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Adult Catechesis: Cognition and Application for the Christian Life

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ADULT CATECHESIS:
COGNITION AND APPLICATION FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

A Major Applied Project
Presented to the Faculty of
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

By
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September, 2021

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Reader

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To Esther, my wife of nearly twenty years:
Mother of five, volunteer of endless hours, and faithful woman of Christ. You have supported me through every step of this process. I love you, and I'm deeply grateful to God for you.

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Soli Deo Gloria!

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|--|
| AFLBS | Association Free Lutheran Bible School |
| AFLC | Association of Free Lutheran Congregations |
| AFLTS | Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary |
| ALC | American Lutheran Church |
| BDAG | <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> |
| ELCA | Evangelical Lutheran Church in America |
| ESV | English Standard Version of the Bible |
| FLBC | Free Lutheran Bible College |
| FLS | Free Lutheran Seminary |
| MAP | Major Applied Project |
| NASB95 | New American Standard Version of the Bible, 1995 update |
| NIV | New International Version of the Bible |
| NKJB | New King James Version of the Bible |
| NRSV | New Revised Standard Version of the Bible |

GLOSSARY

Biblical Literacy: an individual's familiarity with the Bible, including an understanding of not only facts and dates but also of the theological principles and concepts communicated by Scripture. A person who is unfamiliar with basic biblical facts or foundational theological truths might be said to be "biblically illiterate."

Catechesis: a lifelong process of communicating and teaching the material laid out in the Small and Large Catechisms. A summary of the core and basic principles and foundations of the Christian faith in the Lutheran tradition. Included in but not confined to the practice of confirmation.

Catechization: the act of teaching the material in the catechisms.

Formation: the molding of a person by external elements and practices.

Habitus: the practice of core values in individual areas of one's life (or of one's life as a whole). One may develop a pastoral habitus, or one may develop a Christian habitus for the whole of his or her life.

Interleaving: studying two or more types of informational material simultaneously for the purpose of mastering both.

Postmodern: a philosophy, developed and espoused primarily in the twentieth century, which rejects the notion of absolute, objective truth.

ABSTRACT

Gudim, Jason D. "Adult Catechesis as Formation and Habitus for the Christian Life." Doctor of Ministry. Major Applied Project, Concordia Seminary, 2021. 127 pp.

The Small and Large Catechisms are a central part of confessional Lutheran theology. Catechism instruction is built into the practice of confirmation. But for many Lutherans, catechesis stops at confirmation, with some never opening their catechisms again. Built into the Great Commission as a disciple-making process are both baptizing and teaching. Catechesis fits the model in that the people of God are guarding the truth of Scripture that has been handed down to them generation by generation. Recent studies in literature also suggest that catechesis fits nicely into known effective methods of learning. This research project attempted to measure the effectiveness of intentional, direct adult catechesis through a seminar taught on the catechism content of the Apostles' Creed. A short-answer and multiple-choice survey was distributed before and after the seminar. Results suggest that there is a direct connection between exposure to catechetical material and a more confident confession of one's faith.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The basis for this Major Applied Project (MAP) stems from my own personal experience, both as an individual growing up in the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC) and as a pastor in the AFLC. I was born into a Christian home and baptized as an infant. As a child, my family joined an AFLC congregation in Grand Forks, North Dakota, following the lead of my grandfather. He was, at the time, an American Lutheran Church (ALC) pastor in northwestern Minnesota and followed the lead of his congregation in not joining the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) when that church body was being formed. As a result, a vast majority of my Christian training has occurred in AFLC congregations. This included confirmation, which happened over a two-year period when I was 12 and 13. After confirmation, I continued on in church, participating in youth group, attending Bible camps and retreats, and eventually attending the Association Free Lutheran Bible School (AFLBS), the two-year, post-secondary Bible school of the AFLC, where, upon graduation, I received a general certification in Bible.¹ I remained active in AFLC congregations during college and my early adulthood, getting married and settling into full-time work as I slowly completed my college education.

In my mid-twenties, I sensed an internal call into the ministry. Having verified that call by consulting with several mentors and authority figures in my life, I applied to and was accepted at the Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary (AFLTS—the seminary of the AFLC, now known as the Free Lutheran Seminary [FLS]). During the summer before I began seminary, I experienced a major crisis of faith. I remember the night very vividly. I was awoken by a

¹ At the time, AFLBS was an unaccredited institution, so the “certification in Bible” amounted to a degree for completing the program. Today, the school is accredited and is now known as the Free Lutheran Bible College (FLBC).

thunderstorm outside and could not return to sleep. Rather than waking up my wife and young son, I went downstairs and sat on the couch in my living room and first started to shake, and then I started to sob. I was coming under a severe conviction of sin that I was not only a miserable father and husband, but I was a miserable Christian as well. I could not outrun several moral failures in my life. Finally, at a loss for any other direction, I prayed the most frightening words I ever spoke to God. “God, if you can’t make me a good Christian in seminary, I’m walking away. I can’t do this anymore. It’s clearly not for me.” After that prayer, my life proceeded, mostly unchanged and unremarkable, until the beginning of classes during my first year of seminary.

It was in seminary that I was, essentially for the first time, introduced to the Lutheran confessions in the Book of Concord. In a *Lutheran Symbolics* course I was required to take, I was required to read through the Book of Concord for the first time. It was life-altering. It was also during this time that I became acutely aware that I had never re-opened, or even thought about, my training in the Small Catechism since my time in confirmation.

After completing my seminary classes and my internship² assignment in California, I accepted a call to serve as pastor at Faith Free Lutheran Church in south Minneapolis, where I still serve today. It was shortly after starting at Faith that my pastoral context began informing the other half of the basis for this MAP.

About a year after starting as pastor, several members of my congregation began asking me individually, and apart from any knowledge of the others, what made us Lutherans. They wanted to know why we were Lutheran and what beliefs designated us as such. I brainstormed how best to approach this topic and decided to simply teach an adult Sunday school class on the Book of

² FLS refers to the one year of field training in seminary as “internship” rather than “vicarage.”

Concord, moving through each document and studying each article and topic individually.³ It was during this time that I realized a vast majority of my congregation, though willingly identifying as Lutheran, was more or less un-catechized. Many of them, just like me, had not studied or even opened their Small Catechisms since (or even if) they were confirmed. Much of the material I was teaching, directly out of the Small and Large Catechisms, seemed almost brand new to most attendees of the class. This experience laid the foundation of what I would identify as a bigger issue that extended beyond my little congregation in south Minneapolis.

Research Problem

I suspect that the lack of catechesis I encountered as I began my adult Sunday school class on the Book of Concord is not unique to either my personal or pastoral context. What might account for this seemingly ubiquitous lack of catechesis?

Gene Veith offers some potential answers. First, he contends that a “modernist” approach of the twentieth century to both faith in general and Scripture as a whole has certainly been a driving factor:

The twentieth century opened with a theological battle between the so-called modernists and the fundamentalists. With the Scopes Trial of 1925, the media caricatured the fundamentalists, and the intellectual elite ridiculed them. The modernists seized the denominational structures of most mainline churches, including the seminaries, and emerged triumphant. Ever since, modernist theologians have been “demythologizing” the Bible in an effort to make Christianity palatable to the twentieth-century mind. They assume that “modern man” is so oriented to the scientific method and the triumph of the “secular city” that he simply cannot believe in miracles, divine revelation, and a God unseen.

Seminaries began studying the Bible, not as the authoritative Word of God, but as any other ancient document, using the historical-critical methodology of “modern scientific scholarship”... Rather than seeing the Bible as authoritative, it held that

³ We started with the Three Ecumenical Creeds, then the Small and Large Catechisms as a unit, followed by the Augsburg Confession and the Apology, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, and finished with the Formula of Concord in May 2021.

Bible statements should be received “critically,” as reflecting the culture and preoccupations of an ancient people. According to the modernist approach, what the Bible says is not necessarily true.⁴

This “victory” of modernist theology did not come without consequences. Veith continues:

Liberals designed their theology to accommodate modern thought and culture, turning the church away from its preoccupation with an otherworldly salvation to a concern with society’s tangible problems ... Now the political utopianism and the psychological naiveté of liberal theology—while still dominating most mainline seminaries—seem curiously dated. Far from appealing to modern man, the liberal churches have plummeted in membership. If the liberals were right, there is really no need for a church. If the Bible is a myth and we do not really need to be saved, as the liberals so earnestly preached, why not sleep in on Sunday mornings?⁵

It can be concluded that if people aren’t attending church, they aren’t being catechized.

But one simply cannot blame the liberal mainline denominations for this problem. There are factors in the conservative, or evangelical, churches in America as well. “Today, religion is not seen as a set of beliefs about what is real and what is not. Rather, religion is seen as a preference, a choice. We believe in what we like. We believe what we want to believe.”⁶ This sort of postmodern notion seems to permeate the church beyond the liberal and conservative distinction. Because of this, pastors are taking notice and have unfortunately adjusted how they operate. “Today even conservative and evangelical ministers seldom mention Hell. Certainly ‘people don’t like to hear about that,’ and we do not want to scare them away.”⁷ If pastors are appealing to people’s “itching ears” and moving away from Scripture to addressing the felt needs of the people in the pews, then biblical illiteracy can be considered a major part of the church’s lack of catechesis. People cannot know what the Bible says if they’re never told what it actually

⁴ Gene Edward Veith, Jr., *Postmodern Times: a Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1994), 191.

⁵ Veith, *Postmodern Times*, 192.

⁶ Veith, *Postmodern Times*, 193.

⁷ Veith, *Postmodern Times*, 194.

says.

There is some empirical evidence for the problem of biblical illiteracy in the church. Citing what he calls “an important research paper entitled the *Bible Literacy Report*,” Byron R. Johnson notes that English teachers simultaneously believe biblical literacy is important for students heading for college and that these same teachers have observed Biblical illiteracy is “quite common.” Johnson writes:

The survey revealed that only a minority of American teens appear to be “Bible literate.” For example, one out of ten respondents indicated that Moses was one of the twelve Apostles. About the same percentage of teens were not able to identify what Easter commemorates. The study concludes that at least among American teens, Biblical literacy is an obvious problem.⁸

Perhaps one could conclude that if it is merely teens who struggle with biblical literacy, the answer would simply be to focus on confirmation classes and youth group content as a solution.

But biblical literacy seems to transcend one specific age group.

Anecdotally speaking, I have several experiences during my time as a pastor that bear this notion out. One time in specific, I remember counseling a Christian woman who had experienced a tragic death in her family. I mentioned that the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, reminds us that God loves us and points us to Jesus Christ. She responded to me, “I don’t know what that means.” I asked which part, and she said, “I don’t know what you mean when you say, ‘Genesis to Revelation.’”

This problem has been illustrated in contexts beyond mine. Ligonier Ministries has published a website called “The State of Theology.”⁹ In commenting on this website, Gene Edward Veith wrote on his blog, “A majority of Americans, 52%, agree with the statement,

⁸ Byron R. Johnson, “The Case for Empirical Assessment of Biblical Literacy in America,” in *The Bible and the University*, ed. David Lyle Jeffrey and C. Stephen Evans (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 247.

⁹ Ligonier Ministries, “The State of Theology,” accessed February 1, 2021, <https://thestateoftheology.com>.

‘Jesus was a great teacher, but he was not God.’ That’s not surprising. But what *is* surprising is that nearly one-in-three (30%) of *evangelical Christians* also agree in rejecting the deity of Christ.”¹⁰ This sets the stage for Veith’s pertinent analysis (as far as this MAP is concerned):

There is a wealth of fascinating information in this study—some of which is encouraging—but I want to focus on the finding that so many evangelicals do not believe in the deity of Christ. Even among those who do, a large number are evidently heretics. In fact, a *majority* of evangelicals, 55%, agree with the statement “Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God.” The notion that Jesus was created, as opposed to being the eternally-existing Son of God, was a key tenet of Arianism, the heresy dealt with by the Council of Nicaea, whose creed confesses that He is “begotten, not made.”

Evangelicals, however, unlike the Arians, do believe in the Trinity, mostly, with 93% agreeing that “There is one true God in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.” And yet, a majority, 51%, commit another heresy in agreeing that “The Holy Spirit is a force but is not a personal being.”

Perhaps such inconsistency is just an example of theological illiteracy. Some of the questions might be taken in different ways and reflect controversies within particular theological traditions, though these responses to the identity of Christ are pretty straightforward. And getting the identity of Christ wrong should be a serious concern. After all, “faith” requires both trust and belief, and belief requires someone or something to believe in. So faith in Christ should entail a true belief in who He is.¹¹

This seems to be the case with others in the Lutheran church as well. Writing about the Small Catechism in the *Concordia Journal*, Mary Jane Haemig says, “The Lutheran reformers expected the catechism to teach Christians how to read the Bible, making them independent of the whims and caprices of pastors, priests, and false teachers.” She goes on to editorialize, “Given the widespread biblical illiteracy today, this use of the catechism can provide useful assistance.”¹²

¹⁰ Gene Edward Veith, “Evangelicals Who Don’t Believe in Christ?,” *Cranach* (blog), *Patheos*, September 16, 2020, <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/geneveith/2020/09/evangelicals-who-dont-believe-in-christ/>.

¹¹ Veith, “Evangelicals Who Don’t Believe.”

¹² Mary Jane Haemig, “Recovery Not Rejection: Luther’s Appropriation of the Catechism,” *Concordia Journal* 43, no. 1–2 (Winter/Spring 2017): 51.

It is my assertion that in our current post-Christian, postmodern society, biblical illiteracy and theological illiteracy are both concerning parts of a bigger problem in our congregations. If we were to focus solely on biblical illiteracy, I do not think it would get to the heart of the issue. Biblical illiteracy can certainly account for a lack of familiarity with salvation or other core Christian doctrines. However, just because one might be biblically literate does not mean that they can interact in a meaningful way with others in conversations regarding their faith. Consider the examples of the teenagers above. Knowing what Easter represents might enable one to effectively speak about Christ's death and resurrection (at least on a foundational level); however, it does not necessarily follow that knowing Moses was not one of the twelve Apostles (or being able to identify the actual twelve Apostles) equips one to interact with the core truths of the Christian faith. Such knowledge might be considered trivia and yet qualify one to be labeled as biblically literate.

When one adds the concept of theological illiteracy, I believe the picture becomes more complete. It is not enough simply to know information about the Bible. A Christian must also know why that information matters and how it impacts his or her faith.

For this reason, I believe that the Lutheran church is suffering from a deeper problem—a problem with catechesis. We have failed to continue to catechize our members in a formal and intentional way after confirmation and thus have denied them the basic language to discuss or even think about their faith in an appropriate or healthy manner. This is perhaps especially egregious when one considers the purpose of the Small Catechism. Martin Luther himself said, in the shorter preface to the Large Catechism, that the content of the catechism represented “the minimum knowledge required of a Christian.”¹³

¹³ Large Catechism Preface 2 in Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the*

A person who is un-catechized lacks even the basic language to discuss or think about their Christian faith in helpful ways. Their faith runs the risk of becoming purely internal, subjective, and in some cases, circumstantial. Rather than describing their faith in terms of sin and grace, confession and forgiveness, Law and Gospel, and vocation, un-catechized people speak about their faith in almost wholly experiential terms—which, by definition, must almost necessarily be unique and individualistic. In conversations and on social media, un-catechized individuals may refer to such experiences as a “God thing” or talk about how God was prompting them to do this or that through a set of otherwise coincidental events or a distinct feeling. People who speak in such terms might have difficulty interacting with another Christian on matters of faith because, “they reject organized and institutionalized religion in favor of a personal, private, inward spirituality.”¹⁴

A lack of catechization is not meant to be a derisive or demeaning concept or to call one’s Christian faith into question. Rather, it is intended to illustrate that an individual lacks concrete, recognizable, and even biblical means to describe what makes him or her a Christian and how his or her Christian faith is maintained. This individual is left to their own personal, private, unique faith and whatever self-chosen definition of salvation that faith takes on. As such, meaningful Christian communication, education, and perhaps even maturity becomes exceedingly difficult.

Research Question

All of this evidence in my own life and in the world around me has led me to the research question for this MAP. How can I help members of my congregation to think differently about

Evangelical Lutheran Church (Philadelphia: Mühlenberg, 1959), 362.

¹⁴ Gene Edward Veith, Jr., *Post-Christian: A Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020), 233.

the Christian life and to do so in a way that is practical and applicable rather than merely theoretical, experiential, and abstract? Does this catechesis contribute to personal expressions or confessions of an individual's faith?

If, in fact, the Christian life consists of concrete, objective truths communicated to us in Scripture and is, from a Lutheran perspective, summarized in the content of the Small and Large Catechisms, then repeated exposure to and instruction from these catechisms should on some level be measurable. It should also be the case that we as Christians never “graduate” from the materials in the catechisms. They should be sources of life-long learning for us, just as the truths and blessings of Scripture can never be mined completely. Luther discussed the impact of the catechism on his own life when he wrote:

As for myself, let me say that I, too, am a doctor and a preacher—yes, and as learned and experienced as any of those who act so high and mighty. Yet I do as a child who is being taught the Catechism. Every morning, and whenever else I have time, I read and recite word for word the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Psalms, etc. I must still read and study the Catechism daily, yet I cannot master it as I wish, but must remain a child and pupil of the Catechism, and I do it gladly.¹⁵

A lack of catechesis among the members of Lutheran congregations presents pastors and leadership with multiple issues. For Lutherans to address these issues, we should be able to encourage our congregations that direct, intentional adult catechesis is demonstrably effective. This is what this MAP is setting out to do.

Research Purpose

Although I am firmly convinced of the effectiveness of direct, intentional adult catechesis due to my own experiences as pastor of Faith Free Lutheran Church, I did not have any evidence that it was tangibly and demonstrably effective. The primary purpose of this MAP is to identify

¹⁵ LC Martin Luther's Preface 7–8 in Tappert, 359.

and explore the biblical mandate for continuing adult catechesis in the life of a believer and to measure, on a small scale, the effectiveness of such catechesis on a small group of participants in a class.

I sought to address current trends from studies in the science of learning and make an argument that the results of those studies point to the catechetical method as an effective and efficient way of teaching and retaining important information. I also wanted to review literature on catechesis and the catechisms of the Lutheran Church in order to argue that catechesis must be a life-long process rather than stop with confirmation.

I hoped to be able to address the topic of adult catechesis by studying a group of volunteers who took a portion of the class I have taught in my own congregation. I wanted to design a survey that could measure the group's biblical and theological literacy both before and after the class. The survey was intended to ask questions about the Apostles' Creed and how it applies to the life of a Christian. In doing so, I hoped to demonstrate a growth in practical and applicable Christian knowledge that deepened a participant's faith and equipped them to think and speak about their Christian faith in more helpful and meaningful ways.

The primary goal of this study is to continue to encourage my own congregation of the benefits of continued, direct, and intentional adult catechesis, a process we started together nearly ten years ago. Another goal of this study is to encourage other pastors and churches to continue to catechize the adults in their congregations. It is hoped that I have demonstrated that intentional and direct adult catechesis will be effective in equipping congregation members to think about and discuss their faith in concrete, biblical concepts that promote assurance of salvation and Christian maturity. This, in turn, should contribute to the spiritual life of a congregation.

Finally, a goal of this study is to encourage myself in the continued development of the curriculum that I have been writing on the Book of Concord and using in my own congregation. I hope that through the demonstrated effectiveness of the material, I remember to take my own advice and continue to catechize my congregation on a regular basis. I also hope to someday make this curriculum available to others to use for the same purposes, goals, and outcomes I have utilized it for at Faith Free Lutheran Church.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PROJECT IN THE CONTEXT OF RECENT RESEARCH

The focus of this MAP was to measure the effectiveness of adult catechetical materials, specifically of one particular section (the Apostles' Creed) with one particular group. In this chapter, I will highlight the originality of my research as well as how recent literature informs and relates to my research.

Recent trends in research on catechesis tend to focus on teaching theories and styles rather than on the effectiveness of the material itself. Another challenge in comparing the content of this MAP to other recent research is the natural flux in terminology. Terms are frequently defined in different ways for different people due to different contexts. One such example will be examined in the next section.

Originality

One MAP in particular seemed pertinent to the material I wanted to research and study for my MAP. In 2002, Dr. Kevin Wyssmann wrote a MAP entitled "Systemic Catechesis" to complete his Doctor of Ministry studies at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. The opening paragraph of Wyssmann's MAP highlights the important point of comparison. "This Major Applied Project is designed to reveal the dynamics that are making confirmation an unprecedented challenge for today's pastors, and to respond with a model for ministry that reflects today's unique circumstances, that has been tested in the parish and provides for a family-focused approach to catechizing the youth of today."¹

From the outset, Wyssmann equates his concept of catechesis with the Lutheran practice of

¹ Kevin Wyssmann, "Systemic Catechesis" (DMin MAP, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 2002), 3. <https://scholar.csl.edu/dmin/108>

confirmation. This is further established later in the MAP. “The challenge of a parish composed of larger numbers of members who were not life-long Lutherans is that many do not understand the concept of confirmation. They do not automatically make the connection between their teenager and catechesis.” Finally, Wyssmann states it simply and directly: “The first practical presupposition is a clarification of words often used interchangeably: confirmation and catechesis.”²

An implicit question involved in the research for my MAP becomes, “Does catechesis begin and end with confirmation, or should it be a lifelong process for every member of the church?” Wyssmann seems to agree with me later in the same paragraph when he writes, “Parents are often as spiritually clueless as their children ... Confirmation resources will need to be developed that include an instructional component parallel and complementary to that of the junior high program.”³

Where Wyssmann’s research and my research part ways is what to do about the lack of catechesis among adults in our congregations.

What has gone wrong? If sermons are rightly dividing Law from Gospel, parochial schools are diligent at their tasks, and parishes are using the historic sequence provided in Luther’s Small Catechism, then why aren’t our parishioners faring better on these essential doctrines of faith? If we can assume that no Lutheran is intentionally teaching that salvation is by works and that the old Adam, our unredeemed nature, always seeks to justify itself, then the solution must lie in the arena of learning. I would contend that the answer to what is wrong is centered not in a radical deviation in theology but a reflective evaluation of how we communicate our theology to a disinterested, detached, and lost generation.⁴

For Wyssman, the answer to the lack of catechesis among adults in our congregations is a new and refined way of doing confirmation that incorporates the entire family. For me, the answer to

² Wyssmann, “Systemic Catechesis,” 26.

³ Wyssmann, “Systemic Catechesis,” 8.

⁴ Wyssmann, “Systemic Catechesis,” 21.

the same problem is continued and intentional catechesis directed specifically at adults. Rather than change how the church does confirmation, which may or may not be appropriate, changing our focus to a model of ongoing catechesis which is reflected in the Great Commission is the ideal, at least as far as my ministry context is concerned. While it may be fair to criticize or bemoan the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of confirmation, it becomes much less of a crisis if we recognize catechesis as a lifelong process.

One final point of departure between this MAP and Wyssmann's is the function and purpose of catechesis in general.

Answers must follow questions, not questions answers. Catechesis has assumed, up until this time, that the learner need not be asking questions yet. As long as we provide all the answers now, the questions will follow. Questions only follow answers once the brain has sufficiently matured. To provide answers in the hopes that appropriate questions might follow at a later point is not supported by the evidence of available research. It is simply not how people learn. First comes the questions, the hunger and readiness to know, and then the answers take on meaning and relevance to the learner.⁵

Here, Wyssmann seems to view the catechetical method as one that is primarily about the exchange of information. While this is certainly the case in part, especially when it comes to the confirmation of pre-teens and/or teens, it becomes a much deeper concept when one considers the need and practice of adult catechesis.

From my own perspective and in my own context, catechesis not only provided the necessary information for my confession of faith, but it also enabled me to think about Scripture in a better way. For instance, continual reviews of the catechism in my own life have provided the foundation for key Lutheran concepts such as the proper division of Law and Gospel and the Means of Grace, which then led me to develop the paradigm I use in my own catechetical

⁵ Wyssmann, "Systemic Catechesis," 44.

materials: the two halves of the Christian life are assurance of salvation and vocation.

As I have studied and meditated on the material from both the Small and Large Catechisms, I have begun to understand that the product of the Gospel in our lives as Christians is assurance of salvation. This explains the struggles I had before seminary that were mentioned above. I did not have a problem with my salvation. I had a problem with assurance of salvation. As reflected in the Apostles' Creed, parts of the Lord's Prayer, and in the Sacraments, the Gospel promises are objective certainties that are given to me in God's Word. Because of the certainty of what Christ has done for me on the cross and with the empty tomb, I am now free to hear the words of the Law and to utilize them as instruction on how to love my neighbors in my various vocations and as an opportunity to repent when I fail to do so. This has drastically changed the way I think about Scripture and how it applies to my life as a Christian. It is much simpler and less convoluted. It is not any easier, but it is simpler.

In no way do I demean or cast aspersions on Wyssmann's research. I found his MAP to be both interesting and helpful. In this section, I have simply intended to show that, where his research and my research diverge, it is because we differ in the breadth of catechesis explored, as well as the function of catechesis in the life of a congregation.

Literature Review

As I reviewed literature related to the content of my research, four categories began to develop: (1) Modern Theories of Learning; (2) The Concept of Formation; (3) Studies on the Catechism; and (4) Modern Catechesis. In this section, I will discuss the works that I reviewed under each of these four headings.

Modern Theories of Learning

The first book that I reviewed was *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning*, by

Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDaniel. Several of the principles laid out in this helpful book apply directly to Lutheran models for catechesis, some of which I will highlight below.

The authors define learning as “acquiring knowledge and skills and having them readily available from memory so you can make sense of future problems and opportunities”⁶ This is also the starting point of catechesis—to make sure we, as Christians, have the truths of Scripture and the basic foundations of our faith ready at hand to help in our Christian lives. Paul writes to Timothy, “all Scripture is ...profitable” (2 Tim 3:16).

The authors debunk some myths about learning, such as rote memorization and repetition (what they call “massed practice”), which have only limited value for learning material. In the long term, massed practice will be able to produce and interact with the subject material a student is attempting to learn. “Pitting the learning of basic knowledge against the development of creative thinking is a false choice. Both need to be cultivated. The stronger one’s knowledge about the subject at hand, the more nuanced one’s creativity can be in addressing a new problem.”⁷ So it goes with the communication of doctrine in catechesis, especially within the Lutheran framework of Law and Gospel. If either the Law or the Gospel becomes formulaic, exegesis also becomes dry and formulaic, and Scripture itself may cease to capture an individual’s interest. But because of the richness and depth of Scripture (and consequently of doctrine), coupled together with the work of the Holy Spirit, the ability to extrapolate the basic information (Law and Gospel) into nuanced, creative expressions drawn from the various sections and genres of Scripture will both deepen a pastor’s ministry as well as strengthen a

⁶ Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDaniel, *Make It Stick* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2014), 2.

⁷ Brown, Roediger, and McDaniel, *Make It Stick*, 30.

catechumen's faith (including the pastor who is also growing and learning even as he teaches).

Moving on to some of the recommended practices to enhance learning, the authors start with the discipline of practice itself. Rather than “massed practice” or cramming—the method that most students, and perhaps especially pre-teen and teenage confirmation students, employ in an effort to pass quizzes and tests—the authors advocate for practice sessions using various methods that are spaced further apart. “It’s not just what you know, but how you practice what you know that determines how well the learning serves you later.”⁸

“Compared to Massed Practice, a significant advantage of interleaving and variation is that they help us learn better how to assess context and discriminate between problems, selecting and applying the correct solution from a range of possibilities.”⁹ Interleaving means to study two or more types of material (different types of math problems, for example), rather than to study one subject before moving on to the next. While this process feels like it makes learning the material slower, the deeper grasp one gets by going through the process of interleaving is demonstrated by research. Again, the applications for continued catechesis in the church are evident, as a continuous study of the six chief parts of the Small Catechism will eventually produce familiarity and confidence in the material. From my own experience, as mentioned above, the value of the catechism isn’t just in the information communicated but in its ability to help me to think better about Scripture and the Christian life. The authors go on to say, “In fact, because new learning depends on prior learning, the more we learn, the more possible connections we create for further learning.”¹⁰

In another location in the book, the authors parallel quite closely Luther’s lament from the

⁸ Brown, Roediger, and McDaniel, *Make It Stick*, 57.

⁹ Brown, Roediger, and McDaniel, *Make It Stick*, 53.

¹⁰ Brown, Roediger, and McDaniel, *Make It Stick*, 76.

preface to the catechism that people quickly believe they have mastered the material and no longer need the catechism at all. They highlight this with an illustration describing the concept of “spatial disorientation,” which is an “aeronautical term for a deadly combination of two elements: losing sight of the horizon and relying on human sensory perception that doesn’t jibe with reality.”¹¹ For all intents and purposes, this serves as an excellent and functional definition of sin. We lose sight of the truth because of instant gratification, and we replace God’s truth with our own perception of reality because we have deceived ourselves into believing we have mastered the material that allows us to be aware of the temptation and dangers.

A second book which fits into the “modern theories” category is *Martin Luther: Learning for Life*, by Marilyn J. Harran. While this book gives a historical overview of Luther’s ideas about the usefulness of the catechism, its value in relation to this MAP comes in Luther’s ideas about education.

First, Harran lays out the concerns Luther had with the educational methods of his time. Luther realized “that at least at times the conceptual arguments could degenerate into meaningless intellectual tournaments, leading into an abstractness far distant from experience and reality.”¹² Harran concludes later in the book, “As we will see in the next part of the story, Luther influenced education in much of the western world for centuries to come. His ideas were in large part the result of the education he received and his response to it, sometimes positive, as in the case of humanism, and sometimes negative, as in the case of an Aristotle he found an intrusive part of the curriculum.”¹³

Harran describes how Luther’s view of education is not separate from his own theological

¹¹ Brown, Roediger, and McDaniel, *Make It Stick*, 108.

¹² Marilyn J. Harran, *Martin Luther: Learning for Life* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1997), 70–71.

¹³ Harran, *Martin Luther*, 125.

breakthrough:

That Luther continued to beat upon the biblical text for an answer to his anguish is of decisive importance for much that follows. It is key to understanding his theological search came through Scripture itself. Luther understood this answer not as the fruit of his own interpretation, but as the power of the Word that broke through the barrier of his interpretation. The teacher was taught by the text, a perception that would be central to Luther's' concept of education.¹⁴

This strengthens the argument for the formative power of catechesis—teaching the foundations of faith for the molding of the individual, which I will speak about in the next subsection. Harran goes on to say, quoting Martin Brecht, “Luther’s theological work and teaching activity were not performed in an academic vacuum divorced from life. Education was directed to a person’s entire being, including one’s piety, and theological reflection took place for the sake of the church and in committed confrontation with its concrete structure.”¹⁵ The connection and value of teaching, theological teaching in particular, and everyday life is vital to the establishment of catechetical material to formation in the faith. If the basis of the faith, taught to a believer on a regular basis and in a direct way, can inform and enrich a person’s everyday life and affect his or her entire being, then catechesis needs to be the primary focus of the church’s educational endeavors and disciple-making activities.

Harran demonstrates in the book that Luther believed the usefulness of the catechisms transcended the need for theological education. “In Luther’s hands, the catechism underscores both individual faith and relationship with God on the one hand, and responsibilities of life as a member of a community of faith, on the other.”¹⁶ She emphasizes this a few pages later when she states, “Luther gave the catechism a much broader purpose, as ongoing preparation for daily

¹⁴ Harran, *Martin Luther*, 135.

¹⁵ Harran, *Martin Luther*, 140.

¹⁶ Harran, *Martin Luther*, 204.

life.”¹⁷

Harran also acknowledges Luther’s concern for a move away from catechesis because of the false notion that an individual has mastered the content. “Those who pursue such daily meditation will come to know that ‘the longer they work with the Catechism, the less they know of it and the more they have to learn. Only then, hungry and thirsty, will they truly relish what not they cannot bear to smell because they are so bloated and surfeited.’ ”¹⁸

Luther’s own theories of education seem to match up to a great extent with those of Brown, Roediger, and McDaniel. There is a need for humility, continued study, and practice. Mastery doesn’t come through short-term, intense study, but rather through regular, repeated review that will impact the whole of one’s life.

The Concept of Formation

The second main section of literature I reviewed falls under the heading of “formation.” Formation is the molding of a person by elements and practices—in this case the molding of a person in their faith and worldview. James K. A. Smith’s Cultural Liturgies trilogy, consisting of *Desiring the Kingdom*, *Imagining the Kingdom*, and *Awaiting the King*, laid the groundwork for this research.

The premise of Smith’s first book in the trilogy, *Desiring the Kingdom*, acknowledges that distinctly Christian education does not stop with the acquisition of knowledge.

Based on the alternative model I will sketch in this book, how we think about distinctly Christian education would not be primarily a matter of sorting out which Christian ideas to drop into eager and willing mind-receptacles; rather, it would become a matter of thinking about how a Christian education shapes us, forms us,

¹⁷ Harran, *Martin Luther*, 206.

¹⁸ Harran, *Martin Luther*, 220.

molds us to be a certain kind of people whose hearts and passions and desires are aimed at the kingdom of God.¹⁹

This sets a foundation for the concept of formation: the information and practices that “shape,” “form,” and “mold” us. It is my contention that this is best expressed in a Lutheran context as we integrate the practice of catechesis with the command of Christ in the Great Commission to make disciples.

Smith touches on the concept of discipleship in chapter 1. “Discipleship and formation are less about erecting an edifice of Christian knowledge than they are a matter of developing a Christian know-how that intuitively ‘understands’ the world in the light of the fullness of the gospel.”²⁰ This corresponds well with my own experience of ongoing catechesis contributing to a better understanding and even a better way of thinking about Scripture as it relates to my Christian life.

The concept of formation should be of special concern for Christians because of the way the secular world works. Smith establishes the idea of “secular liturgies,” where various establishments in the world around us, such as shopping malls or sporting events, are conditioning us how to think, how to live, and how to order our lives. These secular liturgies are always in competition with the church, which must be in opposition to what amounts to a worldly catechesis:

However at this point, I think Christians often go wrong, for two reasons. First, sometimes Christians fail to articulate strategies of resistance because they fail to see a threat. Because they fail to see these cultural institutions and practices as formative—fail to see them as liturgies rather than just neutral, benign ‘things we do’—they also fail to recognize what’s at stake in them ... But second, sometimes Christians fail to articulate adequate strategies of resistance because they misdiagnose

¹⁹ James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, Cultural Liturgies, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 18.

²⁰ Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 68.

the threat. And they misdiagnose the threat because of a flawed, stunted philosophical anthropology.²¹

Later in the book, Smith indirectly connects the response of Christian resistance to secular liturgies to catechesis. “When Christians engage in the practices of hospitality and Sabbath keeping, singing and forgiveness, simplicity and fasting, they are engaging in a way of life that is formative and constitutive of Christian discipleship.”²² The Christian life, lived out on a day-to-day basis, is where the catechetical method was birthed. Luther intended the Small Catechism to be used in the home and to form our children in the faith as they grow into adulthood.

The introduction to Smith’s second volume in the series, *Imagining the Kingdom*, again indirectly connects the concept of formation to catechesis. In setting an incomplete definition of Christian worldview in his sights, Smith writes, “My criticism here is not that worldview is wrong but only that it is inadequate. It is an approach that imagines us (and our students) as primarily *spectators* of the world rather than as *actors* in the world ... It’s not a matter of thinking trumping dispositions; it’s a matter of acquiring new habits.”²³ In the same way, catechesis impacts the entire life of a Christian and gives us a better understanding of how we interact in the world and of how we interact with the world.

Smith asks some important questions later in the book:

What if we thought the goal of Christian education and formation, not in terms of the acquisition of a Christian ‘worldview,’ but instead as the acquisition of a Christian *habitus*? Might we not better capture the essence of Christianity in the ‘between’ concept of *habitus*—as an orientation to the world that is carried in a way of life and oriented fundamentally toward action, toward tangible being-in-the-world? We would then need to attend to the nexus of belief and body.²⁴

²¹ Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 126.

²² Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 212.

²³ James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, Cultural Liturgies, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 8–9.

²⁴ Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 84.

These questions illustrate the importance of vocation to the Christian life as the place where what we believe impacts how we live. This is the focus of the last section of the catechism, as the Table of Duties formulates a biblical perspective on several vocations one might have in life.

Without allowing our catechesis to form us, to be a part of the process of making disciples, we run the risk of letting the secular liturgies all round us win the day. “So we toddle off to church or Bible study week after week, comforting ourselves that we’re devoted to ‘the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD’ (Jer. 7:4), without realizing that we spend the rest of the week making bread for idols (Jer. 7:18) because we fail to appreciate the *religious* nature of these ‘secular’ practices.”²⁵ Smith here agrees that catechesis cannot be merely the exchange of information. We must know what we believe and why we believe it, and then we must allow that belief to impact our lives on a day-to-day basis.

One paragraph from Smith’s third and final book in the Cultural Liturgies series, *Awaiting the King*, summarizes his concept of formation and its value to the church:

In many ways, though the Cultural Liturgies project is focused on the primacy of liturgical formation in Christian discipleship, this was largely prompted by the reality of our cultural assimilation. How are we to make sense of the fact that Christians can have a wealth of knowledge *about* Christianity and yet live as practical naturalists, giving themselves over to ways of life that are, in some respects, the very antithesis of shalom? If the core goal of my project has been to argue that our loves are rightly ordered through the ‘habitation of the Spirit’ that is Christian worship, this is in no small part a response to the way we are co-opted by rival stories and visions of the good life. In short, the emphasis on *counter*-formation in worship is a fire-meets-fire response to the *deformation* of our loves that manifests itself as conformity to ‘the world.’²⁶

This illustrates almost exactly how I feel about the role of continued, intentional adult catechesis for adults. It’s not enough to simply be biblically literate, if that literacy amounts only to trivia—

²⁵ Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 141.

²⁶ James K. A. Smith, *Awaiting the King*, Cultural Liturgies, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 168–69.

to knowing things *about* the Bible or *about* Christianity. The content of what we learn about Scripture and what we learn from Scripture, content that is wonderfully summarized in Luther's Small Catechism, must form us. It must make us into disciples. The process of catechesis is designed to do just this very thing.

A book that helped me synthesize Smith's ideas into a Lutheran framework was Joel Biermann's *A Case for Character*. Biermann notes that for Luther, the concept of formation was built into his intent for the catechism:

For Luther, the gospel and its way of life needed to be inculcated in the lives of all the people. 'Let all Christians drill themselves daily,' he urges, 'and constantly put it into practice.' That Luther intended the cultivation of Christian (or virtuous?) habits is evident from his admonition that his students should put into practice what they had gleaned from their study [of the catechism]. About the outcome of these efforts, the reformer was confident: 'If they show such diligence, then I promise them—and their experience will bear me out—that they will gain much fruit and God will make excellent people out of them.' Luther was not so heavily minded as to miss the importance of Christian formation in this life. Christians should desire and seek what God intends for them—that they attain to the full potential for which they were created. Excellent people are people who are living as fully human, realizing in their own lives all that it means to live rightly before God and before humans.²⁷

Catechesis, from Luther's perspective, was never merely an exchange of information or even a training to produce orthodox theology. Nor was it simply a useful tool in some sort of behavior modification program. "The goal is not mere outward conformity, but genuine inward renewal accomplished through repetitive practice and established habit."²⁸ The orthodox theology involved in catechesis indeed was and is valuable, but especially so as it formed Christians who lived particularly Christian lives as they loved their neighbors in their vocations.

Harold Senkbeil has written about the concept of Christian formation as *habitus*. In commenting about a pastoral *habitus*, Senkbeil writes:

²⁷ Joel D. Biermann, *A Case for Character* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 95–96.

²⁸ Biermann, *Case for Character*, 96.

A pastor's habituation, or character, is what counts most in ministry. This *habitus* can't be instilled merely through pedagogy or acquisition of intellectual knowledge, though instruction and knowledge remain vital and indispensable components in pastoral education ... Habit is not something you were born with; it's obtained over long experience.²⁹

Perhaps it could be argued that this might be occupational or vocational, but Senkbeil goes on to explain, "Every constructive field in human endeavor has its corresponding *habitus*."³⁰

We can extrapolate these principles to the whole of the Christian life. It is not simply a matter of knowing the right things or doing the right things. It's a matter of one's faith impacting one's life in a habitual fashion through repeated practice and development, the sort of repetition that is built upon by lifelong, continued catechesis. In light of this, Senkbeil concludes, "You don't adopt a *habitus*; you acquire it. You might say you don't find a *habitus*, rather the *habitus* finds you."³¹ As one continues learning and growing in the Christian faith, the material that is studied in the catechism, which flows from Scripture, begins to mold or form an individual into the sort of confession of faith that is expressed not just in words but also in actions.

Studies on the Catechism

I reviewed three books that were studies on the catechism itself: *Martin Luther's Catechisms*, by Timothy J. Wengert; *That I May Be His Own*, by Charles P. Arand; and *Teaching God's Children His Teaching*, by Robert Kolb, which also will serve as a bridge to the next and final subsection.

Wengert has a line in his preface that matches what I intend to be part of the thesis of my MAP: "Despite this precious resource, I am surprised how seldom pastors and Christian

²⁹ Harold L. Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls: Cultivating a Pastor's Heart* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2019), 18.

³⁰ Senkbeil, *Care of Souls*, 21.

³¹ Senkbeil, *Care of Souls*, 22.

educators use either catechism to inform their instruction of adults in sermons and classroom experiences.”³² He goes on to say:

The Small Catechism is not just the Lutheran equivalent of a political slogan: sounds nice but means nothing. It actually reveals the heart of the Christian life: revealing one’s sickness through the commandments, the Great Physician in the Creed, the desperate call to the pharmacy for medicine in the Lord’s Prayer, and some of the medicine itself in Baptism, Confession, and the Lord’s Supper. There is nothing more to the Christian life! So why is it that many Lutherans think they have graduated from the catechism given how little they use it?³³

From Wengert’s perspective, the Small Catechism cannot be a valuable tool for discipleship or for formation into the Christian life unless pastors make use of it to catechize their people on a regular basis.

Wengert makes a comment which ties the catechism to the learning process described in *Make It Stick*: “To ask, ‘What does this mean?’ implies that something is unclear, that there is some deeper, hidden meaning behind the words. Luther’s question was simpler by far: ‘Was ist das?’ What is this? Luther’s question did not give meaning to the obscure; his question was an invitation to paraphrase.”³⁴

A section from the introduction to *That I May Be His Own* helps illustrate the connection between formation and catechesis:

In the wider culture one hears the cry “to teach the basics—simply, directly, consistently, energetically.” This applies also to the church, for those who are entering through its doors are not only biblically illiterate, but they live in a universe of religious options. As a result, many have become eclectic and syncretistic in their spiritual lives. They regard religion primarily as a subjective internal experience rather than a faith that has anything to do with the objective content of doctrine. But this is precisely where the catechism becomes important. It integrates theology and life. It fastens people’s attention on the basics of both so that they are not distracted by peripheral concerns. Thus by getting back to basics, as it were, the church has the

³² Timothy J. Wengert, *Martin Luther’s Catechisms* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), viii.

³³ Wengert, *Martin Luther’s Catechisms*, viii.

³⁴ Wengert, *Martin Luther’s Catechisms*, 11.

opportunity to rediscover and recover something of the original purpose of the catechism.³⁵

There seems to be wide recognition that the church, for far too long, has taken an either/or approach to the idea of theological education on the one hand and formation into a productive Christian life on the other hand. The purpose and intent of the material in the catechism is to unite the two into a lifelong process of learning and practice.

Arand continues this notion of the catechism having a whole-life impact. “In the catechism, the church has gathered the fundamental components of Scripture that go to the heart of defining what it means to be a Christian. It identifies those elements that constitute the very identity of a Christian. This is who we are.”³⁶ He concludes in the next paragraph, “Put another way, the catechism deals with the formation of a Christian *habitus* of the mind and heart, which ‘look[s] at life and live[s] not from our perspective—that’s philosophy—but from God’s perspective—that’s theology.’”³⁷

Arand is also careful to point out that it’s not simply the material of the catechism that has this effect on the life of a Christian, but it’s also the fact that catechesis takes place in multiple settings with multiple different formats:

Instruction, particularly catechetical instruction, never takes place in a vacuum. As it forms a Christian consciousness, it also places a person on the front line of the battle between God and Satan. Catechetical instruction and doctrinal sermons were “for Luther not a matter of informing the interested, but of defending those under attack. The stakes were high: God’s Word rouses Satan’s ire.” A sermon was both teaching and exhortation, but teaching was more important than exhortation.³⁸

The multiple different ways that catechesis can take place lends itself quite nicely to the notion

³⁵ Charles P. Arand, *That I May Be His Own* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2000), 16–17.

³⁶ Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 27.

³⁷ Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 27–28.

³⁸ Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 63.

that catechesis is intended to be a lifelong process, rather than simply the culmination of a class.

Quoting Margaret A. Krych, Arand also addresses tendency Christians have of believing that we have mastered the basic, foundational content of our faith. “Margaret Krych has suggested that we truly do not learn something until it is overlearned. ‘Until something is ‘overlearned’ (for example, the alphabet is learned so well by most people that it almost cannot be forgotten), it will assuredly be forgotten eventually. So the catechism should be overlearned or reviewed often enough that they ‘know it’—that is, have it at their fingertips.’”³⁹

An ongoing habit of catechesis enriches the life of a believer. It helps to form them in the faith. “Luther also recognized that while the catechism leads a person into the Scriptures, it also functions as a catalyst for bringing the same Scriptures into the life of Christians. As such, it equips Christians to interpret their life experiences theologically in light of the Gospel, and thus prepares them to stand firm amidst the turbulence of life.”⁴⁰

Kolb opens his examination of the catechism in much the same way, by highlighting its value for the entire life of a Christian: “Why have so many people found this little book so important? It is because Luther’s Small Catechism is more than a book. It is a way of life. Or, more specifically, it cultivates a world view, out of which we live as believers in Jesus Christ. It creates a mindset which is grounded in the Scriptures and grows out of them. It is a handbook for Christian living.”⁴¹

This is why it’s lamentable that so much of Lutheran catechesis has devolved into a two- or three-year confirmation class for teenagers or a brief, punctuated new members class for adults. This was not Luther’s intent with the catechism. “We regard the Catechism as a set of words

³⁹ Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 99–100.

⁴⁰ Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 113.

⁴¹ Robert Kolb, *Teaching God’s Children His Teaching* (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Press, 2012), 15.

which we must convey to children in the course of two or three years of meetings held once or twice a week, or to adults in twelve easy evening sessions. Luther was not so naïve. He regarded the activity of catechism as a lifelong process.”⁴²

Kolb ties the need for an ongoing process of catechesis with the need for the ongoing forgiveness of our sins. “The process of instruction continues because God continues to forgive sins, as Luther observed in the Large Catechism: The whole life of the church is to be directed toward forgiveness since forgiveness is constantly needed among people still caught in the warp and woof of sinful life.”⁴³ Because I, as a sinner, daily and regularly need my sins forgiven, I must study God’s Word and be able to summarize its contents because it presents the Gospel to me not only in basic, fundamental ways but also in beautiful pictures that I constantly need to learn and learn to appreciate.

Modern Catechesis

The final categories of books I reviewed focused on modern methods of catechesis, or at least modern methods of presenting the material of the catechism. These books discussed not only ways and methods of catechizing but also discussed the need for ongoing catechesis in the modern church and took a fresh look at the material of the catechisms to present it in interesting and attention-grabbing ways.

Bryan Wolfmueller has done an excellent job of identifying Americans’ need for modern catechesis in his book *Has American Christianity Failed?*. “Christians in America have gone theologically nose-blind. There are theological thoughts and ideas that are always around us—so much so that we stop noticing them.... But even when these theological ideas are unnoticed, they

⁴² Kolb, *Teaching God’s Children*, 29.

⁴³ Kolb, *Teaching God’s Children*, 98.

are still at work shaping the way we read and understand the Bible, shaping the way we pray and worship, informing our understanding of God and the world and our place in it.”⁴⁴ Part of my own personal context is that, as I returned to reading and studying the catechism, the material in the catechism gave me a better framework to think about my faith. I have seen this happening in the lives of the members of my congregation who have gone through my catechetical materials as well.

In his book *Echo*, Jonathan Fisk works to present the chief parts of the catechism in interesting ways. While much of Fisk’s material is directed at teens, it is still a valuable supplement to traditional catechetical instruction. In one comment, however, toward the end of *Echo*, Fisk highlights the importance of catechesis:

In the midst of life’s many trials the muscle memory of faith stands on the words of the Echo⁴⁵ without needing to pause and call them to mind. Recall is instantaneous. Faster than awareness. No longer thinking only *about* the Echo, but thinking **with** it. It is not a list but a **mind**, not a rite of passage but a spiritual second sight.⁴⁶

This is the goal of catechesis. Much like the concept of secular liturgies in James K. A. Smith’s work, Fisk recognizes that we are either filling our minds with the contents of our faith, or we are filling them with something else.

The final two books I reviewed for this MAP were written by John T. Pless. They are *Praying Luther’s Small Catechism* and *Luther’s Small Catechism: A Manual for Discipleship*. Each of these books provides useful material for implementing into a life of catechesis.

At the beginning of the book, Pless quotes catechism commentary author Albrecht Peters,

⁴⁴ Bryan Wolfmueller, *Has American Christianity Failed?* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2016), 7.

⁴⁵ Throughout the entire book, Fisk uses the motif “echo” to describe the pattern of catechesis, which he suggests flows from the Greek word for catechism, *κατηχέω*. In catechetical instruction the correct answers are “echoed” back and forth between instructor and student, or more specifically between catechist and catechumen.

⁴⁶ Jonathan Fisk, *Echo* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2018), 325.

who in turn is quoting Luther, about the day-to-day, practical value of the catechism:

Praying the catechism is not merely for children and the simple; it is no less the duty and the joy of the mature Christian. Because the triune God Himself is the true teacher of the basic mysteries of the faith, all Christians are His pupils. Prayerful meditation on those central texts of our Christian faith draws our inner man into the dynamic of the Spirit of God. These texts and the light of faith breaking forth from them pull us out of evil thoughts, still the diffuse unrest of our hearts, and form a sturdy protective barrier against demonic temptations.⁴⁷

Once again, it becomes apparent that there is a real-world benefit to our beliefs. They do not merely possess value because they are true or orthodox, but rather true and orthodox beliefs trickle down through every aspect of life for a Christian.

Pless finds value for a Christian life of prayer in every section of the catechism. “As Hermann Sasse reminds us, the Creed is like all Christian confession: a response to revelation telling us ‘objectively of facts, not of subjective experiences.’”⁴⁸ This is an area of catechesis that is incredibly important but difficult to navigate. It is the objective facts of our faith that create the experiences, yet we, in our sinful natures, want to move to the experiences straight away and make them definitive for who we are as Christians. This highlights excellently how the information in the catechism begins to be formative right away. The objective facts of Christianity, contained in the effective Word of God and summarized by the catechism, are what forms us into Christians in the first place and what sustains us as we live our Christian lives.

Paralleling what Kolb said above, Pless writes:

We cannot live without the forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness is far more than a mere amnesty that erases the past and opens the path for the future. For the Scriptures and for Luther, forgiveness of sins is the necessary condition for the Christian life; it is the oxygen we breathe. Forgiveness of sins is not the gateway to the sanctified life; it is the sanctified life. Forgiveness of sins is not the stepping-stone to life and

⁴⁷ John T. Pless, *Praying Luther's Small Catechism* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2016), 1–2.

⁴⁸ Pless, *Praying Luther's Small Catechism*, 35.

salvation. There is no life and salvation apart from the forgiveness of sins. So the prayer for forgiveness is part of the Christian's daily supplication.⁴⁹

This is at the heart and soul of my own love for catechesis, because it is precisely this information (as communicated in Luther's explanation to the Second Article of the Creed in the Large Catechism) that saved my life. When I am talking about the impact good catechesis has on the life of a Christian, I often use my own life as an example. Even as a Christian, it was the Gospel that kept me from walking away from the faith. For so long, I had been denied the Gospel. Forgiveness of sins was for conversion. The Law was for the life of a believer. This is why I am passionate about catechesis, because of the centrality of the Gospel to every part of the catechism.

In *Luther's Small Catechism: A Manual for Discipleship*, the final book I am reviewing for this MAP, I have found a resource that agrees with my premise that catechesis is central to the process of disciple-making. "Christians are, according to Luther, 'eternal pupils.' That is, we are disciples. Disciples are learners. Our curriculum is straightforward. We need to learn how to receive (faith) and how to give (love). As we live in the field, the Catechism tutors us in both receiving and giving, in both faith and love."⁵⁰ Pless concludes, "Luther did not see his Catechism as an end in itself but as a handbook that would accompany the Christian, navigating a path through this world with eyes fixed on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith."⁵¹ For Pless, life-long catechesis is synonymous with life-long discipleship.

Throughout the rest of the book, Pless walks through each part of the catechism, pointing out and teaching its value for the Christian life. In summary, he writes, "Catechesis is the way in

⁴⁹ Pless, *Praying Luther's Small Catechism*, 69.

⁵⁰ John T. Pless, *Luther's Small Catechism: A Manual for Discipleship* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2019), x.

⁵¹ Pless, *Luther's Small Catechism*, xi.

which the word of God is spoken and then echoes back in confession to the glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”⁵²

In this chapter, I have discussed the originality of my research, especially in comparison with a MAP by Kevin Wyssmann, and I have demonstrated that, for my purposes, catechesis does not need to be limited to a synonym of confirmation for early teens. I have also reviewed several books that relate to my MAP in the areas of learning, formation, studies of the catechism, and modern methods of catechesis. Throughout this section, the importance of catechesis as a life-long process that not only communicates truth as information but also applies that truth in practical ways to the life has been a recurring theme.

⁵² Pless, *Luther's Small Catechism*, 171,

CHAPTER THREE

THE PROJECT IN THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

In this section, I will describe the theological basis which grounds and informs my focus on adult catechesis for this MAP. To begin this process, the etymology of the words “catechism” and “catechesis” will prove helpful. Those terms find their origin in the Greek word *κατηχέω*. Wengert summarizes how this word came to be the root word for “catechism”:

The word, to catechize, is a Greek verb (*κατηχέω*) that described a form of instruction used in ancient schools: *kata* and *echo*, to sound over or repeat again. It denoted a form of oral instruction. The teacher said something, and the children responded, learning by repetition. Paul used the word in Gal 6:6 to refer to Christian instruction, so that it seemed to become almost a technical word among Christians for how they instructed believers. In 2 Clement 17:1, the word already designated prebaptismal instruction. Indeed, the word passed straight into ecclesiastical Latin (as *catechize*) and was also associated with instructing catechumens: people preparing for baptism.¹

Hermann Beyer comments on the same verse and says:

Hence Paul uses not only the common *διδάσκειν* but also this much rarer word, hardly known at all in the religious vocabulary of Judaism, as a technical term for Christian instruction. He desires thereby to emphasise the particular nature of instruction on the basis of the Gospel. The word selected was in fact very apt to assume the exclusive sense of Christian instruction, and it finds an echo to-day in the word “catechism.” This was particularly true when *κατηχέω* was specifically used for the instruction given before baptism, and the one preparing for this sacrament was called a catechumen.²

But as useful and instructive as the etymology may be, it does not provide us with a foundation to examine both the intent and benefit of catechesis.

The Great Commission provides what is lacking in a simple word study of *κατηχέω*, since the flow of the Great Commission emulates the Christian life. In the command to “make

¹ Wengert, *Martin Luther's Catechisms*, 3.

² Hermann W. Beyer, “*κατηχέω*,” *TDNT* (1964-76), 3:639.

disciples,”³ Jesus explains that this is done by “baptizing and teaching.” With the Lutheran doctrine of infant baptism in mind, the teaching aspect of the Great Commission continues forward from baptism as a lifelong process which doesn’t meet its *telos* until eternity.

Biblical and Theological Foundation

The Great Commission, from Matt 28:16–20, is one of the best-known and most frequently analyzed passages in the New Testament, if not the entirety of Scripture. It has been dissected and discussed from just about every angle imaginable, with various authors frequently focusing on just one small aspect of the bigger picture. To a certain extent, this section will be no exception.

The immediate focus of this section will be the didactic function—the role teaching plays—in the Great Commission. But rather than using the mere mention and existence of teaching in the Great Commission as a launching point into further study in the larger context of Scripture, the task here will be to “stay at home,” so to speak. What does the immediate context of the Great Commission teach about teaching, its definition, function, and purpose, especially when the mandate of “making disciples” is taken into account? To that end, three specific areas will be considered: (1) the centrality of the resurrection; (2) the role the disciples’ doubt in Matt 28:17; and (3) the translation and interpretation of τηρεῖν (the present, active, infinitive form of the Greek word τηρέω) in Matt 28:20, which is commonly translated in English as either “to observe” (ESV, NASB95, NKJV) or “to obey” (NIV, NRSV).

The Centrality of the Resurrection.

While no specific mention of Jesus’ resurrection is made in Matt 28:16–20, there is another

³ Matt 28:19, ESV. All quotations from Scripture are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted.

piece of evidence that would point to the importance of the resurrection to the context of the Great Commission—the resurrected Christ himself. While the chapter and verse divisions of the Bible are not a part of the inspired text of sacred Scripture, chapter 28 makes for a logical and intuitive section in Matthew’s Gospel. It contains all the post-resurrection content to Matthew’s narrative. Included within that content is the Great Commission.

The resurrected Jesus permeates the entire passage. The disciples are in Galilee because of Jesus’ instruction to the women at the tomb (Matt 28:7). Jesus receives worship from the disciples as the risen Son of God. And Jesus provides the necessary instructions and assurances for the disciples to live within the reality of the early Church after his ascension. Of particular interest here is that the effects of Jesus’ resurrection bracket the imperative portion of the Great Commission: Jesus is all-powerful, and Jesus is eternally present.

The first words Jesus says to his disciples are, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me,” (Matt 28:18). This is more than a simple affirmation of his personal identity—an identity Jesus has been proclaiming to the disciples throughout his earthly ministry.⁴ With these words, Jesus has intentionally and directly connected himself with the son of man from Dan 7:13–14. Andrew Steinmann states, “‘The Son of Man’ is a title that Jesus applies to himself frequently in the Gospels. The way he uses it indicates that he is deliberately fulfilling OT prophecy concerning it.”⁵ He goes on to explain that, “the biblical teaching that Jesus Christ is both true man and true God, possessing a human nature (without sin) and a divine nature is implicit in [Dan.] 7:13–14.”⁶

Jesus’ resurrection is both evidence that he has fulfilled this prophecy and evidence of his

⁴ Cf. Matt 11:27; John 3:35, 13:3, 17:2.

⁵ Andrew E. Steinmann, *Daniel*, Concordia Commentary (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2008), 357.

⁶ Steinmann, *Daniel*, 358.

power and authority. “Because of this authority, Jesus has the right to issue his followers their ‘marching orders,’ but he also has the ability to help them carry out those orders.”⁷ The command to “make disciples,” along with the accompanying participles (“go,” “baptizing,” and “teaching”) is a command that comes from God. But, as Jesus is the Second Person of the Trinity, it is also a command that is carried out with the power of God. Osborne shares this conclusion and declares, “It is clear that for Jesus and the early church he fulfills that role [of ‘the Son of Man’], and this signifies his exaltation and enthronement. The ‘Son of Man’ title is probably omitted because it would be misunderstood and given a Parousia interpretation; Jesus wishes to teach that the Parousia power and glory are his now and are given to his followers.”⁸

Completing the bracket at the other end of the Great Commission is Jesus’ promise, “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” This is a promise that could quite literally not be made without the reality of the resurrection. Jesus is with the church, right now, because he is risen from the dead.

The promise of Christ’s presence with the church also points to Christ’s work in and through his disciples as the risen Son of God to enable them to carry out his command.

It is a command, however, that is based on a Christological reality and supported by a Christological promise. The Eleven (and others) will make disciples *because* all authority has been given to Jesus, risen from the dead (28:18). That means that he is the Lord and that ultimately the work of making disciples is rooted in his authority to save. Ultimate matters are not in the hands of the Eleven or anyone else. Ultimate matters are in the hands of the Lord Jesus. Moreover, the making of disciples is supported by the promise of the ongoing presence of Jesus in that task: “I am/will be with you for all the days, until the consummation of the age” (28:20) is not a general sort of promise of Christ’s presence with his disciples; rather, it is a promise that

⁷ Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 429.

⁸ Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 1079.

sustains and enables the making of disciples. The church will not go out alone as she baptizes and teaches. Jesus will be going with her.⁹

The church does not go out into the world as orphans, aimlessly trying to fulfill an abstract concept without any help. The church goes with Jesus and in his power to make disciples. The role of teaching is obviously included in what is bracketed by Christ's power and Christ's presence. The command of the Great Commission is to make disciples. Teaching is one of the means employed to do just that. Christ's power enables his disciples to teach, and Christ is present with them as they teach. The church's teaching is sustained and animated by the glorious truth of Christ's resurrection.

One also should not discount the importance of the resurrection of Christ to Lutheran catechetical material. The resurrection has direct impact on two major sections of the Small Catechism and indirect impact on two other sections. The centrality of the resurrection is absolutely evident in the Apostles' Creed, mentioned in both the Second and Third Article of the Creed. The resurrection also takes a prominent role in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, especially in the fourth section:

What does such baptizing with water signify?

Answer: It signifies that the old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts. And also it shows that a new man should daily come forth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written?

Answer: St. Paul says in Romans chapter 6, "We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" [v. 4].¹⁰

⁹ Jeffrey A. Gibbs, *Matthew 21:1–28:20*, Concordia Commentary (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2018), 1640–41.

¹⁰ Large Catechism IV.11–14 in McCain, ed., *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions: A Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord* (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2009), 340.

The resurrection is also implicit in both the sections on the Lord's Prayer and also Holy Communion. In the Lord's Prayer, redemption and forgiveness of sins come into focus especially during the Fifth and Seventh Petitions. The resurrection of Christ is integral to God's completed work of redemption that forgives our sins and delivers us from evil. The same can be said for the Lord's Supper, which delivers the forgiveness of sins that was won on the cross and with the empty tomb.

How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?

Answer: It is not the eating and drinking, indeed, that does them, but the words which are given here, "Given...and shed for you, for the forgiveness of sins." These words are, besides the bodily eating and drinking, the chief thing in the Sacrament. The person who believes these words has what they say and express, namely, the forgiveness of sins.¹¹

Without the reality of the resurrection, there would be a glaring hole in the content of the Small Catechism. Part of living out the Christian life is the necessity of a proper confession that informs one's living. A proper and orthodox confession grounds a Christian in the assurance of salvation and informs their individual Christian walk.

The Disciples' Doubt

The disciples' doubt is one of the most fascinating and perplexing portions of the Great Commission. It is not easily explained, nor are the doubters themselves easily identified. In fact, the identity of those who doubted should be established even before the nature of their doubt is discussed.

Who doubted? There can be no real certainty as to the answer of this question. Gibbs highlights the difficulty of identifying the doubters:

There is a grammatical puzzle and a narrative gap here. The grammatical puzzle regards οἱ δὲ. Normally when the pattern of the article plus δὲ occurs in narrative

¹¹ LC VI, 7–8 in McCain, 343.

texts, it indicates a grammatical change of subject. Matthew employs this pattern too many times to count (e.g., 28:9), and if that were the force there, then it would mean that the Eleven saw and worshiped Jesus but that some different people—other than the Eleven—were the ones who doubted. The twofold problem with that view is that (1) Matthew does not say that any others besides the Eleven were there, and (2) Jesus’ promise to meet them in Galilee was given to the constricted group of the Twelve. There is sufficient evidence, however, to take “but some doubted” in a partitive sense, that is, that some of those who “saw” and “worshiped” Jesus (28:17a) also “doubted” (28:17b).¹²

Talbert agrees with Gibbs’ assessment that an independent group of doubters apart from the Eleven is not in view but identifies every remaining disciple as a doubter.

In Matthew, the particular phrase (*hoi de* + a verbal construction) always refers to the entire group of people mentioned previously or their spokesman (e.g., 2:9; 8:32; 9:31; 20:4-5; 22:5; 28:9; 28:15; etc.). The point of view of a subgroup is never set against the point of view of the whole body. In Matt. 28:17, therefore, **they doubted** refers to the whole group of the Eleven.¹³

Whether it is some or all of the disciples is immaterial, as it appears that it is safe to rule out a separate, unidentified group. With the Eleven singled out, it is now appropriate to ascertain the nature of the doubt.

First of all, it seems important to clarify that the doubt here is not unbelief. The Greek word *διστάζω* occurs only twice in the entire New Testament: here and in Matt 14:31. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (BDAG) defines the term, “to be uncertain, to have second thoughts about a matter,” also connecting it with the idea of hesitation.¹⁴ That fits with the usage in Matt 14, where context is dealing with Peter’s doubt as he is afraid because of the wind and the waves and begins to sink into the water.

But why the uncertainty and hesitation? Blomberg offers a well-reasoned answer that

¹² Gibbs, *Matthew 21:1-28:20*, 1622.

¹³ Charles H. Talbert, *Matthew*, Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 312.

¹⁴ BDAG, s.v. *διστάζω*.

provides excellent direction:

Perhaps, as elsewhere, something about Jesus' appearance makes him hard to recognize at first. Perhaps they fear how he may respond to them. Perhaps their Jewish scruples are still questioning the propriety of full-fledged worship of anyone but Yahweh. Or (most likely?) they may simply continue to exhibit an understandable confusion about how to behave in the presence of a supernaturally manifested, exalted, and holy being.¹⁵

One can easily imagine the thoughts running through the minds of the eleven remaining disciples. They had failed Jesus by abandoning him. They were down a member, as one of their own was responsible for betraying Jesus. They had completely missed the mark on Jesus' teaching about the necessity and significance of his death and resurrection. And now here they were, on a mountainside in Galilee, their risen Lord and Savior right in front of him. The worship came easily and freely, but so did the doubts. What could be coming next? It is easy to empathize with their confusion.

To this end, Gibbs believes Jesus' very words in the Great Commission are at least in part designed to quell the disciples' doubts. "I take Jesus' words in 28:18–20 as his response to those among the Eleven who doubted ... There on the mountain in Galilee, the Eleven worship Jesus, but in the face of what the future holds, some doubted (28:17). Jesus' words now address and assuage their doubt."¹⁶ The Great Commission is given just as much for comfort as it is for purpose and direction.

This concept, assuaging the doubts of those who are already disciples of Jesus Christ, is at the heart and soul of direct, intentional adult catechesis. From my own personal experience, it was my own doubts about my salvation that almost led me to walk away from the faith. But as I read through the Book of Concord in seminary, I came to realize that my problem was not my

¹⁵ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 430.

¹⁶ Gibbs, *Matthew 21:1-28:20*, 1630.

fear that I wasn't saved. My problem was that I had no assurance of salvation. It was the comfort of the Gospel as presented in Luther's explanation of the Third Article of the Creed that provided the assurance of salvation I needed to carry on.¹⁷ In sharing this realization with others throughout the course of the last 15 years, I have found that many empathize with this experience. Several Christians I have known struggle with the assurance of salvation, some in my own congregation. These individuals have expressed to me how helpful the catechisms have been in delivering to them an understanding of the assurance of salvation.

But how does the command to "make disciples," particularly through the means and method of teaching, provide comfort to the doubting disciples? The answer to that question provides the content of the final area under examination.

The Translation and Interpretation of τηρεῖν

That the disciples are commanded by Jesus to "make disciples" is not in question. The means and the methods of "going," "baptizing," and "teaching," the accompanying participles to Jesus' imperative, are well-known. But often overlooked is the fact that there is a certain type of teaching that Jesus has in mind: "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

What does this mean? The first step to understanding Jesus' statement here is to examine the interpretation of τηρεῖν. As mentioned above, τηρεῖν is the present, active, imperative form of τηρέω, most commonly translated "to observe" or "to obey." BDAG reveals three common translations for the term: "(1) to retain in custody (keep watch over, guard); (2) to cause a state,

¹⁷ The specific words that are responsible for this assurance come from paragraph 55 of the section on the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed in the Large Catechism: "Everything, therefore, in the Christian Church is ordered toward this goal: we shall daily receive in the Church nothing but the forgiveness of sin through the Word and signs, to comfort and encourage our consciences as long as we live here. So even though we have sins, the <grace of the> Holy Spirit does not allow them to harm us. For we are in the Christian Church, where there is nothing but <continuous, uninterrupted> forgiveness of sin" (LC Creed, 3:55 in McCain, 405).

condition, or activity to continue (keep, hold, reserve, preserve); (3) to persist in obedience (keep, observe, fulfill, pay attention to).”¹⁸

Several commentators focus on the obedience aspect of these translations. If obedience is the focus of Jesus’ teaching, then that focus becomes one with an ethical emphasis. Osborne typifies this understanding: “The discipleship of v. 19a is defined as ethical obedience ... We are at the heart of Matthew’s gospel here, with the five discourses centering on Jesus’ ethical teaching as the basis here for the teaching ministry of the disciples.”¹⁹ Blomberg reaches the same conclusion and says:

Jesus’ words further demonstrate that Christian ethics and morality should first of all focus on Jesus’ teaching, even though the Old Testament remains relevant, as one sees how it is fulfilled in Christ (Matt. 5:17-20), and even though the rest of the New Testament remains relevant as further explanation of the significance of Christ and his teachings. But the testimony of the Gospels and the commands Jesus issued (of which more are found in Matthew than in Mark, Luke, or John) must comprise the central core of Christian faith and proclamation.²⁰

But is the interpreter of the Great Commission necessarily married to the idea that both Jesus’ teaching and the role of teaching in the process of making disciples are strictly ethical?

Gibbs demurs, if only slightly:

In the context here, I would argue strongly for a broad sense of “keep, guard,” not least because of its connection with the following verb, ἐνετείλαμην, “I commanded,” the aorist middle indicative of ἐντέλλομαι, “to give or leave instructions, *command, order*” (BDAG, s.v. ἐντέλλω) ... Since the Eleven are “the eleven *disciples*” (28:16), who have heard everything Jesus has taught since the inception of his ministry, he has now commanded them to a comprehensive *guarding* of all he has taught. Now that they are being sent to the Gentiles/nations to *make disciples*, they are to baptize and to teach other disciples *to guard* what they themselves are also guarding. Included in this comprehensive guarding of Jesus’ teaching will be obedience, of course.²¹

¹⁸ BDAG, s.v. τηρέω.

¹⁹ Osborne, *Matthew*, 1081–82.

²⁰ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 433.

²¹ Gibbs, *Matthew 21:1–28:20*, 1626.

The emphasis on guarding as the preferred translation/interpretation of τηρεῖν makes a necessary and important connection both to the centrality of the resurrection and the disciples' doubt. The disciples have been commanded to guard a teaching that is both precious to them (as it calms their doubts about Jesus' identity and about the nature of the mission of the church) and one in which communicates the reality and significance of Jesus' death and resurrection—the content of Jesus' teaching about himself and the Word of God.²²

In this sense, the teaching aspect of the Great Commission—the command to make disciples—works with baptism through the proclamation and application of the Word of God to create and sustain disciples in their faith. Gibbs identifies this as the purpose of the Great Commission:

This reminds Matthew's readers/hearers as well that 'make disciples' (28:19) is not to be thought of only in terms of initial conversion to faith in Jesus. Baptism is, indeed, the crucial entry point and establishes the ongoing connection with the Son's death and resurrection, as well as with the Father and the Spirit. The making of disciples continues as the teaching shapes, carves, heals, and transforms God's children. The Great Commission is not just to get converts, although it certainly is about that. The Great Commission is also to nurture and educate believers as they mature and grow in faith and love for all, even for their enemies.²³

With this in mind, the resurrection—especially as it pertains to the preaching of the Gospel—becomes a part of the content of what the disciples are teaching.

This comports well with what is seen in the rest of the New Testament as the early church begins to develop and spread. In 1 Cor 15, the Apostle Paul reminds the Corinthian believers of the content of his preaching. "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also *received*..."²⁴ This is the content that was passed down to him, both by the risen Christ himself

²² Cf. Matt 5:17; John 5:39.

²³ Gibbs, *Matthew 21:1–28:20*, 1643–44.

²⁴ 1 Cor 15:3, emphasis mine.

(1 Cor 15:8; Gal 1:12) and through his time spent with the other apostles (Acts 9:19b). In this way, Paul was made a disciple through baptism (Acts 9:18) and through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God by the disciples.²⁵ In turn, Paul himself became a “disciple maker,” baptizing and teaching in the congregations he helped establish on his missionary journeys.

In fact, one of Paul’s disciples helps illustrate this continued pattern. Paul alludes to the process of disciple-making, with an emphasis on teaching, that was employed in Timothy’s life. “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 3:14–15). This process had developed throughout Timothy’s life, first through his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois (2 Tim 1:5), and then through Paul’s own direct work with Timothy after first meeting him in Lystra (Acts 16:1–2).

Conclusion

The role of a disciple is one of multiplication—to make more disciples.²⁶ Often times this can seem like a daunting task. A disciple is frequently confronted by his fears, his failures, and

²⁵ Caution must be exercised here not to overstate the extent of the effects of the preaching and teaching of the disciples. On the one hand, Paul writes in Gal 1:12 that he received his Gospel through a direct revelation from Jesus Christ. On the other hand, Paul immediately spent time with the disciples in Acts 9:19b and a lengthy period of time in Arabia shortly after his conversion (Gal 1:17–18). As a “Hebrew of Hebrews” (Phil 3:5), Paul would have been well-acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures already, and the supernatural revelation he received from Christ equipped him to preach the Gospel immediately (Acts 9:20–22). It is also quite possible, however, that he still could have been the recipient of training in the Christian faith from the other disciples alongside of this. Either way, since the exegesis of the relevant passages concerning Paul’s conversion and subsequent time spent in Damascus and Arabia are outside the purview of this MAP, it is sufficient to note here that Paul was both baptized and heard the Word of God from the Word himself, thus making him a disciple through the disciple-making process described in the Great Commission.

²⁶ The distinction between clergy and laity, and their varying roles in the process of disciple-making, is beyond the scope and focus of this MAP. For all intents and purposes, this paper agrees with Gibbs’ rhetorical question and assessment: “Do all disciples of Jesus have a call to *participate* in spreading God’s love and God’s Gospel to the world around them and to *grow* and *help others to grow* in their understanding and living out of all that Jesus has taught us to guard? Yes, indeed. There is enough work to go around” (Gibbs, *Matthew 21:1–28:20*, 1647).

confusion about what is going on in his own life and in the world around him (not to mention why it is all happening). In the midst of all the doubts, fears, and failures, the church turns its eyes back to Jesus Christ—her crucified and risen Savior.

Jesus restores failed and fallen disciples through the forgiveness he won through his shed blood. Jesus calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies his disciples through his Word and the Holy Spirit. And Jesus employs his church in the work of advancing his kingdom. To this end, the church has passages in Scripture like the Great Commission to both remind her of her role in advancing the kingdom of God and to instruct her on how to participate.

Integral to this process of disciple-making is teaching. The church cannot create nor maintain disciples without the teaching of the Word of God. But even that statement is a bridge too far, because the role of creating and sustaining disciples is not the *ultimate* responsibility of the church at all. That responsibility, in an ultimate sense, falls to Christ.

The message the church preaches and teaches is the Word of God. It is God's own Word, breathed out by God himself (2 Tim 3:16). It always accomplishes what God intends it to accomplish (Isa 55:10–11). It is “living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart,” (Heb 4:16). It is the Word Christ entrusted to the apostles, the eyewitnesses of his ministry, throughout his ministry—especially when he issued the Great Commission.

But this Word is also a word about Christ. It is a word that proclaims Christ's death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins. It is a word that offers eternal life and applies forgiveness of sins.

Christ empowers the teaching of his Word to make disciples. Christ works through his

Word to make disciples. And Christ is the content of his Word that makes disciples. “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Rom 10:17).

In this way, the church makes use of intentional catechesis: of children, of teenagers, and of adults, to make sure the members of the church are constantly immersed in the Word of God and continually have Christ placed before their eyes. Each individual member is taught to guard the great and glorious truth of the Gospel message.

Historical Context

Aside from the Great Commission, there are several passages involving the importance of teaching in the early church in the New Testament. While the scope of this MAP does not permit an exhaustive study of these verses, two of them stand out—both for what they say and for how they are located in the “Pastoral Epistles” of Saint Paul, which gives them an even greater impetus for the importance of the practice of the early church.

First, Paul’s exhortation to Timothy in 2 Tim 2:1–2: “You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.” The emphasis here clearly ties in well with the Great Commission, as the purpose of teaching is connected with multiplication of disciples.

Lea and Griffin note that, “The ‘things’²⁷ Timothy was to send were the foundational truths of the gospel.”²⁸ This highlights a catechetical emphasis to Paul’s instructions. Towner builds on

²⁷ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, The New American Commentary 34 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 200. Lea and Griffin’s translation of 2 Tim 2:12 is: “You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”

²⁸ Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy*, 201.

this idea and states:

Here we learn that guarding the deposit does not mean burying it somewhere safe. Rather, it means keeping an eye on its purity (protecting it from false teachers) as it is communicated. We also learn that Timothy, like every other minister and every other believer, is a link in a chain of redemption. Each believer has received the gospel as a stewardship. And it carries the obligation to pass it on similarly to others (1 Thess. 1:6–8; 1 Pet 3:15).²⁹

Catechesis is that process by which the “chain of redemption” has moved forward from the Great Commission through church history to the present day.

The second passage of interest in the New Testament is Titus 2:1. “But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.” While 2 Timothy refers to the process of catechesis, here Paul’s instruction to Titus refers to the content of catechesis.

The Greek word translated as “sound” here is the dative, singular, feminine, present, active, participle form of the word ὑγιαίνω. BDAG defines this particular usage as, “to be sound or free from error, *be correct*.”³⁰ Luck adds, “Sound doctrine is true and correct teaching in contrast to perverted doctrine, to μῦθοι καὶ γενεαλογίαὶ ἀπέραντοι, 1 Tm. 1:4. This is the traditional teaching which is established and validated by the apostles and preserved by the office to which Timothy and Titus are called.”³¹

Lenski seeks to establish this as the norm for the early church. “The fact that Titus is ever teaching the healthy teaching of the pure gospel is taken for granted.”³² This certainly lines up with the instructions Christ gave the disciples to “guard” all that he taught them. The early church seems to have made some form of catechesis the norm for passing on the most basic,

²⁹ Philip H. Towner, *1–2 Timothy & Titus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, [year]), 170.

³⁰ BDAG, 1023.

³¹ Ulrich Luck, “Υγιής Ὑγιαίνω,” *TDNT* 3:12.

³² R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus, and to Philemon* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1937), 909.

foundational truths of the faith.

Moving forward from the church of Scripture, one comes across the *Didache*. This early church document (likely written sometime during the second century) according to Schaff, “corresponds to our catechisms.”³³ One interesting note about *The Didache*, especially in light of its catechetical content, is that even though it appears relatively early in church history, “it is not original material. That is, the writer put most of it together from already existing documents.”³⁴ Sparks goes on to note that, “No matter its source or sources, *The Teaching*³⁵ (or material closely related to it) was respected by many church leaders up through the fourth century.”³⁶

While the *Didache* might be catechetical in concept, the content skews towards instructions for Christian living (especially for new converts). There is a brief section that lays out some of the Ten Commandments along with other laws from Scripture, but the emphasis is distinctly practical rather than confessional. “The specific concern of the Didachist was to help the churches avoid the difficulties connected with an *itinerant* ministry by distinguishing between false and true prophets on the basis of their ethical behavior and by electing permanent local officers.”³⁷

To arrive at a confessional focus in the early church, one needs only to examine a subject of the Small Catechism itself—the Apostles’ Creed. Shelley writes, “The best summary of early Christian beliefs is what we call The Apostle’s Creed, to this day repeated every Sunday in many churches. It was not written by the apostles—in spite of its title—but appeared first as a

³³ Philip Schaff, *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (Washington, DC: Funk & Wagnalls, 1885), 17.

³⁴ Jack N. Sparks, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers* (Nashville: Nelson, 1978), 305.

³⁵ Sparks uses the English translation of the Greek term rather than the transliteration *The Didache*.

³⁶ Sparks, *Apostolic Fathers*, 305.

³⁷ Robert G. Clouse and Edward Engelbrecht, *The Church from Age to Age* (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2011), 28.

baptismal confession in second-century Rome.”³⁸ In this case, a catechumen would be directly involved in catechesis—in confessing the foundational doctrine of the church for the purpose of disciple making (note the role of baptism in the Great Commission).

From these early practices, the catechetical method took root as a normal and regular practice in the church. McCain writes:

The ‘catechetical’ method of teaching is rooted in classical Greek and Roman educational methods and was used throughout the Middle Ages down to Luther’s time: the teacher asks a question; the student responds with a fixed and set answer, and so it goes, echoing back and forth. Repetition and recitation of the material is used to instill in the student the words, phrases, and concepts being taught. An explanation is also added, according to the student’s level of understanding. In this way, the Christian Church taught, or *catechized* the faith.”³⁹

It was in the midst of this common catechetical environment that Luther wrote his catechism.

McCain continues, “In Luther’s day there were any number of catechisms and catechetical materials ... Luther cleared away the medieval clutter and retained the core texts of the catechisms: The Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer.”⁴⁰

Luther’s own words from the preface to the Small Catechism illustrate his emphasis on the necessity of catechetical education:

Begin by teaching them the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, etc., following the text word for word so that the young may repeat these things after you and retain them in their memory ... In the second place, after the people have become familiar with the text, teach them what it means. For this purpose, take the explanations in this booklet, or choose any other brief and fixed explanations which you may prefer, and adhere to them without changing a single syllable, as stated above with reference to the text. Moreover, allow yourself ample time, for it is not necessary to take up all the parts at once. They can be presented one at a time. When the learners have a proper understanding of the First Commandment, proceed to the Second Commandment, and so on. Otherwise they will be so overwhelmed that they will hardly remember anything at all. In the third place, after you have thus taught this brief catechism, take up a large catechism so that the people may have a richer

³⁸ Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* (Dallas: Word, 2008), 54.

³⁹ McCain, *Concordia*, 309.

⁴⁰ McCain, *Concordia*, 309

and fuller understanding. Expound every commandment, petition, and part, pointing out their respective obligations, benefits, dangers, advantages, and disadvantages, as you will find all of this treated at length in the many books written for this purpose.⁴¹

Luther was especially focused on the basic, foundational truths of the Christian faith because of the lack of catechesis in German—not only among the laity, but also the pastors. “The deplorable conditions which I recently encountered when I was a visitor constrained me to prepare this brief and simple catechism or statement of Christian teaching. Good God, what wretchedness I beheld! The common people, especially those who live in the country, have no knowledge whatever of Christian teaching, and unfortunately many pastors are quite incompetent and unfitted for teaching.”⁴²

It was Luther’s concern for the laity of Germany that ultimately convinced him to produce the catechism and arrange it in a more effective and efficient fashion. McCain writes about *A Short form of the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer*, somewhat of a prototype to the Small Catechism:

Luther wanted this book to serve the laypeople. While Luther built on catechetical customs, his work stood out as a clear departure from much of medieval catechesis. There were three key reasons for this: First, Luther removed a lot of the additional materials that had accumulated throughout the Middle Ages and focused primarily on the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer, urging if these three things were learned well, the most important truths of Christianity would be known. Second, Luther very intentionally arranged the catechism so that the Commandments would be first, then the Creed, then the Lord’s Prayer. Third, Luther divided the Apostles’ Creed into only three parts, not the traditional twelve parts. Luther wanted to focus clearly on the three persons of the Holy Trinity and their respective saving work. Luther’s little 1520 book was the foundation for his later catechetical work.⁴³

For Luther, not only were the theological contents of the catechism important but also the message the contents communicated as a catechumen moved through the material—a movement

⁴¹ SC Preface, 10–17 in Tappert, 339–40.

⁴² SC Preface, 2 in Tappert, 338.

⁴³ McCain, *Concordia*, 310.

from Law to Gospel to the assurance of God working in our lives as reflected by the Lord's Prayer.

Having established Luther's writing and ordering of the catechism, the next major figure to examine, at least as far as the Scandinavian catechetical tradition is concerned, is Bishop Erik Pontoppidan. Pontoppidan lived from 1698–1764 and served as a pastor in Copenhagen, Denmark, and then as the Bishop of Bergen. Pontoppidan is known less for who he was as a pastor and churchman than what he wrote. His explanation of Luther's Small Catechism was the standard in Scandinavian Lutheran churches for multiple centuries, and perhaps especially as Scandinavian Lutherans emigrated to America. "Pontoppidan's *Explanation* was, indeed, one of the first two books printed for Norwegian immigrants in the United States."⁴⁴ Sandvik elaborates on the significance of this fact:

The first was an English version of Luther's *Small Catechism*, printed in New York in 1841. A year later Pontoppidan's *Truth unto Godliness* appeared in Norwegian. The man who saw to the printing of these books was the lay preacher from Voss who had immigrated to Illinois, Elling Eielsen. This strong and stubborn man walked from Illinois to New York to have these books printed. This early story illustrates as little else could how Luther's *Catechism* and the trusted commentary on it by Pontoppidan were from the very beginning foundational elements of Norwegian-American Lutheranism.⁴⁵

It is almost impossible to overstate the effect Pontoppidan's explanation of the catechism had on Scandinavian Lutherans in general, and Norwegian-American Lutherans in particular. Lee notes that, "confirmation instruction was the primary purpose for public education in Norway. At least half of the class time in every school was devoted to memorizing the questions and answers from Pontoppidan, which remained the exclusive religion text in the country for over one hundred

⁴⁴ Bjørn Sandvik, "'Suffered under Pontius Pontoppidan' or 'Good, Old Pontoppidan'?" in *Crossings: Norwegian-American Lutheranism as a Transatlantic Tradition*, ed. Todd W. Nichol (Northfield, MN: Norwegian American Historical Society, 2003), 58.

⁴⁵ Sandvik, "Suffered under Pontius Pontoppidan," 58.

years. Few books apart from the Bible itself have so profoundly influenced the life of a western nation.”⁴⁶

Having now arrived in America, figuratively speaking, the last major figure in catechetical instruction, at least as far as the AFLC is concerned, is Georg Sverdrup. Sverdrup was one of the co-founders of the Lutheran Free Church, the parent denomination of the AFLC. He was born in 1848 and emigrated to America in 1874 to serve as a professor at Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis, MN.

To understand how Sverdrup relates to the Lutheran catechisms and the concept and process of catechesis, one needs to understand the Norwegian idea of *børnalærdom*. Helland provides a useful discussion on the difficulty of translating *børnalærdom* as well as its importance:

The Norwegian word here translated with *Catechism* is *barnelærdom* [sic] for which there unfortunately is no exact equivalent in the English language. The literal meaning is child instruction, but as used only in the restricted sense of religious child instruction. Seeking a term in English that would most nearly approach the meaning of the Norwegian original, the present writer has hesitatingly chosen the word *Catechism*, printed in *Italics* to signify its special meaning. *Barnelærdom* [sic] implies (1) the general contents of religious child instruction, and (2) the text books used in such instruction in Norway, particularly Luther’s Small Catechism and the different “Explanations” of it, such as Pontoppidan’s “Truth unto Godliness” and books of the same character, most important of which has been Pastor H.U. Sverdrup’s well-known “Epitome.”—Among the Norwegian Lutherans in America the word *barnelærdom* [sic] has also often been used in a special sense, as an expression of the divine truth set forth in plain language.⁴⁷

Hamre expands on this and says, “The term literally means childhood teaching, but it was used in a somewhat technical way by Sverdrup and others to refer to the simple and basic teachings

⁴⁶ Lee, Robert L., *A New Spring Time: Centennial Reflections on the Revival in the Nineties among Norwegian-Americans* (Minneapolis: Heirloom, 1997), 13.

⁴⁷ Andreas Helland, *Georg Sverdrup: The Man and His Message* (Minneapolis: Messenger, 1947), 295.

embodied in the *Catechism* and the *Explanation*.”⁴⁸

Brett Boe describes the importance of *børnalærdom* in Sverdrup’s ministry practice. First, Sverdrup valued *børnalærdom* as a matter of congregational practice. “The brevity of the books proved to be important to Sverdrup. He believed *barnelaerdom* [sic] (*the Catechism* and *Explanation*) hit the right balance in length. On the one hand, these books were not so large as to frighten people away from even tackling them. On the other hand, the two books were small enough that a majority, if not all, of the congregations could reasonably familiarize themselves with the content in a short amount of time.”⁴⁹

Next, Sverdrup valued *børnalærdom* as a matter of pastoral education, seeing it as “a mighty instrument in the training of pastors.” Boe continues, “Sverdrup was determined to avoid shaping pastors who would then control their congregations in a ‘straitjacket of doctrinal propositions’ ... Through focusing on *barnelaerdom* [sic], a spirit of freedom would be promoted. The paralysis of analysis that often flows from an emphasis on ‘theses doctrine’ would not hinder a congregation that bases its doctrinal unity on *barnelaerdom* [sic].”⁵⁰

Boe concludes about the significance of Sverdrup’s views on the importance of *børnalærdom*:

In essence, Sverdrup’s love for *barnelaerdom* [sic], both in the sense of the actual documents of *Luther’s Small Catechism* and *Explanation* and in the sense of Christian teaching in plain language that children can understand, was a return to the biblical teaching of Christ. Jesus taught that children are the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Children possess a simple faith and trust in Jesus Christ. Yes, children grow. But those who remain “as little children” never move on from this simple trust

⁴⁸ James S. Hamre, *Georg Sverdrup: Educator, Theologian, Churchman* (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1986), 64–65.

⁴⁹ Brett A. Boe, “Barnelaerdom: Sverdrup’s Pastoral Approach to Luther’s Small Catechism,” *The Sverdrup Journal* 13, (2016): 25.

⁵⁰ Boe, “Barnelaerdom,” 29–30.

in Christ. Sverdrup sought to impress this truth on his students and on all free and living Lutheran congregations through his emphasis on *barnelaerdom* [sic].⁵¹

Sverdrup certainly valued both the utility and content of the catechism for multiple applications of ministry.

Sverdrup's views and utilization of the catechism fit nicely into Luther's own view of the catechisms' value. Luther says, first of himself, "I must still read and study the Catechism daily, yet I cannot master it as I wish, but must remain a child and pupil of the Catechism, and I do it gladly."⁵² Luther goes on to apply this to others as well. "Even if their knowledge of Catechism were perfect (though that is impossible in this life), yet it is highly profitable and fruitful daily to read it and make it the subject of meditation and conversation. In such reading, conversation, and meditation the Holy Spirit is present and bestows ever new and greater light and fervor, so that day by day we relish and appreciate the Catechism more greatly."⁵³

Sverdrup's views also serve to establish the context and impetus behind this MAP. The Catechism ought to be utilized for more than just confirmation instruction of teenagers. It is useful for all ages and should be employed in pastoral and congregational ministry for the benefit of even mature, lifelong Christians. This is a heritage that I hope is reignited in the AFLC.

⁵¹ Boe, "Barnelaerdom," 30.

⁵² LC Martin Luther's Preface, 8 in Tappert, 359.

⁵³ LC Martin Luther's Preface, 9 in Tappert, 359.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROJECT DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

For the research portion of this project, I decided to teach a class from a section of the catechetical materials I had been using for adult Sunday school at Faith Free Lutheran Church. These materials also serve as the basis for the content of the *Being Lutheran* podcast I co-host with two of my pastor friends.

The reason I chose to teach a class was both because of scope and because of the ability to acquire usable data in the form of surveys taken before and after the class. To really analyze the effect of catechetical materials on the lives of various believers, one would have to trace this through years of time. The scope of the MAP is much smaller than that, so I decided instead to incorporate a two-part survey to measure the ability of the students to recognize the applicability of the class materials to their lives as well as measure any changes in answers from the beginning of the class to the end of the class.

For reasons of brevity, I chose to teach the section of the catechisms on the Apostles' Creed. The original lesson material for the content of the Apostles' Creed consisted of three separate classes, and that was much easier to condense into an afternoon seminar than the other units of the catechism on the Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer, Sacraments, and Table of Duties.

Research Design

Population Sampling

As I began preparing for the class, I decided to limit the research to people 18 years of age or older. This was to simplify ethical concerns. I opened the class to anyone ages 12 and up (only adults attended) but would limit participants in the study—those who would take the surveys—

only to adults who were 18 or older at the start of the class. Beyond the age requirements, there were no other limitations on attendance, and I did not track any other demographic information (such as age, gender, etc.) except for a few short questions about the participants' familiarity with the material I was teaching.

The participants in the study were all volunteers. None were included in the study because they fit a certain mold or demographic. I had originally proposed that the class would consist of 10 or more people and had personally hoped we would reach 20 in attendance. 17 individuals attended the class, all gave their consent to participate in the study, and all completed the surveys.

Implementation

The participants were recruited by a variety of means. First, I made repeated announcements (both verbal and in the Sunday bulletins) in my own congregation, asking for those who would be willing to participate in a study for the completion of my Doctor of Ministry program. Several of the members of my congregation have been following the progress of my Doctor of Ministry studies and were eager to support me in this way. Along with my congregation, I also sent an email to every AFLC congregation in the Twin Cities Metro district with a bulletin insert attached which advertised the class and how to sign up for it. Finally, I made multiple announcements on my Facebook and Twitter accounts advertising the class.

To sign up for the class, participants could contact me personally, show up at the door, or use the website and registration form I created. I used a free website builder on the internet to create the site "gudimclassregistration.wordpress.com" and attached a Google Form to the main (and only) page of that website. The form itself provided information about the date, timing, and

location of the class as well as a disclaimer describing the nature and purpose of my research.¹ Any other advertisement I did for the class, including the bulletin insert sent to district congregations and my social media appeals, pointed people to this website and registration form. Information that I asked for on the form included: Name, email address, and phone number. The reason I collected email and phone numbers of registrants was so that I could contact them in the event that I needed to change, postpone, or otherwise alter the class from what was advertised. Sixteen people eventually registered online for the class.

The class was held from 1–5 p.m. on Saturday, July 10, 2021, in a classroom at Heritage Hall on the campus of the Free Lutheran Bible College and Seminary in Plymouth, MN.² I provided food and refreshments for the class, as well as a schedule.

At the beginning of the class, I greeted the students and provided a brief introduction where I once again reiterated that the purpose of the class was to conduct research for my MAP and the completion of my Doctor of Ministry degree. After this, I supplied the participants with an informed consent form that informed them they were not able to participate in the study unless they were 18 years old or older, and that if they signed the form, it indicated they were voluntarily agreeing to participate in the study. I then informed them that their names, as provided on the informed consent form, would be kept confidential and stored in a sealed envelope in a locked safe at Faith Free Lutheran Church, and these documents would be destroyed seven years after the completion of the project.

Following the distribution of the informed consent forms, I directed the participants back to

¹ The disclaimer read, “Disclaimer: This class is being taught by Pastor Jason Gudim for the completion of his Major Applied Project (MAP) in the Doctor of Ministry program through Concordia—St. Louis. Participants will be asked to sign a disclosure agreement acknowledging this class is a part of ongoing research and giving their consent to be a part of said research. During the class, participants will be asked to complete two surveys for the purpose of data collection and analysis in regards to the material taught during the class.

² For the purposes of full disclosure, I am a member of the Board of Trustees for FLBCS.

the printed schedules I had previously handed out. At the bottom of these documents, I included a section for each participant to record their “Self-Chosen Personal Identification Number.” These numbers would help me link up the surveys completed by the participants before the class to the surveys completed by the participants at the conclusion of the class. The section on the schedule provided the participants with a simple way of recording that unique number so they could remember it throughout the day.

After these introductory matters were completed, I proceeded to distribute the first part of a two-part survey to be completed before I taught the class. None of the surveys were distributed ahead of time, as I wanted the participants to react to the questions on the survey as they received it so that it would not serve as a distraction during the other portions of the day. The first part of the “before” survey consisted of a brief, four-question short answer survey. The instructions on this survey read, “Please answer the following four questions in your own words. Your answers do not need to be particularly lengthy, just a representation of your understanding at the moment.” As the surveys were being distributed, I once again advertised that I was looking for brevity on these short answer questions. They did not need to be essays. The four questions on the first part of the survey were: (1) What is the purpose of the Apostles’ Creed?; (2) How does the First Article of the Creed relate to your life?; (3) How does the Second Article of the Creed relate to your life?; and (4) How does the Third Article of the Creed relate to your life?

Once the participants had completed the first part of the “before” surveys, I distributed the second part of the surveys. This second part consisted of two sections. In the first section, I asked for the participants’ familiarity with my own material on the Apostles’ Creed, whether at Faith Free Lutheran Church or on the *Being Lutheran* podcast.³ I also asked the participants if they

³ The Being Lutheran podcast is a podcast I co-host with two pastor friends of mine, where we go through the

could recite the Creed or any of the explanations of the Creed in the Small Catechism from memory. The second section of this survey was multiple choice. Most of the questions asked for only one answer, but a handful of questions could have more than one possible answer, and this was noted in the instructions for those individual questions. At the beginning of this survey, printed on the survey itself, I informed the participants that this was not a quiz or a test, nor would it be graded. I also asked them not to feel pressured to identify a “correct” answer but to simply give their own answer to each of the following questions.

Once the surveys had been completed by all the participants, I began the teaching portion of the class. Because the Apostles’ Creed is not the first section in the catechisms, and because I was afraid that simply jumping into the Creed would be disjointed and could disrupt the flow of the material itself, I began by doing a brief introductory section on the material from the Ten Commandments I would normally teach before getting to the Apostles’ Creed. This introductory section was trimmed down considerably from what I normally teach and consisted of describing how each commandment both prohibits sinful behavior and promotes godly behavior—identifying a virtue to practice for every vice forbidden by the commandments. I also taught about the common Lutheran understanding of the three functions (or uses) of the Law (curb, mirror, and guide) and about the three purposes of the Law.

This last portion is something I have added to my own material and have not seen anywhere else. All of the purposes of the Law I teach are shown at various places in Scripture. I developed it to combat the notion that the Law was given by God simply as an arbitrary way to evaluate our performance. Rather than this, there are reasons God has given us the Law.

The first purpose of the Law is to show us the holy will and character of God. In Lev 19:2,

Book of Concord Sunday school material I wrote for my congregation.

God says, “You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.” This is echoed by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount in Matt 5:48 when he says, “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” In the Law, God requires us to be holy, then tells us what that looks like, and also informs us that these are ways in which he is holy for us.

The second purpose of the Law is to prepare us for the Savior. The Law is never meant to end at smiting us or to leave us in despair. It is always in service of the Gospel. This is shown in passages like Ezek 33:11, where God says, “As I live, declares the LORD God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” As such, the purpose of the Law is to bring us to repentance so that we can be forgiven of our sins, which was won for us by the completed work of Christ on the cross in our place.

The third and final purpose of the Law is to protect our neighbor from our sinful selves. Jesus also teaches about this in the Sermon on the Mount in Matt 7:3–5, saying,

Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, “Let me take the speck out of your eye,” when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.

It is very easy for us to observe when others break the Law, especially when they break the Law to our disadvantage. But God’s purpose in giving us the Law is for us to love our neighbor, and in this, he wants us to examine our own thoughts, words, and deeds to see if we are harming our neighbor.

At the conclusion of this introductory section of the material, we took a ten-minute break, and then I began teaching my material on the First Article of the Creed. To summarize, the three main points I teach about the First Article are: (1) The First Article establishes the inherent dignity of all human life because God has created each and every one of us; (2) The First Article teaches us that God uses all of creation to bless and sustain our lives (in concert with the Fourth

Petition of the Lord's Prayer); and (3) The First Article proclaims to us that God creates *ex nihilo*—out of nothing—and this sets us up for the material in the Second Article of the Creed, because if God created the universe and everything in it out of nothing, he also creates (2 Cor 5:17) our faith out of nothing and without our help.

Following another ten-minute break, I took up the material concerning the Second Article of the Creed. There are two big ideas I cover in the Second Article. First, I take up Luther's idea from the Large Catechism that when we confess Jesus as Lord, we are really confessing that Jesus is our Redeemer. This directly addresses the saying in American Christianity that, "Jesus might be your Savior, but is he your Lord?" Jesus is always Lord. We don't elect him to that position. And because Jesus is Lord, this means that Satan isn't a competing Lord. He is not a threat to God, God's identity, or God's sovereignty. But God, in his Lordship, has redeemed us from sin, death, and the devil. The second big idea I teach from the Second Article is the importance that all of Christ's life—his incarnation, birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and return—has to our redemption.

At this point in the class, I had scheduled a third break. But as a class, we were running about ten minutes behind, and the class collectively decided to forego the final break with an eye of ending on time at 5:00 p.m. In the Third Article of the Creed I highlight the person and work of the Holy Spirit, especially how he accomplishes his work through the holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints, the Resurrection of the Dead, and the Life Everlasting. My own personal testimony comes into play during this section, as Luther's writing in the explanation to the Third Article in the Large Catechism is what ultimately delivered assurance of salvation to me.

At the conclusion of the class, I again distributed surveys. I began with the short-answer

portion of the survey, which was identical to the one distributed before the class began. Once the participants had completed this section, I distributed the multiple-choice survey. This survey did not include the information about the participants' familiarity with the material or with the Creed and explanations from the catechism. There was, however, a new section attached to the end of the multiple-choice portion of the survey which gave the participants an opportunity to evaluate the class. In this section, I asked the participants to evaluate the effectiveness of the material, what parts of the class they enjoyed the most, what parts of the class could have been improved, and their own opinion about the need for more adult catechetical materials being taught in churches. They were also given an opportunity to provide any other comments or feedback at the bottom of the last page of the survey. The class concluded right at 5 p.m.

Methodological Approach

The methodological approach of this study was to use a modified approach to Action Research. The goal was to demonstrate an increase in both biblical and theological literacy through classroom catechetical material. This was done through the use of the surveys given to the participants before and after the class.

It was my hope that by combining the styles of the surveys, both short answer and multiple-choice, that I could identify trends directly connected to the teaching and reception of the catechetical material taught in the class. The multiple styles of survey provided me with a way of analyzing not only "trivia" questions—questions with a right or wrong answer—but also to see a development in personal application of the material presented.

Research Methodology

The implementation of this study primarily involved quantitative research. By using the

same assessment survey before and after the class, my hope was that the study will demonstrate both the effectiveness of intentional and direct adult catechesis as well as the need for continued adult catechesis.

There were two brief opportunities for qualitative research as well. First, in the implementation and distribution of the short answer surveys, one can analyze any substantive changes in personal application of the materials that were presented. This, however, could also be considered quantitative in some degree, as the individual changes on the answers might not be as important as the existence of the changes in and of themselves.

Finally, the feedback questions at the end of the “after” survey provided an opportunity for me to reflect on the effectiveness not only of the material itself but of the modes and methods with which it was presented. Would the students have answered that they did not feel more adult catechesis in the congregation was needed or valuable, it certainly would have impacted the thesis and premise of this MAP.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Role of Researcher

My assumptions in this study are that Lutheran catechesis is important, that the type of catechesis utilized during confirmation classes is insufficient to keep an individual catechized during adulthood, and that a majority of members in any congregation will display a level of biblical and theological illiteracy that will necessitate an intentional catechetical effort to address.

Limitations of this study consist of not asking, nor being able to answer, the explicit reasons for biblical and theological illiteracy for each individual participant. It may be the participant is new to the Lutheran faith, did not participate in confirmation classes, or any number of other reasons. The multiple causes of biblical and theological illiteracy are beyond the

scope of this study.

Another limitation of this study is my own ability to craft effective survey questions. Many times during the development of the surveys I asked myself, “What if I’m just really bad at writing survey questions?” This became a real issue and will be analyzed in the next chapter as the results of the individual questions are examined.

Finally, this study was mostly limited to the context of the AFLC. Even though I offered an open invitation on both Facebook and Twitter to attend and participate in the study, each participant had a present relationship with an AFLC congregation. As such, this study will not reflect the particular contexts of Lutheran denominations or other Christian denominations apart from Lutheranism.

Implementation Timeline

Having completed the first three chapters of the MAP, I designed the website and registration form and issued the first invitations to attend the class on June 8, 2021. Email invitations to AFLC congregations also were sent on that date. I made multiple appeals to attend the class on social media, as well as from the pulpit each Sunday in my own congregation.

Finally, the class was held on Saturday, July 10, from 1–5 p.m. All the research conducted for the class was completed during this time frame.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE DATA

The information gleaned from the introductory demographic section of the “before” surveys was useful. Of the seventeen individuals who participated in the class, 15 indicated they were either members or regular attenders (at least once per month) of Faith Free Lutheran Church. Three participants marked that they had no prior exposure to my teaching on the Apostles’ Creed. This means that 14 of the participants had some level of familiarity with my material on the Apostles’ Creed, with most of them either through adult Sunday school at Faith Free Lutheran Church or through the *Being Lutheran* podcast.

The final two demographic questions asked had to do with memorization of the Apostles’ Creed and the explanations to the Creed from the Small Catechism. Fourteen participants indicated they could recite the Creed from memory in its entirety. One of the participants answered that they could recite all three of the explanations to the Creed from the Small Catechism, and two more indicated they could do one or two of the explanations but not all three.

These results lead me to believe that the group of participants who attended the class give a reasonable representative sample of a normal Lutheran congregation. A vast majority of the class had a working knowledge of the Apostles Creed as well as with my teaching of the Creed as a pastor. One would expect this to be the case in a congregation as well. Many of the members of the congregation should be expected to have a basic knowledge of the Christian faith as summarized in the Creed, and most of the members of a congregation would also be familiar with their pastor’s teachings about this subject. Because of this, I am led to believe that the rest of the findings of this study will be useful to other pastors and congregations as well.

Data Analyses

I began the quantitative evaluation of the project by looking at the data from the multiple-choice sections of the before and after surveys. Every participant in the class changed multiple answers from the survey given before the class to the survey given after the class. The highest number of changes for a participant was done by participant #11, who had 10 changes. The lowest number of changes were made by participants #3 and #6, who each changed just two answers.

Looking at the overall totals from the individual questions, the data revealed that the answer to every single question was changed at least once. This was unexpected, as I thought some of the questions on the survey were fairly straightforward. The data also revealed that on every single question, at least five participants kept their answer the same. That was also unexpected, because I had purposely designed some of the questions on the survey to be directly related to the material I was teaching during the class (and not just general knowledge). The answers to question #9 were changed the least frequently, with only one participant changing their answer. The answers to questions 7 and 8 were changed the most, at twelve apiece.

At this point, it is necessary to examine the changes in answers for each individual question. For the list of questions and possible answers for the multiple-choice section of the survey, please consult the appendix. The first three questions covered material from the First Article of the Creed, questions 4–6 covered the Second Article, questions 7–11 covered the Third Article, and questions 12 and 13 were summary questions for the entire Creed.

Question #1: What is the purpose of the Apostles Creed? (Circle all that apply)

- A. To teach us who God is**
- B. To give us something to do**
- C. To provide us with hope in the midst of our failure to keep the Ten**

Commandments

D. To identify how God relates to us

E. To inform our worship and praise of God

| Answers | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Pre-Class Survey | | Post-Class Survey | |
| A | 94% | A | 100% |
| B | 6% | B | 6% |
| C | 76% | C | 82% |
| D | 88% | D | 94% |
| E | 76% | E | 71% |

For the first question, there were multiple answers that would have been acceptable, and the participants were instructed to circle all that apply. Only B was an unacceptable answer for this question. Only one student selected B as one of their answers. Everyone else had some other combination of answers, with the correct answer of ACDE being selected on nine surveys.

Six participants changed their answer on the “after” portion of the survey. Only one person (the same participant as before) answered B on the “after” portion of the survey.

This question was a quantitative attempt to identify qualitative application to a participant’s life. It coincides directly with question #1 on the short-answer survey. No substantive conclusions or trends can be drawn from the results of this question.

Question #2: When we identify God the Father as “Almighty,” is this a statement of Law or Gospel?

A. Law

B. Gospel

| Answers | | | |
|------------------|-----|-------------------|------|
| Pre-Class Survey | | Post-Class Survey | |
| A | 59% | A | 0% |
| B | 41% | B | 100% |

The correct answer for the second question is that in the Creed, when we confess that God the Father is “almighty,” this is primarily a statement of Gospel because the Creed itself is primarily a statement of Gospel.

On the “before” survey, ten of the students answered that this was a “Law” statement. Ten students changed their answer on the “after” survey, and every one of those changes was from answer A to answer B. I expected this for two reasons: the material was addressed directly in class, and a participant asked about this particular survey question during the class time, so I was able to explain directly why the answer was “Gospel.” At the very least, the changes made on this question demonstrates recognition of material taught and covered during the class time.

Question #3: The First Article of the Creed establishes:

- A. Our need for repentance
- B. The inherent dignity and value of all human life
- C. God’s wrath against sin
- D. Free will

| Answers | | | |
|------------------|-----|-------------------|-----|
| Pre-Class Survey | | Post-Class Survey | |
| A | 47% | A | 12% |

| | | | |
|----------|------------|----------|------------|
| B | 47% | B | 88% |
| C | 6% | C | 0% |
| D | 0% | D | 0% |

The first article of the Creed establishes the inherent dignity and value of all human life because it identifies God as our Creator (and the Creator of everyone else). This was a major part of the material I taught on the First Article.

On the before survey, eight of the participants answered this question correctly. Eight others answered A, and one answered C. No participant selected that the First Article of the Creed establishes free will.

Seven participants changed their answer on the after survey. Each of the participants that changed their answer changed it to the correct answer of B. I believe this reveals strong evidence for the effect of the material as it was taught, as this question was not specifically addressed as a survey question during the class time.

Question #4: Do you have any theological objections to the commonly used question, “Jesus might be your Savior, but is he your Lord?”

A. Yes (explain):

B. No

| Answers | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Pre-Class Survey | | Post-Class Survey | |
| A | 65% | A | 82% |
| B | 35% | B | 18% |

The fourth question on the multiple-choice survey was perhaps the question for which I

was most anticipating the results. I asked if the participants had any objections to the commonly asked question, “Jesus might be your Savior, but is he your Lord?” This is a question I have heard dozens of times at camps, retreats, and even in individual conversations. This was also the only question on the multiple-choice portion of the survey where I allowed the participants to explain their answer (if they selected A as their answer).

Six of the participants answered B to the question, indicating that they had no problem with the phrase. For the eleven students who answered A, many expressed a similar sentiment to what participant #2 said: “He is Savior and Lord. I do not make him one or the other.” They seemed to recognize that Jesus is already one’s Lord, whether or not that person acknowledges this reality.

Just three people changed their answer on this question, with all three changing their answer from B to A. Each of the participants’ explanations seems to reflect a new understanding in this area. Participant #9 said, “Lord = Redeemer. Jesus is your Lord whether you’re redeemed or not.” Participant #11 said, “Jesus is Lord of all, that does not mean he is/isn’t my God.” Finally, participant #12 said, “Jesus is always Lord.” While I am a little disappointed that more people didn’t change their answer, I am still encouraged that those who did change their answer moved to the correct answer.

This question does a good job of beginning to establish a trend of an increased understanding in the personal and practical applicability of catechesis to one’s Christian life. The question creates a need to express one’s personal views in light of material that was taught from the catechism.

Question #5: What is Satan’s role as far as your sin and redemption is concerned?

- A. Lord over unbelievers and unrepentant sinners**
- B. Deceiver and captor**

C. Convenient foil for sin

D. The evil that is in balance with God’s good

| Answers | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Pre-Class Survey | | Post-Class Survey | |
| A | 24% | A | 12% |
| B | 71% | B | 82% |
| C | 0% | C | 6% |
| D | 6% | D | 0% |

The fifth question piggybacked, so to speak, off question #4. If Jesus as Lord is our Redeemer, does that mean Satan is Lord of the unredeemed? Luther addresses this directly in the Large Catechism: “What is it to ‘become a Lord’? It means that he has redeemed me from sin, from the devil, from death, and from all evil. Before this I had no Lord and King but was captive under the power of the devil. I was condemned to death and entangled in sin and blindness.”¹ Satan is not a competing Lord to Jesus Christ. Rather, he is an opportunistic captor and deceiver (John 8:44).

Twelve of the participants correctly answered B to this question. Of the remaining five, four answered A, and one answered D. Four of the five who answered incorrectly changed their answer to B on the after surveys. In a perplexing development, two of the participants who correctly answered on the before survey changed their answer on the after survey, one to C and one to A. Perhaps this is the case of me wording the question or available answers poorly, or it could be that I need to work on the clarity of the class material in this area.

¹ LC II, 27 in Tappert, 414.

Question #6: According to the Second Article of the Creed, how has our redemption been accomplished?

- A. Through Jesus’ death and resurrection**
- B. Through Jesus’ entire life, from his incarnation to his Second Coming**
- C. By demanding your response to Jesus’ life and ministry**

| Answers | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Pre-Class Survey | | Post-Class Survey | |
| A | 35% | A | 18% |
| B | 65% | B | 82% |
| C | 0% | C | 0% |

This is a question I wish I had worded differently on the surveys. Part of the truth that Luther communicates in the Large Catechism is that all of Jesus’ incarnation, birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and return have value for our redemption. I phrased the question as “how has our redemption been accomplished?” That ended up being a problem, as most Christians would rightly recognize that Jesus’ death and resurrection accomplished our salvation.

With that in mind, I was happy to see that every student answered either A or B for this question. To my surprise, 11 answered B. Three participants changed their answer, all from A to B, on the after survey. I did my best to address the content, as well as the shortcomings, of this question during the class time, but I’m still unhappy with the wording.

Question #7: What does the Holy Spirit primarily do?

- A. Convert souls**
- B. Spontaneously move the hearts of men**

C. Guide and inspire

D. Make people holy

| Answers | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Pre-Class Survey | | Post-Class Survey | |
| A | 53% | A | 12% |
| B | 6% | B | 0% |
| C | 24% | C | 0% |
| D | 18% | D | 88% |

This was another question where I was eagerly awaiting the results. It is my opinion that Lutherans don't do a particularly good job talking about the Holy Spirit, and this is disappointing considering the richness and depth of Luther's writing on the Third Article of the Creed in the Large Catechism.

For this question, every possible answer was selected. Nine selected A, one B, four C, and three D (the desired answer). After going through the class, twelve of the participants changed their answers. The final results were two A's and fifteen D's. The two participants who chose A the second time had also chosen A the first time. This is a significant and encouraging result as answer D ("Make people holy") correctly identifies the Holy Spirit in his role as Sanctifier, a crucial point in the Third Article of the Creed.

I believe that the results of this question also work in a similar fashion to the results of question #4. While it is an objective answer on the cognitive portion of the survey, the answer hopefully caused participants to consider the fact that the Holy Spirit must therefore be making them holy.

Question #8: How does He do this? (Circle all that apply)

- A. Through the forgiveness of sins**
- B. Through internal promptings**
- C. Through the life everlasting**
- D. Through the holy Christian Church**
- E. Through our emotions**
- F. Through the resurrection of the body**
- G. Through the communion of saints**
- H. Through the decisions of anointed leadership**

| Answers | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Pre-Class Survey | | Post-Class Survey | |
| A | 94% | A | 94% |
| B | 35% | B | 6% |
| C | 35% | C | 100% |
| D | 65% | D | 94% |
| E | 6% | E | 0% |
| F | 65% | F | 100% |
| G | 76% | G | 100% |
| H | 6% | H | 0% |

The intent of this question was to simply have the participants identify the various elements of the confession of the Third Article of the Creed. The Holy Spirit sanctifies by the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. This made the desired answer for this question ACDFG.

On the before surveys, seven participants got this correct. Of the other ten, only three had the undesirable answers of B, E, or H in their responses. Twelve people altered their response in some way, shape, or form. At the conclusion of the class, twelve people answered ACDFG on the after surveys. Only one person had a B, E, or H in their answer, and that was just B (“through internal promptings”). Once again, it appears as if the in-class material was effective in preparing participants to answer this question.

Question #9: What is the primary reason you go to church on Sunday?

- A. Forgiveness**
- B. Instruction**
- C. Worship**
- D. Fellowship**

| Answers | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Pre-Class Survey | | Post-Class Survey | |
| A | 71% | A | 76% |
| B | 0% | B | 0% |
| C | 29% | C | 24% |
| D | 0% | D | 0% |

This is the second time I wish I had worded a question differently. Without realizing it, I let the answer to this question be entirely subjective and not dependent on the material shared during the class. “What is the primary reason you go to Church on Sunday?” is always going to be a matter of personal preference, regardless of what Luther says about the importance of the

forgiveness of sins in the explanation to the Third Article of the Creed in the Large Catechism. That being said, the answers from the participants were still instructive.

For starters, only A or C were answered by all 17 of the participants for the before survey. Twelve selected A while five selected B. Next, only one person changed their answer, with HU-317 moving from C to A.

What can be learned from this? Perhaps we can say that people will always have their own individual answers for attending a worship service. But we also can't conclude what people meant when they answered "worship." When I originally wrote the question, I had the American evangelical concept of "praise and worship" in mind as option C. But perhaps the participants who answered "worship" were referring to a worship that flows from the reception and application of the forgiveness of sins in the proclaimed and applied Gospel found in Word and Sacrament.

Question #10: What is the primary role of the Means of Grace in the church?

- A. Remind us of God's faithfulness**
- B. Unite us with believers around the world**
- C. Direct and inform our obedience**
- D. Distribute and apply the forgiveness of sins**

| Answers | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Pre-Class Survey | | Post-Class Survey | |
| A | 18% | A | 12% |
| B | 0% | B | 0% |
| C | 0% | C | 0% |
| D | 82% | D | 88% |

Fourteen participants correctly answered D on this question for the before survey. The other three answers were all A (“Remind us of God’s faithfulness”). Three participants changed their answers on the after surveys, with one of the respondents switching from D to A. This is another perplexing result to me, as the material in class directly addressed this question.

Perhaps, again, this could be an example of a person answering with their own subjective experience. On the one hand, that may go against the cognitive and objective nature of the multiple-choice portion of the surveys. On the other hand, it could be argued that this would be an example of the participants making an effort to internalize and apply what they are learning to their own lives.

Question #11: What roles do the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting play in your sanctification? (Circle all that apply)

- A. Provide us with hope during the trials of life**
- B. To hold before us something to strive for in our Christian lives**
- C. To remind us that we won’t be perfectly sinless until eternity**

| Answers | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Pre-Class Survey | | Post-Class Survey | |
| A | 82% | A | 94% |
| B | 12% | B | 0% |
| C | 65% | C | 59% |

Question eleven was the final question where multiple answers were permissible. I wanted to see participants answering A and C for this question on the before surveys, and seven did

precisely that. Only two of the participants not answering A and C had B in their answers. Following the class, seven people changed their answers and all the B's were removed. Eight participants had A and C. This is another example of catechesis helping to root out a confusion of Law and Gospel in those who are being taught. This was also another question that forced the participants to consider how the information taught by the catechisms applied to their personal lives.

Question #12: How does the structure of the Creed contribute to your understanding of its purpose and meaning?

- A. It helps us understand Scripture better**
- B. It informs us of God's vocations**
- C. It reminds us that we are sinners**
- D. It establishes God in his sovereignty**

| Answers | | | |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Pre-Class Survey | | Post-Class Survey | |
| A | 41% | A | 0% |
| B | 35% | B | 94% |
| C | 18% | C | 0% |
| D | 24% | D | 12% |

The final two questions were taken from a brief summary and conclusion I taught during the class. Part of this conclusion is to teach how the Creeds describe how God loves us in his vocations. One of the wonders of the Gospel is that God in Christ became flesh—a human just like any of us. That makes God our neighbor. In the doctrine of vocation, we are instructed who

our neighbor is and how to love our neighbor. The Creed describes how God our neighbor loves us. Question #12 was designed to see if the class participants remembered this from the lecture.

Five participants correctly answered B on the before survey. Six answered A, two answered C, three answered D, and one curiously answered A, B, C, and D. Following the class, twelve students changed their answers. The results had 15 with B, one with D (changing from C), and a different participant curiously selecting B and D. There seems to be a direct correlation on this question with the material presented in class. I would have correctly assumed few in the class would answer B on the before survey, but it is nice to see how many answered B on the after survey.

There is a pattern of recognition that the participants had to utilize in answering “B.” It is more than just a right or wrong answer. In teaching that God is our neighbor, it involves a deeper understanding of the Gospel (Jesus becoming fully human even as he is fully God), and then a recognition that God loves us in the different ways each article of the Creed describes. This would demonstrate another crossover in the cognitive information presented in the creed crossing over and impacting the practical applicability to our personal lives as Christians.

Question #13: In summary, what does the Apostles’ Creed do for Christians in the world?

- A. It gives us a means of relating to other creeds and cultures**
- B. It provides us with an opportunity to declare our superiority**
- C. It delineates and sets us apart from all other faiths and worldviews**
- D. It is meant only to be used personally and privately**

| Answers | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|-----------|
| Pre-Class Survey | | Post Class Survey | |
| A | 6% | A | 0% |

| | | | |
|----------|------------|----------|------------|
| B | 0% | B | 0% |
| C | 76% | C | 94% |
| D | 18% | D | 6% |

The final question was intended to highlight the final truth taught in the class—that the Apostles’ Creed distinguishes Christianity from all other world religions (including atheism) and also distinguishes orthodox Christianity from heterodox sectarians. The Creed gives Christians the proper and simple confession of God’s identity and his activity. Other world religions get this wrong by identifying other gods as possibilities, and heterodox sectarians get this wrong by teaching falsely about some aspect of the Trinity.

Much to my surprise, thirteen participants correctly answered C on this question for the before survey. Three answered D, and one answered A. Three participants changed their answers for the after survey, with all three changing their answers to C. One participant steadfastly remained committed to answer D and to having the Creed be meant only for personal and private use. Again, through clarifying teaching, the students demonstrated a move to understanding how the Creed helps make Christianity a unique faith in all the world.

Overall, the one definitive theme that has emerged from the multiple-choice portion of the surveys is an increase in cognitive understanding of the content of the Creed. This will become important for a few different reasons that I will discuss below.

With the individual multiple-choice questions analyzed and discussed, we can now look at the short answer questions. In analyzing the answers to the short-answer surveys, one trend stands out among all four questions: the inclusion of first-person personal pronouns, whether singular or plural. I believe that this trend indicates an appropriation of right confession (the

cognitive aspect of catechesis) into a personal confession that informs and impacts the Christian life (the practical/applicable aspect of confession).

Question #1: What is the purpose of the Apostles' Creed?

Most of the answers to this question on the pre-class surveys revealed an understanding that the Creed communicated some sort of summary of the content of the Christian faith. For example, participant #3 wrote, "A brief summary of the basics of the Christian faith." Likewise, participant #6 answered, "To summarize the Christian faith to be confessed by all believers," participant #8 answered, "To teach and explain the basic beliefs of the Christian faith," and participant #13 answered, "To teach the Christian the basic articles of our faith."

Nine of the answers included first-person personal pronouns; however, three of these answers involved indirect or impersonal uses of the pronouns. For example, participant #1 confessed, "I don't really know." Participant #9 answered, "To give a concise answer to 'What do we believe.'" The use of the pronoun in this answer is impersonal because it's used in a hypothetical question. Finally, participant #14 wrote, "To tell us what we need to believe," which indicates a law-based understanding of the Creed as a whole, and not a personal appropriation of the Creed to one's own confession of faith.

On the post-class survey, fourteen of the participants used first-person personal pronouns in their answers. Each and every one of these usages indicated a personalization of the content of the Creed. Participant #6 answered, "To show us who God is and what he does." Participant #12 wrote, "The creed teaches us to know God fully as someone who loves and cares for us." Participant #15 stated, "Gives us hope and how we relate to God and how he relates to us." On the pre-class surveys, each of these three participants answered that the Creed summarized the contents of the Christian faith without using first-person personal pronouns. But on the post-class

surveys, each of these participants appropriated the contents of the Creed to their own personal lives.

Also of note with this question was participant #1, who answered, “I don’t really know,” on the pre-class survey and answered, “Set Christian apart from other religions and such,” on the post-class survey. This is an interesting outlier for the data that was collected, as participant #1 was the only participant who confessed to not having any prior exposure to the Apostles’ Creed.

Question #2: How does the First Article of the Creed relate to your life?

For the final three questions on the short-answer portion of the survey, a high degree of first-person personal pronouns would be expected, as the questions asked how the various articles of the Creed related to the participant’s life. There was still a detectable trend with the answers, however.

For this question, twelve participants used first-person personal pronouns in their answer on the pre-class survey. Two of those answers, however, were “impersonal” uses of the pronoun. Participant #1 answered, “It hasn’t been much a part of my life,” and participant #11 said, “I think the first article describes the Father, and His relation to the Son and Holy Spirit.”

For the post-class surveys, fourteen participants used first-person personal pronouns in their answers. Four participants who used impersonal answers in the pre-class surveys used personal pronouns in their answers for the post-class surveys. Participant #5 answered, “Clarifies who God is as Father,” on the pre-class survey but answered, “God the Father as Almighty (Gospel!!!) and Creator—who created and loves us,” on the post-class survey. Participant #6 stated, “It teaches about God the Father,” on the pre-class survey but then said, “It teaches us that God is creator,” on the post-class survey. Participant #12 answered, “Not sure. Cannot remember what it is,” on the pre-class survey but on the post-class survey answered, “Recognizing that God

daily provides for me.” Finally, participant #15 answered, “Thy will be done. Reminder to the Christian that God’s ways are better,” on the pre-class survey but answered, “God is Creator—provides for our needs,” on the post-class survey. Each of these indicates a personalization (at least on a corporate level) of the contents of the Creed.

Participant #1, whom I mentioned above, answered, “It hasn’t been much a part of my life.” Their post-class survey answer was, “First Article focuses on God, the Creator,” once again demonstrating an increase in cognitive understanding of the Creed.

Question #3: How does the Second Article of the Creed relate to your life?

Question #3 provided some very interesting data. On the pre-class survey, ten students correctly identified the content of the Second Article of the Creed and used first-person personal pronouns. Two others used first-person personal pronouns as confessions that they were either not familiar with the content or hadn’t thought about how it applied to their lives.

Two other students used first-person personal pronouns in their answers, but were not entirely orthodox in their answers. For instance, participant #14 answered, “That I believe in God and the Savior.” Even considering the brevity of the answer, this question raises some concerns about the articulation of the first two Persons of the Trinity. Participant #15 misidentified the content of the Second Article in their response: “Our daily bread—we receive God’s good gifts and provision for our life.”

In addition to these, one participant (#12) simply answered “not sure” to question #3.

On the post-class survey, the usage of first-person personal pronouns increased to fourteen participants. Of note here is participant #15’s answer, “God is redeemer. Atonement of our sins through Jesus.” Not only did this participant correctly identify the content of the Second Article but also used a first-person personal pronoun in the application of that content.

Also significant in the post-class survey answers were the answers of participants #1, #12, and #14. Participant #1, much like with question #2, answered, “It hasn’t been much a part of my life,” on the pre-class survey. On the post-class survey, their answer shifted to, “Second Article emphasizes redemption,” once again displaying a cognitive understanding of the material taught during the class. Likewise, participant #14, who had the concerning confusion in their trinitarian confession above, answered, “That Jesus is Lord,” on the post-class survey. This, too, demonstrates an increase in cognitive understanding, as the Lordship of Christ (explained and equated by Luther with redemption in the Large Catechism) was a major focus of the class material on this article. Finally, participant #12, who answered, “Not sure,” on the pre-class survey, demonstrated not only an increase in cognitive understanding but also applied it to themselves with a first-person personal pronoun. Their answer on the post-class survey was, “Jesus is Lord because he redeemed me.”

Question #4: How does the Third Article of the Creed relate to your life?

The first-person personal pronoun trend was not as strong on the Third Article as it was for the other two articles or for Question #1. Ten participants used first-person personal pronouns in their answers on the pre-class survey, and that number increased to eleven on the post-class survey.²

One trend, however, that remained consistent was an increase in the cognitive understanding of the class material on the Third Article of the Creed. The same three participants (#1, #6, and #12) indicated either unfamiliarity or uncertainty with the content of the Third

² I suspect this is the case because of a general lack of active and intentional Lutheran teaching on the Holy Spirit. Anecdotally speaking, it is my experience and perception that Lutherans tend to avoid talking about the Holy Spirit, perhaps because of an overreaction to a charismatic/Pentecostal overemphasis on the work of the Spirit over, above, and apart from the other two persons of the Trinity. As I did not test for this during my research, my hypothesis on this remains outside the scope of this MAP. I do, however, believe the strong trend in cognitive knowledge (explained in the next paragraph) supports this assumption on some level.

Article on their pre-class surveys. All three of them demonstrated an increase in cognitive understanding on the post-class survey, with two of them also including first-person personal pronouns. On the post-class survey, participant #1 answered, “Third Article covers sanctification.” Participant #6 stated, “It teaches us that God is sanctifier.” Participant #12 said, “The Holy Spirit brings us to a place where we receive the Gospel continually.”

In addition to these, two other participants displayed a noteworthy increase in cognitive understanding of the Third Article. On their pre-class survey, participant #8 answered, “Explain the Holy Spirit and other things,” but changed their answer to “God as the sanctifier” on the post-class survey. While I would have liked to see more application in their answer, there is certainly a clarification in their post-class survey answer from their decidedly vague response on the pre-class survey. Similarly, participant #15 answered, “Forgiveness and forgiving others,” on their pre-class survey but modified their answer to “Sanctification through the Holy Spirit. Applies the Gospel through Word and Sacraments.” Once again, the lack of first-person personal pronouns is evident (although in this case it may be implied), but the increase in cognitive understanding is likewise evident.

Finally, I would like to write about one last trend revealed in the data collected by both the multiple-choice and short-answer surveys, although this trend is much narrower in scope (although no less helpful). Three participants changed their multiple-choice answers more than any other in the class: participant #11 (ten changes), participant #12 (nine changes), and participant #1 (eight changes). Because of these elevated numbers of changes, I believe a closer look at their short answers will be significant.

For participant #11, their answer for the first question demonstrated an increased familiarity with the material taught. On the before survey, they answered, “To clearly define

what we believe as Christians, and to have something prepared if asked about our faith.” They adjusted their answer on the after survey to, “To set us apart from all others by answering, ‘Who is God and what is He like?’ and describing God's vocations.” While it is nice to see the move to a more specific answer taken from the class content, their answers to the final three questions really revealed an increased understanding:

- **Question #2:**
 - **Before:** “I think the first article describes the Father and His relation to the Son and Holy Spirit.
 - **After:** “The First Article describes creation. I am God’s creature.”
- **Question #3:**
 - **Before:** “I think the second article describes Jesus’ sacrifice for us.”
 - **After:** “The Second Article describes redemption. I am redeemed.”
- **Question #4:**
 - **Before:** “The third, I believe, describes the Holy Spirit’s work for us and the church.”
 - **After:** “The third article describes sanctification. I am sanctified.”

In each of the before answers, participant #11 demonstrated a timidness and uncertainty about the content of the Apostles’ Creed, but each of the after answers sound direct and confident, including the use of first-person personal pronouns in relating the content to their life. For someone who changed their answer on ten different questions in the multiple-choice section of the after survey, this confidence (and correctness) is very good to see.

On their before survey, participant #12 stated that the purpose of the Apostles’ Creed was “to establish a consistent set of doctrinal principles.” On the after survey, however, they

answered, “The creed teaches us to know God fully as someone who loves and cares for us.” Of note in this change is the move from an abstract and undefined set of “doctrinal principles” to a personal confession of “knowing God,” specifically the ways that he loves and cares for us. On each of the final three questions, participant #12 answered “not sure” as to the content and application of the three articles of the Creed. On the after survey, they were able to answer, “recognizing that God daily provides for me,” for the First Article, “Jesus is Lord because he redeemed me,” for the Second Article, and, “the Holy Spirit brings us to a place where we receive the Gospel continually,” for the Third Article. Once again, this participant confessed not only a familiarity with the content taught in the class and a correctness in their confession but also a willingness to apply that content to their own life by using first-person personal pronouns in their response.

Finally, participant #1 confessed to having almost zero familiarity with the Apostles’ Creed before the class. After the class, they wrote, “Set Christian apart from other religions and such,” as their answer to question #1. They also described the three articles in succession as: “First Article focuses on God, the Creator,” “Second Article emphasizes redemption,” and “Third Article covers sanctification” in their post-class survey answers to questions 2–4. For someone who admitted to having very little exposure to the Creed, these basic answers are exciting, because they are exactly what the catechisms teach about the Creed. The increase in cognitive understanding of the content of the Creed is very encouraging.

Class Feedback

At the conclusion of the multiple-choice section of the post-class surveys, I provided participants with the opportunity to give feedback on the class itself. A few brief observations about their answers should be shared. Some of the participants commented that the speed and

spacing of the class was too fast. This is probably a result of me trying to cram too much information in a short amount of time. If I had to do it over again, I would have trimmed some of the content from each section. Visual aids were also suggested, and I think offering a worksheet or copies of my PowerPoint presentation may have proved helpful with that.

Finally, fifteen of the students answered 5 and the other two answered 4³ on the question asking for the participants' evaluation of the necessity of intentional, adult education in the congregation. While one could potentially argue that individuals predisposed to attend a four-hour seminar on the Apostles' Creed on a beautiful summer afternoon might be expected to think adult education in the congregation is important, this could also be seen as an indicator that the members of our congregations are ready, willing, and waiting for their pastors to catechize them on a regular basis.

Expected Findings

It was expected that after the survey data was completed, collected, and analyzed that I would see some correlation between the material taught in class and the responses of the participants on the "after" surveys. I believe that this expectation has been borne out. All of the participants, and especially the participants who changed their answers most frequently, demonstrated an increase in their cognitive understanding of the Apostles' Creed. There was also a significant trend of the participants demonstrating personal application of the content to their lives through the increased use of first-person personal pronouns. I believe this trend is indicative of the beginnings of what I would identify as the participants thinking better about their faith and expressing that with their answers.

³ On a scale of 1-5, where a 1 indicated "Less adult education is needed", and a 5 indicated more adult education is needed. See Appendix Six, page 124.

The fact that the answers in the “after” surveys were not changed with perfect accuracy does not disrupt the findings of the research. As it has been explained above, catechesis is much more than an exchange of information or a right/wrong proposition. It also should be a lifelong experience. The trends revealed in the data are encouraging, and I believe they support my thesis that direct and intentional adult catechesis is beneficial to an individual’s understanding and expression of their faith.

I also expected that I might find I was not as skilled at writing survey questions as I hoped I would be. This was especially true on two separate questions on the multiple-choice portion of the survey. Having thought about my dissatisfaction with these questions, I have come to realize that this is exactly what I was talking about in the introduction to this paper: the inadequacy of merely personal experience in making one’s individual faith relatable to others. The questions were too subjective in nature, and thus were not consistent with the data from the rest of the survey. I believe that this actually reveals my own need for catechesis in my life. As I continue to immerse myself in the truths of Scripture that are communicated in the catechisms, I believe I will have a better idea of how to more clearly communicate these realities to those who are under my pastoral care.

Finally, if I could change one thing about the research portion of this MAP, I would add several questions to the multiple-choice survey. I believe more data in that area would confirm the trends that I noticed from the survey that I used.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY

At the beginning of this MAP, I explained that it was my desire, through direct and intentional adult catechesis, to help members of my congregation to think differently about the Christian life and to do so in a way that is practical and applicable rather than merely theoretical, experiential, and abstract. I wanted to explore if catechesis can contribute to personal expressions or confessions of an individual's faith. This was primarily due to a perceived lack of catechesis in my own life and in the lives of people in my congregation.

I believe that, based on the results from the answers to the surveys conducted before and after my class on the Apostles' Creed, direct and intentional adult catechesis accomplishes this. Even though catechesis ought to be a lifelong process for a Christian and the results of this survey are from a finite, four-hour seminar taught on a Saturday afternoon, I believe that the trends revealed in the survey data are encouraging. The two most important trends are an increase in the cognitive understanding of the material from the Apostles' Creed section in the Small and Large Catechisms and an increase in personal application of that material through the use of first-person personal pronouns.

These trends are consistent with the didactic function of the Great Commission from Matt 28:18–20 (and the preceding context). In Jesus' mandate to the church to "make disciples," he describes this process as involving "baptizing" and "teaching." I explained, through the help of Jeffrey Gibbs' excellent commentary on Matt 28:16–20, that the best way to understand Christ's phrase, "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you," and usage of the Greek word *τηρεῖν* is not necessarily a moral or ethical imperative to obedience but rather a catechetical process by which Christ's disciples are "guarding" the teaching he delivered to them.

The didactic and catechetical emphasis of the Great Commission is also seen in the

function of Jesus' resurrection. Jesus' resurrection has a cognitive function in the catechism. It is central to our confession of the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed and to our understanding of Holy Baptism. Beyond that, the teaching of the resurrection is also integral to the Fifth and Seventh Petitions of the Lord's prayer and also to the doctrine of Holy Communion.

But the resurrection is more than mere trivia or rote historical fact. It also impacts our lives as believers. Without the resurrection, the redemption Christ won for us on the cross is not complete. The significance of our baptisms would be empty, as we would not have the hope of the new creation rising from the water. The promises we pray for in the Lord's Prayer would be merely wishful thinking, as we would have no assurance of the forgiveness of sins or of being delivered from evil as a certainty. And we would be left with an understanding of the Lord's Supper that is purely and only symbolic instead of the certainty of receiving Christ's actual body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. A proper confession of the resurrection of Jesus Christ impacts how we live our lives as Christians.

In the same way, the reality and historical fact of Jesus' resurrection played an important role in the lives of the disciples as Jesus issued the Great Commission. The doubt spoken of by Matthew in his Gospel is assuaged by the resurrected Christ, who assures them of his power and authority on one end of the Great Commission and of his graceful presence with his church at the other end. The disciples cognitive understanding of an historical reality allows them to think better and speak better about their faith as they are sent out into the world as witnesses and disciple makers.

I also wrote about the historical precedent for the importance of catechesis. This was established first in the church in Paul's writings to Timothy and Titus as well as in the *Didache*. Early usage of the Apostles' Creed was as a baptismal confession for those who had been

catechized into the Christian faith. This practice highlights the cognitive function of the Creed, where it would have been necessary for new Christians to know just what they were supposed to believe.

But the historical practice of catechesis does not leave us solely with a cognitive emphasis, either. In both Luther's writings, as well as in the writings of Georg Sverdrup, there is a move from instruction about what we believe to why we believe it. Luther wrote about the ongoing necessity of catechism review for the laity, for clergy, but also for himself, going as far as confessing that he could never master the content of the catechisms.

Sverdrup, utilizing the Norwegian practice of *børnalærdom*, or catechetical instruction for children, felt that it was just as beneficial for pastors as it was for the young. Sverdrup never desired that the teaching of theology or doctrine would become rote or an academic exercise, but rather that it would have an impact on the student's life. For Sverdrup, it was essential for the cognitive function of the catechisms to translate into a life of discipleship as the student grew and matured in his faith (even, and maybe especially, as a pastor). Catechetical material must inform the way we think about our faith and the way we let our faith work itself out in our daily lives as Christians.

In chapter three, on recent research in the catechisms and the catechetical method, I examined a MAP by Kevin Wyssmann. Whereas Wyssmann focused on catechetics in concert with confirmation, I have focused on catechesis in the life of adults. This does not mean that there is no overlap between our two projects, however. Wyssmann saw a need for improved cognitive functionality in confirmation instruction, and that, too, is part of my understanding of catechesis. A Christian must know both what she believes and why she believes it. Without the "what," one can never get to the "why" of application. Without the "what," one is not capable of

having a deeper understanding of their faith and how it impacts his or her life.

Two sections of my literature review did not, unfortunately, have much overlap with my research. In the section on modern learning, I saw much value for catechesis in the process of interleaving, but I did not test that in the class. One could make a reasonable argument that much of catechesis actually involves what the authors of *Make It Stick* referred to as “massed practice”—simple and rote memorization of a set of information. I think there is much fruit to be gained by intentionally moving away from a massed practice focus on learning the catechism to one where the process of interleaving is incorporated by reflecting on multiple sections of the catechism on a regular basis. This would support my emphasis on not only direct and intentional adult catechesis, but also adult catechesis as a regular and ongoing practice.

I also did not see any direct results of formation or habitus in my research. While I again can see some overlap and benefit between the results I gained from the surveys, I did not, nor could I, measure directly any concept of formation or habitus development. To do so would have required a much lengthier experimentation process lasting for months or even years. I believe the trends I detected in the survey results, and especially the increased use of first-person personal pronouns, lend themselves to the early identification of formation and habitus development, there was, nevertheless, no direct or overwhelming results to confirm this.

One area of formation that did overlap with my research was the work of James K. A. Smith. In Smith’s mind, we are always being catechized. We are always being formed either by the Word of God or by the world around us. If the world is always leading us through “cultural liturgies” as it were, then we must meet that challenge and threat by always catechizing ourselves. To this end, either we will let the catechisms form us in the church continually during adulthood, or we will be formed away from the church.

In the section “Studies on the Catechism,” there was much agreement by scholars of the catechism with both the purpose and results of my research. Timothy Wengert identified the need for the catechism to impact the daily life of a Christian. Charles Arand highlighted the catechism’s ability to move from cognitive instruction to life application: “It integrates both theology and life.”¹ Robert Kolb built on that and looked to the catechism to develop worldview in the life of a Christian.

Finally, in “Modern Catechesis,” there was great synthesis with my research and results. In the area of cognitive development in the catechisms, Jonathan Fisk focused on the “echo” aspect of catechesis. This involves the material of the catechism to be echoed back and forth by teacher and student in order to increase the student’s (and by proxy, the teacher’s) understanding of the material. Fisk seeks out ways to do this in creative and impactful ways in the lives of teenagers.

John Pless moves from the cognitive aspect of catechesis to the life application aspect of catechesis. In this area, one quote from Pless was particularly instructive:

We cannot live without the forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness is far more than a mere amnesty that erases the past and opens the path for the future. For the Scriptures and for Luther, forgiveness of sins is the necessary condition for the Christian life; it is the oxygen we breathe. Forgiveness of sins is not the gateway to the sanctified life; it is the sanctified life. Forgiveness of sins is not the stepping-stone to life and salvation. There is no life and salvation apart from the forgiveness of sins. So the prayer for forgiveness is part of the Christian’s daily supplication.²

He easily identifies that the cognitive information learned during catechesis can, does, and must find application in the daily life of a Christian.

Final Analysis and Reflections

It is my hope and prayer that this project has been as beneficial to others as it was to me,

¹ Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 17.

² Pless, *Praying Luther’s Small Catechism*, 69.

and I also hope that it will continue to have lasting benefit to pastors and congregations as an encouragement to begin, maintain, and continue to focus on direct, intentional adult catechesis. I believe the data gleaned from the surveys supports the notion that adult catechesis is effective and beneficial for those who participate in it.

I also hope that I have laid a theological and historical foundation for the value of adult catechesis. It is my belief that adult catechesis is in view in the Great Commission as Jesus makes teaching a primary process involved in making disciples. I believe the historical practice of the church has demonstrated its value to the lives of Christians and of congregations. And I believe that recent studies in learning, as well as a renewed focus on formation, prepare the church for a regular practice of adult catechesis.

Certainly, each congregation is in a unique situation and context. This MAP is not intended to prescribe a specific practice that would be universal for all pastors and congregations. Rather, catechesis can and should occur in multiple different ways. In addition to how I have taught the catechism during adult Sunday school, a pastor could preach on the catechism, perhaps developing themes to use during Advent and Lent.³ He could make catechesis a major part of his discipleship of individual members. There is no singular way to go about catechizing a congregation. It just simply needs to be done.

I would also like to bear witness to the effect that adult catechesis has continued to have on my personal and spiritual life as a pastor. As I continue to catechize my congregation as a whole and as individuals who are members of Faith Free Lutheran Church, I am also continually being catechized as a part of that process. This has had measurable effects on me personally as well as

³ This is a practice I have utilized in my own pastoral context. In the last several years, I have preached an Advent series on the Apostle's Creed, a Lenten series on the Lord's Prayer, and a joint Advent/Lenten series on the Ten Commandments (preaching on the First Table during Advent and the Second Table during Lent).

on my pastoral practices.

I cannot overemphasize the impact the catechisms have had on my personal spiritual life, especially in the area of assurance of salvation. I mentioned in chapter two that the Large Catechism, especially the explanation of the Third Article of the Creed, had a profound impact on my spiritual life. “Therefore everything in the Christian church is so ordered that we may daily obtain full forgiveness of sins through the Word and through signs appointed to comfort and revive our consciences as long as we live. Although we have sin, the Holy Spirit sees to it that it does not harm us because we are in the Christian church, where there is full forgiveness of sin.”⁴ I am fully convinced that the Holy Spirit used these words to keep me from walking away from the faith. Because of this assurance of salvation, I have continued to grow in my understanding of my own faith. The catechisms have been integral in maintaining my understanding of Law and Gospel, sin and grace, and even the doctrine of vocation.

In addition to this, the catechism has had a remarkable impact on my practices as a pastor. Early in my ministry, I would fall into sermon writing ruts. The writer’s block would be almost paralyzing. But as I continued to interact with the catechisms, I began to see that even the framework and flow of the Small Catechism could serve as a pattern for interpreting Scripture. If I find the sermon structure difficult to come by, I can find fertile ground in the six chief parts of the Small Catechism and see my sermon text in terms of the Ten Commandments, The Apostles’ Creed, The Lord’s Prayer, Baptism, Holy Communion, and the Table of Duties. There will almost always be overlap between the catechisms and whatever my sermon text for the week is.

The catechisms have also affected my pastoral ministry in the area of pastoral counseling. I regularly use parts of the catechism during my discipleship of members in my congregation.

⁴ LC II, 55 in Tappert, 418.

Again, the pattern and structure of the catechism, as well as the material taught by the catechisms, has served as a useful pattern for thinking about one's Christian life. Even as I have learned to think and speak about my faith in a better way because of the catechisms, I have also had the good pleasure of watching this happen in the lives of the members of Faith Free Lutheran Church. I have frequently recommended books for devotional use, such as John Pless' *Praying Luther's Small Catechism*.

All of this is not to say that I am currently an expert on the catechisms or on their use. Rather, I lean heavily on Luther's own admission, "I must still read and study the Catechism daily, yet I cannot master it as I wish, but must remain a child and pupil of the Catechism, and I do it gladly."⁵

It is my prayer that anyone reading this MAP will likewise be encouraged to be a lifelong student of the catechisms for the enrichment of their own spiritual life as well as that of their congregation's.

⁵ LC Martin Luther's Preface, 8 in Tappert, 359.

APPENDIX ONE

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Study Title: “Adult Catechesis as Formation and Habitus for the Christian Life”

Researcher: Rev. Jason Gudim

Email Address and Telephone Number: jason.gudim@gmail.com (952) 201-8689

Research Supervisor: Dr. Mark Rockenbach

Email Address: rockenbachm@csl.edu

You are invited to be part of a research study. The researcher is a student at Concordia Seminary in Saint Louis, Missouri as part of the Doctor of Ministry program (D,Min.). The information in this form is provided to help you decide if you want to participate in the research study. This form describes what you will have to do during the study and the risks and benefits of the study.

If you have any questions about or do not understand something in this form, you should ask the researcher. Do not sign this form unless the researcher has answered your questions and you decide that you want to be part of this study.

WHAT IS THIS STUDY ABOUT?

The purpose of this study is to identify and explore the biblical mandate for continuing adult catechesis in the life of a believer and to establish a direct connection between adult catechesis and living out the Christian life.

WHY AM I BEING ASKED TO BE IN THE STUDY?

You are invited to be in the study because you are:

- 18 years old or older

If you do not meet the description above, you are not able to be in the study.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE IN THIS STUDY?

About 15 participants will be in this study.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The researcher is a pastor at Faith Free Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, MN. You will be asked during the research if you have participated in the class material at Faith Free Lutheran Church,

but this does not disqualify you from participating in the study.

WILL IT COST ANYTHING TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

You do not have to pay to be in the study.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THE STUDY?

If you decide to be in this study, your participation will last about four hours. You will have to come to the Free Lutheran Bible College in Plymouth, MN, one time during the study.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THIS STUDY?

If you decide to be in this study and if you sign this form, you will do the following things:

- Identify if you have participated in the class material before, either at Faith Free Lutheran Church or by listening to the Being Lutheran Podcast.
- Complete a survey about your knowledge of the Apostles' Creed before the class begins.
- Complete a similar survey about the Apostles' Creed at the conclusion of the class.
- Participate in class interaction by asking questions or contributing to discussion.
- Allow the researcher to observe you during the class and survey time.

While you are in the study, you will be expected to:

- Follow the instructions you are given.
- Tell the researcher if you want to stop being in the study at any time.

WILL I BE RECORDED?

No, you will not be recorded.

WILL BEING IN THIS STUDY HELP ME?

Being in this study will not help you. Information from this study might help researchers help others in the future.

ARE THERE RISKS TO ME IF I AM IN THIS STUDY?

No study is completely risk-free. However, we don't anticipate that you'll be harmed or distressed during this study. You may stop being in this study at any time if you become uncomfortable.

WILL I GET PAID?

You will not receive anything for being in the study.

DO I HAVE TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You can decide not to be in the study and you can change your mind about being in the study at any time. There will be no penalty to you. If you want to stop being in the study, tell the researcher.

The researcher can remove you from the study at any time. This could happen if:

- The researcher believes it is best for you to stop being in the study.
- You do not follow directions about the study.
- You no longer meet the inclusion criteria to participate.

WHO WILL USE AND SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT MY BEING IN THIS STUDY?

Any information you provide in this study that could identify you such as your name, age, or other personal information will be kept confidential. The only time your name will be attached to this study is on this consent form. In any written reports or publications, no one will be able to identify you.

The researcher will keep the information you provide in a locked safe in Faith Free Lutheran Church and only the researcher and the research supervisor will be able to review this information.

LIMITS OF PRIVACY (CONFIDENTIALITY)

Generally speaking, the researcher can assure you that he will keep everything you tell him or do for the study private. Yet there are times where the researcher cannot keep things private (confidential). The researcher cannot keep things private (confidential) when:

- The researcher finds out that a child or vulnerable adult has been abused
- The researcher finds out that that a person plans to hurt him or herself, such as commit suicide,
- The researcher finds out that a person plans to hurt someone else,

There are laws that require many professionals to take action if they think a person might harm themselves or another, or if a child or adult is being abused. In addition, there are guidelines that researchers must follow to make sure all people are treated with respect and kept safe. In most states, there is a government agency that must be told if someone is being abused or plans to hurt themselves or another person. Please ask any questions you may have about this issue before agreeing to be in the study. It is important that you do not feel betrayed if it turns out that the researcher cannot keep some things private.

WHO CAN I TALK TO ABOUT THIS STUDY?

You can ask questions about the study at any time. You can call the researcher if you have any

concerns or complaints. You should call the researcher at the phone number listed on page 1 of this form if you have questions about anything related to this study.

DO YOU WANT TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

I have read this form, and I have been able to ask questions about this study. The researcher has talked with me about this study. The researcher has answered all my questions. I voluntarily agree to be in this study. I agree to allow the use and sharing of my study-related records as described above.

By signing this form, I have not given up any of my legal rights as a research participant. I will get a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

I attest that the participant named above had enough time to consider this information, had an opportunity to ask questions, and voluntarily agreed to be in this study.

Rev. Jason Gudim

Printed Name of Researcher

Signature of Researcher

Date

APPENDIX TWO

SCHEDULE OF APOSTLES' CREED SEMINARY

- Greeting & Introduction**
- Informed Consent Form**
- Self-Chosen Personal Identification Number**
- Pre-Class Survey**
- Introduction to the Apostles Creed**
- 10 Minute Break**
- First Article**
- 10 Minute Break**
- Second Article**
- 10 Minute Break**
- Third Article & Conclusion**
- Post-Class Survey**

Self-Chosen Personal Identification Number

Please record your self-chosen personal identification number below. You will use this number on both the pre-class and post-class survey.

My Self-Chosen Personal Identification Number

APPENDIX THREE

Apostles' Creed Seminary Teaching Notes¹

Slide 1 – “The Apostles’ Creed”



The Apostles’ Creed

Slide 2 – “Introduction”

Introduction

¹ The way I format my notes for teaching is with the information from the PowerPoint Presentation in plain, normal text. The information that is in all caps and bolded are the notes I teach from, but do not appear for the class on the screen.

Slide 3 – “Getting Caught Up”

Getting Caught Up

The Ten Commandments

- Promote/prohibit; virtue/vice

- The Ten Commandments
 - Promote/prohibit; virtue/vice

Slide 4 – “The Ten Commandments”

The Ten Commandments

| <u>Prohibit</u> | <u>Promote</u> |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Idolatry | 1. Faith (in God) |
| 2. Blasphemy | 2. Prayer |
| 3. Apostasy | 3. Worship |
| 4. Anarchy | 4. Order |
| 5. Murder | 5. Life |
| 6. Lust | 6. Chastity |
| 7. Greed | 7. Generosity |
| 8. Gossip/Slander | 8. Edification |
| 9/10. Discontentment | 9/10. Contentment |

- Idolatry
 - Faith (in God)
- Blasphemy
 - Prayer
- Apostasy
 - Worship
- Anarchy
 - Order
- Murder
 - Life
- Lust
 - Chastity
- Greed
 - Generosity
- Gossip/Slander
 - Edification
- 9/10. Discontentment
 - Contentment

Slide 5 – “Getting Caught Up”

Getting Caught Up

The Ten Commandments

- Promote/prohibit; virtue/vice
- Functions & Purposes of the Law

- The Ten Commandments
 - Promote/prohibit; virtue/vice
 - Functions & Purposes of the Law (NEW)
 -

Slide 6 – “Functions & Purposes of the Law”

Functions & Purposes of the Law

| <u>Functions</u> | <u>Purposes</u> |
|------------------|---|
| 1. Curb | 1. To declare the holy character and will of God |
| 2. Mirror | 2. To prepare us for the Savior |
| 3. Guide | 3. To protect our neighbor from our sinful selves |

- Functions
 - Curb – **GIVES US BOUNDARIES**
 - Mirror – **INTROSPECTION/SHOWS OUR SINS**
 - Guide – **PROVIDES DIRECTION FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**
- Purposes
 - To declare the holy character and will of God
 - **THE LAW IS NOT SOME ARBITRARY LIST OF RULES FOR THE PURPOSE OF GOD GIVING US AN OBJECTIVE GRADE**
 - **LEV. 19:2; MATT. 5:48**
 - **GOD TELLS US HE WANTS US TO BE HOLY, THEN HE TELLS US HOW TO BE HOLY**
 - **IN THE END, HE IS TELLING US HOW HE IS HOLY FOR US**
 - To prepare us for the Savior
 - **THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW IS REPENTANCE SO THAT WE CAN BE FORGIVEN**
 - To protect our neighbor from our sinful selves
 - **MATT. 7:3-5**
 - **WE ARE TO EXAMINE OURSELVES BEFORE EXAMINING OTHERS**

Slide 7 – “Getting Caught Up”

Getting Caught Up

The Ten Commandments

- Promote/prohibit; virtue/vice
- Functions & Purposes of the Law
- “*Lex semper accusat*”

- The Ten Commandments
 - Promote/prohibit; virtue/vice
 - Functions & Purposes of the Law
 - “*Lex semper accusat*” (NEW)
 - **THE LAW ALWAYS ACCUSES**
 - **THE LAW DOESN’T ONLY ACCUSE, BUT IT ALWAYS ACCUSES**
 - **WE WILL NEVER DO ENOUGH, WE WILL NEVER COMPLETE THE LAW IN THIS LIFE**

Slide 8 – “Prepping for the Creed”

Prepping for the Creed

Purpose

- The Creed teaches us to know God fully
- We are too feeble and weak to keep the 10 Commandments

Content

- Arranged according to the three Persons of the Trinity
- God the Father (Creation); God the Son (Redemption); God the Spirit (Sanctification)

- Purpose
 - The Creed teaches us to know God fully
 - We are too feeble and weak to keep the 10 Commandments
- Content
 - Arranged according to the three Persons of the Trinity
 - **AS OPPOSED TO RCC MODEL OF ARRANGING IT ACCORDING TO THE 12 APOSTLES**
 - God the Father (Creation); God the Son (Redemption); God the Spirit (Sanctification)

Slide 9 – “The First Article”

The First Article

- **THIS SHOWS AND SETS FORTH MOST BRIEFLY WHAT IS GOD THE FATHER’S ESSENCE, WILL, ACTIVITY, AND WORK**
 - **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS APPLIED IN GOD’S REVEALING OF HIMSELF**
- **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS TEACH US THAT WE ARE NOT TO HAVE MORE THAN ONE GOD, THE CREED TEACHES US WHO GOD IS**
 - **WHAT KIND OF A PERSON IS HE?**
 - **WHAT DOES HE DO?**
 - **HOW DOES HE DO IT?**
 - **HOW CAN WE PRAISE, OR SHOW & DESCRIBE HIM, THAT HE MAY BE KNOWN**

Slide 10 – “The First Article of Creation”

The First Article of Creation

I believe in God the Father
Almighty, Maker of heaven
and Earth.

- I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and Earth.

Slide 11 – “What Does This Mean?”

What Does This Mean?

I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that He has given and still preserves to me my body and soul, my eyes and ears, and all my members, my reason and all the powers of my soul, together with food and clothing, home and family, and all my property; that He daily provides abundantly for all the needs of my life, protects me from all danger, and guards and keeps me from all evil; and that He does this purely out of fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me; for all of which I am in duty bound to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

- I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that He has given and still preserves to me my body and soul, my eyes and ears, and all my members, my reason and all the powers of my soul, together with food and clothing, home and family, and all my property; that He daily provides abundantly for all the needs of my life, protects me from all danger, and guards and keeps me from all evil; and that He does this purely out of fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me; for all of which I am in duty bound to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

Slide 12 – “God the Father, the Creator”

God the Father, the Creator

- I am God’s Creature
- God daily preserves and defends us against all evil
- Everything God does for us is done out of pure love and goodness, without our merit, as a kind Father
- It is our duty to love, praise, and thank him for these things without ceasing

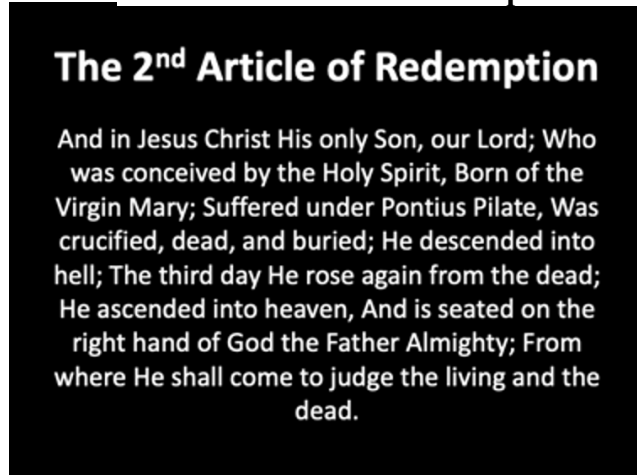
- I am God’s Creature
 - **THE INHERENT DIGNITY AND VALUE OF ALL HUMAN LIFE IS ESTABLISHED HERE**
 - **THREE TRUTHS:**
 - **HE HAS GIVEN ME LIFE**
 - **HE DAILY PROVIDES FOR MY MATERIAL NEEDS**
 - **HE HAS CAUSED ALL CREATED THINGS TO SERVE FOR THE USES AND NECESSITIES OF LIFE**
- God daily preserves and defends us against all evil

- Everything God does for us is done out of pure love and goodness, without our merit, as a kind Father
- It is our duty to love, praise, and thank him for these things without ceasing
- **THE REALITY OF GOD’S ACT OF CREATION IS THAT HE CREATES OUT OF NOTHING**
 - **SPIRITUAL REALITY → HE CREATES OUR FAITH OUT OF NOTHING**

Slide 13 – “The Second Article”



Slide 14 – “The 2nd Article of Redemption”



- And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, Born of the Virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, And is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From where He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

Slide 15 – “What Does This Mean?”

What Does This Mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true Man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord; who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, bought me and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with silver and gold, but with His holy and precious blood and with His innocent sufferings and death; in order that I might be His own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness; even as He is risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

- I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true Man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord; who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, bought me and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with silver and gold, but with His holy and precious blood and with His innocent sufferings and death; in order that I might be His own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness; even as He is risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

Slide 16 – “Jesus Is Lord”

Jesus Is Lord

- I believe Jesus Christ, God’s true Son, has become my Lord
- Lord = Redeemer
- Highlights the role of Satan in our sin
- Redemption accomplished by each element of the Second Article

- I believe Jesus Christ, God’s true Son, has become my Lord
 - **GOD HAS COMPLETELY POURED HIMSELF FORTH AND WITHHELD NOTHING FROM US**
- Lord = Redeemer
 - **HE HAS REDEEMED ME FROM SIN FROM THE DEVIL, FROM DEATH, AND FROM ALL EVIL**
 - **BEFORE, I DID NOT HAVE A LORD OR KING, BUT WAS CAPTIVE UNDER THE DEVIL’S POWER, CONDEMNED TO DEATH, STUCK IN SIN AND BLINDNESS**

- **COMPLETELY FLIES IN THE FACE OF THE MODERN AMERICAN CONCEPTION OF JESUS AS LORD AND OF SATAN’S IDENTITY**
 - **“JESUS MIGHT BE YOUR SAVIOR, BUT IS HE YOUR LORD” = LAW CONCEPTION**
 - **SATAN IS A COMPETING LORD WITH GOD/JESUS, BUT IN THE SECOND ARTICLE, HE’S NOT REFERRED TO AS LORD AT ALL → HE IS NOT A THREAT TO GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY**
- **Redemption accomplished (AND/OR HIGHLIGHTED) by each element of the Second Article**
 - **CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST**
 - **FULLY GOD**
 - **BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY**
 - **FULLY MAN**
 - **SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE**
 - **DIDN’T SUFFER FOR HIS OWN SINS**
 - **CRUCIFIED, DIED, AND WAS BURIED**
 - **ATONEMENT/GREAT EXCHANGE**
 - **DESCENDED INTO HELL**
 - **PROCLAIMED VICTORY**
 - **ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD**
 - **ENSURED VICTORY, DEFEATED DEATH**
 - **ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN**
 - **IMPORTANCE OF THE ASCENSION IN GIVING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND IN CHRIST’S ROLE AS INTERCESSOR**
 - **SEATED ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY**
 - **CHRIST AS INTERCESSOR**
 - **HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD**
 - **SECOND COMING GOOD NEWS FOR THE REDEEMED**

Slide 17 – “The Third Article”



Slide 18 – “The 3rd Article of Redemption”

The 3rd Article of Sanctification

I believe in the Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church, The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body; And the Life everlasting. Amen.

- I believe in the Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church, The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body; And the Life everlasting. Amen.

Slide 19 – “What Does This Mean?”

What Does This Mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith; in like manner as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in this Christian Church, He daily forgives abundantly all my sins and the sins of all believers, and at the last day will raise up me and all the dead and will grant everlasting life to me and to all who believe in Christ. This is most certainly true.

- I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith; in like manner as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in this Christian Church, He daily forgives abundantly all my sins and the sins of all believers, and at the last day will raise up me and all the dead and will grant everlasting life to me and to all who believe in Christ. This is most certainly true.

Slide 20 – “The Work of the Spirit”

The Work of the Spirit

Who is the Spirit?

What does He do?

- He makes people holy

How does He do it?

- The Holy Christian Church
- The Communion of Saints
- The Forgiveness of Sins
- The Resurrection of the Body
- The Life Everlasting

- Who is the Spirit?
 - **THE SPIRIT OF GOD**
 - **STANDS IN CONTRAST TO ALL OTHER SPIRITS: SPIRIT OF MEN, HEAVENLY SPIRITS, EVIL SPIRITS**
- What does He do?
 - He makes people holy (1 COR. 6:11)
 - **HE SANCTIFIES**
 - **“SANCTIFYING IS JUST BRINGING US TO CHRIST SO WE RECEIVE THIS GOOD, WHICH WE COULD NOT GET OURSELVES”**
 - **NOT “GETTING BETTER AT NOT SINNING”, BUT LEARNING TO LIVE IN THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION**
 - **HE DELIVERS THE GOSPEL**
 - **DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ACCOMPLISHING AND DELIVERING THE GOSPEL**
 - **ROM. 10:17**
- How does He do it?
 - **THE SUSPICION AND REGULAR CONFESSION OF THE GENERIC AMERICAN THE CHURCH IS THAT THE SPIRIT ACTS AS A GREAT COSMIC FREE AGENT AND HIS (ITS – I.E. “THE FORCE”) WORK IS CONFIRMED BY OUR EMOTIONAL STATE AT THE MOMENT**
 - The Holy Christian Church
 - **WHERE THE PREACHING OCCURS**
 - **OUTSIDE THE CHURCH, THERE IS NO FORGIVENESS OR HOLINESS**
 - **WHY? NO GOSPEL**
 - **STANDS CONTRARY TO THE PURPOSE AND ACTIVITY OF THE CHURCH IN AMERICA**
 - The Communion of Saints
 - **THE REALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH**
 - **LUTHER EQUATES WITH THE CONGREGATION**
 - **THE PEOPLE WHO RECEIVE THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS**

- The Forgiveness of Sins
 - **THE CONTENT OF THE PREACHED MESSAGE**
 - **“EVERYTHING, THEREFORE, IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IS ORDERED TOWARD THIS GOAL: WE SHALL DAILY RECEIVE IN THE CHURCH NOTHING BUT THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN THROUGH THE WORD AND SIGNS, TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE OUR CONSCIENCES AS LONG AS WE LIVE HERE. SO EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE SINS, THE GRACE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES NOT ALLOW THEM TO HARM US. FOR WE ARE IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, WHERE THERE IS NOTHING BUT CONTINUOUS, UNINTERRUPTED FORGIVENESS OF SIN.”**
- The Resurrection of the Body
 - **COMPLETED SANCTIFICATION**
 - **STILL STRUGGLE WITH SIN NOW**
 - **THE HOLY SPIRIT ALWAYS HAS A REASON TO CONTINUE HIS WORK THROUGH THE WORD**
- The Life Everlasting
 - **END OF FORGIVENESS**
 - **WE WILL BE MADE RIGHTEOUS**
 - **IN THE GOSPEL, WE ARE DECLARED RIGHTEOUS**
 -

Slide 21 – “Wrapping Things Up”

Wrapping Things Up

- The Creed sets apart Christians from all other people
 - Christian from secular/pagan
 - Orthodox from heresy
- The Creed describes God in his vocations
 - God for you

- The Creed sets apart Christians from all other people
 - Christian from secular/pagan
 - **EVERYONE HAS AN ANSWER FOR WHO OR WHAT GOD IS**
 - **EVEN ATHEISTS**
 - Orthodox from heresy
 - **SEPARATES A GOD OF LAW OR GOSPEL FROM A GOD OF LAW & GOSPEL**
- The Creed describes God in his vocations
 - God for you
 - **THE SECOND ARTICLE MAKES IT POSSIBLE**
 - **GOD IS OUR NEIGHBOR & IS FOR US**

APPENDIX FOUR

SHORT ANSWER SURVEY

Self-Chosen Personal Identification Number: _____

**“Adult Catechesis as Formation & Habitus for the Christian Life”
A Class on the Apostles’ Creed for the Completion of the Major Applied Project
Rev. Jason Gudim
7/10/21
Short Answer Survey**

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer the following four questions in your own words. Your answers do not need to be particularly lengthy, just a representation of your understanding at the moment.

1. What is the purpose of the Apostles’ Creed?
2. How does the First Article of the Creed relate to your life?
3. How does the Second Article of the Creed relate to your life?
4. How does the Third Article of the Creed relate to your life?

APPENDIX FIVE

APOSTLES' CREED PRE-CLASS MULTIPLE CHOICE SURVEY

Self-Chosen Personal Identification Number: _____

**“Adult Catechesis as Formation & Habitus for the Christian Life”
A Class on the Apostles' Creed for the Completion of the Major Applied Project
Rev. Jason Gudim
7/10/21
Pre-Class Survey**

INSTRUCTIONS: Please complete this survey in total. This is not a quiz or a test, and it will not be graded. Do not feel pressured to identify or record a “correct” answer, but simply give your answer to each of the following questions.

Introduction:

1. Are you a member or regular attendee (at least once per month) of Faith Free Lutheran Church? (Circle One Answer)
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

2. Have you ever been exposed to Pastor Gudim's teaching on the Apostles' Creed before? (Circle one answer)
 - a. Yes, during Sunday School at Faith Free Lutheran Church
 - b. Yes, through the Being Lutheran Podcast
 - c. Yes, in some other way. Please clarify: _____
 - d. No

3. Are you currently able to recite the Apostles' Creed from memory in its entirety? (Circle one answer)
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

4. Are you currently able to recite the explanations to the Apostles' Creed, from the Small Catechism, from memory? (Circle one answer)
 - a. Yes, all three
 - b. Yes, one or two
 - c. No

The Apostles Creed (Please circle one answer unless instructed otherwise):

1. What is the purpose of the Apostles' Creed? (Circle all that apply):
 - a. To teach us who God is
 - b. To give us something to do
 - c. To provide us with hope in the midst of our failure to keep the Ten Commandments
 - d. To identify how God relates to us
 - e. To inform our worship and praise of God

2. When we identify God the Father as "Almighty", is this a statement of Law or Gospel?
 - a. Law
 - b. Gospel

3. The First Article of the Creed establishes:
 - a. Our need for repentance
 - b. The inherent dignity and value of all human life
 - c. God's wrath against sin
 - d. Free will

4. Do you have any theological objections to the commonly used question, "Jesus might be your Savior, but is he your Lord?"
 - a. Yes (explain):
 - b. No

5. What is Satan's role as far as your sin and redemption is concerned?
 - a. Lord over unbelievers & unrepentant sinners
 - b. Deceiver and captor
 - c. Convenient foil for sin
 - d. The evil that is in balance with God's good

6. According to the Second Article of the Creed, how has our redemption been

accomplished?

- a. Through Jesus' death & resurrection
 - b. Through Jesus' entire life, from his incarnation to the Second Coming
 - c. By demanding your response to Jesus' life and ministry
7. What does the Holy Spirit primarily do?
- a. Convert souls
 - b. Spontaneously move the hearts of men
 - c. Guide and inspire
 - d. Make people holy
8. How does He do this? (Circle all that apply)
- a. Through the forgiveness of sins
 - b. Through internal promptings
 - c. Through the life everlasting
 - d. Through the holy Christian Church
 - e. Through our emotions
 - f. Through the resurrection of the body
 - g. Through the communion of saints
 - h. Through the decisions of anointed leadership
9. What is the primary reason you go to church on Sunday?
- a. Forgiveness
 - b. Instruction
 - c. Worship
 - d. Fellowship
10. What is the primary role of the Means of Grace in the church?
- a. Remind us of God's faithfulness
 - b. Unite us with believers around the world
 - c. Direct and inform our obedience
 - d. Distribute and apply the forgiveness of sins
11. What roles do the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting play in your sanctification? (Circle all that apply)
- a. Provide us with hope during the trials of life

- b. The hold before us something to strive for in our Christian lives
 - c. To remind us that we won't be perfectly sinless until eternity
- 12.** How does the structure of the Creed contribute to your understanding of its purpose and meaning?
- a. It helps us understand Scripture better
 - b. It informs us of God's vocations
 - c. It reminds us that we are sinners
 - d. It establishes God in his sovereignty
- 13.** In summary, what does the Apostles' Creed do for Christians in the world?
- a. It gives us a means of relating to other creeds and cultures
 - b. It provides us with an opportunity to declare our superiority
 - c. It delineates and sets us apart from all other faiths and worldviews
 - d. It is meant only to be used personally and privately

APPENDIX SIX

APOSTLES' CREED POST-CLASS MULTIPLE-CHOICE SURVEY

Self-Chosen Personal Identification Number: _____

**“Adult Catechesis as Formation & Habitus for the Christian Life”
A Class on the Apostles' Creed for the Completion of the Major Applied Project
Rev. Jason Gudim
7/10/21
Post-Class Survey**

INSTRUCTIONS: Please complete this survey in total. This is not a quiz or a test, and it will not be graded. Do not feel pressured to identify or record a “correct” answer, but simply give your answer to each of the following questions.

The Apostles Creed (Please circle one answer unless instructed otherwise):

1. What is the purpose of the Apostles' Creed? (Circle all that apply):
 - a. To teach us who God is
 - b. To give us something to do
 - c. To provide us with hope in the midst of our failure to keep the Ten Commandments
 - d. To identify how God relates to us
 - e. To inform our worship and praise of God

2. When we identify God the Father as “Almighty”, is this a statement of Law or Gospel?
 - a. Law
 - b. Gospel

3. The First Article of the Creed establishes:
 - a. Our need for repentance
 - b. The inherent dignity and value of all human life
 - c. God's wrath against sin
 - d. Free will

4. Do you have any theological objections to the commonly used question, “Jesus might be your Savior, but is he your Lord?”
 - a. Yes (explain):

- b.** No
5. What is Satan's role as far as your sin and redemption is concerned?
- a.** Lord over unbelievers & unrepentant sinners
 - b.** Deceiver and captor
 - c.** Convenient foil for sin
 - d.** The evil that is in balance with God's good
6. According to the Second Article of the Creed, how has our redemption been accomplished?
- a.** Through Jesus' death & resurrection
 - b.** Through Jesus' entire life, from his incarnation to the Second Coming
 - c.** By demanding your response to Jesus' life and ministry
7. What does the Holy Spirit primarily do?
- a.** Convert souls
 - b.** Spontaneously move the hearts of men
 - c.** Guide and inspire
 - d.** Make people holy
8. How does He do this? (Circle all that apply)
- a.** Through the forgiveness of sins
 - b.** Through internal promptings
 - c.** Through the life everlasting
 - d.** Through the holy Christian Church
 - e.** Through our emotions
 - f.** Through the resurrection of the body
 - g.** Through the communion of saints
 - h.** Through the decisions of anointed leadership
9. What is the primary reason you go to church on Sunday?
- a.** Forgiveness
 - b.** Instruction
 - c.** Worship

d. Fellowship

10. What is the primary role of the Means of Grace in the church?
- a. Remind us of God's faithfulness
 - b. Unite us with believers around the world
 - c. Direct and inform our obedience
 - d. Distribute and apply the forgiveness of sins
11. What roles do the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting play in your sanctification? (Circle all that apply)
- a. Provide us with hope during the trials of life
 - b. They hold before us something to strive for in our Christian lives
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12. How does the structure of the Creed contribute to your understanding of its purpose and meaning?
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 - c. It reminds us that we are sinners
 - d. It establishes God in his sovereignty
13. In summary, what does the Apostles' Creed do for Christians in the world?
- a. It gives us a means of relating to other creeds and cultures
 - b. It provides us with an opportunity to declare our superiority
 - c. It delineates and sets us apart from all other faiths and worldviews
 - d. It is meant only to be used personally and privately

Post-Class Assessment & Evaluation

Please evaluate and provide feedback on the class this afternoon.

1. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the least helpful and 5 being the most helpful, how would you rate the effectiveness of the material presented in the class today on your overall understanding of the Apostles' Creed? (Circle one)

1 2 3 4 5

Least helpful ←-----→Most helpful

2. What were the parts of the class you enjoyed the most?

3. What parts of the class could have been improved?

4. On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being “less adult education is needed” and 5 being “more adult education is needed”, considering the material that was taught today, do you think churches should be intentionally implementing adult education similar to this Apostles' Creed class less often, more often, or should they be doing it about the same as they already are?

1 2 3 4 5

Less adult education needed-----About the same-----More adult education needed

Please provide any other comments or feedback you might have about this class and material:

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