whose signs contain descriptions such as Baptist, Non-Denominational, Assembly of God, etc.² Furthermore, the average American Evangelical has been influenced by 3.8 different theological movements such as Revivalism, Pietism, Dispensationalism, Fundamentalism, and/or the Church Growth

² Around 50% of respondents to the Major Applied Research Project stated that they have backgrounds in the Baptist denomination and/or Non-denominational churches.

Movement. Finally, the average journey for someone from American Evangelicalism into Lutheran thought is around 1-4 years.³

What is Epistemology?

Let us begin with a challenging word: epistemology. Epistemology “deals with questions of knowledge: What is truth? . . . How do we know? Concerns of this sort probe into the nature and validity of human knowledge.”⁴ Epistemology is important for it “presents the theory of knowing and knowledge and therefore is closely related to teaching and learning.”⁵ For example, the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 22 discusses that the Jews identify *signs* as ways of getting at knowledge and the Greeks get at knowledge through *wisdom*, that is logic. Each person’s epistemological framework can be thought of as a knowledge system that gathers data from one source or a plethora of sources. In other words, every person derives knowledge from somewhere, such as:

- Authority (e.g., How do I know? Because Albert Einstein told me.)
- Pragmatism (e.g., How do I know? Because I welded it up that way in my shop, tried it out in the field, and it has never failed me since.)

³ Matthew R. Richard “Becoming Lutheran: Exploring the Journey of American Evangelicals into Confessional Lutheran Thought.” (D.Min. MAP, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, 2013).

⁴ William C. Reitschel, *An Introduction to the Foundations of Lutheran Education* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Academic Press, 2000), 46.

⁵ Warren S. Benson, “Philosophical Foundations of Christian Education” in *Introducing Christian Education: Foundations for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Michael J. Anthony, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2001), 27.

- Conventional wisdom (e.g., How do I know? Because nearly everyone in my community thinks so.)
- Observation (e.g., How do I know? Because I was there and saw it for myself.)
- Senses (e.g., How do I know? Because I touched it, and it felt hot, and it smelled as if something were burning.)
- Logic (e.g., How do I know? Because, since A was greater than B, and B was greater than C, I concluded that A was greater than C.)
- Empiricism (e.g., How do I know? Because many studies that used very large samples of the total population of people who have this disease confirm a high statistical correlation between salt intake and the aggravation of this disease.)
- Revelation (e.g., How do I know? For the Bible tells me so; or, Thus saith the Lord.)

The knowledge that we gather helps us in our quest for truth.⁶

Epistemological Crisis and Transition

Since you are most likely attending a Lutheran catechesis class right now, you have made and are making the jump from one set of knowledge sources to a new and different set of knowledge sources. This shift is called an epistemological transition. The transition is

⁶ Truth often is seen as an abstract item that is drifting around in time and space that mankind stretches out to acquire, understand, and harness. However, as Christians we would funnel truth down to not an abstract ideology or philosophy but rather a person, Christ. Jesus in John 14:6 states, *“I am the way and the truth and the life...”* Jesus says that He is truth. Furthermore, Christ not only applies the truth to him but also uses a definite article to essentially say, *“I am not ‘a’ way, ‘a’ truth...”* but rather *“I am ‘the’ way, ‘the’ truth...”* Andrea Köstenberger in the first chapter of the book *Whatever Happened To Truth?* (Crossway, 2005) argues that truth is a person, a crucified person, rather than some abstract ideology. In other words, truth is theocentric and Christocentric. One could even go so far as to say that truth is crucicentric. The idea of truth is found in the Words and actions of God as they are expressed in the Bible and fleshed out in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Therefore, truth is not only something that is theocentric but more specifically is Christo-centric; it is revealed by God to us in Christ in His Word

most likely due to what is called an epistemological crisis. In other words, what likely happened in your past was a conflict over where you acquired knowledge. There may have been a point when you began to question and/or reject American Evangelical sources of knowledge and began to learn from new Confessional Lutheran sources of knowledge. In fact, that transition may be coming to full fruition right now as you are studying and embracing the Small Catechism for the first time.

As you think about this shift in where you acquire Christian knowledge, it is important to realize that this is more of a seismic shift than a mere bump in the road. John Wright states that an epistemological crisis occurs when

a person's narrative account is no longer an adequate account for the data at hand... The collapse of a previously held narrative brings with it a new and often awkward self-consciousness and vulnerability... An epistemological crisis grants a self-knowledge that otherwise would escape our own understanding of ourself. As in tragedy, we stand exposed in front of new data. The new data interrogates us.⁷

You would not be alone in thinking of this epistemological crisis as paralyzing. Wright affirms the pain of an epistemological crisis saying, "The pain of an epistemological crisis, while ultimately helpful, initially sends shock waves through individuals and congregations."⁸

Essentially what is at stake in an epistemological crisis is the assessment and comparison of two or more different and competing sources of knowledge. These different

⁷ John Wright, *Telling God's Story: Narrative Preaching for Christian Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 43.

⁸ Ibid.

sources of knowledge yield different assumptions that yield different worldviews that will yield different behavioral patterns and feelings. Thus, you can see the profound impact and reaching breadth of this crisis. It is certainly something that should not and cannot be minimized. Let us examine this shift a bit closer and in a much more personal manner.

Question:

Where did you receive and acquire your Christian knowledge when you were in American Evangelicalism?

Before American Evangelicals began their journeys towards and into Confessional Lutheranism, research results show they acquired their Christian teaching from popular best-selling authors who seemed to be in Evangelical bookstore top-ten lists at one point or another. More specifically these authors are not historic, but currently alive, with the exception of C.S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer. Besides popular books, American Evangelicals also acquired a majority of their Christian teaching from what their local pastors were teaching.⁹

Questions:

Where do you currently acquire your Christian teaching? What are you studying now? Take a moment and compare your answers here with the answers from the previous question box.

⁹ Richard, "Becoming Lutheran: Exploring the Journey of American Evangelicals Into Confessional Lutheran Thought."

Generally speaking, within Lutheranism you will be studying sources that are older and even authors who have been dead for quite some time. Take, for instance, the Small Catechism. The Small Catechism is around 500 years old and has been taught to millions of people across the world. Furthermore, you also will be studying material that is very definable and theologically consistent, rather than studying multiple authors from different theological backgrounds (i.e., backgrounds such as Baptist, Pentecostal, etc.) and books that pop up on the top-ten list. In Lutheranism you will not be so likely to pick up any book and just take in its truths, rather you may become much more selective in your reading tastes and much more discerning.¹⁰

Making the decision to join the Lutheran church is tangible evidence of the epistemological transition that was spoken of earlier. This transition can be recognized as proof of reform to your epistemological framework and what we will later learn about, your worldview. As previously alluded to, what most likely happened in your journey from American Evangelicalism to Confessional Lutheranism was that your long held beliefs in Evangelicalism were deconstructed and overridden by a new epistemological framework. Sometime your confidence in American Evangelical beliefs was brought to a point when questions were placed upon this belief system, essentially eroding it away until it was impossible for you to continue to follow and hold to these beliefs. In other words, the new knowledge sources from Lutheranism made it virtually impossible for you to depend on

¹⁰ Ibid.

your previous knowledge source and system. As a result, the longstanding and familiar sources of knowledge needed to be rejected and the new sources of knowledge affirmed.

Not only is the purpose of the Lutheran catechesis class, which you are now attending, to introduce to you new knowledge from a new knowledge source (i.e., the Small Catechism and the Lutheran Confessions), but also the class hopefully will bring about epistemological resolution for you. Alasdair MacIntyre comments on how this epistemological crisis is resolved. He states that the new information (i.e., Lutheran tenets) must enable “the agent to understand both how he or she could intelligibly have held his or her original beliefs and how he or she could have been so drastically misled by them.”¹¹ Within epistemological resolution, you should expect that you will process the theology of American Evangelicalism in light of the new sources of knowledge that you are receiving in the catechesis class.

During the transition you may have not experienced a comprehensive equilibrium, where there was rest and continuity between the sources of your knowledge, your framework, your worldview, and your behavioral patterns. In this epistemological resolution stage though, you now most likely will experience symmetry, which then allows for you to safely reflect upon the journey that has taken place. Within this stage of symmetry you should be able to begin to freely assess the errors that you believed, while also finding

¹¹ Alasdair MacIntyre, “Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science,” in *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1989), 140-141.

comfort in the new truths that you are learning and receiving. In other words, having made the transition from American Evangelicalism into Lutheran thought, you will find that you now feel safe to explore the differences between your old and new sources of knowledge.

Homework:

Take time to study questions #1-8 and #57 in Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation, for these questions and answers deal directly with the issues of epistemic systems and the source of knowledge for the Christian

Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 47-52, 150.

Change in Worldviews

What are the results of changing to different knowledge sources? On the surface, it seems as if you simply are swapping books and authors. However, there is much more that is going on beneath the surface. A change from American Evangelical books and teaching sources to Confessional Lutheran sources will bring about a change in your worldview. A worldview is a person's perception of reality. In other words, each person views the world through a particular lens, Paul Hiebert says these lenses "are deep, they are generally unexamined and largely implicit. Like glasses, they shape how we see the world, but we are rarely aware of their presence. In fact, others can often see them better than we ourselves do."¹² According to Hiebert, our worldviews provide us with "mental models of deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or pictures and images that shape how we

¹² Paul Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding Of How People Change* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 46.

understand the world and how we take action.”¹³ I have heard it said that worldviews provide *maps* of how we view reality and life.

Questions:

How do you think your time in the catechesis class, interacting with the Small Catechism and other curriculum, will impact the way that you view the Bible, God, yourself, and Salvation?

Take a moment and compare how you used to read your Bible within American Evangelicalism and how you read it now. What is the same? What has changed?

Generally speaking, the biggest change in how you will read your Bible will come about in your new understanding of Law and Gospel and the Christocentric nature of the Scriptures. This new understanding of Law and Gospel and the Christocentric nature of Scripture will help you see how you previously read the Bible as a ‘how to’ handbook on Christian living; but now you will begin to see that the Bible is not about the Christian, but about Jesus Christ and His grace ‘for’ the Christian.¹⁴

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Richard, “Becoming Lutheran: Exploring the Journey of American Evangelicals into Confessional Lutheran Thought.”

Homework:

Take time to study questions #6-8 and 84-85 in Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation, for these questions and answers deal directly with the issues of Law and Gospel. How does this understanding of Law and Gospel impact the way that you read the Bible?

Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 51-51,100-101.

Questions:

Take a moment and think about how you viewed yourself in Evangelicalism and how you view yourself now (i.e., your opinion of yourself). What has changed? What is the same?

Regarding salvation, generally speaking there will be a change in how you view your fallen-ness. In other words, as you encounter new Lutheran teachings you will begin to see yourselves much worse than you previously assessed yourself to be. Even though this sounds depressing, you also will experience a sense of relief and contentment since you will learn that you can't strive to acquire a sinless condition; you will begin to see yourself simultaneously as a sinner and a saint.¹⁵

Homework:

Take time to study questions #78-83 in Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation, for these questions and answers deal directly with the issue of sin and mankind's condition. How does this understanding of sin impact the way that you view yourself?

Take time to study questions #255-#259 in Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation, for these questions and answers deal directly with the issue of what it means to be simultaneously a sinner and a saint.

Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 98-100, 214-215.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Questions:

Take a moment and think about how you viewed the Christian faith (i.e., God, salvation, etc.) in Evangelicalism and how you view the Christian faith now. What has changed? What is the same?

Finally, the biggest shift that will occur in your view of the Christian faith is that you will begin to see salvation as not depending on yourself and your works, but on Jesus Christ and his atoning work for you. As previously alluded to, this shift will bring about tremendous relief and assurance. Furthermore, there will be a change in how you view the sacraments. While in American Evangelicalism, altar calls, the sinner's prayer, and making decisions for Christ have saving power. However, within Lutheranism though, the Lord's Supper and Baptism, along with the Word, are now viewed as God's saving action.¹⁶

Homework:

Take time to study questions #156-168 in Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation, for these questions and answers deal directly with the issue of who does the work in your salvation. Furthermore, take time to study questions #239-260 and #285-305, for these questions and answers deal directly with the issue of the sacraments according to Lutheranism.

Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 149-157, 205-216, 231-244.

The Epistemology and Worldview Relationship

Now that we understand epistemological systems and worldviews, we can then ask, "How are they related?" As we have previously covered, your epistemological system *forms*

¹⁶ Ibid.

your worldview; however, you need to keep in mind that your worldview *informs* your epistemological system. They both are connected, intertwined and create what is called *circularity*. The epistemological system informs you what should be considered as appropriate knowledge, and the worldview identifies what does and what does not fit the criteria of true knowledge. In other words, the knowledge system forms the lens, and the lens processes and delivers knowledge back to the system. Around and around they go, working together.¹⁷

Continual Worldview Conflict

As you go through the Lutheran catechesis experience, what happens when your American Evangelicalism worldview interacts with the new Lutheran worldview? This may happen when your pastor preaches, teaches, and interacts with you in your catechesis class, as well as when you experience interaction with your pastor through the Divine Service, Bible studies, and so forth. So, what happens when these two worldviews interact? Paul Hiebert answers this saying

We are similarly largely unaware of our own worldview and how it shapes our thoughts and actions. We simply assume that the world is the way we see it, and that others see it in the same way. We become conscious of our worldviews when they are challenged by outside events they cannot explain.¹⁸

¹⁷ MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science," 140.

¹⁸ Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*, 47.

Otherwise stated, until your worldview is held up in comparison with another worldview, you most likely will be unaware of the differences and will be relatively unaware of an alternative point of view. While you already may have experienced a collision of worldviews in your journey thus far into Lutheranism, keep in mind that as you continually interact with the Lutheran worldview, it will cause you to self-reflect on your own worldview lens, making you attentive of the tension. Furthermore, when you experience the conflict between the two worldviews learn to expect possible anxiety, for this is a normal reaction. Hiebert comments on this, saying:

To question worldviews is to challenge the very foundations of life, and people resist such challenges with deep emotional reactions. There are few human fears greater than a loss of a sense of order and meaning. People are willing to die for their beliefs if these beliefs make their deaths meaningful.¹⁹

Keep in mind though, that worldview conflicts do and should happen in the church regardless of whether one is going through catechesis. As parishioners interact with each other, there will be point-of-view collisions. Furthermore, as the pastor preaches the Scriptures and applies the Word to the flock he will be laying forth a particular way of viewing the world that has been shaped by the truths of the Scriptures, a view that will be typically opposed to the general ethos and worldview of our American culture. The grand meta-narrative of the Scriptures continually will form the parish, as well as the pastor's own worldview. Therefore, this is not something that only happens while in catechesis class, but

¹⁹ Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*, 85.

something that continually happens in the church as the Scriptures come into conflict with assumptions in the church, due to worldviews that have not been solely formed by the Bible. Keep in mind that many times worldviews of parishioners are formed by the Scriptures *and* a variety of other influences in life such as personal experiences, cultural norms, the media, traditions, folk Christian theology, and so forth.

Your epistemological framework lies at the foundation, followed by your worldview. As previously stated, they *form* and *inform* each other in a circular fashion. Besides the circular relationship, manifested feelings, values, linguistics, and practices emerge from your worldview. Therefore, what we see visibly on the surface is your behavior patterns, values, practices and feelings that are shaped from your worldview, a worldview that is shaped by your epistemological system. The reason why this is important to understand is that behind your feelings, practices, and behaviors always lays another two layers.²⁰

Linguistic Confusions

Different epistemological systems and different worldviews will bring about different linguistics. Therefore, this means that words may have different meanings. Epistemological systems and worldviews can load words to mean different things or make words emphasize things differently. Since this is true in the case of American Evangelicalism

²⁰ Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*, 85.

and Confessional Lutheranism, it is necessary to take time to identify the use, lack of use, and different emphasis placed on words.

Question:

What words within American Evangelicalism have a different emphasis in Confessional Lutheranism?

Generally speaking, respondents of the Major Applied Research Project shared that the biggest linguistic emphasis change was in who does the verbs. Otherwise stated, in American Evangelicalism you may have seen yourself as the subject doing the majority of the Christian verbs. However, within Confessional Lutheranism you will experience a shift in seeing God doing the majority of the verbs.²¹

Beyond generalities, about a dozen words specifically were identified as having a change in emphasis from American Evangelicalism to Lutheranism. They are further detailed in the following chart.

Word	American Evangelical Emphasis	Confessional Lutheran Emphasis
Grace	Connected to my decision	God’s gift alone
Faith	Self-generated	God’s gift to me
Baptism	Mark of my obedience/my action	God delivering forgiving grace
Communion	An act of my remembrance	Christ’s true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins
Sanctification	-After Justification -My work	-Christ’s action along with Justification -Work of the Spirit

²¹ Richard, “Becoming Lutheran: Exploring the Journey of American Evangelicals into Confessional Lutheran Thought.”

Gospel	What we need to hear in order to make a decision	Christ Crucified for the forgiveness of our sins
Sinner	Unsaved People	All People
Sin	-My Actions -Behavior	-Very core of being -Condition
Vocation	Serving God through a ministerial calling	Serving my neighbor through roles where I am placed
Means of Grace	Sinner's Prayer and Altar Call	Word and Sacrament

The most familiar words used in American Evangelicalism that are no longer being used in Lutheranism are the following: decision, decision for Christ, free will, saved, baptism of the Holy Spirit, invitation, next level, accountability, rapture, anointed, born-again, revival, living the Gospel, altar call, sinner's prayer, purpose, personal relationship, rededicating life, spirit-led, surrender, etc.²²

Homework:

Take time to look the following terms up in Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation to be able to understand the meaning of the terms from a Confessional Lutheran perspective.

Grace: #133-#140

Faith: #157-#161, #254

Baptism: #239-#260

Communion: #285-#306

Sanctification: #156, #163

Gospel: #8, #84

Sinner: #79, #82

Means of Grace: #236-#238

Sin: #78, #80, #81, #83

Vocation: Pages 35-39

Question:

What familiar words used in American Evangelicalism are no longer used in Lutheranism?

²² Ibid.

Generally speaking, within Lutheranism you will find that there are less phrases of a directional nature and less terms that incorporate feelings, such as going to the next level, God led me, the Spirit led me, God laid it on my heart, I feel led, I feel His presence, etc.²³

Question:

What new words have you encountered within Lutheranism?

Within Lutheranism you will encounter words that tend to be multisyllabic, tend to be much older, and may be Greek and/or Latin, such as Law and Gospel, means of grace, liturgy, vocation, simul iustus et peccator, catechism, synod, absolution, justification, sanctification, Lord's Supper, confession, solas, creeds, 3 uses of the Law, indicative & imperative, various Latin/Greek phrases, various Liturgy words, etc.²⁴

Homework:

While you have already looked up many of these terms, take time to look up the remaining terms in Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation.

Liturgy: Page 267

Catechism: #10-#12

Absolution: #265-#266

Creed: #86-#91

3 Uses of the Law: #77

Simul iustus et peccator: #255-#259

Synod: Ask your pastor about this term

Solas: Ask your pastor about this term

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

Conclusion: Continual Catechesis

As a parishioner of the Lutheran church, both you and your pastor have the Scriptures and confessions as your control center. The popular opinions of culture and the popular opinions of the congregation are not the control center. Thus, as you continue to study the Scriptures and as your pastor continues to proclaim the truths of the Word, these truths will penetrate your ears, heart, worldview, and source your epistemological system. These Scriptures will challenge your behaviors, feelings, worldviews, and epistemological system because God is actually present and exercising power in His Word in oral, written, and sacramental forms.²⁵

As a parishioner coming into the Lutheran Church it is also important to understand that Christian catechesis is always ongoing. In other words, the church as the body of Christ continually comes to the Divine Service to be ever reformed by the Word. If the church merely gathers together for social or fellowship reasons and the Word does not ever form and reform the body of Christ, the church is no different than a common rotary club. In a

²⁵ T.R. Halvorson (Personal Communication, 27 July 2012) says, *“Many people say that it does little good to quote the Bible to people who do not already accept the epistemology of revelation. If our doctrine of the Word were merely Fundamentalist or Reformed, we could agree. But in Lutheran theology, the Word is not merely authoritative and inerrant. The Word is living and active. The Word not only is something. The Word does something. It persuades those whom the Holy Spirit converts even though the converted never held either explicitly or implicitly to the epistemology of revelation before, because the Holy Spirit and the Word have the power to effect either or both implicit or explicit epistemological change in the hearer, causing them to, seemingly simultaneously, convert to the Word and to Christ, to the revelation and the Person, and that happens because of the Word being like a sacrament (or the sacraments being like the Word) does something.”*

striking statement William Willimon once said, “‘Community,’ untested by any criterion other than our need to huddle in groups, can be demonic.”²⁶ Therefore, according to Willimon we should not be surprised when “modern congregations may express surprise and even offense at hearing the ancient biblical story.”²⁷ Willimon goes on to share in his book, *Shaped by the Bible*, that it is not the job of a pastor to apologize for the Scriptures but to simply be faithful proclaimers of the Word. Appealing to Jesus he states, “The story caused offense when it was first preached in places like Nazareth; we should not be surprised that it continues to offend. In fact, we preachers ought to be troubled when our handling of the Bible never offends!”²⁸ Thus, you can learn to expect that the word will continually come to you confronting, exposing, and killing your sinful nature. However, do not be discouraged: for what God tears down, he heals; and what God strikes down, he binds up. Where there is death, there is also life. This is the nature of the Word; this is the implications of God’s words of Law and God’s words of Gospel to and for you.

In summary, your Christian catechesis class is just the beginning of lifelong catechesis. As you embark on this new journey into Lutheran thought, your pastor will be there for you as a faithful expositor of truth according to the Word and the Lutheran Church’s confessions. Lord willing, he will graciously stand by your side as you continue to

²⁶ William Willimon, *Shaped by the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 85.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 63.

²⁸ *Ibid*.

experience small and large worldview conflicts, as well as small and large epistemological crises that lead to epistemological resolution, peace, and assurance in the blessed Gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Welcome to Lutheranism!

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APPENDIX SEVEN

BECOMING A LITURGICAL LUTHERAN ANALYSIS SUMMARY

General:

Survey conducted using SurveyMonkey.

Summary: The survey was conducted among American Evangelicals who are or recently have entered a liturgical Lutheran church, in order to assess their misunderstandings, hesitations, and struggles with the Lutheran liturgy.

Problem Thesis:

The journey for American Evangelicals into Confessional Lutheranism is a long, difficult, and sometimes scary road. The shift from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheranism is neither something that just happens overnight, nor is it an easy shift. The shift has linguistic, emotional, worldview, and epistemological challenges that accompany it, thus producing a great deal of anxiety, stress, and uncertainty for the individual. Not only does one experience this shift ideologically, but one also experiences misunderstandings, hesitations, and struggles with the changes from non-liturgical worship settings to the worship practices of the Lutheran liturgy. All of these changes/shifts present a challenge for Lutheran pastors in knowing how to minister to parishioners coming out of American Evangelicalism into their parishes.

Purpose Thesis:

The purpose of the survey is to identify the common misunderstandings, hesitations, and struggles of American Evangelicals who have or are joining liturgical Lutheran churches. From the survey results, future work and study will occur to help Lutheran pastors better serve former Evangelicals, as well as to help former American Evangelicals better understand the Lutheran liturgy.

Date of Survey:

Begin Date: May 6, 2013

End Date: May 20, 2013

Survey Participant Response:

Total Response: 125 participants

Of the 125 participants, 117 currently are worshipping in a liturgical Lutheran church, while the remaining 8 are not consistently worshipping in a liturgical Lutheran church. For the sake of the following survey analysis, the data results will be based on the 117 participants.

Special attention will be given to the other 8 individuals in the Special Focus portion of this analysis paper.

Statistical Accuracy:

Assuming a population of 100,000 individuals who have journeyed and/or are journeying from American Evangelicalism into Lutheranism, 125 participant responses yields the following statistical confidence:

-A confidence level of 95%

-A confidence interval of 8.76%

Survey Results (Quantitative):

1. What is the church affiliation background of American Evangelicals who have journeyed into liturgical Lutheran churches?
 - a. Generally speaking, American Evangelicals journeying into Lutheran liturgy have slightly more than one Evangelical denomination in their backgrounds (i.e., approximately 1.6 denominational backgrounds).
 - b. The two most common American Evangelical backgrounds of those journeying into Lutheran liturgy were the Baptist denomination (i.e., 56.1%) and Non-denominational churches (i.e., 45.8%).

2. Which movements and influences have participants been impacted by within American Evangelicalism?
 - a. Generally speaking, American Evangelicals journeying into the Lutheran liturgy have 3.72 different movements and influences by which they have been impacted by.
 - b. The top movement and/or influence responses are:
 - i. 62.9% were impacted by Revivalism.
 - ii. 62.9% were impacted by Fundamentalism.
 - iii. 56.0% were impacted by Dispensationalism.
 - iv. 55.2% were impacted by Pietism.
 - v. 47.4% were impacted by the Church Growth Movement.

3. Before beginning the journey towards Lutheran thought, how long had participants been in American Evangelicalism?
 - a. 63.7% of participants marked that they were in American Evangelicalism for 10-30 years.
 - b. The other 36.3% of participants varied from less than a year to more than 50 years.

4. In reflecting on familiarity:
 - a. 84.5% of participants said that they were unfamiliar or very unfamiliar with the Lutheran liturgy before beginning their journeys into it.
 - b. 96.6% of participants said that they are currently familiar or very familiar with the Lutheran liturgy.

5. Regarding the Rituals/Agenda and Altar Book of the Lutheran Liturgy (i.e., the rite or order of service of the Eucharist, or Holy Baptism, or Confirmation, or Matrimony, or Burial, etc.):
 - a. 63.2% agree or strongly agree that they experienced misunderstandings, hesitations, and struggles in their journeys from American Evangelicalism into Lutheran liturgy.
 - i. More specifically, the top ritual misunderstandings, hesitations, and struggles existed with:
 1. ...the rite of Holy Baptism (67.8% agree and strongly agree)
 2. ...the rite of Holy Communion (61.4% agree and strongly agree)
 3. ...Confession of Sin and Absolution (59.5% agree and strongly agree)
 4. ...the rite of Confirmation (46.0% agree and strongly agree)
 - b. 29.4% disagree or strongly disagree that they experienced misunderstandings, hesitations, and struggles in their journeys from American Evangelicalism into Lutheran liturgy.
 - i. More specifically, the top least ritual misunderstandings, hesitations, and struggles existed with:
 1. ...the offering (88.7% disagree and strongly disagree)
 2. ...the Lord's Prayer (83.4% disagree and strongly disagree)
 3. ...the benediction (82.5% disagree and strongly disagree)

6. Regarding the Ceremonies of the Lutheran Liturgy (i.e., bodily expressions, speaking, singing, kneeling, bowing, making the sign of the cross, outward observances of the church year, ornaments, symbols, material objects employed in the church's worship, the church building, the altar, crucifixes, candles, vestments, etc.):
 - a. 67.2% agree or strongly agree that they experienced misunderstandings, hesitations, and struggles in their journeys from American Evangelicalism into Lutheran liturgy.

- i. More specifically, the top ceremonial misunderstandings, hesitations, and struggles existed with:
 - 1. ...the sign of the cross (56.7% agree and strongly agree)
 - 2. ...the liturgical chanting (54.0% agree and strongly agree)
 - 3. ...the kneeling and bowing (53.2% agree and strongly agree)
 - 4. ...the sacred vessels and vestments (52.7% agree and strongly agree)
- b. 30% disagree or strongly disagree that they experienced misunderstandings, hesitations, and struggles in their journeys from American Evangelicalism into Lutheran liturgy.
 - i. More specifically, the top least ceremonial misunderstandings, hesitations, and struggles existed with:
 - 1. ...the singing (67.3% disagree and strongly disagree)
 - 2. ...the linen cloths (53.1% disagree and strongly disagree)
 - 3. ...the church building and its ornaments (50.7% disagree and strongly disagree)

Survey Results (Qualitative):

1. General Observations:

- a. Generally speaking the participants stated that before they journeyed into Lutheran liturgy that their opinions of it were merely based on external perceptions. However, as they peeled the layers back and learned about the liturgy, their perceptions of the Lutheran liturgy changed drastically. Participant #7 stated:

All of the pieces of the liturgy confused me until I understood the structure and meaning behind them, all of which point to God's work for us through Christ. I was not familiar enough with my Bible to know that all of the liturgy came from it, and had a reason for being used in worship. I began searching to learn more about the liturgy because when we left the fundie church for a confessional church, a friend from the fundie church wrote an 18 page letter to us explaining what was evil and wrong about the Lutheran church...mainly that it was closely tied with the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and so was associating with the whore of Babylon. Written prayers and the liturgy, he maintained, were dead works and not spiritual, so I began researching to see if he was correct. Needless to say, once I found out that the liturgy was God's Word spoken all throughout the service, and understood

that the Divine Service is simply a reception of God's gifts, with our responses of thanks and praise to Him for His mercy through Christ, I never wanted to leave.

Many participants stated that as they continually learned about the liturgy, their presuppositions also continually changed. Participant #11 stated:

The outward appearance of confessional Lutheranism seemed to me formal and archaic. Yet, once I began to learn more about the historic church, I came to deeply appreciate the reverence and awe that came from following the pattern of sound words that have been passed down for centuries. The outward forms of reverence (kneeling/bowing/sign of the cross/chanting/etc.) may vary from congregation to congregation, but the Divine Service takes on such meaning and significance once one realizes what these things are and why we have them. Similarly, the candles, vestments, and other objects have no meaning unless one knows WHY they are there. I had no idea why they were used until my curiosity drove me to research and now I can view them as wonderful tools in teaching the meaning of God's Word. The fact that everything has a purpose in the Divine Service is lost on many sitting in the pews, and that is a sad fact indeed. Worship is ever so much richer when we understand why we're doing what we're doing (and why the Church has done these same things for centuries).

2. Qualitative results regarding the Rituals/Agenda and Altar Book
 - a. Of the 67.8% of those who experienced misunderstandings, hesitations, and struggles with the rite of Holy Baptism, generally speaking their confusion existed not with the rite and/or order of the ritual but with the theology of baptism (i.e., namely infant baptism). One participant stated, "It took a long time to 'unlearn' bad theology about this."
 - b. Of the 61.4% of those who experienced misunderstandings, hesitations, and struggles with the rite of Holy Communion, generally speaking their confusion existed not with the rite and/or order of the ritual but with the theology of communion. One participant stated, "It's a long road from a symbol using grape juice to Words of Institution and True Body/True Blood. Lots of teaching is needed to re-learn." Furthermore, participants noted that issues of closed communion were difficult to understand and accept.

- c. Of the 59.5% of those who experienced misunderstandings, hesitations, and struggles with the rite of Confession of Sin and Absolution, generally speaking their confusion existed due to Confession and Absolution being extremely foreign to their former Evangelical context and/or Evangelical understanding. As one participant stated, “I was clueless!” As noted by participants the cluelessness was due to them not understanding the office of the keys and how a pastor could forgive sins in God’s stead.
 - d. Note: It is interesting to note that the top three ritual confusions were all means of grace. It is also interesting to note that the general struggles were due to the theology embedded in each of these means of grace.
3. Qualitative results regarding the Ceremonies of the Lutheran Liturgy
- a. Of the 56.7% of those who experienced misunderstandings, hesitations, and struggles with the sign of the cross, generally speaking their hesitations were due to believing that it was too Roman Catholic. As one participant stated, “I thought only Romans Catholics did it, but once I learned that it wasn’t just for field goals and extra points in overtime, I now think all Christians should do it.” Another participant stated, “I feared it because I thought it was Catholic. However, I came to realize that it was a mark of true Christianity.”
 - b. Of the 54% of those who experienced misunderstandings, hesitations, and struggles with liturgical chanting, generally speaking their struggles were due to their lack of experience with chanting. One participant stated, “I cannot read chant music yet; though I play the violin. It is not intuitive to me.” Even though this struggle existed, generally speaking there was a very favorable opinion of chanting from the participants. Commenting favorably one participant said, “I love to hear the prayers chanted. It makes me sad to visit other LCMS churches and to see how few pastors chant.”
 - c. Of the 53.2% of those who experienced misunderstandings, hesitations, and struggles with the kneeling and bowing, generally speaking their struggles were due to simply not being exposed to it before. Participant #28 stated, “Other than at the communion rail, I have never seen this.”
 - d. Of the 52.7% of those who experienced misunderstandings, hesitations, and struggles with the sacred vessels and vestments, generally speaking their struggles were due to not understanding or being familiar with it. In fact one participant even said that, “Lifelong Lutherans seem to have little understanding of the significance of the garments.”

4. What has been the best thing about the journey into Lutheran liturgy?
 - a. Generally speaking the participants stated that the best thing about their journey into Lutheran liturgy was the continuity, consistency, and clarity of the divine service. Participant #1 stated that the best thing is:

Being in a church where I don't have to worry if I'm going to hear the Word of God each week. In my evangelical church, I never knew what I was going to get. It was never consistent. My Lutheran church is stable, and I know exactly what I'm going to get: Word and Sacrament, law and gospel, repentance and faith, historic Christianity. I don't dread Sundays anymore.
 - b. Furthermore, there was a great appreciation for the historic heritage of the liturgy. Participant #10 stated, "I am connected to a story and a way of worship that is as old as the church. I am catholically connected with sacramental Christians the world over."
 - c. Finally, there was a great appreciation for the privilege of being able to attend a divine service where they could 'receive' from God and 'hear' a Christ-centered message.

5. What has been the worst thing about the journey into Lutheran liturgy?
 - a. Generally speaking, the participants stated that the worst thing about their journeys into Lutheran liturgy was the loss of friends and family, as well as the fear of persecution and the persecution itself. Participant #1 shares that the worst part of the journey is, "The fear of being misunderstood by my Baptist parents, of them thinking I've gone off the deep end... The fear of being ostracized by my former church."
 - b. Furthermore, participants noted that it was difficult dealing with lifelong Lutherans who did not appreciate the gift of their liturgy. Participant #40 speaks to this saying, "Dealing with lifelong Lutherans who aren't as passionate about their faith and who want to jump into the muck of Evangelicalism is hard. I am made to feel like a troublemaker for not approving of or wanting to jump into the muck with them. I've been there and it is not pretty." Participant #45 comments on this saying that one of the worst parts of this journey is, "Seeing lifelong Lutherans not understanding what they have and become bored with it or wanting what they think would be exciting."

- c. Finally, participants shared that one of the struggles with the journey into Lutheran liturgy has been the tremendous learning curve; there is just simply so much to learn.
- 6. What advice, encouragements, thoughts, and/or insights can you give to those that are currently going through the journey into Lutheran liturgy?
 - a. Generally speaking, the participants would like to share with others going through this journey into the Lutheran liturgy that they can relax and be patient, for the journey takes time. Participant #23 states, “Don’t expect to understand it all at once, and even if you don’t get everything right in worship, it doesn’t mean you’ve broke anything. God’s Word still works.”
 - b. Furthermore, they would like to encourage those journeying into the Lutheran liturgy to be open-minded by asking a lot of questions to their new Lutheran pastors, as well as to read, read, and read as much as they can about the Lutheran faith and the Lutheran liturgy. Participant #35 says, “Ask lots of questions, even after the divine service, about things that confuse you even if it’s for silly things.”
- 7. What advice, encouragements, insights, and/or thoughts can you give to Lutheran pastors so that they might better minister to former Evangelicals joining their liturgical churches?
 - a. Generally speaking the participants would like to share with pastors that former Evangelicals coming to the Lutheran church need pastors to be patient as they teach them. Participant #36 says to pastors, “Teach your people what it means to be confessional, and what it means to worship in Spirit and Truth. Don’t mess with the liturgy to dumb it down or make it easier or less boring! Do you kiss your wife every day? Is that boring?”
 - b. Furthermore, pastors need to be prepared for many questions. Participant #22 says to pastors, “When they [former Evangelicals] ask, don’t take it as a challenge to your authority but as a seeker looking to understand.”

Special Focus:

In comparing the 117 participants who are currently attending a Lutheran church that upholds the Lutheran Confessions as expressed in the Book of Concord and practices the historical liturgy with the 8 respondents who are not currently attending a liturgical church, one significant thing needs to be noted. Both the 117 participants and the 8 participants noted that they are currently familiar or very familiar with the Lutheran liturgy (Specifically, 96.6% of those currently attending say that they are very familiar or familiar with the liturgy, whereas 75% of those not currently attending a liturgical Lutheran church say that they are

very familiar or familiar with the liturgy). However, when participants were asked about specific items of the liturgy (i.e., the Nunc-Dimittis, The Pax Domini, The Sanctus, The Salutations and Collect, etc.) those who are not attending a liturgical church scored much higher in the realm of not understanding these terms and concepts. Therefore it may be concluded that a person's definition and degree of familiarity with the liturgy may be directly tied to whether or not they are attending a liturgical church. Thus it is plausible that one can familiarize himself with the Lutheran liturgy to a certain degree theoretically speaking, but without attending and participating in the Lutheran liturgy through a congregation, one's familiarization still may be lacking or incomplete.

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